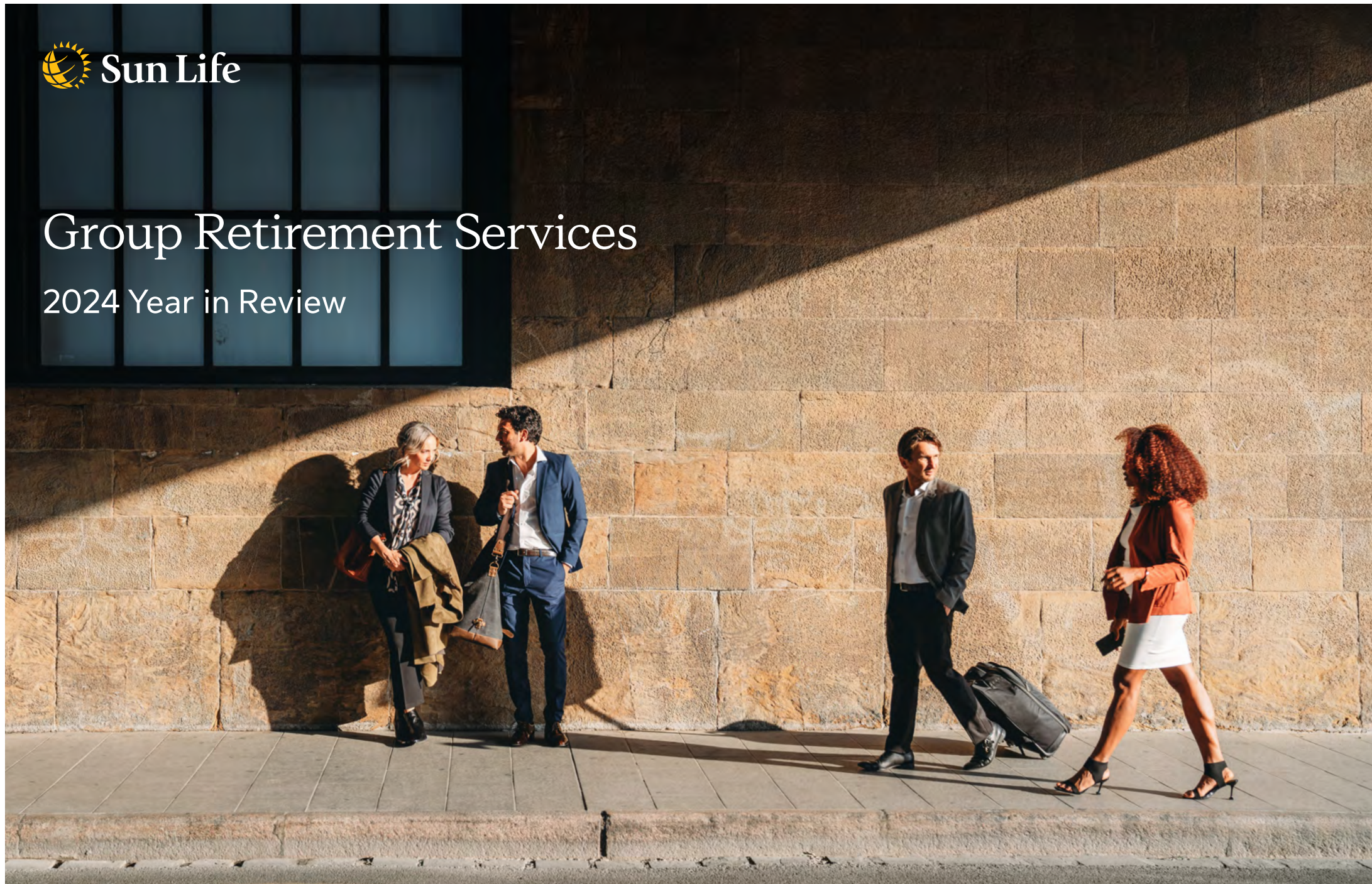




Group Retirement Services

2024 Year in Review



Group Retirement Services are provided by Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada, a member of the Sun Life group of companies.
© Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada. All rights reserved.

1. Financial security and retirement readiness
2. Digital innovation
3. Market research, insights, data and advocacy
4. A look ahead: 2025





1.

Financial security and retirement readiness

Boosting the financial health of plan members – from hire to retire and beyond

We're committed to helping you support plan members improve their financial security – both during their careers and throughout retirement. We continue to engage with them early on and provide access to retirement planning tools and learning opportunities. This ensures plan members can make the most of the savings plans you provide.

We also provide nudges at pivotal moments in their savings journey. Our 2024 RRSP campaign was a great example of this. It generated the highest level of plan member engagement ever, leading to more savings and better financial health. Initiatives like this contribute to retirement readiness – something that's critical to both you and your plan members.

This year marked a significant milestone in our support for plan members with the launch of our *MyRetirement Income* offering. This first-of-its-kind retirement income product combines steady income with withdrawal flexibility, making it a true game-changer within our lineup of decumulation solutions.



Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) campaign

An RRSP is one of the most effective ways for plan members to work towards their saving goals while benefiting from tax-sheltered investment growth.

Sun Life ran another successful RRSP campaign reaching out to plan members encouraging them to enrol and contribute to their group RRSP. We presented an RRSP message across our web and mobile zones to over 540,000 plan members. Over 156,000 of them engaged with our messages. These results represent our highest engagement rate to date at 28%.



Encouraging plan members to invest in a future they're excited about with a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA)

A Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) is a great way for plan members to invest their money and stay on track with their personal savings goals. Each year we run a TFSA campaign to educate plan members, helping them build their financial resiliency. Throughout this campaign, we encourage them to use a TFSA to stay on track with their savings goals.



Capital gains campaign for plan members in Non-Registered plans

We launched an awareness campaign about capital gains or losses in Non-Registered plans. This campaign will become part of Sun Life's regular campaigns going forward in order to help plan members make informed investment and tax planning decisions.

The campaign provides information on how:

- Segregated funds work
- The various ways their investment could generate capital gains or losses

We'll only include Non-Registered plan members who have money in a Non-Registered plan within these campaigns.

Financial Literacy campaign

November is [Financial Literacy Month in Canada](#). Every year, Sun Life participates in this campaign, encouraging plan members to take action when it comes to their retirement savings opportunities and managing their money wisely. Throughout the month of November, we engaged with plan members to strengthen their financial literacy and encourage them to save for their future.

Financial Wellness Webinars

Our free financial education webinar series aims to strengthen the financial literacy of plan members.

This year, each webinar covered a different stage of the financial journey. The following are some of the topics from 2024:

- Understanding credit and debt
- Newcomers to Canada
- Financial considerations for women
- Save for retirement now

Navigating Retirement in Canada: Four key takeaways from our survey for Canadian retirees

Sun Life and The Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) partnered on a survey to gather the retirement perspectives and experiences of those approaching retirement and those already retired.

With over 3,500 responses to this survey which highlighted a respondent's general awareness and use of financial products, sentiments on their retirement experience, health impacts in retirement and how they're planning or planned for retirement.

Four key takeaways we gathered from the results:

- 1. Ensure Canadians have readily available information by providing advice at scale, leveraging digital tools and creating omni-channel engagement strategies.
- 2. Engagement with plan members at earlier life stages to ensure they feel supported in their retirement planning.
- 3. Offering ongoing support and advice to those in-retirement, ensuring they feel supported as their life circumstances change.
- 4. Empower retirees with support that addresses all their holistic needs.

[Download the full infographic here.](#)

In November, CARP hosted a webinar that featured a deep dive into Sun Life’s decumulation solution, *MyRetirement Income*. The event offered a unique opportunity to hear from both industry professionals and a retiree’s personal experiences.

Watch a recording of the webinar [here](#). (English only).



Introducing Sun Life MyRetirement Income: A first-of-its-kind “target age” solution

This year, Group Retirement Services and Global Investments introduced a new target age retirement solution: *Sun Life MyRetirement Income*. This new solution isn’t available anywhere else in Canada. It provides all the benefits plan members want with an easy transition from saving, to drawing income in retirement.

One third of Canadians find it challenging to plan for retirement in Canada and there is no one-size-fits-all retirement income solution. *Sun Life MyRetirement Income* offers many important and simplified features that plan members are looking for:

- Regular income. Receive payments all the way through retirement up to the

plan members selected maturity age. Annual payment recalculations will factor in investment performance and account changes.

- Flexibility. Plan members can add or withdraw money at any time, as well as change their maturity age or payment frequency.
- Retirement affordability. It offers plan members a steady budget so they know how much they can spend each year, so they don’t spend too much, or too little.

At Sun Life, we want to manage the uncertainty around retirement and give plan members confidence that we can help them live a secure and fulfilling retirement.

Learn more [here](#).

Enhanced SunAdvantage™ my savings product and digitization of our Clients experience

We launched our new SunAdvantage™ my savings product, which features a new plan design, a complete digital experience for plan sponsors, [and a revamped website](#) – with enhanced communication and support.

In addition, digital services were also enabled for all existing SunAdvantage my savings Clients, like online enrolment and the ability to edit to individual plan member accounts.



DB Solutions: 2024 Milestone

In 2024, the Canadian pension risk transfer market hit an amazing milestone with over \$60 billion of cumulative pension promises transferred from defined benefit pension plans to insurers. Sun Life’s DB Solutions is responsible for approximately \$21 billion, or about a third of the market and is now responsible for the monthly pensions of over 125,000 annuitants.

Expanding the fund offerings on our Core investment platform

In August, we announced the addition of three PineStone Asset Management Inc. funds to the Core investment platform. They include the PineStone U.S. Equity, PineStone International Equity and PineStone Global Equity Segregated Funds.

In September, we also announced the addition of Boston Partners Global Investors, Inc. as a new investment manager on Sun Life's core platform. The addition of Boston Partners as a new investment partner demonstrates our commitment to enhance our platform with managers and funds, which appeal to Clients and that complement our existing options. The funds add breadth to our foreign equity offerings that are managed with a Value investment style.

Updated Morningstar web experience

We've recently updated the Morningstar funds reporting experience on the plan sponsor and plan member sites. The new interface is simpler and easier to use and navigate. With the new functionality, users can view and compare funds more dynamically. They can also export fund information into Excel to use as needed. The Morningstar Fund Information report has also been refreshed. It's more dynamic, contains additional data points and features new ways to measure fund performance.

To learn more about the updates, [read this article](#).



360 Plan Advice

Over one million group plan members have access to advice and planning from our licensed financial services consultants*. In addition, Sun Life One Plan can provide actions to help them achieve their financial and retirement goals.

**Registered as financial security advisors in Quebec.*

Retirement Planner

Designed to give plan members the support and guidance they need when planning for their retirement. This year we launched our new Retirement Planner, a tool that helps plan members create a personalized financial roadmap in less than five minutes.

Plan members can log in to mysunlife.ca to easily access the tool. Once they start using the Retirement Planner, they'll be able to review their strategies or make updates any time they need to.

The Retirement Planner offers a shortened experience of our Sun Life One Plan, which is also available to plan members.

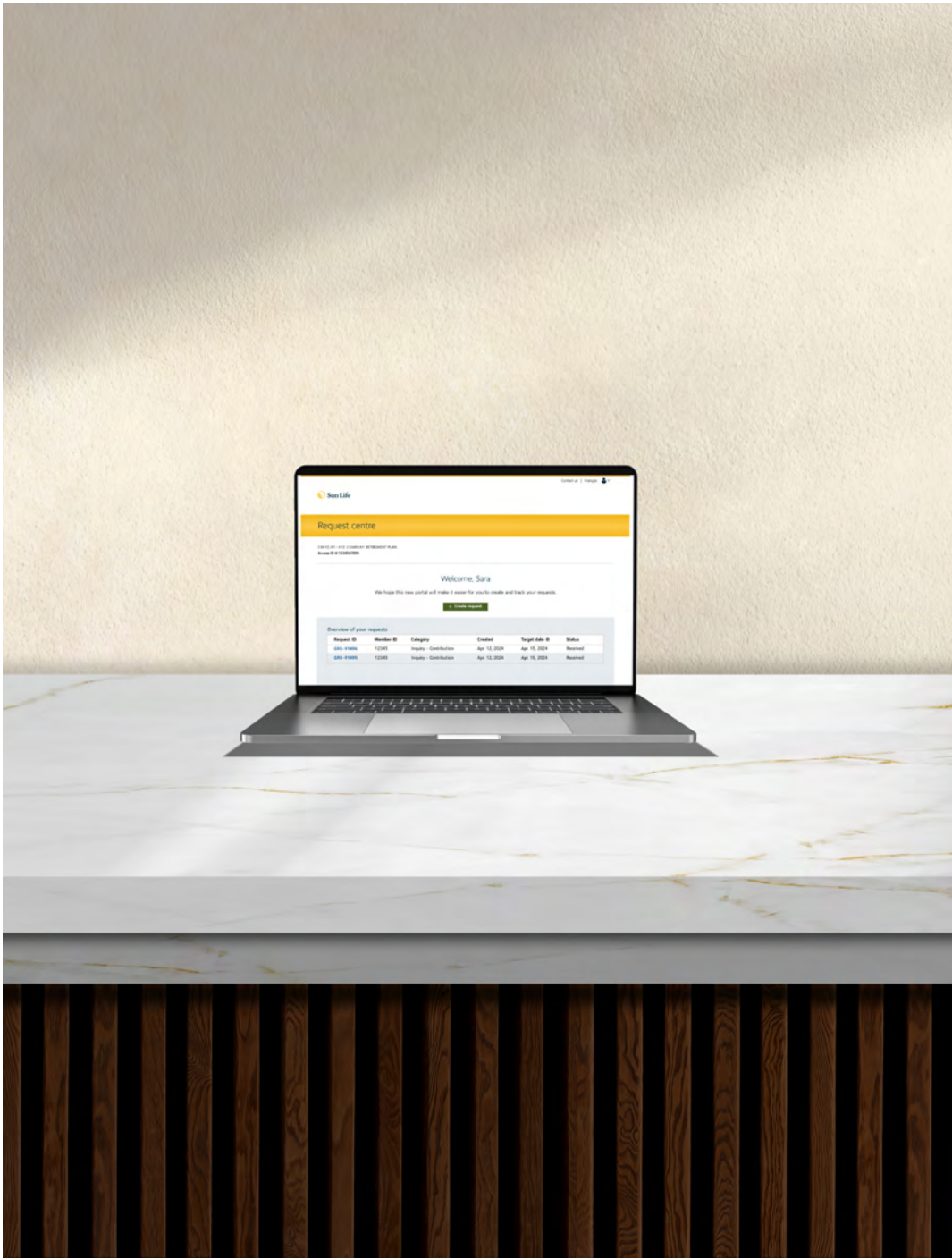


Decumulation Hub

In September, we launched the updated Decumulation Hub.

The new Hub provides information about Sun Life's latest decumulation offerings to help ease the challenge of turning accumulated wealth into retirement income.

There will be more updates to the [Decumulation Hub](#) in early 2025.



2. Digital Innovation

Leveraging technology to optimize the experience for you and your plan members

We continue to transform our service delivery by digitizing the business, simplifying processes and automating services. In 2024, this transformation included the enhancement to our sponsor request and resource centres. We also continue to make it easier to navigate the plan sponsor website, with our video series.

For plan members, we created an even better plan experience, making it easier to use and review their plan. This included enhancements to the mobile app to make contributions easier, and a more streamlined process for online withdrawals.

Here's an overview of the key enhancements that we delivered in 2024.



Planalytics: Your reporting tool

This year, we introduced a redesigned version of Planalytics that offers more insightful and dynamic reporting capabilities. The new design highlights key results, drives actionable insights, and suggests actions plan sponsors can take to support the ongoing review of their workplace savings plans.

You can learn more about Planalytics [here](#).

Request Centre for plan sponsors

Request Centre was designed to help our Clients keep track of all their plan administration activities and requests organized in one spot. We continued to add new features and enhancements to the Request Centre throughout 2024, including *Inquiry* feature and proactive e-mail notifications. With the feature, you can ask questions or add comments to your requests that will be viewed and replied to by the Operations team. This organized conversation thread experience is especially helpful for managing more complex inquiries.

Haven't tried the Request Centre yet? [Sign in to the sponsor secure website](#) and check it out today!

Watch this short (one minute) [overview video](#) to see how easy and efficient the Request Centre is.

Stay tuned as there are more great Request Centre updates to come in 2025!

Sponsor Resource Centre

We've updated our Sponsor Resource Center with the following:

New! [Financial Education section](#)

We've created a new financial education tab that is organized by topic and consists of resources (presentations, promotional posters, email templates) that Clients and advisors can use to provide financial education sessions for plan members. These sessions can help them grow their knowledge and take control of their money, no matter how much they already know. Topics include money management, investing, retirement planning and more.

New! [Campaign section](#)

We've created a new section that provides email templates and marketing collateral for you to share with plan members. These align with our

[campaigns](#) and provides an opportunity to cross-promote these products and services along side our campaigns or off-cycle.

To start, we've included:

- *Three Retirement campaigns*, introducing the "Learn – Plan – Do" concept.
- *my Sun Life Registration Campaign*, encouraging plan members to register on [mysunlife.ca](#) and the my Sun Life mobile application,
- *E-Beneficiary Campaign*, nudging plan members who have access to the online beneficiary tool to review, update, or add a beneficiary for eligible products.

New campaigns will be added in 2025.

[Planning for retirement section](#)

We've updated the content to make it easier for you to find what best suits plan member needs.



Withdrawal redesign for members

We've revamped our online withdrawal process for plan members. The redesigned tool provides an easier and more streamlined experience, while also ensuring all member transactions are secure via fraud controls that will remain in place.

What's changed?

- To offer a more intuitive and user-friendly experience, we've redesigned the sequence of steps required by plan members to make withdrawals from their plan.
- The new flow contains only information that is relevant to the plan member's withdrawal process.
- Revised content makes it clearer and easier for plan members to understand our rules and provides follow-up information in a timelier manner.
- New product restriction messages will help plan members better understand why they may be unable to withdraw from certain products online.

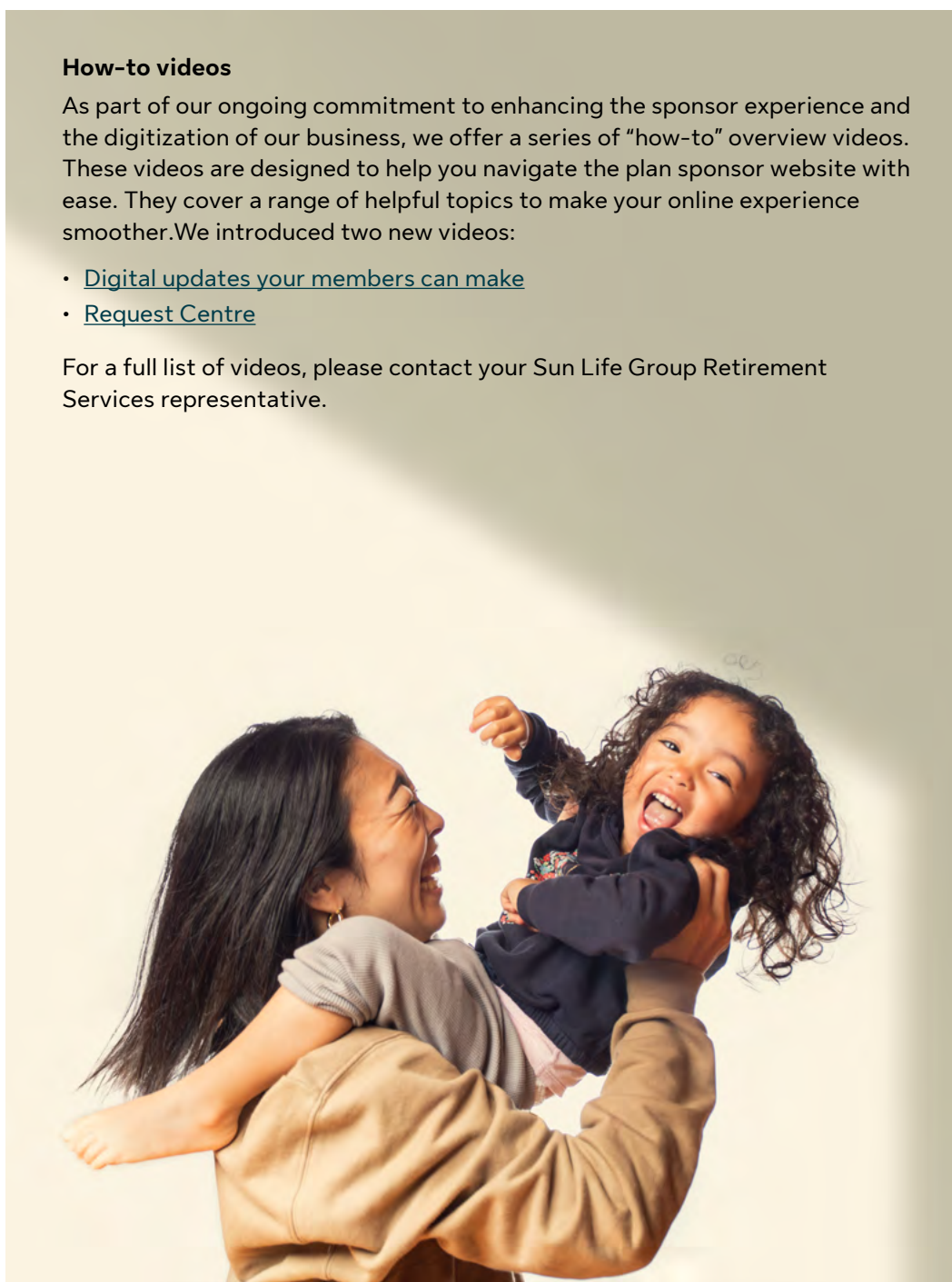
We gradually rolled out these enhancements in 2024 and will continue to make them available to all our Clients in 2025, depending on plan design.

How-to videos

As part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing the sponsor experience and the digitization of our business, we offer a series of "how-to" overview videos. These videos are designed to help you navigate the plan sponsor website with ease. They cover a range of helpful topics to make your online experience smoother. We introduced two new videos:

- [Digital updates your members can make](#)
- [Request Centre](#)

For a full list of videos, please contact your Sun Life Group Retirement Services representative.



Recurring and one-time contributions on the my Sun Life mobile app

Sun Life continues to make improvements to the mobile app to provide a simplified and convenient user experience. This year the following enhancements were rolled out to plan members in the *my Sun Life Mobile app*:

Recurring Contributions

- A new digitized experience for plans that offer Automatic Cheque Plan (ACP) deposit. Plan members will now have the ability to skip the paper forms and setup their recurring contributions digitally through the my Sun Life mobile app.

One-Time Contributions

- Lump-sum deposits can now be performed in the mobile app.

Improvements to our digital Asset Consolidation tool

We implemented improvements to better support your plan members through the process of combining their outside savings with their Sun Life plan.

Plan members who leave the Asset Consolidation tool before completing the process will receive an email offering them additional support. The email will outline the benefits of asset consolidation and encourage them to continue using the digital tool or seek further assistance if needed.



3.

Market research, insights, data and advocacy

Helping you make informed decisions about your retirement plan

The retirement savings landscape is constantly evolving, and knowledge of these changes can be essential to effective plan management.

We'll always keep you informed about current trends and what's on the horizon. And our research and thought leadership provides insights to help you maximize your plan's effectiveness and consider plan changes. We also continue to advocate with regulators and governments to represent the interests of you and your plan members. Here's an overview of the key insights we delivered in 2024.



GRS 2024 Market Update webinar

In March, we hosted our GRS Market Update. With over 200 live attendees, the webinar featured a panel of investment experts:

- Tiffany Wilding, Managing Director, North American Economist, PIMCO
- Ashwin Gopwani, Managing Director, Head of Retirement Solutions, North America, SLC Management
- Jafer Naqvi, Vice President & Director, Lead of Institutional Asset Allocation Team, TD Asset Management

The panel discussed how economic themes are being reflected in portfolio positioning and investment opportunities and the role of active vs passive investments.

Designed for savings: Digital engagement

The *Designed for Savings: Digital engagement* supplemental report uncovered the impact of digital engagement on members group savings plans.

Data from Sun Life Clients showed that digitally engaged plan members have higher savings, more confidence in their plans, and better retirement outcomes.

There is a clear correlation between digital engagement and retirement preparedness. Digitally engaged plan members had account balances 230% *higher* than non-engaged plan members. They also had higher contribution rates, better utilization of employer matches, and were more likely to make voluntary contributions.

Additionally, digitally engaged plan members were more likely to designate beneficiaries, hold target date funds, make lump sum contributions, and transfer assets from other institutions. They also had lower withdrawal rates compared to non-digital members.

The report emphasizes that enabling digital access benefits both plan members and sponsors, driving positive retirement outcomes, regardless of member age.

You can access the full report on the [Designed for Savings webpage](#).

New Bright Papers

In October, we shared two new Bright Papers:

[Our global equity manager is underperforming – should we worry?](#)

This Bright Paper highlights important topics related to global equity investing, particularly focusing on how recent trends are impacting investment strategies. It looks at how the concentration in large-cap tech stocks, often referred to as the 'Magnificent 7,' have made them the dominant contributors to market returns. The report emphasizes that fiduciaries should take a broader approach to performance evaluation. This approach considers manager style, process and philosophy, as well as the plan member experience of absolute returns.

[Are ETFs an obvious choice for Capital Accumulation Plans?](#)

Passive or index investing is a compelling option within Capital Accumulation Plan's (CAP). While pooled index funds are currently the common option for passive investing, Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) may be another obvious choice to offer plan members. The article explores key considerations for CAP sponsors when comparing pooled index funds to ETFs. This includes fees and expenses, record-keeper fees, brokerage commissions and transaction fees.

For more articles and other thought leadership pieces visit our [Bright Papers page](#).





DC Plan Summit

This presentation by Sun Life's VP of Market Development and Strategy Jean-Michel (JM) Lavoie and our technology partner Conquest Planning, focused on the role of technology in crafting decumulation strategies.

They highlighted the increasing responsibility plan sponsors feel towards pre-retirees and retirees, emphasizing the need for tailored solutions that offer control, flexibility, and alignment with personal lifestyle choices.

The importance of technology in providing personalized retirement planning at scale was underlined. Tools like One Plan help simplify the retirement planning process, allowing users to explore different scenarios.

This technological approach, combined with education, engagement, and a range of flexible products, aims to address the complex challenge of decumulation planning for millions of individuals, each with unique needs and preferences.

Canadian Pension & Benefits Institute (CPBI) National Forum

Sun Life presented the latest on how Canadians are preparing for retirement, with a focus on the decumulation phase in the context of workplace savings plans.

The shift from Defined Benefit to Defined Contribution pensions has made retirement planning more complex, especially in the private sector where only 9-10% of employees now have DB pensions. Group savings plans, including DC pensions and group RRSPs, have become increasingly important, with over \$260 billion in assets as of 2021.

The decumulation phase presents unique challenges, as individuals must manage various risks including longevity, inflation, and healthcare costs. To address these issues, Sun Life has developed a three-pillar approach to decumulation, focusing on engagement and advice, seamless client experience, and innovative products.

As Canada faces a significant wealth transfer, with 73.4% of wealth expected to be held by Gen X and Baby Boomers by 2030, the need for comprehensive decumulation strategies becomes even more critical for ensuring financial security in retirement.

The Association of Canadian Pension Management (ACPM) national conference

This presentation explored the application of Generative AI in financial institutions and its broader economic impact.

AI has the potential to significantly boost economic growth, with ChatGPT's rapid adoption serving as a testament to its transformative power. The technology is poised to revolutionize various industries by enhancing knowledge worker efficiency, automating tedious tasks, and accelerating information retrieval through Q&A interactions. These applications can streamline operations,

improve decision-making processes, and increase overall productivity in financial institutions.

Key lessons learned from AI adoption include the importance of effective prompt engineering to optimize AI interactions and the need for robust change management strategies.

Sun Life highlighted the importance of addressing ethical considerations and regulatory frameworks, such as the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) "EDGE" framework, which emphasizes explainability, data stewardship, governance, and ethical alignment in AI implementation.





ESG Toolkit

The Investment Solutions team has created an ESG toolkit to help you understand the ESG principles of the newly released CAPSA Risk Management Guideline. Our goal is to help you understand and comply with this new CAPSA guidance and best practices. The Investment Solutions team will support you with leveraging our proprietary ESG evaluation framework for the investment managers and funds on our platform. We're here to help you formalize and document your ESG policies and ensure communications help your plan members make informed investment decisions.

This toolkit will also include two plan sponsor case studies which feature real-life examples of how our CAP plan sponsors are incorporating ESG into their plans.

Please contact your Investment Solutions Executive to learn more about these best practices.

Commitment to Advocacy

With our Clients in mind, we're driving advocacy in the pension space by championing Sun Life's position on key public policy files.

Sun Life was successful in securing changes to the Canadian Association of Pension Supervisory Authorities' (CAPSA) Guideline No. 3 – Guidelines for Capital Accumulation Plans.

Wins include:

- Streamlined requirements in member statements;
- Generally positive statements from CAPSA on automatic features; and
- Grace period for implementation until January 1, 2026, where IT or process changes are required.

The new guideline provides modernized guidance based on the current CAP landscape. New elements of the guideline include product innovations such as auto-features, a focus on plan governance and clarifying plan sponsor, service provider and plan member

responsibilities. It also focuses on the importance of ensuring all aspects of the plan are aligned with its purpose and improving plan member outcomes, including plan member education and communications, investment selection and decision-making tools.

The guideline applies to all types of CAPs. Many of the changes in the 2024 guideline reflect best practices that have evolved since 2004 and that are already industry standards. As an industry leader, we've always offered our services in alignment with CAPSA guidelines as a minimum. We've also led the industry in moving beyond what is required, to implementing innovations that have improved plan member outcomes. We're committed to supporting our Clients in meeting guideline requirements. Plan sponsors and administrators have until January 1, 2026, to make any updates required.

Further, we played a key role in the development of CAPSA Guideline No. 10 – Guideline for Risk Management for Plan

Administrators. Specifically, we were members of a CAPSA Industry Working Group that worked to support the development and review of the guideline. Our staff were also instrumental to the development of the Guideline's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) content, and we provided feedback to CAPSA's consultations on the Guideline and its content.

We continue to be involved in discussions regarding other key files such as decumulation, specifically, Variable Payment Lifetime Annuities (VPLA), and automatic features.

Sun Life is a valued pension stakeholder and thought leader that governments and regulators across Canada consult on pension policy. We do this by participating in public consultations, leading discussions within our industry, and meeting with government and regulators. These activities are guided by our Purpose of helping Canadians achieve lifetime financial security and live healthier lives.





4.

There's more on the way – our enhancements and innovations continue

We continue to evolve our solutions and services to provide the best retirement planning experience possible. And we have many new supports and innovations planned in 2025. Here's what you'll see in the year ahead.

Sun Life Choices Flex

We're introducing a new, more flexible way to help plan members maximize their savings potential and achieve greater financial security. In 2025, plan members will have exclusive access to additional savings products through Sun Life Choices Flex.

Sun Life Choices Flex will offer plan members access to additional accounts if your plan doesn't offer them. These include a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA), Non-Registered Savings Plan (NREG), and Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). Choices Flex products complement an existing workplace savings plan.

With Sun Life Choices Flex, plan members will have more choice and flexibility. This allows them to seamlessly add additional savings streams to their plan and manage everything in one convenient place.



Redesign of the sponsor secure site

Revamp of the sponsor secure site home pages to give them a new clean and bright look and feel.

Enhancements to the Sponsor Request Centre

Request Centre will be enabled with a new outbound capability, which will allow us to initiate requests to Clients for example, ask questions, deliver a report or to follow up on an item in progress.



New Contribution Centre

One place to manage all work related to contributions. The new Contribution Centre launch is scheduled for early 2025 with a gradual roll out to all Clients throughout the year.

2025 Designed for Savings

Our highly anticipated flagship report on workplace savings is set to be released, offering the most comprehensive analysis of capital accumulation plans in Canada. This report provides insights into the trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the future of workplace savings.

Education and Advice

We'll continue to drive plan member engagement and positive outcomes. Focusing on the evolution of our education and advice model, with the launch of a fully integrated experience. Look out for our new robust digital education platform. We're making it easier for plan members to access the great resources available to them – while maintaining the quality and effectiveness of our Financial Education & Wellness Program, including support through 360 Plan Advice and decumulation.

Financial Wellness Webinars 2025

We created and launched the Financial Wellness webinar series – a first of its kind multi-employer free series of virtual sessions for plan members on various topics related to financial wellness and education. Over the years we've made numerous updates and continue to improve our sessions to provide the best plan member experience, for their evolving needs.

In 2025 we'll offer two new topics:

- Making the most of your retirement with Sun Life
- Financial planning for the modern family

Webinar topics, dates, times and registration information can be also found at sunlife.ca/mymoney.



Sponsor Resource Centre

Among many great updates that we made on the Sponsor Resource Centre this year is the new [Campaign section](#) that provides pre-written email content and marketing collateral for you to share with plan members. To start, we've included three Retirement campaigns, as well as my Sun Life Registration Campaign and E-Beneficiary Campaign.

Stay tuned as we're aiming to introduce additional campaigns in 2025. Don't forget to [bookmark the page](#) to make sure you don't miss new resources!



Save the date and register for our virtual events in Q1 2025

Join us on March 4, 2025 for the Decumulation dialogue: Retirement realities and the path forward webinar focused on Decumulation in the retirement savings industry. This will be a panel discussion featuring Dr. Bonnie-Jeanne MacDonald, who will share research and insights on retirement readiness. Bonnie-Jeanne MacDonald is the Director of Financial Security Research at the National Institute on Ageing (NIA). Her research focuses on the policies and practices needed to address the multiple challenges and opportunities presented by Canada's aging population.

Joining Bonnie-Jeanne MacDonald will be Jean-Michel (JM) Lavoie, Vice-President, Market Development and Strategy, GRS, and [Oricia Smith](#), President, SLGI Asset Management, and Senior Vice-President of Investment Solutions for Sun Life Global Investments.

Click [here](#) to register for this event.

On March 27, 2025, Angela Maitland, Investment Solutions Executive, will be hosting a GRS Market Update webinar. Our panelists will share a broad macroeconomic update along with a general equity and fixed income market update, including portfolio positioning, the role of quantitative investing and inflationary forces impacting global markets.

Our featured panelists for this event are:

- Christine Tan, Assistant Vice-President, Portfolio Management, Sun Life Global Investments
- [Martin Gerber](#), Director, President & CIO, Head of Asset Allocation, Connor, Clark and Lunn Investment Management Ltd.
- Frances Donald, Chief Economist at RBC

Click [here](#) to register for this event.



Life's brighter under the sun

