

A Message from OCERS Chief Executive Officer Steve Delaney on the OCERS Response to COVID-19

One of the more frustrating aspects of this COVID-19 crisis is the uncertainty that comes with dealing with something so new and so dangerous. I'm writing to reassure all OCERS members about certain facts of which you can be confident.

Your Benefit is Secure

The most important fact that you need to know is if you are retired, you will get your benefit, paid in full, paid on time. That's a fact.

OCERS Benefits are determined by the length of time you served the citizens of Orange County. They do not fluctuate with the ups and downs of the financial markets.

The OCERS Investment Portfolio is Sound

In recent weeks, the spread of COVID-19 has increased the volatility of global stock and bond markets. While markets remain unstable, it is important to note that OCERS is a long-term investor and has a history of protecting assets in market downturns.

OCERS' investment pool is a well-diversified, global portfolio that is built to weather short-term disruptions with an emphasis on securing benefits for OCERS' members. In 2019, OCERS' Investment Division took the initiative to protect a portion of its portfolio against a stock market sell-off. Those measures were in place before COVID-19 emerged and have been working to preserve capital in these uncertain markets.

In the coming weeks, there will be talk of some pension funds lacking the cash they need to fully pay benefits. OCERS is not suffering a liquidity crisis and member benefit payments are not at risk. OCERS is cash flow positive, which means that we take in more cash than we need in order to pay benefits. It is an enviable position for us and we appreciate the flexibility that this affords us in turbulent markets. Our focus on delivering timely, accurate and secure benefits continues.

The OCERS Team is Here to Serve You

Our offices may be closed to visitors through April 17th for everyone's safety, but the entire OCERS team is working remotely processing monthly payroll and getting new retirement applications processed. You can call (714.558.6200), or write (info@ocers.org) – we will receive your comments and requests however you may send

them – we will answer, and we will assist. Our web service portal, myOCERS, is available 24 hours a day and is full of important news as well as the information and facts you need to know in order to retire with confidence or simply continue confident in the retirement you have already begun.

In closing, I've had the privilege to serve as OCERS' Chief Executive Officer for more than a dozen years. When I arrived in January 2008, everyone was afraid of what the financial future might hold as the Great Recession was just beginning. OCERS came through with flying colors. We were ranked among the best, most secure pension systems in the entire country. We still have many of the same staff as well as several OCERS board trustees who were with us during those challenging times and are still here today providing the same sound guidance.

OCERS is celebrating 75 years of dedicated service to you our members. There's no doubt that times are challenging but one thing you do not need to worry about is OCERS; we're here, secure, sound and ready to serve.