Roadmap to Retirement Planning

10 or more years from retirement

____ Review beneficiary designations to ensure that they updated and accurate:
  • Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) / State Group Life Insurance (use same designation unless you specify otherwise)
  • Individual & Family Group Life Insurance
  • Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance
  • University Insurance Association Life Insurance
  • Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) 403(b) Program
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  • Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) 457
  • UW Employee Inc. Life Insurance
  • EPIC Benefits+
  • Any private plans you hold

____ Review UW System insurance coverage levels (single vs. family, too much or not enough life insurance).

____ Review private insurance coverage (e.g., life, disability, homeowners/renters, auto insurance).

____ Submit military discharge papers (DD-214) to the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) for any active military service prior to 1974.

____ Use the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) online retirement annuity calculator (etf.wi.gov/calculators/disclaimer.htm) to estimate future value of retirement annuity.

____ Review annual Social Security Statement of Benefits and/or use online Social Security calculator (www.ssa.gov/estimator/) to estimate future value Social Security benefits.

____ Sick leave will be converted to pay for health insurance in retirement. Use the Sick Leave Estimator to estimate value of future sick leave credits: https://www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/benefits/sle/.

____ Save at least 10% of income.

____ Save for retirement before college.

____ Have an adequate emergency fund.

____ Start/increase contributions to a Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) 403(b) Program (www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/benefits/ret/tsa/) and/or Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) 457 (www.wdc457.org) account and review asset allocations.

____ Start/increase contributions to an IRA.

____ Write will, durable power of attorney and/or living will.

____ Review Benefit Summary and Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) Annual Statement of Benefits (both available in myUW portal).

____ Contact your human resources office with any benefits questions.

5 years from retirement

____ Do all of the above, if you have not already.

____ Increase contributions to Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) 403(b) Program / Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) 457 accounts (maximize if possible).

____ Think carefully about buying long-term care insurance.

____ Reduce your debt.

____ Attend Pre-Retirement Workshops (if available).

____ If possible, preserve sick leave to pay for retiree health insurance.

____ Request a forfeited/qualifying service estimate from the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) (if applicable).

____ Begin to think about post-retirement use of time, second career, part-time work, volunteer work, hobbies, travel, and recreation.

Rev 01/2018
1 year from retirement

- Select retirement date.
- Order retirement application from the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) either online or by calling ETF at 1-877-533-5020.
- Meet with the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) and/or your institution’s human resources office after receipt of retirement application.
- Review Employee Benefits at Retirement document.
- Develop a budget to estimate how much money you will need in retirement.
- Review your will and estate plan. Revise if out-of-date.
- Investigate distribution options for Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) 403(b) Program / Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) 457 accounts.
- Schedule a Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) 403(b) Program and/or Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) 457 individual counseling session to discuss your asset allocation and options.
- Request a projection of your Social Security benefit from the Social Security Administration.

2-3 months before retirement

- Announce retirement to department, if appropriate.
- Use the Department of Employee Trust Fund’s (ETF) Income Tax Withholding and Accelerated Payment Cost Calculators to help you determine your take-home annuity amount.
- Submit retirement application to the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) – can submit up to 90 days before termination date.
- If eligible for Social Security benefits, apply 3 months before you want the benefit to begin.
- Investigate payout options of banked leave/ALRA – extend time on payroll and/or receive a lump sum distribution.
- Send lump sum of all or part of the distribution on a pre-tax basis to Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) 403(b) Program and/or Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) 457 account.
- Make arrangements to have remaining Flexible Spending Account (FSA) deductions taken from final check.
- If spouse is a UW System / State employee, have spouse become subscriber of insurance plans (State Group Health, EPIC Benefits+, Dental Wisconsin, VSP Vision).
- If spouse/domestic partner is a UW System / State employee, have spouse/domestic partner become subscriber of insurance plans (Individual & Family Life Insurance, Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance).
- Submit sick leave credit escrow application to the Department of Employee Trust Funds (ETF) if you will have comparable health insurance from a non-UW System / State employer and want to preserve your sick leave credits for future use.
- Contact Tax-Sheltered Annuity (TSA) 403(b) Program provider(s) / Wisconsin Deferred Compensation (WDC) 457 to finalize distribution decisions if you plan to begin distributions at retirement.
- Review beneficiary designations to ensure that they updated and accurate.

1 month before retirement

- Apply for Medicare Part B if over age 65 at retirement.
- If moving out of Wisconsin, complete health insurance application to change to one of the Access Plans.

Post Retirement

- Submit continuation/conversion forms for any benefits that you want to continue in retirement.
- Continuation/conversion information will be mailed to you shortly after your retirement date. All forms must be submitted within specific deadlines or you will lose your right to continue coverage.
- Confirm receipt of new ID cards for any health-related benefits that you continued in retirement.
- Continue to pay premiums for benefits continued in retirement.
- If re-employed at UW System, meet with human resources office to find out about available benefits and leave, insuring that the 75 days minimum break is fulfilled.
- Apply for Medicare Part B, 90 days prior to your 65th birthday.
- Remember to take any required minimum distributions at age 70 1/2.