

FOLLOW-UP TO IPERS SURVEY: PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Satisfaction with Benefits and Services

Web site use

Finding

Over 82 percent of active members and over 77 percent of retired members have never looked at the IPERS Web site. Of those who have looked at IPERS' Web site, almost all could find the information they needed.

Action Plan

- Evaluate and redesign the current IPERS Web site to ensure it is easy for visitors to navigate and find relevant information.
- Implement a static Web server that allows listserv and other enhanced services, such as surveys.
- Promote the Web site as a source of current information.

Written information

Finding

Roughly 97 percent of active members and 89 percent of retirees were satisfied with product and service updates, and 96 percent of employers were satisfied with the written information IPERS provides. However, some reported IPERS' major means of communication, such as training material, handbooks, and newsletters, could be more effective.

Action Plan

- Redesign the newsletters to eliminate the tabloid design that some report is difficult to handle.
- Include more benefit, policy, and investment information in all newsletters.
- Include more special interest information in coordination with other agencies.
- Continue to publish and widely distribute an annual financial summary that includes information about governance, administration, membership, revenues and expenditures, long-term funding status, investments, and services.
- Use technology to eliminate mailing multiple copies of publications to a household on request.

Small employers

Finding

Some small employers in rural areas of the state feel IPERS should better attend to their needs.

Action Plan

- Add educational sessions for members in rural areas of the state.
- Explore alternatives to face-to-face meetings with employers, such as electronic meetings or the ICN.
- Collaborate with city and county associations and employer associations to reach rural areas.

Electronic communication

Finding

The most frequent suggestion for keeping administrative costs down was to communicate electronically.

Action Plan

- Implement listserv and other enhanced services that automatically will deliver notices, announce posting of new information on the Web site, and provide for electronic delivery of publications.
- Allow members the option of receiving electronic communications instead of mailing printed materials to every member.
- Eliminate SSNs as identifiers to heighten members' confidence in the security of electronic communication.

Awareness

Awareness vs. satisfaction

Finding

Awareness levels among all groups were lower than levels of satisfaction.

Action Plan

- Publish and distribute information to members at all points in their career cycle: new members, when vested, nearing retirement, and retiring.
- Find ways to make information more relevant, such as by providing examples, personal stories, helpful hints for all life stages, and other information identified as useful by targeted audiences.
- Conduct outreach through established channels and associations.

Awareness and age or length of service

Finding

In general, awareness increased with age or length of service. A significant number of members, employers, and elected officials have few years of service.

Of elected officials, 60 percent had been in their position for less than 10 years, with half of those in the position less than 5 years.

Half of the employers have been in their decision-making positions less than 10 years, and 60 percent of those, or 30 percent overall, have been in the position less than 5 years. Forty (40) percent had been in government less than 10 years, with half of them in government less than 5 years.

IPERS adds about 17,000 new and returning members each year.

Action Plan

- Develop basic introductory material for all target audiences.
- Develop an automated distribution plan to reach membership segments, such as members who are newly vested.
- Provide ongoing orientation and education for those new to IPERS through direct mailing, electronic publications, providing benefits materials to employers to distribute, and outreach through associations and human resource offices.
- Tailor information to the audience to increase the relevancy of presentations, Web, and written material.

Death, disability benefits; purchasing service credits

Finding

A large percentage of all groups reported they were not aware of IPERS death and disability benefits or purchasing service credits.

Action Plan

- Publish information on plan features electronically and in print.
- Ensure information on all plan features is distributed at training and other events.
- Continue to distribute information on service purchases with estimates.
- Promote use of the Web site as an information source.
- Provide printed and electronic benefits materials to employers to distribute.
- Provide for electronic mass distribution of information by email.
- Include benefit education in training for employers.
- Develop an outreach plan to reach employer human resource personnel.

Awareness of how IPERS works

Finding

Many said they were not aware of who makes decisions about IPERS and how the trust fund works.

	Who makes decisions	How the trust fund works
	<i>Percent aware or very aware</i>	
Active members	27%	30%
Retired members	57%	56%
Employers	20%	69%
Elected officials	26%	33%

Action Plan

- Include in member newsletters information on how long-term funding for a retirement system works.
- Add a section to the IPERS Web site explaining how IPERS and IPERS funding works.
- Promote use of the Web site as an information source.
- Publish information in benefit educational materials about the plan and IPERS' decision makers.
- Feature IPERS boards in information that is disseminated.
- Target general information to policymakers.
- Conduct outreach to associations and agencies through a speakers bureau.

Contribution rate

Finding

Less than half of active members who are contributing to IPERS reported they were aware why IPERS had asked the Iowa Legislature to increase the contribution rate.

	<i>Percent aware or very aware</i>
Active members	44%
Retired members	60%
Employers	89%
Elected officials	66%

At the same time, 68 percent of active members said they agreed or strongly agreed that they were willing to contribute more to maintain the guaranteed monthly retirement benefits provided by IPERS.

Action Plan

- Publish information about the Plan in benefit educational materials.
- Include in member newsletters information on how long-term funding for a retirement system works.
- Add a section to the IPERS Web site explaining how IPERS and IPERS funding works.
- Promote use of the Web site as an information source.