



NRTA in the Know

April 9, 2021



NRTA Announces 2021 We Care Grants Program

You may recall that last year at the onset of the pandemic, [AARP](#) and [NRTA](#) announced the "We Care" grants program to help strengthen Retired Educator Associations' (REA) virtual engagement with members.



The program was a huge success thanks to REA leadership and engagement. A few highlights of We Care grant accomplishments include:

- 27 REAs participated, engaging more than 500,000 educators.
- In some states, REA virtual engagement resulted in membership spikes.
- Many REAs invested in infrastructure to better virtually engage members and educators.
- REA leaders engaged to deliver messages and information on safety and well-being.

We're pleased to announce we have launched an enhanced We Care grant program to provide even more support to REAs in 2021. This year, the program has been expanded and enhanced with additional opportunities to strengthen your member engagement during these difficult times. Moreover, we have streamlined the administrative experience.

Your timely action to apply for this program is important because funding is limited. NRTA will distribute We Care grant funds on a first-come, first-served basis. The maximum grant amount that will be awarded is \$5,000 per REA in one installment at the time of approval.

REA leaders were sent detailed information on April 5, 2021, via email regarding the application and reporting process. Please contact [Mary Beth Dixon](#) if you have questions or comments.

As always, NRTA stands ready to support REAs in 2021, particularly as you navigate engagement in accordance with public health protocols. We hope the We Care grant program further strengthens your infrastructure, virtual engagement, and recruitment of 50+ educators

Top Scams Targeting Older Americans in 2021

Frauds aimed at older adults are becoming more creative. But, there are ways retired educators can recognize and protect themselves from costly cons.



“Scammers stay on top of whatever is new, such as the popularity of Zoom, COVID-19, and online shopping,” says Amy Nofziger, AARP’s director of fraud victim support. Fraudsters then move fast to create ploys that best fit the moment.

Read [here](#) about nine frauds happening widely right now -- including Zoom phishing emails, celebrity imposter scams, and account takeover texts.

Retired educators are invited to listen to The Perfect Scam podcast [here](#) and to sign up for the AARP Fraud Watch alerts [here](#).

Florida Retired Educators Advocate to Keep Teacher Pensions

The [Florida Retired Educators Association](#) (FREA) is actively involved in opposing legislation that would end retirement plan choice and pensions for certain new state employees – except for police and firefighters - beginning in July 2022.



The Senate voted to approve the bill on Thursday. The [Miami Herald](#) reports that the House does not have a similar bill, so it is “unclear whether the change will pass before the scheduled April 30 end of the annual legislative session.”

“It is outrageous that lawmakers are playing favorites,” said [Nancy Hosie](#), a retired St. Lucie County science teacher and president of FREA. “There is zero justification that only certain segments of the Florida public workforce are provided retirement plan choice and pensions. This treatment of teachers is especially outrageous in a year when school personnel have given so much and worked tirelessly during the pandemic.”

Other states that have replaced pensions with 401 (k)-style accounts have seen [taxpayer costs escalate](#) while weakening public employers' ability to [recruit and retain](#) experienced employees and undermining [retirement security](#).

The legislation comes as a [new state-wide poll](#) commissioned by FREA finds that Floridians overwhelmingly support providing pensions benefits for the state's education workforce and believe it is unfair to offer pensions to some Florida public employees, like police officers and firefighters, but not to teachers.

Read about FREA's advocacy and pension poll [here](#). Read [here](#) a *Forbes* column, "Pensions In The Sunshine State: Avoiding Unintended Dark Clouds."

Backlash Halts Pension Changes in Vermont

Chief Investment Officer reports that a plan to change Vermont's public employee retirement plan has been "put on hold after it received a strong backlash from teachers and state employees who said it would force them to work longer, contribute more, and earn less for retirement."



The decision was announced by Vermont House Speaker Jill Krowinski, who called for the creation of a pension task force to look at potential revenue sources and benefit changes. Krowinski recommended "keeping a one-time infusion of \$150 million in reserve while the proposed task force looks for solutions."

Read more [here](#).

Kentucky Moves New Teachers to Hybrid Retirement Plan

The *Courier Journal* reports that Kentucky lawmakers voted to override Governor Andy Beshear's veto of a bill that changes pension benefits for future teachers.

Starting in 2022, new Kentucky teachers will be offered a hybrid" retirement plan that combines elements of a 401(k)-style defined contribution account and a defined benefit pension.

Under the new law, teachers "will be eligible to retire at a later age than current teachers — 57 with 30 years of service — and will likely need to pay more into retirement."



Read more [here](#).

Webinar Replay | Membership Virtual Strategies

Many Retired Educator Association (REA) leaders and members participated in the first of a series of training webinars to address pressing membership challenges.

If you were unable to join the first session on March 31st or would like to share it with others, the presentation slides and replay are available [here](#).



During the session, NRTA highlighted online strategies that generate results, along with a framework to align outreach efforts and keep volunteers engaged.

The webinar series is designed to include topics like reaching and engaging new retirees using virtual strategies; creating an engaging member experiences online; and strategic planning to prioritize activities, time and resources.

Stay tuned for more dates coming soon!

Questions?

As always, the NRTA Team is available to answer your questions or provide counsel on issues. Below is our contact information:

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We thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with you and your members!

