



July 15, 2020

Ms. Erin Leonard, Executive Director  
Minnesota State Retirement System  
60 Empire Drive, Suite 300  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55103

**Re: Proposed Assumption Changes – MSRS JRF**

Dear Erin:

Enclosed is a supplemental actuarial valuation showing the estimated impact of changing the actuarial assumptions of the Judges Retirement Fund of the Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS JRF). Unless noted otherwise and to the best of our knowledge and belief, the calculations were completed in accordance with the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, Section 356.215, and the requirements of the Standards for Actuarial Work established by the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR).

Future actuarial measurements may differ significantly from the current measurements presented in this report due to such factors as the following: plan experience differing from that anticipated by the economic or demographic assumptions; changes in economic or demographic assumptions; increases or decreases expected as part of the natural operation of the methodology used for these measurements (such as the end of an amortization period or additional cost or contribution requirements based on the plan's funded status); and changes in plan provisions or applicable law. Due to the limited scope of the actuary's assignment, the actuary did not perform an analysis of the potential range of such future measurements.

The purpose of this report is to estimate the impact of new actuarial assumptions. It should not be relied on for any other purpose, is intended for use by the MSRS Board and staff, and may be provided to other parties only in its entirety and only with permission of the Board. GRS is not responsible for the unauthorized use of this report. Determinations of the financial results associated with the benefits described in this report in a manner other than the intended purpose may produce significantly different results.

The valuation was based upon information furnished by MSRS, concerning Retirement System benefits, financial transactions, plan provisions and active members, terminated members, retirees and beneficiaries. The signing actuaries are independent of the plan sponsor.

Please call if you have any questions regarding the calculations enclosed.

Sincerely,

Bonita J. Wurst, ASA, EA, FCA, MAAA

Brian B. Murphy, FSA, EA, FCA, MAAA, PhD

BJW/BBM:sc  
Enclosures

# Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund

## Executive Summary

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**Requested By:** Ms. Erin Leonard, Executive Director  
Minnesota State Retirement System

**Date:** July 15, 2020

**Submitted By:** Bonita J. Wurst, ASA, EA, FCA, MAAA and Brian B. Murphy, FSA, EA, FCA, MAAA, PhD  
Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company

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This report contains an actuarial valuation of proposed changes in actuarial assumptions for the Judges Retirement Fund. Please see our report, *Judges Retirement Fund 4-Year Experience Study*, dated June 30, 2020, for a full description of the proposed changes.

Bonita J. Wurst and Brian B. Murphy are Members of the American Academy of Actuaries (MAAA) and meet the Qualification Standards of the American Academy of Actuaries to render the actuarial opinions contained herein.

**The date of the valuation was June 30, 2019.** This means that the results of the supplemental valuations indicate what the June 30, 2019 valuation would have shown if the proposed assumptions had been in effect on that date. Supplemental valuations do **not** predict the result of future actuarial valuations. Rather, supplemental valuations give an indication of the probable long-term cost of the **assumption change only** without comment on the complete end result of the future valuations.

Unless noted otherwise, data, plan provisions and actuarial methods were consistent with those used in the regular actuarial valuation of the MSRS JRF on the valuation date as prescribed by Minnesota Statutes Section 356.215, the requirements of the Standards for Actuarial Work established by the Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement (LCPR) and the Board of Directors for the June 30, 2019 MSRS JRF Valuation.

This report does not reflect the recent and still developing impact of COVID-19, which is likely to influence demographic experience and economic expectations, at least in the short term. We will continue to monitor these developments and their impact on retirement plans.

Results in this report are shown on an Actuarial Value of Assets (AVA) basis.

## Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund Calculations as of June 30, 2019

A brief summary of the data, as of June 30, 2019, used in this valuation is presented below:

<b>Active Members</b>			
<b>Number</b>	<b>Projected Annual Earnings</b>	<b>Average in Years</b>	
		<b>Age</b>	<b>Service</b>
315	\$161,130,000	55.8	8.8

<b>Retired Members</b>		<b>Deferred Vested Members</b>		<b>Non-Vested Members</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<b>Average Annual Benefits</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Average Annual Benefits</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Average Member Contributions</b>
383	\$66,898	19	\$46,683	1	\$30,120

# Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund

## Step 1 – Change Mortality Assumptions

### Calculations as of June 30, 2019

Recently, the Society of Actuaries published a mortality study that was specific to public sector retirement systems. This is a very comprehensive study and there are numerous mortality tables created for each classification of employee (General members, Public Safety, Teachers, Survivors, Juvenile, headcount-weighted, benefit-weighted, above median income, and below median income). One of the key findings of the study is that there is a high correlation between longevity and income and education. Consistent with the SOA study, JRF members with higher benefits generally appear to experience longer lifespans, resulting in lower mortality rates.

Fully generational tables, which are utilized for the MSRS valuations, help take into account future improvements in mortality that are expected to occur. The Society of Actuaries updates the projection scale annually and the latest published table is called the MP-2018 Projection Scale.

#### **Present Mortality Assumptions:**

- Healthy pre-retirement: RP-2014 employee generational mortality table, adjusted for white collar and mortality improvements using scale MP-2015, from a base year of 2006.
- Healthy post-retirement: RP-2014 healthy annuitant generational mortality table, adjusted for white collar and mortality improvements using scale MP-2015, from a base year of 2006.
- Disabled: RP-2014 healthy annuitant generational mortality table, adjusted for white collar and mortality improvements using scale MP-2015, from a base year of 2006.

#### **Proposed Mortality Assumptions:**

- Healthy pre-retirement: Pub-2010 General Employee Mortality Table, projected with mortality improvement scale MP-2019.
- Healthy post-retirement: Pub-2010 General Retired Mortality Table, projected with mortality improvement scale MP-2019.
- Disabled: Pub-2010 General/Teacher Disabled Retiree Mortality Table, projected with mortality improvement scale MP-2019.

# Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund

## Step 1 – Change Mortality Assumptions

### Calculations as of June 30, 2019

#### Actuarial Statement

The financial effect of the proposal is shown below:

	Valuation Baseline	Update Mortality	Change from Baseline
Normal Cost Rate, % of Pay	19.50%	18.83%	-0.67%
Amortization of Unfunded Accrued Liability, % of Pay	23.30%	21.55%	-1.75%
Expenses, % of Pay	0.17%	0.17%	0.00%
Total Required Contribution, % of Pay	42.97%	40.55%	-2.42%
Actuarial Accrued Liability, 000s	\$391,146	\$377,427	\$(13,719)
Funded Ratio, AVA Basis	53.2%	55.1%	1.9%

Adoption of the recommended mortality table decreases liability and increases the funding ratio, potentially providing for an earlier expected payment of the 2.0% and 2.5% post-retirement benefit increases. Any changes to the timing of the post-retirement benefit increases are not reflected in this report. If the post-retirement benefit increase timing assumption was changed in this step, the resulting liabilities and required contribution utilizing the new mortality assumption rates would be greater than the amounts shown above.

# Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund

## Step 2 – Change Other Demographic Assumptions

### Calculations as of June 30, 2019

Our report, the *Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund 4-Year Experience Study*, dated June 30, 2020, contained several recommended changes to demographic assumptions, including changes to retirement and disability rates and the assumed age difference for retirees and their spouse.

**Present Demographic Assumptions:** See the *Minnesota State Retirement System Judges Retirement Fund Actuarial Valuation Report as of July 1, 2019*, dated December 5, 2019, for a complete description of the present demographic assumptions.

**Proposed Demographic Assumptions:** Change demographic assumptions as follows (please see our experience study report noted above for a full description of the proposed assumptions):

- Retirement:
- Decrease the rate of assumed unreduced retirement rates (i.e., Normal Retirement) at age 67 and increase the rate of assumed unreduced retirements at ages 65 and 69. The overall impact is an increase in the expected number of unreduced retirements.
  - Decrease rates of assumed early retirement rates at age 62 and increase the rate of assumed early retirements at ages 61 and 64. The overall impact is an increase in the expected number of early retirements.
- Disability:
- Proposed rates are 60% of current rates.
- Marital statistics:
- Change the assumption that female retirees have a beneficiary three years older to two years older (same assumption as the General Plan).

# Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund

## Step 2 – Change Other Demographic Assumptions

### Calculations as of June 30, 2019

#### Actuarial Statement

The financial effect of the proposal is shown below:

	Valuation Baseline	Updated Mortality & Demographic Assumptions	Change from Baseline
Normal Cost Rate, % of Pay	19.50%	18.91%	-0.59%
Amortization of Unfunded Accrued Liability, % of Pay	23.30%	21.66%	-1.64%
Expenses, % of Pay	0.17%	0.17%	0.00%
Total Required Contribution, % of Pay	42.97%	40.74%	-2.23%
Actuarial Accrued Liability, 000s	\$391,146	\$378,228	\$(12,918)
Funded Ratio, AVA Basis	53.2%	55.0%	1.8%

As discussed earlier, any changes to the timing of the post-retirement benefit increases are not reflected in this report. If the post-retirement benefit increase timing assumption was changed in this step, the resulting liabilities and required contribution utilizing the new mortality and demographic assumptions would be greater than the amounts shown above.

## Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund

### Steps 1-2 – All Changes

### Calculations as of June 30, 2019

A step-by-step summary of the changes due to the mortality assumption and other demographic assumptions changes are summarized below:

	Valuation Baseline	Update Mortality	Add Changes to Demographic Assumptions
Normal Cost Rate, % of Pay	19.50%	18.83%	18.91%
Amortization of Unfunded Accrued Liability, % of Pay	23.30%	21.55%	21.66%
Expenses, % of Pay	0.17%	0.17%	0.17%
Total Required Contribution, % of Pay	42.97%	40.55%	40.74%
Actuarial Accrued Liability, 000s	\$391,146	\$377,427	\$378,228
Funded Ratio, AVA Basis	53.2%	55.1%	55.0%

It is important to remember that the 2019 General Plan experience study also showed that the probability of achieving the 7.5% return assumption is less than 50%. Therefore, although the required contribution rate will decrease as a result of this experience study, it is important that the statutory rate be maintained at least at its present level.

As discussed earlier, any changes to the timing of the post-retirement benefit increases are not reflected in this report. If the post-retirement benefit increase timing assumption was changed in this step, the resulting liabilities and required contribution utilizing the new mortality and demographic assumptions would be greater than the amounts shown above.

# Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund

## Calculations as of June 30, 2019

### Comments

**Comment 1** — The calculations are based upon assumptions regarding future events, which may or may not materialize. They are also based upon plan provisions that are outlined in this report. If you have reason to believe that the assumptions that were used are unreasonable, that the plan provisions are incorrectly described, that important plan provisions relevant to this proposal are not described, or that conditions have changed since the calculations were made, you should contact the author(s) of this report prior to relying on information in the report.

**Comment 2** — If you have reason to believe that the information provided in this report is inaccurate, or is in any way incomplete, or if you need further information in order to make an informed decision on the subject matter of this report, please contact the author(s) of this report prior to making such decision.

**Comment 3** — In the event that more than one change is being considered, it is very important to remember that the results of separate actuarial valuations cannot generally be added together to produce a correct estimate of the combined effect of all of the changes. The total can be considerably greater than the sum of the parts due to the interaction of various plan provisions with each other, and with the assumptions that must be used.

**Comment 4** — The reader of this report should keep in mind that actuarial calculations are mathematical estimates based on current data and assumptions about future events (which may or may not materialize). Please note that actuarial calculations can and do vary from one valuation year to the next, sometimes significantly if the group valued is very small (less than 30 lives). As a result, the cost impact of a benefit change may fluctuate over time, as the demographics of the group changes.

**Comment 5** — Review of the investment return assumption and actuarial methods is outside the scope of this experience study. Please refer to GRS' Minnesota State Employees Retirement Fund experience study dated June 27, 2019. This report concluded that the current investment return assumption was within a reasonable range as of the date of the report, but that a rate near the median, such as 7.0%, would be likely to be sustainable for a longer period. It is important to note that, by lowering the assumed rate of inflation but not the assumed investment return rate, the investment return assumptions are actually more optimistic than before because the assumed real rate of return is higher than previously assumed. The 7.5% investment return assumption is required per Minnesota Statutes. If the investment return assumption is found to be out of compliance with Actuarial Standards, we would be required to issue a qualified report.

**Comment 6** — We have provided this analysis in the same format as that used when plan or assumption changes are considered by the Trustees. For any legislative proposals, it may be necessary to follow-up with a more in-depth analysis to comply with the Standards for Actuarial Work. We will provide the additional information upon request.

**Comment 7** — The recommended change to the mortality assumption may result in a change to the plan's actuarially equivalent factors. An update to these factors has not been reflected in this study.

# Minnesota Judges Retirement Fund Calculations as of June 30, 2019

## Comments (concluded)

**Comment 8** — Benefit recipients receive a future annual compounding 1.75% post-retirement benefit increase. In the event the MSRS JRF accrued liability funding ratio (determined on a market value of assets basis) reaches or exceeds 70% funded (on a 2.00% post-retirement benefit increase assumption) for two consecutive years, the post-retirement benefit increase will revert to 2.00%. Similarly, if the accrued liability funding ratio (determined on a market value of assets basis) reaches or exceeds 90% funded (on a 2.50% post-retirement benefit increase assumption) for two consecutive years, the post-retirement benefit increase will revert to 2.50%. For purposes of the annual valuation, we performed a projection of liabilities and assets to determine an assumed date for the post-retirement benefit increase. For the 2019 valuation and this supplemental valuation, we assumed the 2.00% post-retirement benefit increase would begin January 1, 2040 and the 2.50% post-retirement benefit increase would begin January 1, 2057. This is only an assumption; actual timing will depend on actual experience.

**Comment 9** — Please see our report, the *Minnesota State Employees Retirement Fund of Minnesota 4-Year Experience Study*, dated June 27, 2019, for recommended changes to the Standards for Actuarial Work.