



## **New Repeating COLA Option is Available for Cities**

Effective May 27, 2023, the Texas Legislature amended the TMRS Act to provide participating cities with a new repeating COLA option.

Currently, a COLA must be calculated retroactively by looking back to the cumulative change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) since each retiree's retirement date, commonly called the "catch-up." The retroactive calculation makes granting a COLA more expensive for cities that have never provided a COLA and for most cities that currently provide a COLA and are already "caught up."

The new non-retroactive repeating COLA option eliminates the retroactive calculation by only looking back to the change in the CPI for the one-year period that ends 12 months before the COLA's effective date (the "New COLA Option").

In almost every case, the New COLA Option will be slightly less expensive for a city than a repeating COLA calculated retroactively. While the impact of the New COLA Option on each retiree depends on many factors, no retiree's current monthly benefit will be reduced.

However, adopting any repeating COLA, with or without the retroactive calculation, is still expensive. Even without the retroactive expense, the city still must advance fund all COLAs for both current and future retirees.

A city does not have to adopt the New COLA Option. All current repeating or ad hoc COLA options with the retroactive calculation are still in place. Details about current COLA options can be found [here](#).

Following are key provisions and examples of the New COLA Option.

### **Key Provisions**

- All repeating COLAs adopted using the non-retroactive option must be effective on January 1, 2024, 2025, or 2026. To adopt the New COLA Option, a city must pass an ordinance and provide it to TMRS by the December 31 preceding the January 1 effective date.
- Adopting the New COLA Option replaces any previous COLA and remains in effect until the city adopts any ordinance impacting COLAs.
- Because the New COLA Option is calculated based on the CPI during the year that ends 12 months before the COLA's effective date, each retiree will receive the same percentage increase to their monthly benefit. For example, if a city adopts a non-retroactive 50% repeating COLA effective January 1, 2024, each eligible retiree's benefit increase will be 3.23% (50% of 6.45% inflation during 2022).



- Cities can only use the New COLA Option to maintain or increase their COLA CPI percentage; they cannot decrease it.

### **If a city does not provide a repeating COLA**

Cities that do not provide a repeating COLA as of January 1, 2023, can pass an ordinance to adopt a non-retroactive repeating COLA of 30%, 50%, or 70% of CPI.

The cost impact for cities that have never adopted a COLA will be modestly less under the New COLA Option as compared to the cost of the retroactive repeating COLA options of the same CPI percentage. The cost impact for cities that have previously adopted any COLA, will vary depending upon the city's COLA history.

### **If a city provides a repeating COLA**

Cities that have a 30% or 50% retroactive repeating COLA as of January 1, 2023, can pass a new ordinance to maintain or increase the COLA percentage with the non-retroactive calculation. Whether the COLA cost for a city would decrease or increase depends on the city's COLA history.

Cities that have a 70% retroactive repeating COLA as of January 1, 2023, can pass a new ordinance to maintain the 70% COLA with the non-retroactive calculation. The non-retroactive repeating 70% COLA will be slightly less expensive than the retroactive repeating 70% COLA.

### **Request a COLA cost analysis from TMRS**

To request a COLA cost analysis, email [cityservices@tmrs.com](mailto:cityservices@tmrs.com). TMRS' plan change tool that calculates the cost of COLAs will be available in July.