



Pension Newsletter

Issue 23, September 2013

Changes to Ontario Pension Law

In 2012, two significant changes to Ontario pension legislation were passed. The first change relates to vesting. Pension plan members must begin to be vested (own their pension) immediately after joining the plan. This was already part of the United Church's pension plan, partly because this is a requirement in other provinces but, more importantly, because it is part of the Statement of Beliefs and Guiding Principles of the plan. "Accrued benefits belong to members from the date of enrolment in the plan," says this statement. (Read it in full at www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pension/principles.)

The second change relates to a provision known as "grow-in," which means that additional benefits for Ontario plan members could have applied in the event of a termination of employment without cause. The Pension Board elected to opt out of this new provision, which it is permitted to do because of the structure of the pension plan. Had it not done so, additional benefits would have been conferred on a few members in Ontario that would not have been available to members in other provinces.

For an explanation of grow-in, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, the regulator, has a page of questions and answers devoted to this topic available at www.fsco.gov.on.ca/en/pensions/legislative/Pages/IndividualgrowinFAQ.aspx.

What Does "Spouse" Mean?

In the past 20 years in Canada, the term "spouse" has expanded significantly. It can mean people who are married in services where there is legal oversight by the province where the marriage takes place or in less official ceremonies with no legal recognition; or a partnership that has lasted long enough to be legally recognized. It's important to note that the definition of spouse, especially a common-law spouse, is not exactly the same in each province.

When a life event such as divorce or death happens, the province of employment at that time determines the status of your spouse with regard to your pension. A professional, such as a lawyer or a funeral director, may be able to answer questions about this, but it is always prudent to be aware of how a move between provinces may affect the status of your family relationships. For example, separated spouses may be surprised to discover that

their former partners could still have spousal priority to death benefits from the pension plan, depending on where they live.

If you are concerned, contact a legal professional to answer questions. To ensure your spousal information is correct, contact the Benefits Centre directly at 1-866-859-5025, or view your profile online at <http://ybrcanada.hewitt.com/ucc>. (Have your PIN handy.)

A summary of definitions of spouses across Canada is available on the United Church website, www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pension/information, and a condensed version is included in the Pension Statement 2012.

Join the Board

The Pension Board is looking for members-at-large—members of the plan who are not expert in pensions, but are interested in serving the board by bringing their perspective as members to the table. For details about what this role involves, e-mail nominate@united-church.ca.

Retirement Estimator Tool

Are you curious about how your pension benefit will be affected if you choose to work after age 65? Or perhaps you are wondering about retiring early. The Retirement Estimator tool on the United Church Benefits Centre YBR (Your Benefits Resource) can tell you!

Go to the Benefits Centre website at <http://ybrcanada.hewitt.com/ucc>. (You will need your PIN.) Look for “Pension” information, and follow the links to the Retirement Estimator. You can also download a PDF file explaining how to use the tool from the United Church website at www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pension/information.

Updated Webpage

The United Church website has updated the Pension webpage to make the information provided to members easier to find. All important information about the pension plan is posted in this area of the website. Check out the page and see what’s available: www.united-church.ca/minstaff/pension.

Address Updates?

Active Members: Contact your treasurer or payroll administrator, who will do one of the following:

- Complete the New/Change Employee sheet and fax it to the pastoral charge payroll service provider (ADP).

- Contact the Benefits Centre directly to update the address (if not using the payroll service).

Pensioner Members: Contact the Benefits Centre directly at 1-866-859-5025.

E-mail Notification

To receive e-mail notification about *Foresight* (three annual e-mails, plus one for the annual report), please ensure your current e-mail address is correctly noted in your Benefits Centre profile.

Pensioner Members: Call the Benefits Centre at 1-866-859-5025.

Active Members: Call the Benefits Centre at 1-866-859-5025 or go online at <http://ybrcanada.hewitt.com/ucc> and update the field directly.