



Retiree Newsletter

December 2023

Director's Message

Season's Greetings and Happy Holidays to everyone. I can't believe it is December already and 2023 is ending. This was a big year for Retired and Annuitant Pay and we have a lot of information for you in this edition.

First, tax season is here, and we have a few articles about what you can do right now to make this tax season go smoothly, including when your 1099-R will be available and how to use myPay to get it early. Some retirees still select to have their 1099-R mailed to them and there is an article on what to expect in that mailing, as well.

The 2023 SBP Open Season ends January 1, 2024, and we have an article outlining the important deadlines.

Over the past year, my staff and I attended retiree events and talked with many retirees and families around the country and in Europe. These are valuable opportunities for us to hear what's working for you and what's not working. We so much appreciate your feedback and ideas for transforming Retired and Annuitant Pay. You'll see some of your ideas come to life in these newsletter articles and on our website, and there are more coming in 2024. Thank you for being a vital part of our ongoing modernization initiatives.

One of the ideas we heard from you is more information about what a retiree's family needed to know after the retiree passes away. Because of that idea, we created a downloadable PDF checklist.

Another idea that is now live on our website is our Quick Tools webpage, which helps you quickly access the frequently requested tools and resources.

And again, based on your feedback, we have an article on how to upload documents using askDFAS.

It's COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) time again and we have information on the percentage increase and pay dates.

Finally, the CRDP/CRSC annual open season is in January. This article provides information, FAQs, and what action you may need to take, if you are eligible.

It is such a pleasure to work in Retired and Annuitant Pay and provide the best possible customer service to military retirees and their annuitants. It truly is an honor to serve those that served. I hope you have a safe and happy holiday season.

Gray Area Retiree Spotlight

The Gray Area Spotlight in our newsletter is a special feature for Gray Area Retirees.

New to Retired Pay: What to Know for Tax Season

After you retire and begin receiving retired pay, the next tax season will bring a few changes.

Tax Document

First, the retired pay tax document is an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 1099-R instead of the IRS W-2 you are accustomed to receiving.

The IRS 1099-R is the form for Distributions from Pensions, Annuities, Retirement or Profit-Sharing Plans, IRAs, Insurance Contracts, etc. The form is similar to an IRS W-2 but has a number of different boxes that won't be relevant to your retired pay.

Your annual 1099-R will be available in myPay to view and download. myPay offers printing or downloading of your tax statements for your retired pay. You can print/download your current year tax statement, as well as prior year 1099-Rs (up to four prior years for retirees). In addition, you'll have earlier access to your 1099-R tax statement in myPay. Statements are generally available in myPay in late December, while paper copies aren't mailed until mid-to-late January.

If you have the preferences in your account set to receive statements via postal mail, those statements are mailed no later than January 31 of each year, along with your December Retiree Account Statement.

Tax Withholding

Federal Income Tax Withholding

DFAS will withhold federal income tax from your retired pay according to the instructions you provide on your DD Form 2656 when you apply for retired pay.

You can also change your federal income tax withholding after your retired pay is established by using myPay (<https://mypay.dfas.mil>) or by sending us a completed, signed IRS W-4 Employee's Withholding Certificate.

State Income Tax Withholding

DFAS can also withhold state income tax from your retired pay for one state at a time, but only if the designated state has signed the standard written State Income Tax Withholding agreement with the Department of Defense (DoD). Please see the table on our webpage for the status of specific states/territories:

<https://www.dfas.mil/retstatetax>

Military retirees can start, stop, or change state income tax withholding (SITW) by using myPay, by filling out and sending a DD Form 2866 - Retiree Change of Address/State Tax Withholding Request, or by sending a written request that includes all the necessary information. The information includes your full name, daytime phone number, social security number, date, and signature on all written correspondence. DFAS cannot process requests that do not include this information.

Because tax obligations vary from state to state, contact your state's department of revenue regarding taxability of your military retired pay.

Local Income Tax Withholding

DFAS is unable to withhold local income tax from retired pay.

Military Retired Pay Taxation Tips

Military retired pay is paid for many different reasons under many different laws. There are differences in the types of pay a military retiree might receive and the tax laws that apply to them. Whether a portion or all of an individual's military retired pay is subject to federal income taxes depends on his/her individual circumstances.

A military retiree can either use myPay or send an IRS Form W-4 to alter the amount DFAS withholds for federal income taxes from their military retired pay.

An individual's choice to have no withholding for federal taxes does not impact whether the individual's military retired pay is subject to federal income taxes. Ultimately, the IRS will determine the amount of taxes owed on the military retired pay.

Please note: the IRS requires any individual claiming exemption from federal withholding to provide a new Form W-4 at the beginning of each tax year certifying their exemption from withholding.

Additional Information

DFAS cannot provide tax advice. Please consult a tax professional or the IRS.

Please see our webpage for more information regarding taxation of retired pay: <https://www.dfas.mil/retpaytax>

There's Still Time to Get a Head Start on Tax Season

The best step you can take is to use your myPay account (<https://mypay.dfas.mil>). With your myPay account you'll be able to find all of your most important retired or annuitant pay information, including your IRS 1099-R, which is already available in myPay. As a reminder, the 1099-R is the retiree and annuitant tax statement, like the W-2 provided to wage earners. The 1099-R documents the amount of taxable retired or annuity income earned and how much was withheld in taxes – and must be filed with your tax return.

If you've requested to receive your 1099-R through the mail, it will go out through the U.S. Postal Service no later than January 31, 2023.

Skip the Mailbox and Use myPay

One of the biggest advantages of using myPay is all your documents are available at your convenience, including your 1099-R tax statement. You can download it much sooner than if you wait for a hard copy in the mail and, if you file taxes electronically, you won't need to scan or find another way to convert your hard copy 1099-R into an electronic file.

1099-Rs are available now in myPay, while paper copies aren't mailed until later in January. Not only that, you'll also have prior year 1099-Rs in myPay (up to four prior years for retirees and up to two prior years for annuitants) if you want to compare or need to file an amended return.

While you're in myPay, you can also easily check to make sure we have your correct mailing address and email address. You don't want any important correspondence or paperwork going to the wrong location.

Additional Ways to Get You a Duplicate 1099-R

If you aren't using myPay yet, we do offer other convenient options to replace an IRS Form 1099-R.

For retirees, if your mailing address on file with DFAS is current, you can get a copy of your 1099-R mailed to you through our telephone self-service option – but don't do this until after February 12, 2024. Please allow time for the postal service to do their job.

To use telephone self-service for retirees:

- Call 800-321-1080 or 317-212-0551
- Select option "1" for Self-Serve
- Select option "1" 1099-R
- Enter your Social Security Number when prompted

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Your 1099-R should be in the mail within 7-10 business days to the address we have on record.

Retirees and annuitants can get their 1099-Rs sent to the address on file with DFAS or to a one-time, temporary mailing address by submitting a request online. Our online request tool also accepts international addresses. It's easy to find on our Quick Tools webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/raquicktools>

If you prefer traditional mail, you can send us a written request by fax or mail, but please make sure you leave time for processing.

It can take up to 30 days to process requests received by fax or mail. Find instructions: <https://www.dfas.mil/rettaxes>

Members with unique situations can speak directly to one of our customer care representatives. Depending on call volume, you may have to wait on hold while we assist other customers. For more information, go to: <https://www.dfas.mil/racustomers>

Changing Your Federal Tax Withholding

If you need to change your withholding, you can do it easily in myPay. Or you can fill out and mail an IRS Form W-4 if you are a military retiree or an IRS Form W-4P if you are an SBP annuitant. The forms are available on the IRS website and are also linked from our Forms page.

Please note: You are not required to file a new Form W-4 unless you claim exemption from federal tax withholding. If you claim exemption from withholding, the **IRS requires you file a new W-4 each year.**

DFAS customer service representatives cannot provide tax advice or recommendations about withholding. Please consult a tax professional if you have questions about your taxes.

Reminder – Retired Pay Taxation

Military retired pay is paid for many different reasons under many different laws. There are differences in the types of pay a military retiree might receive and the tax laws that apply to them. Whether a portion or all of an individual's military retired pay is subject to federal income taxes depends on his/her individual circumstances.

A military retiree can either use myPay or send an IRS Form W-4 to alter the amount DFAS withholds for federal income taxes from their military retired pay.

An individual's choice to have no withholding for federal taxes does not impact whether the individual's military retired pay is actually subject to federal income taxes. Ultimately, the IRS will determine the amount of taxes owed on the military retired pay.

Please see our webpage regarding taxation of retired pay: <https://www.dfas.mil/retpaytax>

myPay: How to Reactivate Your Account or Get Started

myPay is an online tool for getting your tax documents, as well as managing your annuitant pay account year-round.

myPay provides access to a range of information about your payments and lets you easily update your contact information, tax withholding, or download your tax documents.

Reactivating Your myPay Account

We know some of you only use myPay once a year to get your 1099-R during tax season. Then, when you do try to access your account, you discover your password is expired, lost, or forgotten. If this sounds like something that has happened to you, please update your password now, before the tax season starts. Waiting to update your password might mean delays in accessing your tax documents.

If your myPay account is in an inactive status because your password has expired, you can follow the simple steps below to reactivate your account.

1. Go to <https://mypay.dfas.mil> in your web browser on a computer or connected device.
2. Click on the "Forgot or Need a Password?" link
3. Enter two of the following: your Login ID, Social Security Number and/or registered email address (previously registered in myPay). Check the box affirming you are the account owner and click "Continue."
4. If you previously set up the security questions, you'll be presented three security questions to answer. When finished answering the questions, click "Check my Answers."
5. If you answer the security questions correctly, you will be able to reset your password online.

If you haven't set up security questions or answer them incorrectly, you'll get the option to have a temporary password sent to you. You can choose to send the temporary password to:

- A) Your mobile phone via text if your mobile phone number is registered in myPay; OR,
- B) The mailing address you have on file with DFAS in your pay account.

When you receive the temporary password, go back to myPay and log in to reactivate your account.

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Getting Started with myPay

If you're not yet using myPay, it's easy to get started.

You can request an initial password on the myPay homepage using the "Forgot or Need a New Password" link. The password will be mailed to the address you have on file with DFAS in your retired pay or annuity pay account and you should receive it in about 10 business days (for domestic mailing addresses).

Once you receive your password in the mail, you can return to the myPay homepage and create your myPay profile using your Social Security Number and the password you received in the mail.

If You Need Assistance with myPay

If you need assistance accessing your myPay account, please contact the myPay Customer Care Center toll-free at 1-888-332-7411, select option 5 or at 1-317-212-0550.

You Asked, We Delivered: The New “What to Do When a Military Retiree Dies” Checklist and Enhanced Webpage

The time surrounding the death of a loved one is a difficult period in anyone’s life. In addition to grief, the time is full of uncertainties and change.

At DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay, we realize that the status of pay and entitlements is one of those areas of uncertainty. Thanks for your feedback and ideas, we’ve made some improvements to help smooth the process for survivors and beneficiaries.

We are pleased to announce that we’ve created a **shareable PDF checklist** for the process that follows the death of a retiree. The checklist includes all the pertinent information about the required forms and supporting documents, along with important reminders. The checklist also provides helpful tips on how to submit the documents to DFAS.

You can find the **“What to Do When a Military Retiree Dies” Checklist** on our new Quick Tools page. The checklist can be found toward the top of the page: <https://www.dfas.mil/raquicktools>

We also added much more information to our webpage on DFAS.mil for reporting the death of a retiree and the next steps your family will need to take.

For example, for survivors of military retirees who previously chose to cover one (or more) family members under the Survivor Benefit Plan, there are instructions for annuitants on how to claim and begin their SBP annuity.

Report a Retiree’s Death - <https://www.dfas.mil/retdeath>

We hope these additional resources will be helpful to you and your family.

We also added more information to our webpage about reporting the death of a Survivor Benefit Plan annuitant.

Report a SBP Annuitant’s Death - <https://www.dfas.mil/anndeath>

New Retiree and Annuitant DFAS Resources Now Available!

Quick Tools Page

Here at DFAS Retired and Annuitant Pay, we're very busy working on ways to improve our customer service for you. And here's the latest example: the Quick Tools page on DFAS.mil.

What is the Quick Tools page? Think of it as a one-stop-shop for our most popular and often-requested tools. It's designed specifically for people who have a clear picture of what they need to accomplish and just need one simple place to find it.

One thing you'll immediately notice about the Quick Tools page is its organization. The webpage is neatly organized by customer group. As a valued member of the SBP annuitant/survivor community, there's a section just for you. Whether you're looking for the way to report a death, get a 1099-R tax statement reissued, utilize myPay, or use one of our helpful Form Wizards or convenient askDFAS online upload tools—this webpage will get you where you need quickly!

And just as we always do—we'll keep working on this page to make it most useful and current over time. We have even more great tools planned for you, so we'll make sure Quick Tools is always a quick stop to meet your needs.

You can find the Quick Tools page at <https://www.dfas.mil/raqicktools>. Please spread the word and encourage other retirees to visit the page, too. We will keep improving it over time as we add new tools and capabilities to improve your experience.

Revamped askDFAS Resource Page

As part of another project in our work to modernize Retired and Annuitant Pay and make the processes easier for you, we built a suite of online tools that allow forms and required documentation to be filled out or uploaded at askDFAS on the DFAS.mil website, which is also accessible on a mobile browser.

We also recently revamped the askDFAS Resource webpage section for retirees and annuitants to make it easier for you to find the askDFAS online form or upload tool you need.

The askDFAS Resource webpage section for Retirees and Annuitants is now organized into separate areas with specific resources and links for retirees and specific resources and links for SBP annuitants, plus additional resources.

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askDFAS tools are a quick and easy way to submit select forms and documents to us directly. Instead of mailing or faxing your completed forms, for some you can now either fill out an online form or upload them directly in a PDF through the askDFAS online tool on the DFAS.mil website.

Please note all documents uploaded to an askDFAS online tool MUST be in PDF format and contain the Social Security Number of the retiree or deceased member.

Using askDFAS is a convenient way to submit requests and eliminate the time and hassle of sending requests through mail or fax and provide more timely and accurate service to retirees and annuitants.

See the revamped askDFAS Resource webpage by clicking on Retirees and Annuitants at: <https://www.dfas.mil/askdfas>

Also check out the **“How to Upload Your Documents Using our askDFAS Online Upload Tools”** article in this issue to get more information.

Updated User Guides

We know that it is important that improvements are communicated well and supported by helpful resources.

We are proud to share that we have updated resources available that explain many of our primary tools in great depth.

We have User Guides (also a version for Retired Pay and another for Annuitant Pay) posted on our website available to you. Find these User Guides by visiting <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/> and scrolling down to the section that says, “Retirees and SBP Annuitants: Helpful Guides for DFAS Online Tools.

While these User Guides cater to different audiences, you will be able to find information about askDFAS Online Upload tools to submit forms, Form Wizards, status notifications, and many other tips and tricks to make your experience better.

Introducing Our Newest Form Wizard: DD 2656-6, Survivor Benefit Plan Election Change Certificate

We are excited to announce our newest Form Wizard for the DD 2656-6, Survivor Benefit Plan Election Change Certificate. The DD Form 2656-6 is used to make changes to your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) election, as you experience life-changing events throughout your retirement. This Form Wizard has built-in logic based on your current SBP status and will only provide you the options that are viable to you in updating your SBP election.

Our Form Wizards “take the form out of the form” and are a great tool to assist you in completing the forms necessary to keep your retirement account up to date. The Form Wizard will ask you a series of questions regarding your individual status and populate your responses within the form. Once all responses are populated, you will then be able to generate a completed copy of the form. Upon generating the completed PDF, you can print, sign/witness and then upload your completed form to askDFAS at:

<https://corpweb1.dfas.mil/askDFAS/ticketInput.action?subCategoryId=19104>.

For additional information on askDFAS and the benefits in using it, please see the article provided within this newsletter.

We **strongly encourage** our customers to take advantage of using the Form Wizards even if they are not fully electronic because the Form Wizards eliminate the guesswork and assist in ensuring the form is completed correctly the first time.

Form Wizards are located on the Forms Library webpage of the DFAS Retired and Annuitant website at <https://www.dfas.mil/raforms>. The Form Wizard is positioned above the PDF version of the form on the website.

Retiree Form Wizards

DD 2894, Designation of Beneficiary Information (Arrears of Pay)

DD 2656-6, Survivor Benefit Plan Election Change Certificate

Annuitant/Survivor Form Wizards

SF 1174, Claim for Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Member of the Uniformed Service (AOP)

DD 2656-7, Verification For Survivor Annuity

DD 2788, Child Annuitant’s School Certificate

DFAS 9415, Representative Payee Application

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Please note that as forms are being updated in newer versions of Adobe. When using Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or Safari to access an Adobe Form Wizard, you may need to download or save the PDF (by clicking the download or save icon in the upper right-hand corner of the page). Then go to the saved location and open the form/Form Wizard. It is not recommended to save completed forms on a public or shared computer due to Personal Identifiable Information (PII). If prompted, you may need to update to the latest version of Adobe Reader for Windows® or Mac to download and open the Form Wizard.

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How to Upload Your Documents Using our askDFAS Online Upload Tools

The Back to the Future movie franchise is a slice of Americana. You remember the role of the DeLorean, right?

Let's hop into the "Retired Pay" DeLorean and take you back to times past for getting DFAS your documents for processing. In this era, you only had two options: mail and fax.

It is worth noting that mail and fax is still an option today in 2023. But are you missing out on a better option?

Let's consider the limitations of mail and fax. Perhaps you live overseas. Maybe you're *not* one of the people who have a working fax machine. Maybe the mail isn't moving as quickly as you need it to.

Well let's hop back into our trusty DeLorean and get back to the future. And the future is truly here for a third and better option—electronic submission using our askDFAS Form Upload tools!

If you're not uploading your documents to DFAS via our askDFAS online upload tools, you are missing out on some key benefits: 24/7 availability, confirmation of receipt, quickest method to get documents to DFAS, and—for many transactions—processing updates delivered as email status notifications!

If you would like more details on how to get to askDFAS and use the tools, there is a great companion article in this newsletter entitled "New Retiree and Annuitant DFAS Resources Now Available!" This article will provide more information and even how to access our customer guides to using the tools.

But for the remainder of this article, it's important that you understand how simple it is to upload your documents to DFAS. After you access askDFAS and find the appropriate category and subcategory for your submission, all you need to do is fill out the ticket.

Filling out an askDFAS ticket is as simple as providing your name, email address, and creating a password in case you need to review what you submitted. Once you've filled in the basics, you simply upload the file(s) you need to send to DFAS by clicking "Choose File" and locating your document(s) on your device.

Two more clicks are all it takes—from there you simply click "Upload File(s)" and then "Submit." That's it—no flux capacitor needed!

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It's important to note that any document you upload must be in the form of a PDF, and your name and Social Security Number (or the name and Social Security Number of the member) should be included on your document(s).

You will receive a confirmation email along with your ticket number. The normal processing timeframe of 30 days still applies to askDFAS submissions, but you have confirmation that the files were received by DFAS and the peace-of-mind that comes with knowing that your items arrived as quickly as possible.

We have seen so many customers move away from mail and fax in favor of uploading documents using the askDFAS online upload tools. Will you join them as well?

And one more thing: we here in DFAS Retired Pay are taking many trips to the future in the DeLorean. So please be on the lookout for askDFAS to be even more helpful and full of new capabilities into 2024 and beyond!

The SBP Open Season Ends January 1, 2024

The Deadline for the Survivor Benefit Plan Open Season is January 1, 2024

The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Open Season began on December 23, 2022 and ends at midnight Eastern Standard Time on January 1, 2024.

Open Season Enrollment and Discontinuance Forms must be RECEIVED before midnight Eastern Standard Time on January 1, 2024.

What You Need to Know About Submitting Forms Before the Deadline

We strongly recommend you upload your form via our askDFAS online upload tool to ensure it is received prior to the deadline.

Our final postal mail delivery before the deadline is on Friday, December 29, 2023. **If you are mailing a form, we recommend you use mail service with proof of mail date.** *If we receive a form in the mail after Friday, December 29, 2023, you will need to provide proof that it was postmarked/mailed by the deadline for the request to be valid.*

You can also fax your form prior to the deadline.

There are special forms to enroll or discontinue in accordance with the NDAA 2023 SBP Open Season law and processes.

The forms, deadlines, information, and FAQs are available on our special focus webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>.

Individual Estimate Requests No Longer Accepted

We are UNABLE to provide individual estimates for requests received after November 13, 2023.

Also, estimate letters for requests we received after November 1, 2023 may not reach you via postal mail in time for you to consider the cost and enroll prior to the enrollment deadline on January 1, 2024.

You Can Enroll Without an Estimate

Enrollment is not contingent upon getting an estimate. **YOU CAN ENROLL WITHOUT GETTING AN INDIVIDUAL ESTIMATE.** If you decide to enroll, submit an SBP Open Season Enrollment Form.

If you decide to enroll and submit an enrollment form, after we process your enrollment, we will mail you an enrollment confirmation letter that includes the amount of your Buy-In Premium and your monthly premiums.

Please note: You are allowed **30 days from the date you sign** the enrollment form to cancel your enrollment. Cancellation must be in writing and must be received within those 30 days.

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Examples of SBP Open Season Buy-In Premiums

The SBP Open Season Buy-In Premium examples may assist you in making an enrollment decision without obtaining an individual estimate. See the Example Buy-In Premiums on our webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>.

Brief Overview of the Enrollment Process

The SBP Open Season allows for retirees receiving retired pay, eligible members, or former members awaiting retired pay who **were NOT participating** in SBP or RCSBP (Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan) **as of December 22, 2022** to enroll.

For a member who enrolls during the SBP Open Season, the law generally requires that the member will be responsible to pay retroactive SBP premium costs that would have been paid if the member had enrolled at retirement (or enrolled at another earlier date, depending on the member's family circumstances).

Open Season Enrollment Forms must be RECEIVED before midnight Eastern Standard Time on January 1, 2024. We strongly recommend you upload your form via our askDFAS online upload tool to ensure it is received prior to the deadline.

For a member already receiving retired pay: Upon enrollment you will be legally responsible and obligated to pay a "Buy-In Premium." The Buy-In Premium is comprised of (a) amounts you would have been required to pay you had enrolled in SBP at an earlier opportunity plus (b) additional open season costs. Check out our Example Buy-In Premiums on the webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>.

The CURRENT Two-Step Enrollment Process:

YOU CAN ENROLL WITHOUT GETTING AN INDIVIDUAL ESTIMATE. If you decide to enroll and submit an enrollment form, after we process your enrollment, we will mail you an enrollment confirmation letter that includes the amount of your Buy-In Premium and your monthly premiums. Please note: If you send an enrollment form and then decide to cancel, we must receive your signed and dated written request to cancel your enrollment within 30 days of the date of your signature on the enrollment form. If we don't receive it within those 30 days, you will be legally obligated to pay the Buy-In Premium and monthly premiums.

STEP 1. If you want to officially enroll, submit your completed and signed SBP Open Season 2023 Enrollment Form, including your choice for how you will pay for the one-time buy-in premium. You can use our askDFAS online upload tool to submit your form or send it via postal mail or fax.

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Download the “SBP Open Season 2023 Enrollment Form” from our webpage:
<https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>.

Open Season Enrollment Forms must be RECEIVED before midnight Eastern Standard Time on January 1, 2024. We strongly recommend you upload your form via our askDFAS online upload tool to ensure it is received prior to the deadline.

Our final postal mail delivery before the deadline is Friday, December 29, 2023. If you are mailing a form, we recommend you use mail service with proof of mail date. If we receive a form in the mail after Friday, December 29, 2023, you will need to provide proof that it was postmarked/mailed by the deadline for the request to be valid.

STEP 2. We will mail you a confirmation of your enrollment, including the final costs, and provide instructions on how to submit payment. Your enrollment will be effective the first day of the first calendar month following our receipt of your valid enrollment form.

*You are allowed **30 days from the date you sign** the enrollment form to cancel your enrollment. Cancellation must be in writing and include your signature and date and must be received within those 30 days.*

For more details on the enrollment process, please see our special focus webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>.

Brief Overview of the Discontinuance Process

The SBP Open Season also allows eligible members and former members who were enrolled in SBP or RCSBP (Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan) as of December 22, 2022, to permanently discontinue their SBP coverage.

The law generally requires the covered beneficiaries to concur in writing with the election to discontinue. Previously paid premiums will not be refunded.

To discontinue SBP coverage, complete and submit an “SBP Open Season 2023 Discontinuance Form.” The form is available to download from our special focus webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>.

Open Season Discontinuance Forms must be RECEIVED before midnight Eastern Standard Time on January 1, 2024. We strongly recommend you upload your form via our askDFAS online upload tool to ensure it is received prior to the deadline.

Our final postal mail delivery before the deadline is on Friday, December 29, 2023. If you are mailing a form, we recommend you use mail service with proof of mail date. If we receive a form in the mail after Friday, December 29, 2023, you will need to provide proof that it was postmarked/mailed by the deadline for the request to be valid.

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The discontinuance will be effective the first day of the first calendar month following our receipt of your valid discontinuance form.

Please note: To be valid, the form must be properly signed and dated by all parties, including the current spouse, and any currently covered former spouse, child aged 18-22 or natural interest person (NIP). In addition, the covered party's signature must either be notarized or witnessed by an SBP counselor.

No refunds of SBP premiums for the period of coverage are allowed. In addition, retirees remain responsible for any debt accrued due to unpaid premiums during the time in which the retiree had SBP or RCSBP coverage. Also, there is no provision to cancel or change your discontinuance once we receive a valid discontinuance form.

Before submitting your request for discontinuance, please review the SBP advantages and disadvantages information on the first page of the Discontinuance form. SBP Open Seasons rarely occur. Consider the impact your decision will have on your loved ones moving forward. Because your beneficiaries must also concur with the decision to discontinue, you may want to review this information with them.

For more details on the discontinuance process, please see our special focus webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>.

This Information is for Retirees Receiving Pay

Please note that the information in this article is for retirees receiving pay. Gray Area Retirees, please contact your Branch of Service for details on how to enroll or discontinue RCSBP/SBP coverage during the SBP Open Season.

More Information, Forms, and FAQs

The forms, deadlines, information, and FAQs are available on our special focus webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>.

Important Changes If You Pay SBP/RCSBP Monthly Premiums Direct Through Treasury CRS

Some retirees need to pay monthly Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) or Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP) premiums directly because their VA disability pay offsets their retired pay. We call that direct remittance.

Most of these payments are handled by the U.S. Department of Treasury Centralized Receivables Service (CRS), where retirees can make their payments online, or using their bank's bill payment service or through the mail.

Recently, CRS changed their payment processes and their customer service phone number. These changes were communicated on the monthly statement CRS mails to the retirees.

CRS NEW Customer Service Phone Number: 1-888-618-3104

New CRS Payment Processes

Retirees now need a specific invoice number for each month to pay their SBP premiums online at the CRS Guest Payment website. The invoice number changes each month.

If you are a retiree that pays SBP premiums via CRS and you do not receive mailed invoices, you may need to update your mailing address with DFAS. With the recent changes, CRS no longer sends emails regarding pending bills.

Retirees must contact DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay to update their mailing address to update both the DFAS and CRS records.

Updating contact information in DEERS does not update information in the DFAS or CRS systems.

Update Your Mailing Address

The quickest and easiest way to update your mailing address is to use myPay: <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. If you have trouble logging in to myPay, check the troubleshooting instructions on the [Using myPay webpage](#) or call 888-332-7411.

Retirees can use our [convenient online form](#) to update your mailing address. You must answer identity security questions to have your request processed.

Complete a Retiree Change of Address/State Tax Withholding Request using the DD Form 2866. The form is available on our Forms Library webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/raforms>

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Mail the form to:

Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retired Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis IN 46249-1200

Or Fax to: 800-469-6559

If You Have Questions About Your SBP Coverage

Please contact the DFAS Customer Care Center at 1-800-321-1080.

If You Have Questions About CRS Payments

Please contact CRS at 1-888-618-3104.

2024 Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

Based on the increase in the Consumer Price Index, there is a 3.2 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for most retired pay and Survivor Benefit Plan annuities, effective December 1, 2023.

Retirees will see the change in their December 29, 2023 payment and annuitants in their January 2, 2024 payment.

For details, see the Fiscal Year 2024 COLA Memorandum:
<https://militarypay.defense.gov/Pay/Retirement/cola>

What Retirees Can Expect in the Year-End Mail from DFAS

For retirees who request their tax statements via postal mail from DFAS each January, we will mail your 1099-R, which is the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) form for reporting retired pay distributions; along with a special print edition of the DFAS Retiree Newsletter with important news for the coming year.

We will also include a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) change Retiree Account Statement (RAS), which shows the change in your gross and net payment that occurs when there is a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to your pay.

It's important to note that the Statement Effective Date on the COLA change RAS is the first of December, so the Year-to-Date Summary figures are only for 11 months (they do not include your December payment). Hence, the Year-to-Date Summary figures on this RAS will not match the figures on your 1099-R.

If you opted out of receiving mailed delivery of statements, you will not receive this notice in the mail. Your 1099-R and COLA change RAS are conveniently available to print or download from myPay.

If you're not yet using myPay, it's easy to get started. Check out the **"There's Still Time to Get a Head Start on Tax Season"** article to find out how to start your myPay account.

CRDP/CRSC Open Season - Frequently Asked Questions

It is possible to be eligible for both Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay (CRDP) and Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC). However, you cannot receive both at the same time. If you're eligible for both, CRDP/CRSC Open Season is when DFAS will send you a letter with instructions on how to change your election from one type of payment to the other if you choose.

2024 CRDP/CRSC Open Season is January 1-31, 2024. Election change requests must be postmarked by January 31, 2024.

FAQs

Q: Why did I receive an Open Season letter?

A: Retirees who are eligible for both CRDP and CRSC will receive an annual Open Season letter with the amount of both entitlements. Since retirees cannot receive both entitlements, you can make an election during each Open Season.

Q: Do I need to return my election letter if I want to remain under the same program?

A: No, you are not required to respond if you want to keep your election the same. If an Open Season election form is not returned by the deadline, we will treat this as a passive election and continue to pay you under the same program until the next annual Open Season.

Q: What happens if I forgot to check the box on the form?

A: Returning the form with a signature and an unchecked "change my entitlement" box will result in an unclear election and may delay any changes you do wish to make. Please return the form and check the box only if you wish to CHANGE programs. No action is required if you wish to keep your election the same.

Q: What if I made a mistake and want to switch back to the program I was previously receiving?

A: If you notify us by phone or written correspondence by the deadline of your chosen election, we can make the change for you. Requests to switch programs made or postmarked after the deadline cannot be processed.

Q: What if I am tax exempt?

A: If your Federal Tax status is E (or Exempt), you will receive the same amount of pay under either program because neither entitlement would be taxed.

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Q: What if my address has changed or I will be out of the state/country during Open Season?

A: We suggest verifying the mailing address on your retired pay account is correct in early December of each year. If you know you will have a different, temporary address during the Open Season period, please be sure to update this information as early as possible. The Open Season letter is time sensitive. Address changes can be made in myPay, by phone or by sending your request in writing by mail or fax. If you forgot to change your address in time, please contact us directly at 800-321-1080 so we can update your information and send a new letter. Your election change request must be postmarked by the deadline.

Q: What happens to my Retired Pay if I switch to CRSC?

A: If you elect to receive CRSC, your retired pay will be offset by the full amount of your VA disability pay. You may still receive some retired pay if your retired pay exceeds your VA disability pay. Or you may not receive any retired pay at all if your VA award exceeds your retired pay. Or you may not receive any retired pay at all if your VA award exceeds your retired pay. You will also begin to see an amount under "VA Waiver" on your electronic Retiree Account Statement (eRAS).

Please keep in mind if you switch to CRSC, any allotments, Former Spouse deductions, or garnishments may be suspended if there are not enough funds left to pay out of your retired pay. CRSC payments are subject to deductions for monthly Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) premiums or garnishments. Also, CRSC is non-taxable, so it is issued separately from your retired pay. You may begin to receive two separate payments from DFAS each month, one for retired pay (taxable) and one for CRSC (non-taxable).

Example: \$1000.00 (Gross Retired Pay) Minus VA Pay (\$450.00) = \$550.00 (Net Retired Pay - taxable)

Plus \$250.00 CRSC pay (non-taxable) = Total of \$800.00 from DFAS

Q: What happens to my Retired Pay if I switch to CRDP?

A: If you elect to receive CRDP, your VA Waiver will be reduced by the amount of your CRDP pay. As a result, your taxable/disposable income will increase. Former Spouse deductions or garnishments will also increase if your disposable income increases. SBP monthly premiums (if applicable) will be deducted from your retired pay. In addition, if you want to start or resume any allotments, you will need to make a request through myPay to start these deductions. Since you will no longer receive a separate payment for CRSC, you will only receive one payment for your Retired Pay/CRDP.

Q: Will I lose my VA pay if I switch to either CRDP or CRSC?

A: No, your VA disability pay is separate from CRDP and CRSC. Regardless of your election, you will continue to receive your monthly disability payment from the VA, which is non-taxable.

Q: What if I have a Former Spouse who receives a portion of my retired pay?

A: It is important to understand CRSC is not subject to the provisions of the Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act. This means if you switch to CRSC, your former spouse's payments may decrease, or stop altogether. This is because the amount of your disposable income may change, depending on the amount of your VA Waiver. CRSC payments are subject to garnishments for alimony and child support.

Q: What happens if I switch to CRSC and my allotments stop?

A: Allotments cannot be deducted from your monthly CRSC payment. If there is no retired pay (or not enough retired pay) to deduct allotments from, some allotments, such as those for Delta Dental or TRICARE, will require you to begin making payments out of pocket directly to the agencies to maintain your benefits.

Q: What happens to my Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) if I switch to CRSC?

A: If there is not enough retired pay to cover your monthly recurring SBP premiums, they will automatically be deducted from your CRSC payments. If your beneficiaries are covered by the Survivor Benefit Plan, your spouse/child(ren) are still eligible to receive SBP even if you switch to CRSC.

Q: What happens if my CRDP or CRSC entitlement changes mid-year?

A: All Open Season election forms must be received or postmarked by the deadline. It is important to understand you will not be able to switch programs after this date until the following annual Open Season, even if there is an increase or decrease to one or both of your entitlements. When determining which program is best for you, keep in mind any pending VA claims/awards as well as any pending CRSC reconsideration claims, because these may affect your entitlements. Your entitlements are calculated using the most current information we receive from the VA and your Branch of Service at the time the letters are mailed.

Q: My VA disability award increased, why is my CRSC entitlement still the same?

A: Increases to your CRSC award are not always automatic. If the VA awards new service-connected disabilities, you must submit a reconsideration claim to your respective Branch of Service. They determine which disabilities are combat-related, not DFAS. If they approve any additional combat-related disabilities, then a copy of the new CRSC award letter will be forwarded to our office to update your account and entitlement accordingly.

Visit our webpage for more information on filing a reconsideration request: <https://www.dfas.mil/applyforcrsc>

News from Our Partners: Free MilTax Services Available to Recent Retirees

If you separated from service within the last 12 months, you are eligible to file your taxes for free with MilTax e-filing software and support. The MilTax software is available Jan. 18, 2023 through April, with extensions through mid-October.

Veterans are eligible for free support from Military OneSource, including MilTax, until 365 days past end of tour of service, retirement date or discharge date. This includes service members on the Temporary Disability Retirement List, as well as their immediate family including spouses, children and anyone who has legal responsibility for a service member's children, for the benefit of the children.

New in 2024, eligibility is being verified through the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System. Visit [Military OneSource](#) to learn more about eligibility.

MilTax free tax filing software and support

MilTax from Military OneSource is:

- No cost to eligible users and includes access to tax consultants
- Designed to account for the complexities of military life
- Offers secure industry-leading software, provided by the Defense Department

MilTax eligibility takes you through the entire tax-filing season. Contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647 for more information.

Get started with [MilTax: Free Software & Support](#).

Other options for free or discounted tax services

If you no longer qualify for Military OneSource's MilTax, you may be eligible for [IRS Free File](#) and the [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program](#). Additionally, many tax services provide a discount to veterans.

News from Our Partners: 2023 Air Force Assistance Fund “50 Years of Caring” Campaign “Sprint Finish!”

2023 marked the Department of the Air Force’s 50th annual Air Force Assistance Fund Campaign at Air and Space Force Bases worldwide. Thanks to your generosity, over \$244 Million have been donated by Airmen and Guardians, and other supporters over these past 50 years, providing a safety net for our fellow Airmen—and now Guardians—as well as their families. Your contributions this year helped provide a total of over \$50,500, in assistance as of 1 December 2023...\$5,000 more than retirees were able to contribute for the entirety of 2022! I’d like to encourage you to continue your support of these four extraordinary charities, committed to *taking care of our own*. Let’s finish the 2023 campaign year with a “sprint finish” by making a year-end donation of any amount.

If you missed our update last quarter, here’s a quick summary of the great good our four official charities of the Department of the Air Force has done for the Air Force family over the years...

The Air Force Villages Charitable Foundation provides the full spectrum of care for widows and widowers of retired Air Force Officers living at Blue Skies of Texas in San Antonio, just down the road from Lackland AFB.

Thanks to your generous donations over the years, over 600 surviving spouses have been served.

Over \$26 million has been invested in their care since 1970 and you’ll be glad to know 100% of gifts go directly to the residents’ living expenses and continuing care to allow them the peace of mind to live comfortably in their homes with a secure future. Today, deserving recipients live in all levels of care; independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, and memory care. Your contributions allow them to live in dignity and safety.

The Air Force Aid Society (AFAS) provides support to Airmen, Guardian’s, and their families when they need it most. Thanks to your generous contributions and donations, AFAS provides emergency assistance support, educational scholarships, as well as community support programs such as childcare programs, parenting classes, as well as a spouse employment program. AFAS provided over \$13 million in direct assistance to over 17,000 Airmen, Guardians, and their families in 2022. This year, they celebrated the 20th anniversary of their annual Charity Gala, where they partnered with the Gala Committee from the Air Force Officers' Spouses' Club (AFOSC), Spouses' Clubs and Thrift Shops from across the Air and Space Forces, along with corporate and organizational sponsors. With over 500 attendees at this year's event, more than \$595,000 was raised to help Airmen, Guardians, and their families.

Thus far in 2023, AFAS has provided over \$3,750,000 in emergency assistance support in addition to \$1,600,000 in disaster relief. Additionally, this year, AFAS has provided nearly \$140,000 in assistance for community programs such as “Bundles for Babies”, “Child Care for PCS” and “Give Parents a Break”; and supported dependent spouses and children with educational benefits totaling over \$2,850,000. Again, we couldn’t make this happen with you!

Situated in the picturesque Florida Panhandle, adjacent to Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field, The Air Force Enlisted Village (AFEV) proudly upholds its enduring commitment to offering a home for surviving spouses of retired enlisted Department of the Air Force (DAF) members. This compassionate community caters to the diverse needs of its residents, providing a spectrum of services encompassing independent living, assisted living, and memory care. The village, steeped in tradition, ensures that no eligible surviving spouse is ever turned away, irrespective of financial constraints.

In the past year, the invaluable support from our generous donors has amounted to a remarkable \$534,352, directly benefiting eligible USAF widows residing at both Bob Hope Village and Hawthorn House through the benevolence program. This substantial financial aid has been instrumental in easing the burden of monthly service fees, facilitating transportation to and from medical appointments and grocery shopping, and ensuring the timely pick-up of prescriptions. Such crucial assistance has contributed significantly to the overall well-being of our surviving spouses. The impact of your donations extends beyond monetary aid, making a tangible difference in the lives of all residents.

In addition to the \$534,352 in direct support to residents from the Benevolence Fund, your generosity helps provide:

- 79,843 miles of transportation to and from medical appointments and grocery shopping
- 10,214 prescriptions picked up and delivered
- 75,438 nutritious meals provided to Hawthorn House residents
- 1,300 life-enhancing activity programs
- 3,000+ hours of wellness classes and workshops

These numbers underscore the practical and essential assistance that is made possible through the collective generosity of donors like you. In essence, your philanthropic contributions over the past 50 years have transformed the lives of thousands within our senior DAF family. The Air Force Enlisted Village remains steadfast in its mission to provide a home imbued with security, dignity, independence, and camaraderie to those who have served our country.

As we express our profound gratitude, we acknowledge the profound impact your generosity has had on the well-being of our cherished residents. Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to ensuring that the essential needs of our senior DAF family are met with compassion and dignity.

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The General & Mrs. Curtis E. LeMay Foundation (The LeMay Foundation) is a proud family established non-profit organization. For over 30 years its legacy and commitment of caring for the needs of surviving spouses have significantly impacted many lives for the better. Thank you for your continued contributions, so we can help provide financial support to the surviving spouses of all Air and Space Force retirees which gratefully don't ever need to be repaid. Your support continues to matter to the current spouses receiving LeMay's supplemental income to help with their needs. Last month, your kindness to support has made it possible for a spouse. Here is a note from someone we have assisted:

"The foundation has rescued me from great hardship. I'm so grateful for the emergency aid with my electricity and helping with monthly aid. Thank you, LeMay Foundation." -Ms. Sandra, Greeleyville, SC -widow of retired SSgt Oswald.

Because of your generosity, monthly grants of \$25,775 are given directly to our spouses. This supplemental benefit allows them to live with security and dignity. One-time support is also provided for those unplanned expenses. Since January, \$314,132 was spent to improve their quality of life and have essential needs taken care of. This would not have been possible if it hadn't been for our gracious patrons. General and Mrs. LeMay wanted our AF & SF families taken care of, during service and their retirement years. Our foundation stands strong on "Taking Care of Our Own." Thank you for your continued support to our spouses, without your devoted commitment we could not continue making a difference. Please visit our website to learn more www.lemay-foundation.org.

If you haven't yet had the opportunity to give but want to make a year-end contribution, you can give anytime online now at <https://www.afassistancefund.org>. Just click the red "DONATE NOW!!" button near the top right of the page. You'll be taken to our donation page where, on the right side of the page, you can choose to either use a donation form to authorize payroll deduction donations, or document where you'd like your check or money order donation to go. Then there's our "E-Giving" option, on the left side of the page, where you can help your favorite base and squadron by giving directly to their campaign—just scroll down to the "DONATE TODAY WITH OUR NEW PEER-TO-PEER PLATFORM" box and click the "Donate Today!" button. When you click the "Find a Base" button, you'll be able to click on the base link where each squadron/organization will have their own link. You can also give this way by texting **AFAF** to 50155 using your smart phone.

Join the *AFAF Wingman Squadron* today by signing up for monthly giving and your monthly donation won't automatically stop after just one year—unless you pause or stop it yourself. You're in full control with your giving account! In fact, if you authorize monthly recurring e-giving, it's *highly recommended* that you set up an account.

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You can do that after making your donation online by going to <https://secure.ggiv.com/for/afassistancefund> and clicking the "Sign In" link and then clicking "Create an Account" link at the bottom of the pop-up box. If you need help linking your account to your monthly gift, please contact Department of the Air Force Fundraising at usaf.fundraising@us.af.mil.

Again, if e-Giving isn't your thing, that's okay. You can still give by check, money order, cashier's check, or through the annual payroll deduction plan from your retired pay. The contribution form can be found online at https://www.afassistancefund.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/DAF_2561-20221026.pdf. Please be aware that payroll deduction allotment authorizations mailed to AFPC will not begin coming from retired pay until 1 July 2024.

*****PLEASE DON'T SEND CASH IN THE MAIL*****

Mail Check and Payroll Deduction Plan Donations to:

AIR FORCE ASSISTANCE FUND
AFPC/DP3SA
550 C STREET WEST
JBSA RANDOLPH TX 78150

Thank you once again for your continued support of the annual AFAF Campaign, and our fellow Airmen, Guardians, and their families. ***Retired, but still Active!***

Pay Schedule

To help you plan for 2024, below is a list of the days you should expect to receive your pay. Retired and annuitant pay is due on the first of the month. However, if the first falls on a weekend or holiday, retirees are paid on the last business day of the month and annuitants are paid on the first business day of month. For example, in December 2023, retirees will receive payment on December 29, 2023. However, annuitants are scheduled to receive payment on January 2, 2024. Please see the chart for each month in 2024.

Entitlement Month	Retired Pay Date	Annuitant Pay Date
September 2023	September 29, 2023	October 2, 2023
October 2023	November 1, 2023	November 1, 2023
November 2023	December 1, 2023	December 1, 2023
December 2023	December 29, 2023	January 2, 2024
January 2024	February 1, 2024	February 1, 2024
February 2024	March 1, 2024	March 1, 2024
March 2024	April 1, 2024	April 1, 2024
April 2024	May 1, 2024	May 1, 2024
May 2024	May 31, 2024	June 3, 2024
June 2024	July 1, 2024	July 1, 2024
July 2024	August 1, 2024	August 1, 2024
August 2024	August 30, 2024	September 3, 2024
September 2024	October 1, 2024	October 1, 2024
October 2024	November 1, 2024	November 1, 2024
November 2024	November 29, 2024	December 2, 2024
December 2024	December 31, 2024	January 2, 2025

Contact Us

DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay Website

<https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary>

DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay Mailing Addresses

Retired Pay:

Defense Finance and Accounting
Service
U.S. Military Retired Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis IN 46249-1200

Annuitant Pay:

Defense Finance and Accounting
Service
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis IN 46249-1300

DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay Phone and Fax Numbers

Phone:

Toll-free: 800-321-1080
Local: 317-212-0551
DSN: 699-0551

Retired Pay Fax: 800-469-6559

Annuitant/Survivor Pay Fax: 800-982-8459

myPay

<https://mypay.dfas.mil>

Phone: 888-332-7411