



County of Los Angeles 457(b) Horizons and 401(k) Savings Plans

Using NRSM 2024 to help current and future retirees live large in LA



Category: National Retirement Security Month

Project Summary

Plan Profile

The County of Los Angeles offers employees the 457(b) Horizons and 401(k) Savings Plans. As of March 13, 2025, the combined asset size is \$24.4B with 139,020 participants with a balance (457(b) Horizons—\$19.6B and 118,344 participants; 401(k) Savings—\$4.8B and 20,676 participants). The County of Los Angeles partners with Empower, which provides administrative, recordkeeping, communication, and investment education services for both Plans.

Background

Today's retirees could spend almost a third of their entire lives in retirement. So, while it's absolutely essential to help employees save and invest for the income needed for an extended retirement, it's also critically important to continue to support retirees in achieving and maintaining a comfortable post-work life. The Plan Administrative Committee (PAC) of the County of Los Angeles' 457(b) Horizons and 401(k) Savings Plans, in collaboration with Empower, aimed to create a campaign to prompt the behaviors that help build retirement security at every phase of the retirement journey—especially for those who have achieved retirement but can still take steps to achieve the retirement outcomes they want.

Goals

The County of Los Angeles' 457(b) Horizons and 401(k) Savings Plans wanted to use its 2024 National Retirement Security Month (NRSM) campaign to help move the needle on traditional metrics such as enrollment, contributions, and asset allocation—while placing special emphasis on the needs of its retired participant segment. The goal was to help participants understand the need for ongoing engagement and planning throughout the retirement journey. Each phase of the retirement planning process has its potential pitfalls and solutions—from enrollment through retirement and beyond. The County of Los Angeles, in collaboration with Empower, developed a campaign to drive participation through its webinars focused on retirement, pre-retirement, contribution increases, and enrollment. The promotional emails expanded on the theme of "Living in LA" and the iconic attractions of one of the world's most dynamic cities. Each webinar included clear calls to action that would strengthen retirement readiness at a particular phase of the retirement journey. And for the first time ever, webinars focused on the unique needs of retirees. The campaign also included in-person outreach by the Plan's team of local Retirement Plan Counselors throughout NRSM, allowing employees to get personalized answers to their questions.

In total, more than 1,500 employees participated in one of the NRSM webinars, and local Retirement Plan Counselors engaged with more than 4,200 participants during the NRSM campaign—resulting in nearly 500 Comprehensive Account Reviews, close to 950 enrollments, and 3,500 beneficiary updates. Also, during NRSM, the combined website for the Plans engaged 40% more unique users than the previous month, with 23% more sessions and 35% more page views—a clear indicator of participant interest and activity.

Today's participant is tomorrow's retiree. The County of Los Angeles knows that the relationship with a participant is built over years and decades and can be a powerful tool in helping that participant retire comfortably. This campaign was specifically designed to connect with participants at every phase of the retirement journey—including the retirees who can still benefit from the services and support the Plans offer.

"Retirement planning doesn't end when someone retires—it continues throughout their retirement years. During National Retirement Security Month, we wanted to use this opportunity to connect with our retirees in a more meaningful way, while still offering helpful information on enrollment, higher contribution rates, and pre-retirement planning for our active participants. We understand that retirement planning is a long journey, and we want to remind everyone that both the County and Empower are here to support them every step of the way."

Kimberly Burch-Garcia
Principal Analyst
County of Los Angeles

The County of Los Angeles Horizons 457(b) and Savings 401(k) Plans: Using NRSM 2024 to help current and future retirees live large in LA

National Retirement Security Month Leadership Award Category: Project Justification

Project Details and Context

"Retirement security" means different things to different people, depending on where they are in their careers and retirement planning journey. Plan sponsors understandably devote a lot of effort and resources to helping current employees save and invest to fund their retirement future. But one group that often goes overlooked in the discussion of strengthening retirement security is retirees themselves. So, for the first time, the County of Los Angeles 457(b) Horizons and 401(k) Savings Plans decided to broaden their NRSM outreach and specifically address the challenges retirees face and educate them on their options for strengthening their retirement. Planning for retirement is a decades-long project, and retirement itself can be just as long. The campaign was designed to emphasize the importance of both phases and the way they interrelate.

The County of Los Angeles' 2024 NRSM campaign had a two-fold objective: 1) encourage positive action to strengthen retirement readiness for those in the accumulation phase (from enrollment to near-retirement); 2) expand the focus to include retirees who can still improve retirement outcomes for themselves and their families. The campaign consisted of four emails, each focused on a specific phase of the retirement journey: retirement, pre-retirement, contributions, and enrollment. The campaign's theme was "Living in LA," with each email emphasizing a different aspect of the LA area's vibrant culture and diverse attractions, from its beaches and hiking areas to its food scene to its artistic and sporting events. The emails included a link to register for several webinars planned for October 2024. Another email highlighted the full slate of presentations scheduled for the month, and a hard-copy flier for posting in high-traffic areas complemented the online communications.

The webinars themselves were designed to educate retirees, participants and potential participants on how the plan could help them from enrollment through retirement and beyond and encourage the actions that would improve retirement readiness. The content focus for each week was as follows:

- **Retiree Week** - Highlighting the advantages of staying in the plan, the benefits of a Comprehensive Account Review with a local Retirement Plan Counselor, the various distribution options available and the implications of each, and the importance of designating and updating beneficiary information.
- **Maximizing Contributions Week** – A discussion of the primary role contributions play in building retirement readiness, how to earn the County's full matching contribution, and the transformative impact that compounded growth can have on future retirement income.
- **Pre-Retirement Week** – The option of capitalizing on catch-up contributions in the run-up to retirement, the importance of proper asset allocation and risk management as retirement nears, adjusting the estimate of retirement income needs, and how different income retirement sources can work together.
- **Enrollment Week** – The availability of matching contributions from the County, the diverse investment lineup available to 457(b) Horizons and 401(k) Savings Plan participants, and the impact of tax-deferred saving and compound growth potential available through the Plans.

In addition to the slate of virtual webinars, Retirement Plan Counselors from the County's recordkeeper, Empower, conducted in-person seminars and held benefits fairs at various locations throughout the County during NRSM to engage directly with County employees. People could get immediate answers to their questions, along with personalized support and recommendations.

Timeline

Development of the campaign's messaging and creative elements began in June 2024. The email campaign then began in late September 2024. The webinar series began on October 1, 2024, and continued through October 30—totaling 74 webinars and virtual seminars for the month. The seminars for each week focused on a distinct content area: retirement, maximizing contributions, pre-retirement, and enrollment.

Campaign Results and Outcomes

The round of promotions leading up to NRSM drove impressive engagement, with the email communications generating an average open rate of 59.7% and an average click rate of 2.75%. That activity translated into the following behavioral changes:

- **Webinar attendance** - A total of **1,525 attendees** attended at least one of the **74 webinars** held during NRSM.
- **Online engagement** - During October 2024, the combined website for the Plans saw **40% more** unique users (39,146 total) than the previous month, with **23% more sessions** and **35% more page views**—indicating a significant increase in participant engagement and activity.
- **Comprehensive Account Reviews** - Nearly **500 (486)** participants scheduled a Comprehensive Account Review for a personalized analysis of their retirement income goals and saving/investing strategies.
- **Beneficiary updates** - More than **3,500 participants** across both the 457(b) Horizons and/or 401(k) Savings Plans updated their beneficiary designations in the weeks following NRSM.
- **New enrollments** - A total of **939 employees enrolled** in the 457(b) Horizons and/or 401(k) Savings Plans.

Just as impressive, Retirement Plan Counselors from Empower's local office engaged with more than **4,200 participants** during the NRSM campaign. Each engagement represents an opportunity to help participants take positive steps to improve retirement readiness.

Significance of Improvement

For the County of Los Angeles, National Retirement Security Month offered a unique opportunity to show County retirees that their concerns and challenges are just as important to the Plan as those of active participants. The County has spent years, even decades, working with employees who have made the transition to retirement. They wanted this group to know that the PAC was committed to maintaining that connection after they leave the workplace—and that retirement planning doesn't end with retirement. At the same time, the PAC understands that today's active participant is tomorrow's retiree. They also leveraged NRSM to generate new enrollments, promote personalized Comprehensive Account Reviews for current participants, and drive positive behaviors such as contribution increases and beneficiary updates. The campaign is also compelling evidence of the power of a "high-tech/high-touch" approach that combines in-person and virtual engagement.

Feasibility of Use by Other Governments

The County's 2024 NRSM campaign capitalized on Los Angeles' iconic attractions to help drive interest and engagement—a concept that other plans could adopt by highlighting the uniqueness of their own hometowns. The campaign also combined the complementary strengths of virtual and in-person outreach. Assuming that other plans have a similar capacity to deploy their own email promotional campaign, conduct online seminars, and hold face-to-face events, they could easily launch a similar NRSM campaign. Most importantly, plans would need to develop messaging tailored to the needs, challenges, and opportunities of its retired participant population. The specialized content directed at this audience segment helped the County's 2024 NRSM campaign stand out from the crowd.



Retirement education webinars available all October during National Retirement Security Month.

Join one today ➔

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Always **LA**
 457(b) Horizons & 401(k) Savings Plan
NATIONAL RETIREMENT SECURITY MONTH 2024

LIVING IN LA



Join Empower for on-site personalized service for your 457(b) Horizons and / or 401(k) Savings Plans!

Retirement Plan Counselors will be on-site to answer any questions you have about your 457(b) Horizons and / or 401(k) Savings Plans.

When:
Tuesday, October 15th
9:00 am – 2:00 pm
Table service will take place in Room 140

Where:
Kenneth Hall of Administration
500 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Additionally, you can participate in a retirement education seminar!

Seminar	Time	Location
Make the Most of your Plans	12pm	Room 140

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October 2024 Retirement Planning Webinar Schedule

NATIONAL RETIREMENT SECURITY MONTH 2024

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1	2	3	4
	<div>9:00am - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div> <div>12:00pm - Seminar: 457(b) Enrollment Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Before Health Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div>		<div>TO ATTEND A WEBINAR, CLICK REGISTER (Pre-Retirement)</div>	
7	8	9	10	11
<div>NRS&: >> Redire Week</div> <div>9:00am - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div> <div>11:00am - Living in Retirement (1 hr) REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Before Health Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div>		<div>9:00am - Living in Retirement - Hosted by Empower & Post Retirement working. Hosted by LACERA (2 hrs) REGISTER</div> <div>12:00pm - Make the Most of Your Retirement Plans (1 hr) REGISTER</div> <div>2:00pm - Seminar: 457(b) Enrollment Seminar & LACERA New Hire Orientation Plus G General (2 hrs) REGISTER</div>	<div>9:00am - Living in Retirement - Hosted by Empower & Post Retirement working. Hosted by LACERA (2 hrs) REGISTER</div> <div>12:00pm - Seminar: 457(b) Enrollment Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>2:00pm - Living in Retirement (1 hr) REGISTER</div>	
14	15	16	17	18
<div>NRS&: >> Max Contribution Week</div> <div>9:00am - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>1:30pm - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Before Health Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div>	<div>IN-PERSON EVENT</div> <div>9:00am - Public Meeting: Make the Most of Your Plans Presentation in Room 140 REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Public Meeting: Max Contribution Seminar in Room 140 REGISTER</div>	<div>IN-PERSON EVENT</div> <div>9:00am - Public Meeting: Make the Most of Your Retirement Plans (1 hr) REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Public Meeting: Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div>	<div>9:00am - Make the Most of Your Retirement Plans/Max Contribution (3 hrs) Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div> <div>11:00am - Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Stay in the Plan & LACERA Power of Choice (30 mins) Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div>	<div>9:00am - Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>11:00am - Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div>
21	22	23	24	25
<div>NRS&: >> Pre-Retirement Week</div> <div>9:00am - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>1:30pm - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Before Health Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div>	<div>IN-PERSON EVENT</div> <div>9:00am - Public Meeting: Make the Most of Your Retirement Plans (1 hr) REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Public Meeting: Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div>	<div>IN-PERSON EVENT</div> <div>9:00am - Public Meeting: Make the Most of Your Retirement Plans (1 hr) REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Public Meeting: Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div>	<div>9:00am - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div> <div>11:00am - Max Contribution Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div>	
28	29	30	31	
<div>NRS&: >> Enrollment Week</div> <div>9:00am - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div> <div>12:00pm - Seminar: 457(b) Enrollment Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>1:00pm - Pre-Retirement Seminar (3 hrs) Before Health Hosted by Empower and LACERA REGISTER</div>	<div>9:00am - Seminar: 457(b) Enrollment Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>11:00am - Make the Most of Your Retirement Plans (1 hr) REGISTER</div> <div>2:00pm - Seminar: 457(b) Enrollment Seminar & LACERA New Hire Orientation Plus G General (2 hrs) REGISTER</div>	<div>9:00am - Seminar: 457(b) Enrollment Seminar (30 mins) REGISTER</div> <div>11:00am - Make the Most of Your Retirement Plans (1 hr) REGISTER</div> <div>2:00pm - Seminar: 457(b) Enrollment Seminar & LACERA New Hire Orientation Plus G General (2 hrs) REGISTER</div>	<div>Don't forget retirement education is one you, only needs and no links with our webinars. Know on your schedule!</div>	

WEBINAR QUICK GLANCE - Webinar password: Retirement!

457(b) HORIZONS ENROLLMENT SEMINAR
Get 457(b) Horizon not yet, get us to get enrolled now. Don't wait, time and free money may be slipping away.

PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINARS
Setting up a Pre-Retirement Seminar to learn key action steps if preparation of retirement and what to expect when you retire.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR RETIREMENT PLANS
Visit to make the most of your retirement? Join Make the Most of your 457(b) Horizons and/or 401(k) Savings Plans to learn how to take advantage of all services to make the most of your retirement plans.

STAY IN THE PLAN & LACERA POWER OF ATTORNEY
STOP! You don't have to go. Join our day in the plan webinar to learn more about the importance of staying in the plan even after you retire.

LIVING IN RETIREMENT
Before! Sign up for our Living in Retirement webinar! We'll discuss benefits, distribution options, investments and so much more!

MAXIMIZING CONTRIBUTIONS
Interested in maximizing your contributions for the year? Are you contributing enough to earn the full County match? Join us at this educational webinar to learn about best practices, how to maximize your deferral and reduce taxable income.

IN-PERSON EVENT

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