

NAGDCA Award Nomination – Technology & Cybersecurity

Plan Profile

The Municipal Employees’ Retirement System (MERS) of Michigan is an independent, professional retirement services company that was created to administer the retirement plans for Michigan’s local units of government on a not-for-profit basis.

As a voluntary system, each municipality chooses to join MERS. Further, benefits are determined at the local level. MERS listens and works in partnership with municipalities to deliver superior value to our members.

TOTAL DC ASSETS
\$3.1B

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
85,000



Background

One of MERS strategic objectives is to transform our customers’ experience through seamless service delivery. To ensure our participants have access to their MERS retirement plan information anywhere they are – which can range from a fire station to a library to a hospital wing - MERS launched the secure myMERS app. The myMERS app provides fast, free, and secure access to individual account information and resources helpful in charting one’s path toward retirement and overall financial goals.

Working with our recordkeeper and internal staff, this app integrates all their benefits from defined benefit to defined contribution and even their health care savings, into the same tool, giving participants with multiple products seamless access to a variety of program information. To ensure data and participant information remains secure, strict cyber security standards were established including utilization of a multi-factor authentication.

Goals

- Achieve 1,00 downloads

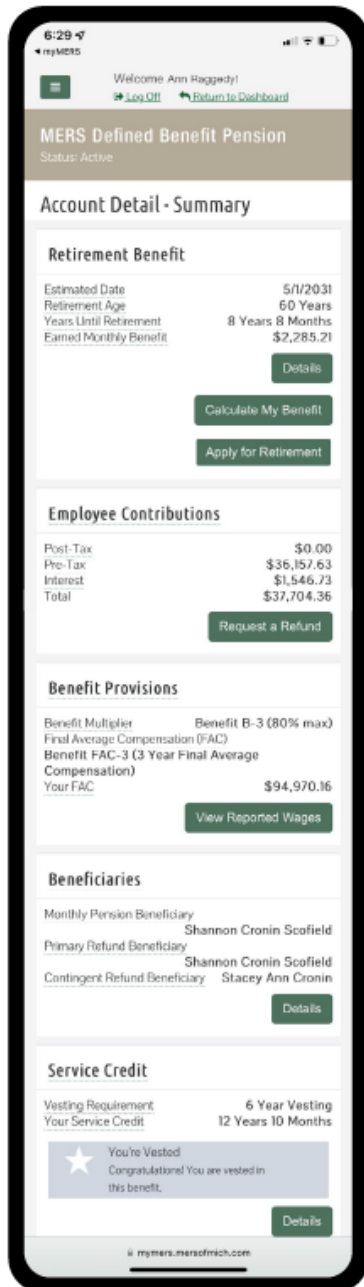
In our own words

The myMERS gives our participants the power to seamlessly view and engage with all their MERS retirement plans in one secure location.

Description of the project

The myMERS mobile app provides participants with the ability to receive fast, free, secure access all their MERS information anywhere they go. They can view MERS plan information and statements, check balances, view investment performance, and review contributions and much more. When changes are needed, the app provides secure access to perform transfers, make allocation changes and review or change contact and beneficiary details.

What's in the myMERS app



myMERS App Campaign

Targeted communications were sent to persona-based cohorts. Personas are semi-fictional characters based on our participants, and were created by looking at our demographic data, analyzing our annual *Voice of the Customer* survey results, and speaking with participants. Regardless of age, all participants are **Aspiring Retirees**, which was the overall slogan of this campaign.

Generation Z



AGE: 25 and younger
PERSONA: Sara

Gen Z (recent college grad starting first job) – Has always used apps, more comfortable and more likely to view retirement plan information from an app than by going to a website on their laptop and logging in.

Millenials & Generation X



AGE: 26-49
PERSONA: Tony

Busy job outside of a traditional office (firefighter, EMS, CRC worker) – Doesn't have access to a computer throughout the day as others might and not likely to spend time logging into a computer after work hours to view retirement plan information. However, it's much easier to log in to myMERS via an app through their phone.

Nearing Retirement



AGE: 50-60
PERSONA: Joanne or Ramone

As retirement gets closer, this person needs easy access to retirement plan information when having conversations with financial planner, spouse, etc. about making sure they are prepared. Hard to carry a laptop around, but easy to use the myMERS app.

Retired



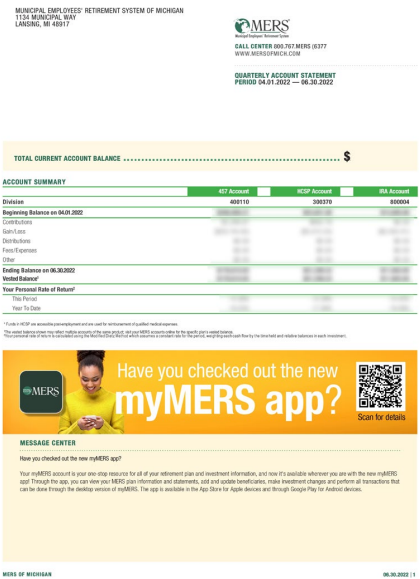
AGE: 60+
PERSONA: Arthur or Nancy

Feedback shows that retirees don't always have a computer easily accessible, but most have a smart phone. The app now gives them easier access to myMERS. Cohorts age 60+ tend to use social media apps like Facebook to connect with their families.

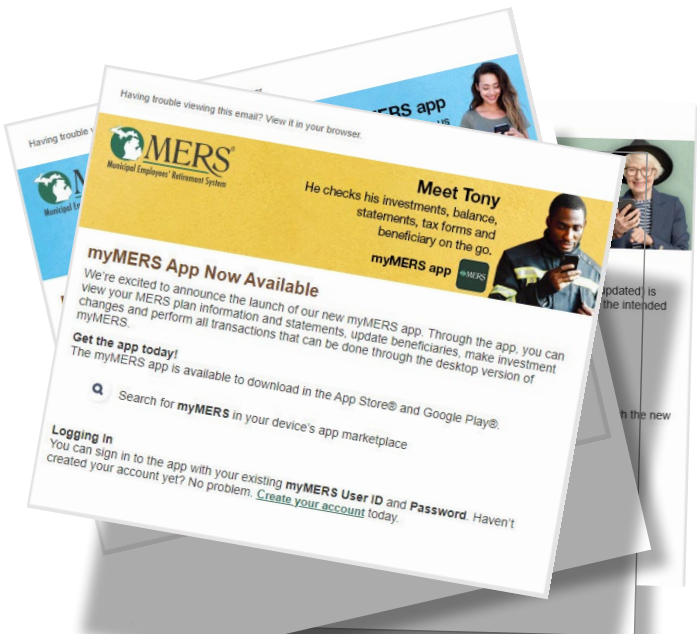
Summary of Channels Used



Printed newsletters were delivered to retired participants highlighting the myMERS app using our Retiree Age targeted version. QR code links users to details and download options instantly.



Quarterly Statements introduced the myMERS app to participant directed account holders and provided QR code link for easy access.



Eblasts sent to participants introducing participants to the myMERS using different versions of the ad targeted to user demographics.



Results

Our initial goal was 1,000 downloads by the end of the year. We have greatly exceeded that through continuing promotions and outreach. Since releasing the app to our customers in June 2022, there have been **4,000** participants download and use it, with more continuing to do so regularly.

Feasibility of use

Connecting our recordkeeping vendor and defined benefit technology staff together, others may be able to find opportunities to provide participants with a seamless customer experience.