

Your CTA Retirement Savings Plan Handbook

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Plan Handbook

Answers to common questions about investing in the CTA Retirement Savings Plan.

Why would I join the CTA Retirement Savings Plan?

Someday we all stop working but our expenses go on and on. Your pension provided to you by CalSTRS or CalPERS is a great starting point to paying your living expenses in retirement, but it will only replace about half of what you will need to live on once you stop working.

To reach your goal of a financially secure retirement, it is important to put aside a portion of your salary each month into a 403(b) plan. The CTA Retirement Savings Plan was designed for educators and is the only plan endorsed by your union.

What is a 403(b)?

A 403(b) plan is a powerful savings tool. It is a retirement savings plan where you can set aside money from each paycheck to spend in your retirement years.

What makes a 403(b) plan such a great benefit is that you set aside part of your salary before you pay taxes so that your money grows tax-free all during your work life.

There are so many plans out there, what makes the CTA Plan better?

There are a lot of retirement savings plans you could select. However, many of those plans have high fees and surrender charges.

The CTA plan was designed by your union with only you in mind. The CTA plan offers high-quality investment options at a low cost, so more of your money stays in your pocket. And all the details of your plan are completely transparent so there are no hidden fees or restrictions.

How much money should I set aside from each paycheck?

One of the smartest things you can do is to start saving at an early age, that way you have the power of compound interest to help your money grow. If you are not sure how much to start with, try \$100 per month as a starting point. You can always increase your savings rate as your situation changes, the important thing is to just start.

Who is managing the CTA Retirement Savings Plan?

The investments in the plan are managed by some of the world's leading asset managers including firms such as Vanguard and BlackRock.

An independent investment consulting firm recommends and monitors the investment options evaluating factors such as performance, track record, fees and investment team stability.

It is CTA's practice to hire an independent recordkeeper for the Plan. Aspire Financial Services, LLC (Aspire) is the recordkeeper and responsible for managing the administrative aspects of the plan including providing account statements.

Does CTA give me a choice of where to invest my money?

When you sign up for the CTA Plan using the quick enrollment option, you will be automatically enrolled in a LifePath target date fund that corresponds to your age. This fund is managed by BlackRock, one of the largest mutual fund managers in the world.

If you prefer to create your own investment mix the CTA Plan has a variety of fund options. You can find them at enroll.CTaretirementplan.org.

And, you can change your investment options at anytime.

How do I keep track of my account?

You can check your account balance as often as you wish online at CTAretirementplan.org. Additionally, you will receive a quarterly account statement.

Can I get to my money if I need it before I retire?

If you have an emergency or urgent need you can borrow or possibly take your money out early. If you take your money out before you are 59.5 years of age you will pay a penalty and regular taxes.

What happens to my money if I leave teaching?

You can keep your money in the CTA plan where it can keep growing until you retire or roll it over to an IRA. If you are over age 55 when you leave teaching, you can take the money out of the account as cash. The money you take out is taxed as salary but you will not pay a tax penalty. If you are under age 55 when you leave teaching, any amounts you withdraw as cash are taxed as salary and you will incur a tax penalty unless you wait until you turn age 59.5 to take a withdrawal.

What are the fees in the CTA Plan?

Effective December 1, 2018 you pay a flat annual record keeping fee of \$95.00 and 0.05% for custodial services based on the assets in your account. These fees will be deducted from your account balance on a quarterly basis. Additionally, you pay an asset-based fee for the investments selected and certain transactions such as loans and distributions are subject to fees.

Enrollments that are received after October 15, 2018, will include a one-time enrollment fee of \$10. This one-time enrollment fee will be assessed with the first quarterly recordkeeping fee payment at the end of the quarter in which your account is funded.

All fees are clearly outlined in the annual fee disclosure statement, online at CTAretirementplan.org and will be reported as transactions on your quarterly statement.

Should I invest pre-tax or post-tax?

With pre-tax, your contributions are made before your taxes are taken out. This means your money grows on a tax-deferred basis. You will pay taxes when you withdraw your money after you retire.

Post-tax or Roth contributions are made after your taxes have been taken out of your paycheck. You do not pay taxes on qualified withdrawals in retirement.

What happens if I change school districts?

The money you have saved is yours and will stay in your account. When you start your new job you will need to open a new account and complete a new salary reduction agreement so new money can be invested in the plan. You can roll over the original account into the new district account or keep them separate. Unlike some 403(b) plans, there are no fees or charges for rolling over your CTA Plan to a new account.

What is a LifePath target date fund?

A target date fund is a mix of investments that automatically adjusts over time to help make sure you are in a diversified portfolio that corresponds to your age.

This is a very popular choice with educators. 90% of educators in the CTA 403(b) Plan are using the target date fund.

Steps to Enrolling in the CTA Retirement Plan

All CTA members are eligible to participate in the CTA Retirement Savings Plan.

If you are currently participating in a retirement savings plan that is not endorsed by CTA, you can switch to the CTA plan.

Here are the simple steps to enrollment:
(or go to enroll.CTAretirementplan.org)

1.

Complete the paper enrollment form or enroll online at enroll.CTAretirementplan.org

2.

Complete the salary reduction form that comes from your district's retirement plan administrator.

If you need help locating this form you can call the CTA Enrollment Center at 916-235-9800.

**For more information
on the CTA Retirement
Savings Plan, go to:**

**For enrollment help, contact
the CTA Enrollment Center
at 916-235-9800 from 5 am
to 5 pm, M-F.**

**Or go online anytime:
enroll.CTaretirementplan.org.**

