



Why designate a beneficiary?

If a member passes away, TRS must distribute the member's **account balance** and other benefits (if any) to the member's surviving beneficiaries. For this reason, all TRS members should review and update their beneficiary records regularly, especially after major life changes such as marriage or divorce.

TIP

Your **account balance** consists of all contributions you have paid into TRS, plus interest. You can view your current TRS account balance in **My TRS**.

IMPORTANT: Before you submit a beneficiary designation to TRS, be sure you have read **TRS Fact Sheet: Beneficiary Designations for Active Members**, available on the TRS website (trs.mt.gov). It describes your responsibilities and TRS's legal obligations regarding payment to beneficiaries in the event of a member's death.

There are two ways to submit a new beneficiary designation to TRS:

- ▶ You can complete and submit **TRS Form 123** (available on the TRS website)
- ▶ Or you can update your beneficiaries in **My TRS**, the online member account system. See Page 2 for more information.
 - *Exception: You cannot designate a Trust beneficiary online.*

TIP

TRS requires the following information for any individual you designate as your beneficiary:

- their full legal name
- their SSN
- their date of birth

If you *remove* or *change* an existing Spouse beneficiary due to death or divorce, TRS also requires:

- the spouse's date of death (if applicable)
- date of divorce and court name (if applicable) – or
- the spouse's notarized signature or a court order authorizing the change (if a divorce is pending)

See "How to" information on the next page.



How to review your current beneficiary designation in My TRS

1. Log into **My TRS** and select “My Beneficiaries” from the menu.
2. Review your existing beneficiary or beneficiaries, if any.
 - ◆ If you see a pencil icon  to the right of a listed beneficiary, you can click it to make corrections to the beneficiary’s mailing address, phone, or email address.
 - *Note:* If no pencil icon is shown, it means you can’t change this beneficiary’s contact information. This might be because your beneficiary is also a TRS member.
 - ◆ To make other changes, such as to add or remove a beneficiary, you will need to submit a new beneficiary designation to TRS.

How to submit an Online Beneficiary Designation using My TRS

1. First, review the “My Contact Information” screen. If your mailing address, phone number and email are not current, update them before proceeding.
2. Then, access the “My Beneficiaries” screen. Do you see a button that looks like this?  If you do, it means you may update your beneficiaries online. Click the button to begin the process.
 - ◆ *Tip:* You have until midnight to complete and submit your Online Beneficiary Designation. If you cancel the process or if you are unable to finish by midnight of the same day, don’t worry – your existing beneficiaries remain in effect.
3. Follow the on-screen instructions to **keep or delete** each existing beneficiary.
 - ◆ You will be able to update certain information for beneficiaries that you keep.
4. Then **add** new beneficiaries, if desired.
5. Finally, **verify** and **submit** your Online Beneficiary Designation to TRS.
 - ◆ *Important:* If your submission includes a request to remove a spouse beneficiary while a divorce is pending, you will be required to mail additional documentation (spousal waiver or court order) to TRS before your designation can be processed.

What happens next?

TRS usually can process your new beneficiary designation within 10 business days, whether you sent in TRS Form 123 or you submitted your designation online. TRS staff may need to contact you if any information is missing.

Once processed, you’ll be able to view your updated beneficiary records in **My TRS**.

Failure to provide required documentation. Certain actions – like removing a spouse beneficiary when a divorce is pending – require that you send additional documentation to TRS. If you do not provide the required information, TRS will not process your new beneficiary designation and your existing beneficiaries will remain in effect.