

PRC is awarded Retirement Research Foundation grant for its Pension Promises Initiative

The Pension Rights Center is pleased to report that we have been awarded a grant from The Retirement Research Foundation (RRF) to continue our Pension Promises Initiative. The grant will help make it possible for us to undertake an education campaign on the multiemployer crisis and to provide technical assistance to retirees and policymakers committed to crafting a fair multiemployer solution. We are seeking additional support to build on RRF's grant and to continue our work on this important project.



Congress creates committee on multiemployer plans

In February, Congress established the Joint Select Committee on Solvency of Multiemployer Pension Plans as part of a deal struck in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018. This new Committee is tasked with developing bipartisan recommendations and legislative language that will help solve the multiemployer crisis by November 30, 2018.

Now, PRC and the thousands of retirees whose activism pushed Congress to act to solve the multiemployer crisis are urging the members of the Joint Select Committee to develop a strong, comprehensive solution that fixes severely underfunded multiemployer pension plans, protects the full benefits of retirees and workers, and shores up the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. The Joint Select Committee has already held two hearings and is expected to hold three more in June and July.

More: Pension Rights Center blog post: [Joint Select Committee starts process to save multiemployer system](#) | Pension Rights Center blog post: [Joint Select Committee focuses on multiemployer basics, asks for public comments](#) | Pension Rights Center fact sheet: [Resources for multiemployer reform](#) | Joint Select Committee [website](#)

Annual pension counseling conference hears from experts



Every spring we hold our National Training Conference for the U.S. Administration on Aging Pension Counseling and Information Program. There are six regional pension counseling projects across the country that provide hands-on free legal help to people in 30 states who have retirement plan problems or questions. This 25-year-old program has been hugely successful, recovering more than more than \$228 million for more than 55,000 individuals. The PRC provides legal advice and training to the counseling projects. Every year, attorneys from the projects come to Washington D.C. to discuss pension and retirement savings plan issues, hear legislative and case law updates, and learn from experts, each other, and Pension Rights Center staff, fellows and consultants. This year we had sessions that focused on the projects' successes and challenges, how project clients in abusive relationships navigate dividing benefits at divorce, and new developments in addressing over payments to individuals in private pension plans.

If you need help with a pension or 401(k) problem, [check to see if you have a project in your state.](#)

More: Pension Rights Center blog post: [Pension counselors come to Washington, D.C. for National Training Conference](#) | Pension Counseling Project [success stories](#)

Legal program protects retirees in overpayment cases

Recently the Center's legal program won significant victories in two "recoupment" cases. Recoupment means that a pension plan, after making a mistake that results in overpaying an individual, tries to recover the payments – even years later. This can be devastating to the retirees. You can learn more about recoupment [here](#).

In one of our success stories, the Center's Legal Program Director Emily Spreiser assisted a retired firefighter in his sixties, whose plan sought to recoup overpayments by cutting his benefits by \$350 a month. Emily reached out to the plan and, demonstrating that the retiree would face significant hardship, negotiated the reduction down to less than \$100 each month, which the client thinks is a fair deal for him – and the plan.

In a second case, Karen Racowsky, PRC's Staff Attorney, went to bat for a construction worker whose pension plan had been reducing his benefit for more than a decade. During that time, the

plan recovered well over what it claims it overpaid the worker, but the plan insisted that it had the legal right to continue recouping for the rest of his life. Using arguments about the unfairness of this recoupment action and new, retiree-friendly changes to government rules, Karen convinced the plan to stop recouping from the retiree and to bring his monthly payments back up to the unreduced level. Now, he is receiving nearly \$200 more per month in needed income.

Other recent happenings



- Karen Friedman spoke about the Joint Select Committee and the need for Congress to develop a multiemployer solution in [a speech](#) she gave to approximately 600 members of the United Steelworkers.
 - The Center’s Policy Analyst, Jane Smith, published a [blog post](#) on legislation to help retirees locate their “lost” pension plans and a [fact sheet](#) on the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation’s new Missing Participants Program.
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- [Lay employees lament Diocese of La Crosse's decision to end their pension plan](#)

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