

# Financial focus

FINANCIAL SECURITY FOR YOUR GOLDEN YEARS



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## 2015 Investment Returns Slightly Negative

By Tom Pfeifle  
EPCRP Executive Director

The Plan experienced a slightly negative return for 2015, returning -.6% for the past year. This return, while disappointing, confirms that the rebound in the equity markets since the 2008 downturn is definitely slowing down. The -.6% return on the fund is far from our target long-term return goal of 8% annually.

The fair value of the portfolio at the end of the year was approximately \$320.9 million, a decrease of over \$ 2.5 million from last year. The bulk of this decrease was due to:

- Chinese market volatility
- Continued drop in the price of oil internationally adversely impacting domestic markets and products

Real Estate was by far the most positive story for 2015 and the only portfolio segment in the black, earning nearly 13% for the

year. The next closest asset category was Hedge Funds at -.3%, followed closely by fixed income at -1.5%. Private Equity was the biggest disappointment, dropping -7.8% for the year, and International markets continue to be flat in the face of economic pressures there.

The board monitors all investments on an ongoing basis, but adopts a new investment policy at least annually. Our

current policy is available on our website at [www.epcretirement.org](http://www.epcretirement.org) under Investments.

Looking forward, the board will continue to examine existing asset classes for opportunities to incrementally increase returns. We will also consider new asset classes to add to our portfolio, as well as the appropriateness of those asset classes for the Plan. Achieving a long-term return of 8% with appropriate risk remains our goal.

### El Paso County Retirement Plan Asset Allocation and Policy

Total Plan as of Dec. 31, 2015

Asset Class	Market Value	Actual %	Policy Range %
Domestic Equity	\$ 130,762,910	40.7	30 - 45
International Equity	\$ 58,321,612	18.2	15 - 25
Private Equity	\$ 946,919	0.3	0 - 5
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>\$ 190,031,441</b>	<b>59.2</b>	<b>45 - 75</b>
<b>Domestic Fixed Income</b>	<b>\$ 52,347,709</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>10 - 25</b>
<b>Real Estate</b>	<b>\$ 61,471,147</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>10 - 25</b>
<b>Hedge Funds</b>	<b>\$ 16,546,660</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>0 - 10</b>
<b>Cash</b>	<b>\$ 497,029</b>	<b>.1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$320,893,986</b>	<b>100%</b>	



## How to Protect Yourself Against Phone Scams

As many senior citizens spend their retirement traveling with family, pursuing second careers or becoming more active in the community, con artists are creating devious schemes to prey on their accumulated wealth. Many senior citizens are receiving phone calls from scammers who purport to be IRS agents, Medicare claims officers, bank officials, and many more. They claim to be calling about unpaid back taxes, problems with medical claims, account verifications, or other pressing matters designed to gain trust with retirees, but are in reality designed to steal identifying information to gain access to financial and other important records, including their identity.

Here are some common best practices to use when communicating via phone with anyone who solicits information from you:

1. NEVER GIVE OUT ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION to someone who solicits from you without reaching out to them FIRST! This includes information such as your Social Security Number, date of birth, place of birth, account numbers or any other private information. No legitimate caller would ask for such information!
2. Even if feeling pressured to do so immediately, DO NOT make any PAYMENTS until you verify the caller's identity. This means hanging up and calling the number back, or researching the number online or with proper authorities the identity behind the phone number contacting you. If they seem suspect, HANG UP IMMEDIATELY!
3. Get a Caller ID service to help you identify which calls are legitimate and those that are not.
4. ASK QUESTIONS!! - What is the purpose of this call? Who is calling? Why am I confirming information if you already have it? The more you ask, the more likely you are to identify those that are calling for purposes other than what is in your best interest! It is NOT RUDE to ask callers to identify themselves or ask the reason for their call.
5. Join the National Do Not Call Registry to have your number(s) removed for sales or other solicitations you do not want to receive.
6. Be suspicious. Being skeptical can be difficult. However, being generally suspicious of cold calls that promise huge benefits is an effective way to stay protected.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has an excellent site, including an up to date breakdown of the most common scams reported, as well as advice on appropriate actions to take if you suspect you have been a victim of a phone scam. You can link to this page at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0076-phone-scams>, or contact the FTC by phone at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357).

Remember, keeping silent if you suspect you have been a victim of a phone scam only hurts YOU, and gives those that perpetrated such crimes time to get away and, even worse, to claim more victims! Report any/all suspicious activity to your local police or Sheriff's office, or Federal authorities via the FTC.

### Retirement Board

**Ray Bernier**  
BOARD MEMBER  
Member Elected

**Mark Lowderman**  
TREASURER  
Current El Paso County  
Treasurer

**Rebecca Ellis**  
VICE-CHAIR  
BOCC Appointed

**David Guest**  
ASSOCIATE BOARD  
MEMBER

*Board meetings are held on the fourth Monday of every month, except for June and December.*

**Nicola Sapp**  
CHAIRWOMAN  
Member Elected

**Michael Pennica**  
SECRETARY  
BOCC Appointed

**Michael Varnet**  
ASSOCIATE BOARD  
MEMBER

*Contact the retirement office (719) 520-7490 for the location.*

# 3 Household Management Apps to Better Organize Your Life

By Lauren Otto

The Dime – Spring 2016

The advent of the smartphone is changing the way people live their lives, and no one thing has altered the way people organize their time than smartphone apps. While many are out there and readily available, here are three applications that you can try. They might just help you feel more in control and connected to your family!

## Avocado

Avocado is great app for couples to stay connected. You can share lists, calendars and photos within the app. The app also has a messaging feature. The calendar feature is very nice and easy to use, plus you can connect your Google calendar, making all of your events and appointments easy to find in one place. You are limited to 5 lists with the free version but depending on your needs, that may be enough. You can upgrade to the full version for \$2 a month, or \$14.99 for a year that allows you to create unlimited lists and share unlimited photos. You can turn on and off push notifications or set it up where all of your notifications run through the messaging feature. It also sends you a notification when your partner's phone battery is low!

## Wunderlist

Wunderlist, like its name implies, is wonderful for sharing lists. The app itself is super easy to use. You can share lists with anyone who has the app. This allows you to share grocery lists with one person, while sharing holiday planning lists with someone else. You can add multiple people to the same lists and everything updates in real time! You can further assign lists to people and add due dates, as well as set up reminders that will only notify the person assigned to that item. Not only can you add due dates, but you can add notes, pictures or documents. It is also great for to-do lists to be able to add documents or notes that are important. You can even search your lists for keywords or tags. It further allows you to organize lists with folders and subtasks so you can use Wunderlist as a lifestyle project management tool as well.

## Cozi

Cozi is great if you are looking to organize your whole family. While you can share lists and calendars with Cozi, you can also share family journals and recipes. You can do fun things with your lists on Cozi such as



check, uncheck or clear entire lists at once, or send a list via email. There are numerous organizational options, and everything is easy to see in the "Cozi Today" section. The shared calendar feature allows you to avoid double booking your family, and maintains everyone's schedule all in one place! Many of the features are limited, though, unless you upgrade to Cozi Gold, which is \$19.99 for the year. The Cozi Gold version covers your whole family and every device. Other upgraded features include multiple reminders, more notification options and a "Shopping Mode", which brings your list to a full screen view that won't dim or rotate even if you put your phone in your pocket!

These are just a few apps that can make your life easier. Be bold, and try some of these yourself. It could provide the answer to a more manageable lifestyle for you!

## Life Doesn't Stop When You Retire

Call EPCRP at (719) 520-7490 and let us know if you have any changes to your beneficiaries. This helps ensure that any benefits payable when you pass away are processed efficiently and according to your wishes.

Let us know when your marital status changes, too, whether due to divorce or marriage, or if your spouse passes away.

Plus, keep EPCRP contact information with your important papers. This makes it easier for your loved ones to contact us.

## El Paso County Retirement Plan



**Thomas Pfeifle**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Dana Fuller**  
SENIOR RETIREMENT  
COUNSELOR

2880 International Circle,  
Suite N30  
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Phone: (719) 520-7490  
Fax: (719) 520-7495

[www.epcretirement.org](http://www.epcretirement.org)

# Colorado Pension Exclusion Law Explained



Once you begin receiving your retirement pay, it is important to understand that your benefit from this Plan is entirely taxable in the year in which you receive payments. While that can add some anxiety to planning your retirement, it is important to note that Colorado DOES EXCLUDE such pension amounts from taxation, up to certain limits.

Currently, Colorado law excludes from Colorado state income tax total pension income up to \$20,000 per year per person for those retirees age 55 through 64, or \$24,000 for those retirees age 65 and over. The retiree's

age on December 31 is used to determine the exclusion amount for that year. Pension income includes your EPCRP retirement benefit, Social Security payments, certain other retirement pensions, and distributions from Individual Retirement Accounts and tax-deferred savings plans. These plans include, but are not limited to, Deferred Compensation Plans under IRC Section 457, as well as IRC code 403(b), 401(a), and 401(k) plans. Persons receiving a survivor benefit, regardless of age, also qualify for this pension exclusion.

Please ask your financial or tax professional about specific details, and how this exclusion applies to your individual situation.

[www.epcretirement.org](http://www.epcretirement.org)



**El Paso County Retirement Plan**

2880 International Circle, Suite N030  
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

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