

Comments made by retirees at the February 2015 luncheon to the following statement:

Please identify a tip you would give to someone contemplating retirement—perhaps something you wish you had known or a surprise you had.

1. A. Take advantage of all three modes of retirement advice [from STRS]:
 - phone appointment (great book sent to you)
 - personal interview
 - group information planYou will get different information from each.
- B. Get your employment record from state 1 yr ahead; check for errors and fix them.
- C. Be aware of month retiring which may affect your money allocations.
- D. Be on flex plan the day you retire: I wasn't and lost it.
2. Do it as soon as you can. Life goes by fast—you want many years of retirement—it's great.
3. Sign up for Long Term Care while you are young. Treasure your time here—DVC was such a wonderful place to work.
4. Do not retire midyear. You lose your 1st cost of living increase for entire year and it complicates the calculation of your final retirement benefit from STRS. Keep working part time. It keeps you connected with DVC & contact with young people is great. And it keeps your mind active.
5. We made many sacrifices before retirement:
 - started a tax shelter annuity—put as much as you can so you can draw on the interest
 - pay off mortgage and any other major debt
 - make lists of goals you would like to achieve. Do a regular assessment to stay on track.
 - have fun; you earned it.
6. The transition to retirement pay was a little rough. Plan ahead.
7. Be persistent. You may need to keep track of your actual amount. Keep records, keep calling; don't expect to get answers the first time. But if you're well prepared, you will get the correct amount.
8. Find a really good financial advisor who can make your money grow.
9. You thought you were busy before? Retirement is a busy time.

--work for an exit interview: the college didn't seem interested in finding out how we felt about our time—5 years? 40?

10. Switching from Cobra to individual or none vision plan was confusing. 18 months after retiring, I was expected to have signed up at retirement for coverage not starting until Cobra expires. I didn't realize that.
--A pre-retirement checklist would have been helpful (a master list, including both STRS and district and benefits information).
11. When I retired, I put "after tax" money into the retirement system to buy "air time"; when those "after tax" dollars come out to me in my monthly retirement check, there was "no tax" taken on those dollars. Also, as a retiree, I get free "24 Hour Fitness" because I have Anthem Blue Cross in my supplemental health insurance. The program is called "Silver Sneakers." Other fitness centers also participate in this program. Kaiser does not have this.
12. STRS system works very well. Kaiser Senior Advantage works very well. CCCCD Medicare Part B reimbursement works well.
13. We have a great retiree group—do join; it's a great way to stay connected with the College and colleagues, etc. (Note: upon retirement you lose your DVC email: why not connect by providing our group with your email.
14. Would have liked to know more about eligibility to continue our VSP benefit.
15. Plan carefully and completely. Check STRS benefit pre retirement; check health plan benefit; check Medicare benefit.
16. A surprise: the check of reimbursement if Medicare withdrawal.

Comments: What's Next--Planning for your time as a retired person

1. "Once you formally request retirement, it's very hard to continue on the job. Time slows down and your last month will seem like a long wait. Once you retire, try to relax!"
2.
 - a. "Start planning 2 years in advance on how you want to spend your time in retirement.
 - b. Mind, body, spirit/nature should be in balance.
 - c. Think about what your interests are: what would you like to do if you had time?"
3. "Realize that when you retire that not only your life changes but so too do the lives in your immediate family. So, plan your retirement **with** them."
4. "My biggest tip for every year is to travel—as many places as possible—while you have your health and can enjoy it. It usually starts to slow one down later on!! I would like to revisit every place we went!"

5. Take your time in getting used to being retired. Don't feel guilty about reading a book during the day or about not 'getting lots of stuff done.' Find ways to stay healthy—walking, meditation, eating well, etc.”
6. “I was surprised at how empty my day was when I didn't have to get up at 5 a.m. to go to work. So, figuring out what and how to fill that time was more than just 'sleeping late.”
7. “Five to ten years before retirement, identify two things that you would be passionate about—and start classes, hobbies ahead of time.”

Retired Public Employee Association: R.P.E.A. “helps guard our retirement funds in Sacramento. Please put this in email for retirees to join PERS.”