

# **Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board**



## **2017 Thrift Savings Plan Education Efforts**

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# Introduction

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We are pleased to provide this summary of our education efforts in 2017 in response to the following requirement contained in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Elections Act of 2004:

*The Board shall annually report to the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Government Reform in the House of Representatives on its Thrift Savings Plan education efforts on behalf of plan participants. Pub. L. 108 -469, §2, 118 Stat. 3891, 3892.*

In 2017, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB) engaged and educated participants using social media, YouTube videos, one-to-one communications, enhanced annual statements, and training for agency and services TSP representatives and employees.

We are committed to delivering compelling messaging that encourages participants to save for retirement; to educating, communicating, and interacting with participants to help them make smart choices; and to creating innovative products and programs to assist participants in achieving their retirement goals.

# YouTube and Social Media Videos

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In 2017, the TSP launched a video and social media campaign called “TSP@30” that highlighted nine real TSP participants and their stories. We also released seven new or updated videos:

- Two new videos focused on the Blended Retirement System (BRS): one outlined reasons uniformed services members may or may not want to opt into BRS with a focus on the TSP, and the other explained the TSP to new BRS members;
- One updated video geared toward uniformed services members who are not part of BRS but still choose to contribute to the TSP;
- One updated video explained to uniformed services members how Roth TSP works;
- One updated video encouraged separated participants to make an informed decision on whether to stay with the TSP;
- One new video explaining the TSP to new civilian federal employees; and
- One new video telling participants how they can reset their passwords online. This video is the first in our “Now You Know” series, which give one-minute answers to our most frequently asked questions.

In support of the Department of Defense's (DoD) BRS training, we collaborated on a webinar, a live Facebook Q&A session, and a live Twitter chat.

# YouTube and Social Media Videos

The metrics related to the above-mentioned videos, as well as the DoD special events, are summarized below:

- "Opting into the Blended Retirement System (BRS)" – 72,562 YouTube views; 32,544 Facebook views (total from 3 posts)
- "The TSP for BRS Members: What's It All About?" – 3,379 YouTube views
- "The TSP for non-BRS Uniformed Services Members" – 905 YouTube views
- "Is Roth TSP Right for Me? (Uniformed Services)" – 1,406 YouTube views; 10,050 Facebook views
- "Don't Move! Reasons to Stay in the TSP" – 949 YouTube views
- "Welcome to the TSP! Here's What You Need to Know" – 2,224 YouTube views
- "Now You Know: Password Reset" – 632 YouTube views; 16,719 Facebook views
- TSP @30 Participant Stories (totals for the series) – 10,270 YouTube views; 56,673 Facebook views
- Facebook Live Q&A with DoD – 8100 reached, 485 views, 79 shares, and 22 direct engagements
- Live webinar with DoD – 259 participants
- Twitter chat with DoD – 157 participants

\* All YouTube and Facebook views are totals as of February 2, 2018.

# Communications

## Blended Retirement System Communications

In addition to the previously mentioned videos, webinars, and social media events aimed at educating uniformed services members about BRS, the TSP released the fact sheet *Questions and Answers about Opting into the Blended Retirement System (BRS)*. We also replaced the *Managing Your Account* booklet that covered both civilian and uniformed services with two new booklets designed to help members manage their accounts: *Managing Your Account for Members of the Uniformed Services* and *Managing Your Account for Civilian Federal Employees*. We revised many other TSP publications and web pages to reflect policies that changed with BRS, which were released on January 1, 2018.

## Participant Communications

Our educational efforts also include one-on-one contact. We offer participants various ways to submit inquiries to the TSP including written correspondence, secure e-messaging, and telephone calls. We also receive questions via Twitter and Facebook and, whenever possible, we answer them as long as the question doesn't involve a participant's personal information.



## **Email Notices**

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We used mass emails to communicate with participants and beneficiaries. News and announcements about the Plan are disseminated to a GovDelivery subscriber list, which currently has 3,011,086 subscribers. We send out between one and five announcement emails per month.

To explain why we ask for personal contact information and how we use it, we emailed our Privacy Act Notice to all participants with an email address on file. This email was sent to 2,768,156 recipients and had 992,266 unique opens.

## **Annual Statement Enhancements**

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We added beneficiary information to the annual statements. Participants can see designated primary beneficiaries on their annual statement. If none are designated, they will see a message outlining the statutory order of precedence for TSP death benefits.

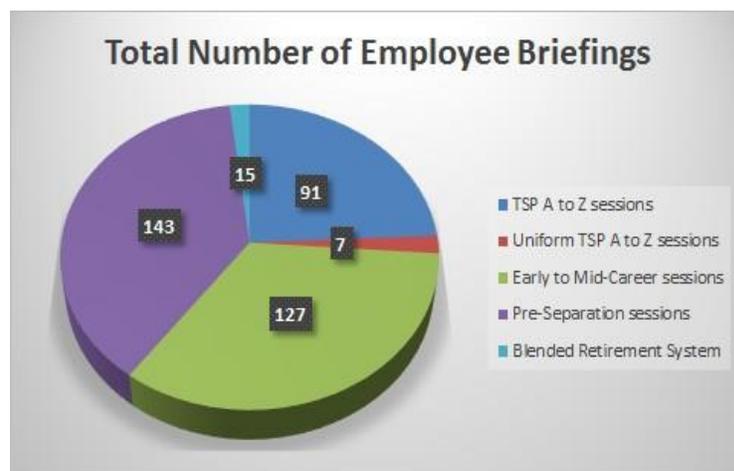
As we typically do every year, we included special leaflets with some of the annual statements for targeted groups. One targeted FERS participants of any age who had never contributed to their TSP accounts; it detailed how matching works and the benefits of not leaving money on the table. Another went to younger uniformed services members and explained the power of compounding over time. A third leaflet informed new employees of the option to transfer other eligible plans into the TSP.

# Agency Representative/Employee Trainings

By law (5 U.S.C. § 8350), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is required to operate a training program for retirement counselors in employing agencies. This requirement ensures that employees are able to obtain current information and personal service in response to their retirement-related questions. Since 1987, we have worked with OPM to sustain a network of TSP agency representatives as part of this program. In 2017, 758 TSP agency representatives attended a total of 30 training sessions led by the TSP training staff. We also hosted four quarterly meetings with 159 agency representatives receiving TSP updates for their HR offices.

We provide free training sessions to federal employees and uniformed services members. A total of 52,826 employees attended TSP training sessions, either in person or by webinar. Of these, 8,187 attended one of the 91 sessions of the "TSP A to Z" or "Uniform Services A to Z" courses; 8,070

attended one of the 127 sessions of the "Early to Mid-Career" course; 9,563 attended one of the 43 sessions of the "Pre-Separation" course; and 800 attended one of the 15 sessions of the "Blended Retirement System" course. There were 8,494 people who logged into our webinar sessions, which were online versions of these courses.



We increased our presence with TSP exhibits at conferences and financial benefits fairs for civilian employees and members of the uniformed services. In 2017, we participated in 57 events, enabling our staff members to reach 13,951 attendees. We also partnered with the Securities Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to conduct joint trainings for Federal Executive Boards (FEB) in Atlanta, GA; Dallas-Fort Worth, TX; Kansas City, MO; Chicago, IL; and St Louis, MO. We conducted a total of 15 sessions reaching 1,770 federal employees. We will continue joint efforts such as this one to reach more employees in the future.