

# Hot Flashes

Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

May 2023

## Chairman's Message

March was warmer than usual this year, so of course, April is cooler to balance things out! Never mind, summer will be here soon. So don't forget to share your vacation experiences with fellow retirees in a future issue of Hot Flashes!



Our annual meeting was held on May 3 via Zoom. Unfortunately, distribution of this month's issue of Hot Flashes was delayed a few days so we wouldn't spoil Jeff Weiler's "Big Reveal" – the size of our cost-of-living increase this year. See the article below for details!

Hot Flashes Editor Chuck Higdon is always looking for material to share. Email your contribution to Chuck at [FCREA99@gmail.com](mailto:FCREA99@gmail.com), or mail it to Bobbie Deegan at 4316 Knott Street, Beltsville, MD 20705, and she will make sure that Chuck gets it.

I hope to see you soon!

Sincerely,

Pam Martin, Chairman  
Fairfax County Retired Employees Association

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***Department of Human Resources***

As a Fairfax County Government retiree and subscriber to a county-sponsored health plan, if you have questions about your plan or concerns about a bill or claim, your first step should always be to contact the vendor partner's customer service line. When contacting a vendor partner's customer service team, many issues, including denials related to timely filing, incomplete claim submissions, and contract and fee schedule disputes, may be quickly resolved through a real-time adjustment by providing requested or additional information. Contact information for each vendor partner can be found on the Retiree Benefits Page on the county's public website: [Retirement Benefit Page](#)

Find yourself facing an escalated concern, or need help beyond the available customer service channels. The Benefits Division in the Department of Human Resources may be able to help.

Our team administers the health and other benefits for employees and retirees of the Fairfax County Government and oversees benefit program administration. If a vendor partner's customer service team or care advocate is unable to help you resolve your concern, contact the Benefits Division in the Department of Human Resources through HR Central at [HRCentral@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:HRCentral@fairfaxcounty.gov) or [\(703\) 324-3311](tel:7033243311).

The Benefits team is the point of contact for 23,000 plan members, and when calling for help with a question or escalated concern, it is essential to leave a voicemail message or follow up with an email if possible. Your message should include your name, contact phone number, and a brief description of what you are calling about. (And continuing to call multiple times in a short period will not get your call answered any faster).

Our team is here to help, and we make every effort to return voicemails and emails within 24 hours (48 hours during Open Enrollment), but if no message is left, we cannot assist you.

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***Volunteer***

**Volunteer Solutions** offers meaningful volunteer opportunities to improve the quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers. It's a partnership between Fairfax County's Department of Family Services and Neighborhood & Community Services. Volunteers assist in one-on-one or group settings. Drivers, social visitors, grocery shoppers, and household organizers are needed. Do you have a skill to share? Fairfax County Senior Centers are looking for leaders, entertainers, and instructors in fitness, dance, the arts, music, languages, and more. Visit [bit.ly/FXVSVOL](https://bit.ly/FXVSVOL), email [VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov) or call [703-324-5406](tel:703-324-5406).

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## Change in Tax Withholding

Many of you have completed filing your 2022 Federal and Virginia income tax returns. However, remember that in January 2023, the income tax withholding tables for both Federal and Virginia changed. These changes do not affect everyone, but they could adjust the amount we withhold from your monthly benefit payment. This, in turn, could impact the amount of your tax refund or payment due for tax year 2023. Please use the following forms to make changes to your tax withholding:



Federal tax withholding form [2023 Form W-4P \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/retirement/forms/2023-Form-W-4P)  
Virginia tax withholding form [VA-4P 11 27 07.indd \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/retirement/forms/VA-4P-11-27-07.indd)

If you have questions about completing the forms, please contact a tax advisor. The completed forms can be returned to our office by mail or fax to [703-653-9543](tel:703-653-9543).

## Cost of Living Adjustment

The annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) has been announced for 2023: It is **3.7%** and will be effective with your July 2023 benefit payment. The COLA is applied only to the monthly base benefit and any accumulated COLAs from prior years. If you have been retired for less than a year, your COLA will be prorated.

**EXAMPLE**, retired more than one year:

7/1/2023 COLA = 3.7%

Partial view of pay advice:

Income	Current	YTD Income
Base Amount	2,014.43	10,072.15
Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)	138.62	693.10
Pre-Social Security Benefit	1,007.21	5,036.05

	Current	COLA	additional amount
Base Benefit	\$2,014.43	x 3.7%	= \$74.53
Accumulated COLAs	138.62	x 3.7%	= <u>5.13</u>

Total adjustment amount due to 3.7% COLA \$79.66

Both of the calculated COLAs (\$74.53 & \$5.13) will be added to the Current COLA balance. The COLA total beginning with the July benefit payment will be increased from \$138.62 to \$218.28.

For more information on the 2023 COLA, click [here](#).



### *What's happening at NextMark?*

Many of us think of Spring as a perfect time to become organized. We begin cleaning out garages, planting gardens, or power washing decks. We declutter basements, organize closets, and even go through paper documents that have accumulated in bins over the winter months.

## **Community Shred Day.**

This is a perfect time to consider shredding your personal documents securely at **NextMark's Community Shred Event on May 20**. Join us from **8am-11am at our Fairfax Branch** (4201 Members Way, Fairfax, VA) to shred your personal documents securely. Get the details [here](#). Bring a friend, family member, or neighbor. The event is open to the community.

## **NextMark Fairfax Branch Remodel.**

We are excited to announce that our Fairfax Branch (4201 Members Way) is undergoing a redesign. This remodel will help elevate the branch experience, and allow our members to perform transactions with more ease and convenience. Although we understand that this may cause some inconvenience, we believe the changes will positively impact your future visits to our branch, making them more efficient and enjoyable.

The renovation is expected to be completed by mid-summer. Of course, as with any construction project, things may change, so we will send periodic updates on the process and any impact the project has on our operating hours.

## **What to expect?**

Our goal is to minimize disruption while maximizing productivity. The lobby and drive-thru may be temporarily inaccessible at times. However, we will do our best to process your transactions and assist you with consultative needs. Feel free to visit our other nearby locations found [here](#).

## **Enroll in Online and Mobile Banking.**

Due to limited branch access, you may experience longer wait times. If you have not done so already, we highly recommend you enroll in online and mobile banking, where you can deposit checks remotely, transfer funds between accounts and to others, pay bills, make loan payments, view transaction history, and more. Learn more about Online and Mobile banking and enroll [here](#).

## Mail Box Fishing is on the rise.

Mail theft is a growing problem in the U.S., and most recently, it has become a strategic tactic for organized criminal groups that are incredibly tech-savvy. These thieves steal mail from mailboxes, including envelopes with checks, clean them with household cleaners removing any ink, and make out checks to new recipients (most likely themselves) in any dollar amount by forging the signature on the check. Keep your mail safe and secure by doing the following:

1. Deposit mail in collection boxes as close to the indicated pick-up time as possible,
2. Do not put up the pick-up flag if you leave outgoing mail in your mailbox.
3. Use the mail hold service when on travel, or have a trusted friend or neighbor retrieve your mail daily.

If you have any suspicions, report them to the USPS immediately at [usps.gov/report](https://usps.gov/report) or by calling [877-876-2455](tel:877-876-2455).

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[Click here for Branch Locations and ATMs](#)

Check out our [quarterly newsletter](#) for current promotions and other news.

**FCREA**

## **Membership**

### **New Members**

- David Gantt, Retired from Vehicle Services on March 7, 2017
- Nicole Laprise-Barlow, Retired from Tax Administration/Real Estate Division on March 10, 2023
- Walt Leppin, Retired from FCPS/Food and Nutrition Services on November 30, 2017
- Jacqueline T. Woodruff, Retiring from Family Services on May 23, 2023



[Membership Fact Sheet](#)

[Membership Application](#)

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## **Events 2023**

September DTBD, FCREA Picnic, 11:30, Nottoway Park

December 20 - FCREA Holiday Luncheon, 11:30, International Country Club.

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### **Members' Information.**

For a list of FCREA Board Members: [Board](#)

FCREA retirees are asked to forward any news concerning retirees or their family members who are ill or have passed away to Joyce Gerhart: [703-560-4785](tel:703-560-4785) or [ggerhart2@verizon.net](mailto:ggerhart2@verizon.net)

Please send address changes to Bobbie Deegan: [301-937-7070](tel:301-937-7070) or [BobbieDeegan@aol.com](mailto:BobbieDeegan@aol.com)

[FCREA Website](#)

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[Fairfax County Retirement Systems](#)

[Fairfax County Retirement Web Member Services](#)

[Fairfax County Retirees Benefits](#)

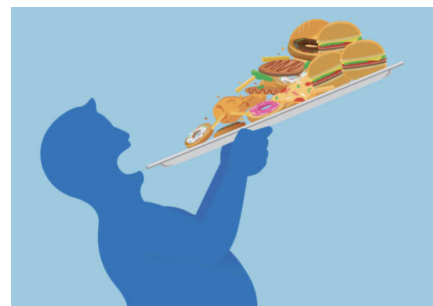
Fairfax County HR [Who to Call Contacts](#)

LiveWell [2023 Benefits Academy Catalogue](#)

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### **Finally... A lose, lose proposition**

Each year the U.S. population spends more money on diets than the amount needed to feed all the hungry people in the rest of the world. Obesity is a double victory for consumerism. Instead of eating less, people eat too much and then buy diet products – contributing to economic growth twice over.



-*Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari

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