



## Your Voice for AT&T Retiree Benefits

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### First Quarter Newsletter

March 2024

We're almost done with winter. You can tell the season is changing, as flowers poke their heads up, and snowbirds think about when to head North! Meanwhile, your fellow retirees who volunteer with AASBCR® have been busy these past three months. Here's what's been going on.

### Bulletins

We emailed and posted three bulletins this quarter. You can find them at our website [aasbcr.org](https://aasbcr.org) under the Resources tab, and the latest ones will be under the NEWS tab as well, or you can click on a bulletin's link below.

- [Get Your Taxes Done for Free](#) – January 2024
- [Turning 65 -- What to Do about Medicare](#) – February 2024
- [Survey on SS Mistakes](#) – March 2024

### Benefits Questions

Our volunteers fielded dozens of questions and concerns this past quarter, mostly around the decision to sign up or not for AT&T Medicare Advantage plan. Many of the concerns also involved billing issues, which AT&T acknowledged and assured us would be resolved by the February billing period. That seems to be the case as the volume of inquiries has declined significantly in recent weeks.

We continue to get questions about who handles what since the Alight Retiree Health Exchange is no longer an agent for AT&T. Most benefit issues are now handled by the AT&T Benefits Center.

Attached is a short list of the telephone numbers and websites most frequently requested by AT&T retirees.



**AT&T Benefits Center** ..... 877-722-0020 (domestic)  
att.com/benefitscenter 847-883-0866 (international)

**CarePlus** ..... 877-261-3340 (domestic)  
careplus.att.com/ 877-246-8173 (international)

**Fidelity Service Center.** ..... 800-416-2363  
(report a death, change beneficiary)

**United Healthcare.** ..... 866-819-3448  
retiree.UHC.com/att  
Grandfathered Retirees ..... 888-803-9234

**Discounts for Retirees (all)**  
internet, U-verse, VOIP, wireline, DSL ... 877-377-9010  
Wireless ..... 800-331-0500

**Donations and Grants**

We offer grants to non-profits who help seniors, veterans, children, the under-privileged and those in need, or the community at large. The amount can be from \$500 to \$5000. Instructions for applying are on the website under “For Members Only.”

**We would like to see more grant applications.** For the past few years, mostly Board members have generated applications. Members can do it too! To get your 501(c)3 organization to apply, just provide them with the guidelines and form on the website. This is the simplest grant application they will ever see! Your only job is to hand them the check, and get a report from them one year after the grant is made.

**Ride Assist Naperville (RAN)** has been using the grant from AASBCR® to recruit more drivers and do a background check before approving them as drivers. RAN now has 73 drivers and 540 active riders! They just celebrated giving 10,000 rides since starting up in April 2017.

One of our 2022 grants was to **West Park (Cleveland area) Meals on Wheels.** They used the funds to pay overdue rent and phone bills, buy serving trays, and buy \$25.00 gas cards for their volunteer drivers. This photo shows their work behind the scenes.

Meanwhile, we have continued to make donations to the following charities in 2023: World Central Kitchen for \$10,000, Doctors Without Borders for \$5000, and Feeding America for \$5000.



## News about Pension De-Risking

Two class-action lawsuits have been filed against AT&T for its sale of 96,000 pensions to Athene last year. You can re-read the AASBCR® Bulletins on Pension De-Risking [here](#). NRLN has made pension de-risking protections one of its main priorities for 2024. An Bloomberg Law article about one of the lawsuits follows:

### AT&T Pension De-Risking Move Triggers a Class Action Fight

*By Jacklyn Wille, Bloomberg Law - March 11, 2024*

- **COURT:** D. Mass.
- **TRACK DOCKET:** [No. 1:24-cv-10608](#)

(Updates with AT&T spokesman’s response in sixth paragraph.)

[AT&T Inc.](#) was sued Monday by four former employees challenging a 2023 transaction in which the telecommunications giant allegedly shifted responsibility for funding the pensions of nearly 100,000 workers to a “risky” new insurance company.

The [proposed class action](#), filed in the US District Court for the District of Massachusetts, says AT&T offloaded more than \$8 billion worth of pension liabilities to subsidiaries of Athene Holding Ltd. by purchasing group annuity contracts to fund the retirement benefits for 96,000 people. This transaction, known as pension “de-risking,” allowed AT&T to enjoy an immediate profit of \$363 million while jeopardizing workers’ retirement benefits and stripping them of federal legal protections, according to the lawsuit.

“Before the transaction, Plan pension benefits were guaranteed by AT&T—a Fortune 15 business and one of the world’s largest telecom companies—which was responsible for paying the benefits as they came due, even if Plan investments fell short of expectations,” the workers said in the complaint.

Now, AT&T no longer guarantees payment of retirement benefits and is no longer subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act’s funding requirements, causing the 96,000 plan participants in question to be “ejected from the federal pension regime” and its protections, according to the complaint.

“The 96,000 Plan participants and beneficiaries whom AT&T unloaded to Athene had no say in the transaction,” the workers said. “And they bear all of the transaction’s risk while enjoying none of the profits that AT&T reaped through its purchase of a much less expensive, but far riskier, annuity than was available and that AT&T could have purchased.”

“We have not been served with this lawsuit,” AT&T spokesman Jim Kimberly said in an emailed response to a request for comment. “We can’t offer a comment until we’ve had an opportunity review it.”

Athene isn’t named as a defendant.

The workers are represented by Zuckerman Spaeder LLP, Edward Stone Law PC, Kantor & Kantor LLP, and Libby Hoopes Brooks & Mulvey PC.

The case is *Piercy v. AT&T Inc.*, D. Mass., No. 1:24-cv-10608, complaint 3/11/24.

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## News about Social Security Clawback

Two of our bulletins have been about SS clawback, where the SS administration demands that overpayments – often its own fault – be repaid suddenly, without regard to the effect on the retiree’s financial situation. AASBCR influenced NRLN to make this a priority. NRLN reached out to Congress, initiated a survey for horror stories, and emailed the new Social Security Administrator.



Now CBS News reports that the Administrator, Martin O’Malley, has ordered that repayments cannot exceed 10% of monthly SS payments, doubled the length of time for the repayment process, made it easier to request a waiver of repayment, and removed the requirement that those overpaid prove it was not their fault.

This is a win for NRLN, and for us! It shows one more reason why AASBCR is pleased to be a member and supporter of NRLN. It also shows the power of responding to NRLN Action Alerts with letters to your representatives.