

YOUR RETIREMENT BENEFITS

General Municipal Employees (MERS)

WHAT IS YOUR RETIREMENT BENEFIT?

Members of the Employee's Retirement System of Rhode Island have a **Hybrid Retirement Benefits Plan** made up of a Defined Benefit plan (**Pension Plan**) and a Defined Contribution Plan (**DC Plan**).



WHAT IS A DEFINED BENEFIT OR PENSION PLAN?

- Your Pension benefit is managed by ERSRI and **pays you a specific amount of money per month** when you are eligible to retire.
- You contribute towards your individual pension.
- Your employer contributes into the pension fund for all employees.
- The amount of your monthly pension benefit is based on a number of criteria including your schedule, how long you have worked and your salary.

WHAT IS A DEFINED CONTRIBUTION (DC) PLAN?

- The Defined Contribution (DC Plan) allows you to **save money for your retirement in a tax-deferred account.**
- You and your employer contribute a percentage of your salary each pay period into your DC plan that is managed by TIAA.
- TIAA manages your investments and when you retire you will withdraw money from this account to pay for your living expenses.

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUR PENSION AND DC PLANS

Contributions	Pension Plan	Defined Contribution (DC)
Employee	1%	5% or 7% <i>(if not in Social Security)</i>
Employee with COLA	2%	5% or 7% <i>(if not in Social Security)</i>
Employees with 20+ Years of Service as of 6/30/12	8.25% <i>(1+5+2.25)</i>	No longer participates in the plan.
Employees with 20+ Years of Service as of 6/30/12 with COLA	9.25% <i>(2+5+2.25)</i>	No longer participates in the plan.

As part of the pension settlement, if you **have 20 or more Years of Service credit as of June 30, 2012**, you no longer contribute to the DC Plan as of July 1, 2015 and will continue to own your own account.

YOUR EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DC PLAN

LESS THAN 10 YEARS AS OF 6/30/12

1% salary or 3% if not in Social Security.

AT LEAST 15 YEARS, BUT LESS THAN 20 AS OF 6/30/12

1.5% salary or 3.5% if not in Social Security.

AT LEAST 10 YEARS, BUT LESS THAN 15 AS OF 6/30/12

1.25% salary or 3.25% if not in Social Security.

20 OR MORE YEARS AS OF 6/30/12

No longer participates in the DC Plan.

NOTE: Members fall into one of the above categories based on frozen service as of June 30, 2012. They do NOT move between categories as they earn additional years of service.

WHAT'S A SCHEDULE?

- Schedules are determined by when you were hired and how many years of service you had at certain points in time.
 - Hired before or after June 30, 2012?
 - Eligible to retire as of June 30, 2012?
 - How many years of service as of June 30, 2012?
- Schedule type impacts when you are eligible to retire, your accruals and service credit factor, and what your benefit will be when you retire.

HOW DO WE DETERMINE YOUR SCHEDULE?

SCHEDULE 1

Active and eligible to retire with either 30 years of service OR age 58 with 10 years of service on, or before, June 30, 2012.

SCHEDULE 3

Active as of July 1, 2012, but not eligible to retire as of June 30, 2012 and had less than 5 years of service.

SCHEDULE 2

Active as of 7/1 2012, but not eligible to retire as of June 30, 2012 and had 5 or more years of service as of June 30, 2012

SCHEDULE 4

New hires on, or after, July 1, 2012.

NOTE: All years must be years of *contributing service* to be counted towards retirement eligibility.

WHEN CAN YOU RETIRE?

- **Retire with full benefits:**
 - Schedule based on retirement date
 - OR
 - **Rule of 95:** Your age and service equal 95 (only applies to those whose retirement date is age 62 or later).
- **Retire early with reduced benefits**
 - Transition Rule 1
 - Transition Rule 2

All members have their own unique retirement eligibility age

WHEN CAN YOU RETIRE?

Schedule Based Retirement Date

Schedule 1	Schedule 2	Schedule 3 & 4
<p>Currently eligible to retire. Became eligible with 30 years of service at any age. OR Age 58 with 10 years of contributing service as of June 30, 2012.</p>	<p>Social Security Normal Retirement Age (SSNRA) proportionally scaled back based on years of service earned as of June 30, 2012.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not less than age 59• 5+ years of contributory service as of June 30, 2012.	<p>Social Security Normal Retirement Age (SSNRA) and 5 years of contributory service.</p>

WHEN CAN YOU RETIRE?

Rule of 95

- Members of any schedule type can retire when their age (at least 62 years old) plus their years of service equal 95.
- **For example:**
 - 62 years old + 33 years of service = Rule of 95 Eligible.

The rule of 95 is only used to provide an **EARLIER** retirement date than your Schedule Based Eligibility Date.

RETIRING EARLY: TRANSITION RULE 1

- **Eligibility for Transition Rule 1:**
 - You have 20+ years of service and are within 5 years of your full benefit eligibility date.
- **How early can you retire?**
 - Up to five years before your full benefit eligibility date.
- **How is your benefit reduced?**
 - Your benefit is reduced by a set percentage for each year you leave before your full benefit eligibility date.
 - **For example:** If you left 5 years before reaching eligibility you would receive 62% of the benefit earned through your last day of employment.

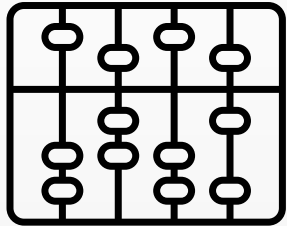
Year(s) before retirement eligibility	Per year reduction	Cumulative reduction
1	9%	9%
2	8%	17%
3	7%	24%
4	7%	31%
5	7%	38%

RETIRING EARLY: TRANSITION RULE 2

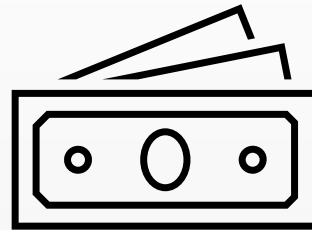
- **Eligibility for Transition Rule 2:**
 - You completed 10 years of service by June 30, 2012.
- **How early can you retire?**
 - You can retire based on your eligibility rules in effect as of June 30, 2012.
- **How is your benefit reduced?**
 - ERSRI will use your Service Credit Factor and Highest Average Salary earned as of June 30, 2012 to calculate your pension.

CALCULATING YOUR PENSION BENEFIT

How is your pension benefit calculated?



**SERVICE
CREDIT FACTOR**



**HIGHEST
AVERAGE SALARY**



**YOUR
PENSION BENEFIT**

CALCULATING YOUR SERVICE CREDIT

- Each year that you work for a participating employer, you accrue a set percentage (your accruals) that are added together to determine your Service Credit Factor.
- **Your total service credit factor cannot exceed 75%.**

Time Earned?	Accrual per year
Years worked prior to June 30, 2012 (all members).	2%
Years worked after July 1, 2012 (all members).	1%
Years worked after July 1, 2015 (ONLY members with 20+ years of service as of June 30, 2012).	2%

CALCULATING YOUR HIGHEST AVERAGE SALARY

- Your highest average salary is the average of your highest 3 consecutive (back to back) years of salary.

Schedule	Highest Average Salary
Schedule 1	3 highest consecutive years.
Schedule 2 Schedule 3	3 highest consecutive years. <i>(Must be equal or greater than highest average salary as of 6/30/12)</i>
Schedule 4	3 highest consecutive years.

YOUR PENSION PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment option	Amount	Spouse/beneficiary amount	Allowed to switch options one time?
Service Retirement Allowance (SRA)	Full benefit paid monthly to the member	\$0	No
Option 1: Joint & Survivor 100%	Reduced benefit	Spouse or beneficiary receives same monthly benefit after member's death.	Yes—to Option 2 or SRA
Option 2: Joint & Survivor 50%	Reduced benefit	Spouse or beneficiary receives 50% of the monthly benefit after member's death.	Yes—to Option 1 or SRA
SRA Plus (Only offered if you had 10 or more years of service as of June 30, 2012)	Higher benefit prior to age 62. Reduced pension after 62.	\$0	No

- A Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) may restrict your pension payment options.
- **Option 1: J&S100** and **Option 2: J&S50** are actuarially reduced benefits based on difference in age between member and beneficiary.
- One time change is permitted while living if **Option 1: J&S100** and **Option 2: J&S50**. The change of option form must be received by ERSRI prior to death.

RECEIVING YOUR PENSION PAYMENTS

- Your first pension payment will be received 2-3 months after retirement (payment is retroactive to date of retirement).
- Each payment will be directly deposited to your bank account.
- An e-mail will be sent to you each month notifying you that your direct deposit stub is available online.
- Payments will be made on the last business day of the month for the month.

DEATH BENEFITS

What benefits are your survivors entitled to?

- A member's designated beneficiary is eligible to receive a one time death benefit payment regardless of retirement option selected.
- Benefit is \$800 per year of completed service, up to a maximum benefit of \$16,000 with 20 years of service.
- Benefit reduces 25% each year of retirement to a minimum death benefit of \$4,000.

Please be sure to keep your **beneficiary information up to date** with ERSRI.

WHAT ABOUT A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT?

- **Annual COLA:**
 - COLA equal to 1/4th of the calculated COLA is paid if your plan is under 75% funded.
 - The full calculated COLA amount is paid when your plan is 75% or more funded.
- **COLA Eligibility**
 - Members retiring today become eligible for the Annual COLA the month after reaching their Social Security Normal Retirement Age AND the three year anniversary date of their retirement.

NOTE: Not all municipal plans offer COLA to all employees. If your plan does not offer COLA, you are not eligible to receive a COLA.

WHAT ABOUT A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT?

COLA Calculation

- COLA is calculated based on equal parts of 50% of investment performance minus 5%, and 50% of inflation with a maximum COLA of 3.5%.
- For members retiring now, COLA is paid (if eligible) on the first \$30,622 (indexed) of your annual pension benefit.

PART-TIME ANTI SPIKING RULE

What is Pension Spiking?

- Pension spiking is the inappropriate enhancement of one's salary immediately prior to retirement in order to artificially inflate one's pension benefit.

When does the Anti-Spiking Rule apply?

- If more than one half (1/2) of your total years of service consist of years during which you **devoted less than thirty (30) business** hours per week, but your highest average salary consists of three (3) or more years during which you **devoted more than thirty (30) business** hours per week.

How Does the Anti-Spiking Rule Impact Your Pension Calculation?

- Your highest average salary will be calculated using one of the below methodologies
 - The average of your 10 highest consecutive years of salary.
 - If your highest average salary is under \$35,000 (indexed to inflation) your highest average salary will be the greater of your 10 year or schedule based highest average salary calculation.
- In no event will your highest average salary be less than it would have been as of June 30, 2012.

ERSRI ONLINE REGISTRATION

- Visit www.ersri.org to register your **My Retirement** account.
- The self registration process will ask you for identifying personal information and give you a login ID.
- Be sure to write down your login ID and password in a safe place.

The screenshot displays the ERSRI website interface. At the top left is the ERSRI logo, featuring a shield with an anchor and the text 'Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island'. To the right of the logo is a 'Log out' button and a search bar with the text 'Hi John Doe' and a search icon. Below the logo is a home icon. The main content area is titled 'My Retirement' and features a large banner with the text 'Introducing... your pension plan' and a photo of a woman. Below the banner is a 'Read the plan description' section with a 'Get started!' button. To the right of the banner is a 'My Pension' section with a dark header and a light body containing text: 'Assuming you will continue to participate in the plan until retirement, your estimated pension payable at age 64 is equal to: \$26,200 per year.' Below this text is a list of links: 'Use the Pension Projection tool', 'Use the Buyback tool', 'Update My Personal Information', 'View My Pension Profile', 'View My Documents', and 'Schedule An Appointment'. To the right of the 'My Pension' section is a 'HELP' sidebar with a 'Call Us' button and an 'Email Us' button. At the bottom of the page is a 'Tools' section with four icons: a clock, a checklist, a dollar sign, and a person icon. Below the 'Tools' section is a 'My Plans' section with a dark header and a light body containing the text 'My Employer Pension Plan'.

HOW TO RUN A BENEFIT ESTIMATE ONLINE

PENSION PROJECTION TOOL Administrator tools ▾ | Recent estimates | Yearly amounts ▾ | Printable statement

WHAT THIS IS
This tool allows you to estimate your pension benefits from your pension plan at different ages.
[VIEW DEMO](#)

WHAT I KNOW
Date of birth: January 1, 1908
Total years of service: 11.57
Earned salary: \$50,000
[SEE ALL PERSONAL AND DESIGNATED JOINT & SURVIVOR INFORMATION »](#)

WHAT IF ...
My future annual earnings increase is: 0%

RETIRE AT ...

<input type="radio"/> Age 62	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Date 01-01-2042
<input type="radio"/> Age 64	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Date 01-01-2045
<input type="radio"/> Age 64	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Date 01-01-2045

[CALCULATE](#)

YOUR ESTIMATED INCOME AT RETIREMENT

■ Employer Pension Plan

Age	Estimated Income
Age 62	\$15,000
Age 64	\$23,000

[SHOW DETAILS »](#) [SHOW DETAILS »](#)

POST RETIREMENT EMPLOYMENT

Hired Post Retirement as a...	Days allowed before pension suspension	Gross pay allowed before pension suspension	Time period
State Employee	0	\$0	N/A
Registered Nurse	75 (or 150 half days)	N/A	Calendar year
Classroom Instructor, Academic Advisor, or Coach at a State School or College	N/A	\$25,000	Calendar year
Drivers Ed Teacher	N/A	\$15,000	Calendar year
MERS Employee	75 (or 150 half days)	N/A	Calendar year
Teacher	90 (or 180 half days)	N/A	School year
Elected MERS official	Unlimited*	Unlimited*	N/A
Unpaid state or municipal board	Unlimited*	Unlimited*	N/A
Non Participating Municipality Employee	Unlimited	Unlimited	N/A

Any employment or reemployment may begin no earlier than 45 days after separation/termination from employment.

* Unlimited except for those who previously worked and earned service credit as an elected official or board member.

POST RETIREMENT EMPLOYMENT

Your employer's post retirement employment responsibilities:

- Retirement contributions will not be deducted from your wages and you will not earn any additional retirement service credit for any post-retirement employment.
- Reporting days worked or earnings depending on employment type to ERSRI on a monthly basis.

Your post retirement employment responsibilities:

- It is your responsibility to ensure that while collecting a retirement benefit your employment does not violate any statutory restrictions.
- Your post retirement earnings or days will be reported to ERSRI and available to review in your member portal at www.ersri.org. It is your responsibility to ensure your employer is accurately reporting your employment. Please follow up with your employer if there is a discrepancy.
- No “mixing and matching.” You cannot participate in more than 1 area that is limited by statute.
- Post-retirement provisions apply if you are a consultant or corporation or employee of another party providing services to a ERS or MERS employer.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF RHODE ISLAND

Address: 50 Service Avenue, 2nd floor, Warwick, RI 02886

Phone: (401) 462-7600 | **Email:** ersri@ersri.org | **Website:** www.ersri.org

TIAA – DC PLAN COORDINATOR

The Gateway Center
15 Park Row West, Suite 102
Providence, RI 02903

(800) 897-1026

www.tiaa.org/ri

FEDERAL SOCIAL SECURITY

Providence Office
(877) 402-0808

www.ssa.gov

For inquiries regarding retiree health benefits, contact your employer.