
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
Informational Booklet - FY2025



State Universities Retirement System of Illinois
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SURS DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

The University Retirement System was established on September 1, 1941, for employees of the University of Illinois and other state educational and scientific agencies. In 1963, the System adopted its current name, State Universities Retirement System (SURS). SURS' purpose is to provide retirement allowances and other benefits for staff members and employees of the state universities, community colleges, and certain affiliated organizations, certain state educational and scientific agencies, and the survivors, dependents, and other beneficiaries of such employees.

Funding

SURS is funded through contributions from members, through state of Illinois appropriations, from federal and trust funds administered by universities and community colleges, and through investment income.

Management

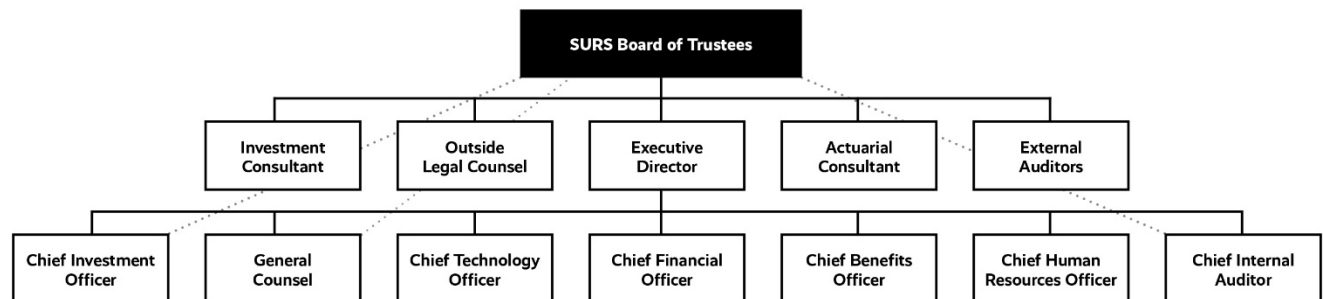
Management of the System is vested in a board of trustees, which is established by statute, 40 ILCS 5/15-159. The SURS Board of Trustees is comprised of 11 members, as follows:

- The chairperson of the Board of Higher Education;
- Four trustees, who may not be members of the System or hold an elective state office, are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate;
- Four active, contributing SURS participants are elected from fellow active, contributing SURS participants, no more than two of which may be from any of the University of Illinois campuses; and,
- Two SURS annuitants who have been annuitants for at least one full year, elected by fellow SURS annuitants, no more than one of which may be from any of the University of Illinois campuses.

In addition to their service on the SURS Board of Trustees, board members also serve on one or more of the following committees: Administration Committee, Audit & Risk Committee, Board Governance Committee, Diversity Committee, Executive Committee, Investment Committee, Legal & Legislative Committee, and the Claims Panel Committee.

The executive director implements the board's policies relating to fund administration and investment management and directs and oversees all aspects of System operations.

Functional Subdivisions



Records Maintained by SURS

SURS records include pension-related information about its members and employers, as well as its investment portfolio. SURS records also include information on its operations, such as administrative expenses and contracts. Many records, including but not limited to, active RFPs, actuarial and financial reports, quarterly performance reports, board minutes and agendas, and brochures and publications on a variety of SURS-related topics are immediately available on SURS' website under the Business, Resources and Publications tabs at www.surs.org.

SURS OFFICE LOCATIONS, STAFFING AND BUDGET

The main office of the System is located at 1901 Fox Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820. SURS also has an Outreach Center which is located at 1120 East Diehl Road, Naperville, IL 60563. All mailed correspondence should be addressed to the main office in Champaign. The System has 176 full-time employees and a total operating budget for the fiscal year 2025 of \$36,554,583. Detailed information regarding the System is contained in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and other publications available on SURS' website, www.surs.org or upon request.

WHAT IS A FOIA REQUEST?

SURS is a public body subject to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/1 *et seq.* A "FOIA request" is simply a written request to inspect or receive copies of public records, submitted to a public body. The Illinois Freedom of Information Act provides that a person can ask a public body to inspect or copy its records on a specific subject and the public body must provide those records, unless there is an exemption in the statute that protects those records from disclosure (for example: records containing proprietary information or trade secrets, personally identifying information (PII), and other confidential/private information).

WHO CAN FILE A FOIA REQUEST?

Any person, group, association, corporation, firm, partnership or organization has the right to make a FOIA request to any state or local public body, including any city, township or county office. FOIA requests can even be submitted anonymously.

NOTE: SURS members/participants do not need to submit a FOIA request to receive their own personal benefit information. SURS members can access their personal benefit information at the SURS' Member Website, <https://webserver.surs.org/CGI-BIN/lansaweb?webapp=WSLOGON+webtrn=wrlogon+ml=LANSA:XHTML+partition=PRD+language=ENG> or contact (800) 275-7877 to speak with a Member Services Representative.

WHERE SHOULD I FILE MY SURS FOIA REQUEST?

All requests for inspection and/or copying should be directed by email to SURS' FOIA Team at FOIA-Officers@SURS.org or delivered personally or mailed to the attention of the FOIA Team at 1901 Fox Drive, Champaign, IL 61820. SURS' First FOIA Officer is Heather V. Kimmons, and SURS' Second FOIA Officer is Bianca T. Green. The FOIA officers and other members of the FOIA team may be reached directly by electronic mail sent to FOIA-Officers@SURS.org.

SURS has developed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request Form found here, <https://surs.org/wp-content/uploads/Freedom-of-Information-Act-Request-Form.pdf> in order to ensure an easy and transparent way for the public to submit their requests. Although

SURS recommends the use of this form, it is not required in order for your FOIA request to be filled.

WHEN CAN I EXPECT A RESPONSE TO MY FOIA REQUEST?

SURS typically responds to FOIA requests within five (5) business days after receipt of the request. SURS may extend that response period for an additional five (5) business days from the date of the original due date if certain circumstances exist.

The person making a request and SURS may agree in writing to extend the time for compliance for a period to be determined by the parties. If the requestor and SURS agree to extend the period for compliance, a failure by SURS to comply with any previous deadlines shall not be treated as a denial of the request for the records.

CAN SURS CHARGE FEES FOR MY FOIA REQUEST?

SURS is authorized by 5 ILCS 140/6 to charge the following fees in responding to a FOIA request:

Photostatic copying of paper documents: First 50 pages – no charge
Black and white - 15¢ per page
Color or irregular size - actual cost of reproduction

Paper copies of microfilmed/microfiche documents: 25¢ per page

Certification of record: Not to exceed \$1.00

Commercial Requests Only: The first eight (8) hours spent by personnel searching for or retrieving a requested record must be provided without charge. After the first eight (8) hours, up to \$10.00 for each hour spent searching for or retrieving a record, or examining the record for necessary redactions, may be charged.

If records are contractually maintained offsite by a third-party storage company, the actual cost of retrieving and transporting may be charged.

In the event any of these commercial request charges are imposed, SURS must provide the requester with an accounting of all fees, costs and personnel hours incurred.

Additional fees are statutorily authorized for requests for electronic records meeting the statutory definition of “voluminous.” SURS will provide additional information on these fees if applicable.

CAN SURS DENY MY FOIA REQUEST?

SURS may deny a request for public records in whole or in part, as permitted by law. If SURS denies all or any part of a FOIA request, it will notify the requester in writing of the decision to deny the request, the reason(s) for denial, including a detailed factual basis for the application of any exemption claimed, and the names and titles or positions of each person responsible for the denial.

CAN I APPEAL SURS' RESPONSE TO MY FOIA REQUEST?

A requestor has the right to have a denial of their request reviewed by the Public Access Counselor (PAC) at the Office of the Illinois Attorney General. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). Commercial requesters have a limited right to have a denial reviewed by the PAC; this right is limited to the purpose of reviewing whether SURS has properly determined the request to have been made for a commercial purpose. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(b). The Requestor can file his/her Request for Review with the PAC by writing to:

Public Access Counselor
Office of the Attorney General
500 South Second Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701
E-mail: publicaccess@ilag.gov
Phone: (877) 299-3624

A Request for Review must be submitted within 60 calendar days of the date of the SURS' denial letter. 5 ILCS 140/9.5(a). The requestor must include a copy of their original FOIA request and the denial letter when filing a Request for Review with the PAC.

A requestor has the right to file suit for injunctive or declaratory relief following the denial of a FOIA request by filing a lawsuit in circuit court in the state of Illinois, either in Champaign County (where SURS resides) or in the county where the requester resides. 5 ILCS 140/11.