



PROJECT SUMMARY

Plan Profile

The North Carolina Department of State Treasurer (DST) is committed to helping public servants become “retirement ready.” To support this mission, the state offers a robust pension benefit alongside the NC 401(k) and NC 457 Plans (“the Plans”), which together form the Supplemental Retirement Plans. As of February 28, 2026, the Plans hold more than \$20.5 billion in combined assets and serve over 325,000 unique participants. The Plans are administered by DST and the Supplemental Retirement Plans Board of Trustees, with Empower providing recordkeeping and communication services.

Background

DST has proudly supported NAGDCA’s efforts to promote retirement readiness since 2006, when National Retirement Security Week was first introduced. That commitment continued as the initiative expanded to National Retirement Security Month (NRSM) in 2020. In 2025, DST leveraged NRSM as a strategic opportunity to motivate public servants across North Carolina to take their next best steps—participating in the Plans, engaging with educational resources, and gaining clarity on when and how to take meaningful action toward retirement preparedness.

Goal

Through a coordinated, multi-channel effort, the 2025 Retirement Express campaign was designed to engage, educate, and inspire both current and future participants to take a multistage, intentional approach to retirement planning. The campaign encouraged North Carolina’s public servants to:

- Engage with a compelling video series highlighting the stages of retirement planning
- Take action by participating in educational opportunities tailored to their needs
- Enroll and/or increase contributions as they gain confidence and clarity about their financial future
- Increase engagement with key digital resources, including priority webpages and social media

This structured approach ensured that every touchpoint—digital, educational, and behavioral—worked together to move participants forward on their retirement readiness journey.

DST proudly submits this initiative for the National Retirement Security Month category.

Commentary

“When you guide people through retirement one stop at a time, using clear, relatable concepts and creative storytelling, you make the journey feel achievable. That’s what the Retirement Express was designed to do—help our members understand their benefits, take full advantage of what’s offered, and make confident choices for their future. This campaign didn’t just generate engagement; it inspired action. It encouraged our members to treat their future selves as a priority, and that is the true measure of success.” – North Carolina State Treasurer Brad Briner



PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

DST set out to encourage meaningful action during National Retirement Security Month—driving enrollment and contribution increases, boosting participation in educational events, and elevating digital engagement. The goal was not only to capture attention but also to inspire members to take tangible steps toward securing their financial future.

A Four Week Immersive Journey Powered by the Retirement Express

The heart of the campaign was the **Retirement Express**, a video-driven storytelling experience featuring North Carolina State Treasurer Brad Briner and filmed on location at the North Carolina Transportation Museum. This creative approach invited members to “hop aboard” and follow a clear, multistage path toward retirement readiness. Treasurer Briner guided viewers through four themed stations, each representing a critical step in the planning journey:

- Budget Junction
- Contribution Station
- Investment Depot
- Futureville

This narrative framework served as the backbone of the entire month. It set the pace and tone for the four-week experience, informed the sequencing of weekly webinars, and shaped messaging across digital channels. Insights gathered from the pre-campaign member survey were woven throughout the journey, ensuring that content reflected what participants said mattered most to them. By grounding NRSM in a cohesive, relatable story, DST made retirement planning more accessible, engaging, and actionable.

A dynamic social media presence and refreshed web content amplified the Retirement Express, while employer partners extended its reach into workplaces across the state. These partners hosted events, shared campaign materials, and reinforced weekly themes, creating authentic, peer-driven momentum. This year, we expanded beyond our inhouse staff and, for the first time, integrated the Plans’ dedicated counselors (Empower) into the campaign through targeted topic videos—humanizing this extension of staff who provide support for the Plans to employers and participants on a daily basis. Together, these elements formed an immersive, coordinated experience that kept members engaged from the first whistle to the final stop—transforming NRSM into a guided journey toward confident retirement planning.

Strategic Early Activation: Laying the Tracks Before NRSM Began

DST launched communications a full 30 days ahead of NRSM, creating early momentum that directly fueled dramatic increases in engagement. A coordinated push-pull strategy—combining proactive outreach with an online survey inviting members to share their retirement priorities—built awareness early and generated meaningful interaction before the campaign officially began. Strong employer partnerships amplified this momentum, extending reach and creating authentic, peer-driven buzz.

This early activation proved critical, laying the groundwork for the campaign’s exceptional digital performance and ensuring members were already engaged when NRSM officially launched.

This early activation translated into exceptional web traffic results when comparing October 2025 to October 2024.



Full Steam Ahead: The Retirement Express Powers Triple-Digit Web Growth and Social Interactions

The Retirement Express didn’t just capture attention—it moved members to action. The early activation strategy, paired with a compelling narrative and strong employer partnerships, translated directly into dramatic increases in visits to priority webpages **and a surge in social engagement**. Across digital channels, member interaction skyrocketed:

Social Action	Increase %
Social Interactions	158%
Link Clicks	78%
Views	42.7%

These gains underscore how the campaign’s storytelling and early outreach resonated with members and motivated them to explore their retirement options and take action, as evidenced by our website metrics.

URL	Compared with Sept. 2025	Compared with NRSM 2024
myNCPlans.gov website	Increased 220%	Increased 150%
Enrollment Codes webpage	Increased 250%	Increased 120%
Steps to Enroll webpage	Increased 308%	Increased 290%

The combination of early outreach, peer-driven storytelling, and a cohesive digital strategy ensured that the Retirement Express didn’t just raise awareness—it drove meaningful action. Members were not only informed; they were inspired to take the next step toward securing their financial future.

On Track for the Future: Enrollment and Contribution Growth Gains Momentum

The Retirement Express didn’t just capture attention—it moved members to take meaningful action. With the call to “grab your goals, pack your priorities, and hop on board,” members responded in record numbers, driving results unlike anything we’ve seen before. Enrollments in October 2025 increased 39% over October 2024, and contribution increases surged 49% over the same period. This remarkable momentum shows that when retirement planning is presented as a clear, guided journey—one that feels accessible, relatable, and even fun—members are far more likely to take the steps that strengthen their financial future.

	NRSM 2025	Compared with NRSM 2024
Enrollments	3,208	Increased 39%
Contribution Increases	3,880	Increased 49%

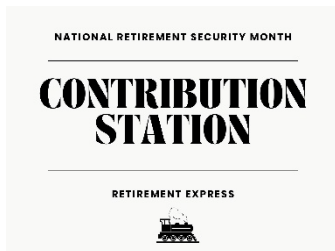
The Retirement Express didn’t just create engagement, it inspired action—empowering members to invest in their future selves with confidence and purpose.

Expanding the Line: How Other Governments Can Run Their Own Retirement Express

This campaign approach is easily adaptable for governments of all sizes. With a focused strategy and a peer-based model, any organization can unite its communication channels around a single, compelling theme. For one month, every platform—from social media to email to employer partnerships—worked in concert to drive awareness and emphasize the importance of preparing for retirement. The Retirement Express demonstrated that when messaging is clear, coordinated, and rooted in relatable storytelling, members are far more likely to take meaningful action.

The strength of this model lies in its simplicity and flexibility. The narrative framework, weekly themes, survey-informed content, and employer-driven amplification can all be replicated or scaled up or down depending on resources. Whether a government serves 3,000 employees or 300,000, the core components remain accessible: a unifying story, consistent messaging, and strategic timing.

Ultimately the Retirement Express provides a ready-made route that any peer organization can adopt. The tracks have already been laid—other governments need only customize the journey to fit their audience. With creativity, collaboration, and a commitment to meeting members where they are, this campaign model can help public servants everywhere take confident steps toward a more secure financial future.



Get on Board the Retirement Express

Each year in October, National Retirement Security Month presents an opportunity for workers in all stages of their careers to assess their retirement savings and goals.

The North Carolina Retirement Systems will be promoting the month through social media and have a series of educational webinars for all public servants in North Carolina.

Grab your goals, pack your priorities and hop on board the Retirement Express!

OCTOBER 1, 2025

National Retirement Security Month

Join North Carolina State Treasurer Brad Briner on the Retirement Express and learn how you can plan and save for a successful retirement.

\$20.5 Bil
Assets

325k
Participants



North Carolina
Retirement Systems



Welcome to Futureville



OCTOBER 16, 2025
Welcome to Futureville
Futureville, this is where you see the results of your hard work and dedication saving.



myNCPlans.gov

Website Growth
Comparison

150%
Oct 2024
220%
Sept 2025



Enrollment Codes

Webpage Growth
Comparison

120%
Oct 2024
250%
Sept 2025



Steps to Enroll

Webpage Growth
Comparison

290%
Oct 2024
308%
Sept 2025



Enrollment
Increases

3,208
Enrollments
in October

39%
Increase
Compared with
NRSRM 2024



Contribution
Increases

3,880
Contribution
Increases in
October

49%
Increase
Compared with
NRSRM 2024



Social Engagement
Increases

158%
Interactions

78%
Link Clicks

43%
Views

10:00 AM



North Carolina Retirement Systems
October 14, 2025 •

We're all on this journey together as members of the North Carolina Retirement Systems. And who better to learn from than each other?

Let's celebrate what we're doing right—and reflect on what we could improve—by looking to our peers.



Where do you see yourself in the first few years of retirement?
Home and traveling to visit friends and family.

myNCRetirement.gov

National Retirement Security Month:
Get on Board the Retirement Express

Learn More

12:00 PM



All Aboard the Retirement Express

@myNCRetirement 4d ago

myNCRetirement
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National Retirement Security Month 2025 ... more

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Sort by

11:00 AM



Welcome to Budget Junction



October 6, 2025

Events this week

Join us at Budget Junction as we lay the foundation for your retirement with this week's events.

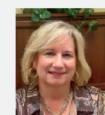


October 6, 2025

NC Transportation Museum

Special thank you to the North Carolina Transportation Museum located in Spencer, North Carolina! They helped to bring the Retirement Express to life this October.

Tips from the NC 401(k) and NC 457 Plans



NC 401(k) and NC 457 Plans Retirement Counselor, Kelly Martindale, shares some tips on investments.

Learn more about Kelly and the counties she serves [here](#).

To find your counselor for the NC 401(k) and NC 457 Plans, click [here](#).

Click here to view Chris Garavito tips on budgeting.

