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**KANSAS PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
CHIEF BENEFITS OFFICER  
POSITION SPECIFICATIONS**

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Created by the Kansas Legislature in 1962, the **Kansas Public Employees Retirement System (KPERS or the “System”)** is charged with securing a financial foundation for those spending their careers in Kansas public service. The **System** provides disability and death benefits while employees are still working, and a dependable defined benefit when they retire. **KPERS** runs three state-wide, cost-sharing multiple employer defined benefit retirement plans as follows:

- Kansas Public Employees Retirement System
- Kansas Police and Firemen's Retirement System
- Kansas Retirement System for Judges

Retirement System benefits are offered by slightly over 1,500 state and local employers. KPERS has more than 340,000 members including active, inactive and retired members. As of June 30, 2024, **KPERS** held assets of \$27.3 billion.

Along with the defined benefit plan, **KPERS** also oversees two voluntary supplemental plans, KPERS 457 and KPERS 401(a). The 457 and 401(a) plans are administered by a dedicated team within KPERS that is independent from the **System's** Benefits and Member Services Division.

A nine-member Board of Trustees oversees the **System**: four are appointed by the Governor, one is appointed by the President of the Senate, one is appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, two are elected by System members, and one is the elected State Treasurer. The Board appoints an executive director who manages staff in carrying out daily operations. The Board approves the **System's** annual operating budget. As a component unit of the State of Kansas, the budget is also approved by the Kansas Legislature and Governor as part of the regular legislative budget process.

**KPERS Mission**

*The Kansas Public Employees Retirement System in its fiduciary capacity, exists to deliver retirement, disability and survivor benefits to its members and their beneficiaries.*

**KPERS** employs approximately 140 staff members with roughly 54 staff members comprising the Benefits and Member Services Division. The Benefits and Member Services Division currently offers a limited hybrid work schedule based on operational and customer service needs.

**KPERS** is headquartered in Topeka, KS and is within easy commuting distance to Lawrence KS, home of the University of Kansas, and to the western suburbs of Kansas City.

For additional information about **System**, please see the **KPERS'** website at [www.kpers.org](http://www.kpers.org).

## **THE CHIEF BENEFITS OFFICER ROLE**

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The **Chief Benefits Officer** is responsible for the overall management of the Benefits and Member Services Division of the **System** to ensure that members receive accurate and timely benefit services and payments. The team accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2024, included:

- Distributing more than 1.4 million retirement benefit payments totaling \$2 billion.
- Processing 5,100 new pension inceptions for new retirees.
- Coordinating distribution of almost \$33.8 million in life insurance benefits.
- Processing nearly 10,800 payments to members withdrawing account balances with total payments of about \$65.4 million.
- Assisting employers with enrolling 23,400 new members, transferring about 8,900 members from one participating employer to another, and returning 5,800 members to KPERS-covered employment.
- Issuing 220,000 Member Annual Statements to active, inactive and disabled members.
- Answering 97.5% of 100,400 of incoming calls from members and employers with an average wait time of 31 seconds.
- Responding to 25,000 email requests from members, employers, beneficiaries and other interested parties.
- Receiving satisfaction survey responses from new retirees showing that 98% of members felt that service provided was “excellent,” “very good” or “good.”

The **Chief Benefits Officer** serves as a member of the **System's** senior management team and reports directly to the Executive Director. The **Chief Benefits Officer** will assume a strategic role in the overall management of the **System** and will deal frequently with Trustees, members, employers, other stakeholders, and the public.

KPERS is embarking on a 5-year pension administration modernization project. The current Chief Benefits Officer is assuming a new role as Deputy Executive Director for Modernization for this initiative. The new **Chief Benefits Officer** will work closely with her/his predecessor during the life of this project.

The Chief Benefits Officer has four direct reports comprised of: Deputy Benefits Officer for Customer Service; Deputy Benefits Officer for Retirement Services; Manager of

Training and Education; and a Senior Payment Specialist. The total operating budget for the Division is \$5.3 million.

**Essential responsibilities include:**

- Strategic planning and management of all phases of benefit administration, related financial records, IRS compliance, customer service programs and benefit counseling.
- Development of action plans and benchmarks related to goals in the strategic plan.
- Ensuring consistent application of fiduciary standards when making decisions regarding eligibility and benefits.
- High-level management of retirement benefit programs including calculation and payment of benefits.
- Administration of the disability benefit programs, including activities handled through a third-party administrator or consultants by preparing RFPs, reviewing contracts, attending due diligence meetings, monitoring services provided, authorizing expenditures and making final decisions regarding denial of benefits.
- Monitoring the self-insured basic group life insurance program and monitoring options and customer service provided.
- Interpret new legislation and manage implementation of new operational policies and procedures, including coordination with other divisions and business units.
- Direct customer services delivered through multiple channels including contact center operations, member website, in person and virtual presentations and individual and group counseling.
- Oversee business aspects of detecting and investigating potentially fraudulent activities, including collaboration with security, technology and legal teams to develop and implement strategies to detect, prevent and deter fraud.
- Work with the System's attorneys on benefit issues, including testifying on behalf of KPERS during administrative appeals.
- Monitor the division budget and effectively communicate needs, both immediate and future, to the Executive Director, Fiscal Services, and Information Technology Divisions.
- Ensure appropriate member records are maintained and monitor related information systems and coordinate needs or enhancements with information technology staff.
- Provide general direction and oversight of educational programs for members and employers as well as divisional staff training.
- Prepare and make regular presentations and reports to the nine-member Board of Trustees.
- Make presentations to interested groups as requested.
- Serve as a member of the **System's** senior management team, participating in major decisions and performing special assignments as may be appropriate.
- Special projects as assigned by the Executive Director.

## EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

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- Undergraduate degree in business management, public administration, or closely related field from an accredited college or university is required.
- Five or more years of progressively responsible experience managing customer service activities related to public retirement or benefits administration.
- Five or more years of professional staff supervisory experience.
- Certification as a Certified Employee Benefits Specialist (CEBS) or Certificate of Achievement in Public Plan Policy (CAPPP), or related certifications are highly preferred.
- Prior experience working with and presenting to a public Board of Trustees is highly preferred.
- The ability to present complex ideas, both orally and written to a broad range of constituents in a professional and courteous manner.

## PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

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- High level of ethics and demonstrated commitment to transparency, accountability, efficiency and performance reporting.
- Unassailable standards of personal and professional integrity.
- Effective and persuasive oral and written communication, presentation, and negotiation skills.
- Professionalism to effectively represent the **System** with members, Trustees, employers, and the general public.
- Strong work ethic and dedication; results-driven and the ability to handle multiple priorities successfully.
- Strong problem solving and creative skills and the ability to exercise sound judgment and make decisions based on accurate and timely analysis.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate and manage well at all levels of the organization.
- Ability to establish and maintain positive relationships and team environment.
- Ability to foster a culture of teamwork, collaboration and mutual respect with team members at all levels and across the System.

## COMPENSATION

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Compensation will include a competitive base salary based on experience and qualifications of the successful candidate. The successful candidate will also participate in **KPERS'** excellent benefits package, including health, dental, vision, life and long-term disability insurance coverages; flexible spending account/health savings account; tuition assistance and professional development opportunities; and participation in **KPERS'** retirement plans. **KPERS** offers a generous paid time off package which includes vacation leave accrual based on the candidate's total number of years of relevant professional experience.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

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EFL Associates, an executive search firm, is assisting **KPERS** with this important search. All calls and inquiries should be made through the search firm. Referrals and applications will be held in confidence. Review of applications will begin immediately and will continue until the position is filled.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

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Our client and EFL Associates firmly support the principle and philosophy of equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of age, race, gender, creed, national origin, disability, veteran status or any other protected category pursuant to applicable federal, state or local law.

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