

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board

Customer Service Plan



Standards

When you apply for these benefits, you can expect us to process your application within the number of calendar days shown below and on the next page.

Type of application	We will make a decision within...
<p><i>Employee and spouse retirement benefits</i></p> <p>Filed in advance of the beginning date of your annuity</p>	<p>35 days of the beginning date of your annuity</p>
<p>Not filed in advance of the beginning date of your annuity</p>	<p>60 days of the date you file your application</p>
<p><i>Initial survivor benefits</i></p>	<p>60 days of the beginning date of your annuity</p>
<p><i>Conversion from spouse to survivor benefits</i></p>	<p>30 days of the date you file your application</p>
<p><i>Lump-sum death benefits</i></p>	<p>60 days of first notice of the employee's death</p>
<p><i>Unemployment and sickness insurance benefits</i></p> <p>Unemployment and sickness applications</p>	<p>10 days of the date you file</p>
<p>Subsequent claims for unemployment and sickness benefits when found entitled</p>	<p>10 days of the date we receive your claim</p>

Type of application	We will make a decision within...
<p><i>Disability benefits</i></p> <p>Note: Processing applications for disability benefits is more complex than our other benefits due to the need to develop medical evidence. When you file an application for disability benefits, our field office staff will provide you with additional information on our processing times for decisions and payments.</p>	<p>100 days of the date you file</p>

After our decision is completed

Notice of Award or Denial

You should receive a decision notice within 2 weeks.

Benefit Payment

If you are entitled to benefits, generally you can expect that the payment will be deposited in your bank account within 1 week of our decision.

Additional Information

Occasionally, claims for some benefits may take longer to handle than others if they are more complex, or if we have to get information from outside the agency. If this happens, we will give you an explanation and an estimate of the additional time required to make a decision.

If you do not receive your payment or decision notice within the time periods stated in our standards, contact the office where you filed your application or claim. They will provide the current status and an estimate of when you can expect a decision or payment.

Openness

- We will display in each office annually how well we are meeting the established standards.
- When you visit our offices, the staff you see will identify themselves by name.
- When you telephone us, we will identify ourselves by name.
- Our letters will be easy to understand and the person writing to you will give you his or her name, unless the letter is a computer-generated notice.

Accessibility

- If you have access to the Internet, you can get more information on the agency and its programs through our Web site, www.rrb.gov. The agency's ***Benefit Online Services*** at www.rrb.gov provides information regarding services that are currently available online. If you take advantage of these options, generally you can expect to receive services faster than if you handled these transactions by traditional methods, though these are still available. You can also send a secure message to a field office via our Web site.
- A toll-free automated Help Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-800-808-0772. You can use the Help Line to find the locations of RRB field offices, obtain information on unemployment-sickness benefits or statements of creditable service and compensation, request a letter to verify your current monthly benefit rate, secure a replacement Medicare card, or request a duplicate RRA tax statement.
- You may telephone our offices during our business hours if you have a question about your benefits. If you leave a message, we will generally return your call by the next business day.

- Before visiting one of our offices, we encourage you to make an appointment to enable us to service you more promptly. If you cannot come to our offices, we may be able to visit you at one of our regularly scheduled Customer OutReach Program service locations.
- When inquiring with us by letter, we will respond to you in a timely fashion. Generally this will be within 2 to 4 weeks depending on the nature of your letter. If we cannot answer your question fully within that time frame, we will acknowledge your contact and let you know when you can expect to receive a full response.

Accountability

- The information you provide us is protected under the provisions of the Privacy Act.
- If things go wrong, at the very least you are entitled to a good explanation and an apology.
- If you don't agree with our decision about your benefits, you have the right to ask for review and to appeal. We will tell you about these rights each time we make a decision about your benefits.
- A Customer Assessment Survey form is available in every office for you to tell us how we did and how we can improve our service.
- If you are not satisfied with our service, you may contact the manager of the office or the Regional Director who is responsible for that office. Their names and addresses are available in each office and on our Web site at www.rrb.gov.

Customer Service Pledge

The U.S. Railroad Retirement Board recognizes that all of its services are financed by our customers: the nation's railroad workers and employers. They are entitled to high quality service, responsive to their needs, provided efficiently and at a reasonable cost. This has been recognized in the agency mission statement:

In carrying out its mission, the Railroad Retirement Board will pay benefits to the right people, in the right amounts, in a timely manner, and will take appropriate action to safeguard our customers' trust funds. The Railroad Retirement Board will treat every person who comes into contact with the agency with courtesy and concern, and respond to all inquiries promptly, accurately and clearly.

The *Customer Service Plan* is centered on the following principles of public service: standards; openness; accessibility; and accountability. It is published nationally and posted in each office of the RRB in order to communicate these standards to our customers and to reinforce them with our employees. There is a clear presumption that our service will progressively improve as our operations become more efficient. The plan will be reviewed and updated periodically as we gain more experience with it and as we compare our service with the best in the private sector.

Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Railroad Retirement Board regulations, no qualified person may be discriminated against on the basis of disability. The Board's programs and activities must be accessible to all qualified applicants and beneficiaries, including those with impaired vision and/or hearing. Individuals with disabilities needing assistance (including auxiliary aids or program information in accessible formats) should contact the nearest Board office. Complaints of alleged discrimination by the Board on the basis of disability must be filed within 90 days in writing with the Director of Administration, U.S. Railroad Retirement Board, 844 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611-2092. Questions about individual rights under this regulation may be directed to the Board's Director of Equal Opportunity at the above address.

Fraud and Abuse Hot Line

Call the toll-free Hot Line if you have reason to believe that someone is receiving railroad retirement or unemployment-sickness benefits to which he or she is not entitled; that a person responsible for the financial affairs of a minor or other benefit recipients who are unable to manage their own affairs is misappropriating benefits; or that a doctor, hospital or other provider of health care services is performing unnecessary or inappropriate services or billing Medicare for services not provided. You may also use the Hot Line to report any suspected misconduct by a Railroad Retirement Board employee. The Hot Line has been installed by the Railroad Retirement Board's Inspector General to receive any evidence of such fraud or abuse of the Board's benefit programs.

The toll-free Hot Line number nationwide is 1-800-772-4258. Or you may send your complaints in writing to RRB, OIG, Hot Line Officer, 844 North Rush Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611-2092, or via e-mail at hotline@oig.rrb.gov.

Please do not call or write the Inspector General's Hot Line with questions about eligibility requirements, delayed payments, or similar problems. Such matters should be directed to the nearest Railroad Retirement Board office.