

NEWS RELEASE

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Mary-Joy Coburn Receives NCPERS 2024 Pension Communicator of the Year Award – Rising Star



Mary-Joy Coburn

Santa Ana, CA (January 29, 2025) – The National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems (NCPERS) has recognized Mary-Joy Coburn, Director of Communications at the Orange County Employees Retirement System (OCERS), with the 2024 Public Pension Communicator of the Year – Rising Star award. Ms. Coburn is the inaugural recipient of this newly established award category, which recognizes an individual who has been with their organization for five years or less, across all funding categories, and has demonstrated exceptional potential and growth in public pension communications.

“Public pensions thrive when talented individuals bring fresh perspectives and energy to the field, and Ms. Coburn is a shining example of that,” said Hank Kim, NCPERS Executive Director and

Counsel. “The Rising Star Award was established to honor professionals like her who are shaping the future of our industry. Ms. Coburn’s engaging and creative work on OCERS’ traditional and digital platforms demonstrates how effective communication can strengthen trust and understanding among stakeholders.”

In less than two years, Ms. Coburn has made a profound impact at OCERS by improving its communication strategy to prioritize clarity, transparency, and stakeholder engagement.

Highlights of her achievements include:

- **Revamping OCERS’ Digital Presence:** Modernizing the website, optimizing social media engagement, and redesigning the *OCERS by the Numbers* publication and *At Your Service* newsletter to be more visually appealing, digitally accessible, and timely sources of essential information for members.
- **Innovative Outreach Initiatives:** Producing dynamic and informative content and public service announcement videos to simplify complex retirement topics for diverse audiences.
- **Successful Social Media Campaigns:** Featuring events such as Retirement Security Week with impactful videos and posts, resulting in a 52% increase in engagement across all social media platforms.

- **Redesigned Quarterly Newsletter:** Incorporating engaging stories, videos, and QR codes linking to additional resources on the OCERS website, further enhancing member support and engagement.

With more than 15 years of experience in government and crisis communications, Ms. Coburn brings a wealth of expertise to her role. She holds degrees in Political Science and Broadcast Journalism, and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Public Administration.

The Public Pension Communicator of the Year Awards are prestigious honors recognizing communication professionals who demonstrate innovative leadership, creativity, and measurable impact, fostering trust and engagement within their organizations.

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About Orange County Employees Retirement System ([OCERS](#))

For 80 years, the Orange County Employees Retirement System (OCERS) has been dedicated to delivering retirement, death, disability, and cost-of-living benefits to the employees of our 13 participating employers, which include the County of Orange, various special districts, and the City of San Juan Capistrano. Our mission is to deliver secure retirement and disability benefits with premier service quality.

About NCPERS

Established in 1941, the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems ([NCPERS](#)) is the largest trade association working on behalf of public sector retirement systems. Organized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a diverse membership that includes 500 plans, plan sponsors, and stakeholders who collectively oversee approximately \$6 trillion in retirement funds, NCPERS works to protect and expand pension access through essential [education](#), innovative [research](#), and unwavering [advocacy](#). From the largest statewide systems to the smallest local funds, NCPERS members make possible the work to safeguard the retirement security of more than 20 million teachers, police, firefighters, and other public servants.

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