

Creditable Service Reference Guide

This document is a Resource pursuant to Education
Code section 22325

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Creditable Service Reference Guide

The document provides information about what constitutes creditable service for the CalSTRS Defined Benefit Program and Cash Balance Benefit Program pursuant to Education Code sections 22119.5 and 26113, respectively. References to other Education Code (EDC) sections are provided where applicable. The Teachers' Retirement Board has the final authority to determine whether activities not specified in law are creditable service. All official Resources related to creditable compensation and creditable service are available at CalSTRS.com.

Questions? Contact EmployerTraining@CalSTRS.com.

Creditable Service Overview

Creditable service is the work employees perform for which they are eligible for CalSTRS benefits. For service to be creditable, it must meet all the following requirements:

- Be performed by an employee of a CalSTRS employer.
- Be performed in a position that meets the minimum requirements (unless exempt).
- Be a creditable service activity.

In some cases, creditable service may also include “outgrowth” activities, service covered by another California public retirement system, service as an elected officer of an employee organization, or service as a trustee as described later in this document. Please note that the performance of creditable service does not guarantee compensation is reportable. Compensation must still meet the conditions of creditable compensation and requirements of salary or special pay. For more information see the Creditable Compensation Reference Guide at CalSTRS.com.

Is the employee employed by an employer? (EDC 22131 and 26122)

For service to be creditable under the Defined Benefit Program or Cash Balance Benefit Program, a person must be employed by an employer. To be employed by an employer, an employee must be employed by one of the following entities that offers the applicable program:

- Charter school (must be approved and eligible for State apportionment)
- Community college district
- County office of education
- School district
- Joint powers authorities (all entities included must be considered CalSTRS employers, and the joint powers authority must report through a single county office or education)

Those employed by a third-party entity, private institution, charter management organization/non-profit organization, or as an independent contractor are not employed by an employer and, therefore, are not performing creditable service. However, if a member or participant is retired, and working as an independent contractor or for a third-party entity, they may be performing retired member or participant activities, respectively.

Does the employee meet the minimum requirements or are they exempt?

Minimum requirements vary by the type of employer. CalSTRS cannot determine if a specific position is subject to or meets minimum requirements. Contact the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing or the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges for assistance. These minimum requirements are used to establish CalSTRS membership and creditable service. Positions may be subject to other requirements for employment purposes. Refer to the Education Code or Department of Education, if needed.

Charter schools

Charter school employees are subject to the provisions of the approved charter for the operation of that charter school. They are not subject to further minimum requirements for CalSTRS purposes.

Community college districts

Community college employees must be one of the following and subject to minimum standards adopted by the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges pursuant to EDC 87356:

- Faculty member, as defined in EDC 87003.
- Academic position, as defined in EDC 87001(b).
- Educational administrator, as defined in EDC 87002(b).

The following are exempt from the minimum requirements for creditable service:

- Presidents and chancellors of community college employers. This does not include assistant or vice presidents and chancellors. Contribution File format users report creditable compensation associated with presidents and chancellors using **Service Type Superintendent/President/ Chancellor (SPCC)**. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type.
- Employees providing vocational training pursuant to a contract between the community college district and the United States Department of Defense. These employees must meet the requirements provided in the contract. Contribution File format users report creditable compensation associated with this vocational training using **Service Type Teaching (TEAC)**. However, if the employee is subject to the Community College Comparison Calculation use **Service Type CCD/CCCC Lab Instructor (01)**, **CCD/CCCC Lecturer / General Instructor (02)**, or **CCD/CCCC Adult Education Instructor (03)**, as applicable. See the Community College Comparison Calculation job

aid available at employersupport.calstrs.com as a training material related to this unique calculation. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type.

- Audiometrists. Contribution File format users report creditable compensation associated with audiometrists using **Service Type Health Services (HESE)**. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type.

School districts and county offices of education

School district and county office of education employees must be in a position with certification qualifications authorized by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) pursuant to EDC 44001. This means that for service to be considered creditable, the CTC must authorize certification qualifications for the position. An employer's individual requirements for a position are not considered.

The following are exempt from the minimum requirements for creditable service:

- Superintendents of California public schools. This does not include assistant or vice superintendents. Contribution File format users report creditable compensation associated with a superintendent using **Service Type Superintendent/President/Chancellor (SPCC)**. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type.
- Consulting teachers participating in the California Peer Assistance and Review Program for Teachers (PAR) pursuant to Article 4.5 of Chapter 3 of Part 25 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Education Code. Contribution File format users report creditable compensation associated with those employed in PAR using **Service Type PAR Consultant (PAR)**. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type.
- Audiometrists. Contribution File format users report creditable compensation associated with audiometrists using **Service Type Health Services (HESE)**. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type.

Is the employee performing a creditable service activity?

The following list includes the creditable service activities found in EDC 22119.5(b), along with the Service Type used to report creditable compensation associated with the service when using the Contribution File format. Service Type is not reported when using the F496 File or Voluntary Deduction File formats.

Teaching (TEAC)

The work of teachers, instructors, district interns, and academic employees employed in the instructional program for pupils, including special programs such as adult education, regional occupation programs, childcare centers, and prekindergarten programs pursuant to Section 22161. Sojourn and exchange teachers are excluded from membership pursuant to Education Code section 22601.

Exception: If the employee is subject to the Community College Comparison Calculation, you must use **Service Type CCD/CCCC Lab Instructor (01)**, **CCD/CCCC Lecturer / General Instructor (02)**, or **CCD/CCCC Adult Education Instructor (03)**, as applicable.

Counseling (COUN)

Education or vocational counseling, guidance, and placement services. This activity does not include mental health counseling.

Exception: If the employee is subject to the Community College Comparison Calculation, you must use **Service Type CCD/CCCC Counselor (05)**.

Program Research/Evaluation (PRRE)

The work of employees who plan courses of study to be used in California public schools, or research connected with the evaluation or efficiency of the instructional program.

Curriculum/Material Development (CRMD)

The selection, collection, preparation, classification, demonstration, or evaluation of instructional materials of any course of study for use in the development of the instructional program in California public schools, or other services related to California public school curriculum.

Mentoring/Training (METR)

The examination, selection, in-service training, mentoring, or assignment of teachers, principals, or other similar personnel involved in the instructional program. This service is specific to those who are performing these duties and does not typically include those who are performing human resource, payroll, or personnel services related to these tasks.

This activity does not include the attendance of training or professional development. The attendance of training or professional development is considered part of the work of the member's primary creditable service activity. For example, attending training as a teacher is considered the work of a teacher.

Health Services (HESE)

The work of nurses, physicians, speech therapists, psychologists, audiologists, and other California public school health professionals. Other health professionals are considered health professionals that serve the overall public school health program. This can include occupational therapists, mental health counselors, and similar positions at charter schools and community college districts. PreK-12 districts and county offices of education are limited in positions that may be considered other health professionals because the CTC must authorize certification qualifications for the position.

Librarian (LIBR)

Services as a California public school librarian.

Exception: If the employee is subject to the Community College Comparison Calculation, you must use **Service Type CCD/CCCC Librarian (04)**.

Child Welfare Services (CWSR)

Activities connected with the enforcement of the laws relating to compulsory education, coordination of child welfare activities involving the school and the home, and the school adjustment of pupils.

Supervision/Administration (SVAD)

The work of employees who are responsible for the supervision of persons or administration of the duties described in EDC 22119.5(b). This activity typically does not include human resources, financial services, business services, or similar supervisory or administrative positions as they are not performing their supervisory or administrative duties for the work described in EDC 22119.5(b).

Is the service creditable another way?

Outgrowth

Creditable service also includes the performance of California public school activities related to, and an outgrowth of, the instructional and guidance program of the California public school when performed for the same employer in the same fiscal year for which the member is performing another creditable service activity. Outgrowth activities do not meet the requirements of creditable service on their own and are most often extracurricular activities. When service meets the definition of creditable service on its own, it does not need to be performed for the same employer in the same fiscal year to be creditable to CalSTRS. CalSTRS does not have a list of what is considered “outgrowth.”

Contribution File format users report creditable compensation paid for the performance of outgrowth using **Service Type Outgrowth (OUTG)**. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type.

Outgrowth - Sports Coaches

Sports coaches are one of the most common examples of outgrowth at PreK-12 school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools because the CTC does not authorize certification qualifications for coaching, and these positions are typically not considered teachers. At community college districts, sports coaches are subject to the appropriate minimum standards adopted by the Board of Governors in their minimum qualifications handbook as faculty members and are performing the creditable service activity described in EDC 22119.5(b)(1).

Other retirement system service – Retirement System Election (EDC 22508 and 22508.5)

Service covered by another California public retirement system is creditable service for the Defined Benefit Program if the employee elected coverage pursuant to EDC 22508 or 22508.5

Contribution File format users report creditable compensation associated with this service using **Service Type Other Retirement System Service (ORSS)**. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type. To view additional training materials related to Defined Benefit membership, see the Defined Benefit Membership course at training.calstrs.com.

Other retirement system service – Grandfathering of misreported service (EDC 22119.6)

Activities that are not otherwise creditable service are creditable service for the Defined Benefit Program if the activities were:

- Performed for an employer on or before December 31, 2015; and
- Reported as creditable service to CalSTRS; and
- The employee did not elect to have the service excluded from CalSTRS coverage pursuant to EDC 22508.7.

This only applies to service in that specific position. If the employee becomes employed in another position, for the same or another employer, on or after January 1, 2016, the activities in that position must meet the definition of creditable service to remain creditable to CalSTRS. However, the employee may be able to elect coverage under the Defined Benefit Program for that service via the *Retirement System Election (ES 372)* form.

Contribution File format users report creditable compensation associated with this service using **Service Type Other Retirement System Service (ORSS)**. F496 File and Voluntary Deduction File users do not report Service Type.

Elected officer of an employee organization (EDC 22711)

Members may accrue service credit under the Defined Benefit Program for time served as an elected officer of an employee organization while on a compensated leave of absence pursuant to EDC 44987 or 87768.5. Members and employers must contribute to CalSTRS at a rate adopted annually by the board. These rates are currently the same as the contribution rates for the Defined Benefit Program.

The member must have been employed and performed creditable service in the month prior to beginning their leave of absence (excluding periods not included in the school term). A school term is defined as a minimum period of 35 weeks that begins on the first day and ends on the last day creditable service is required to be performed by a member employed on a full-time basis (EDC 22168.5). Members do not have to be on a full-time leave of absence to perform service as an elected officer.

Contribution File format users report compensation paid for a leave of absence to serve as an elected officer of an employee organization using **Benefit Program Code Defined Benefit Member (DB1)**, **Assignment Code Elected Officer (37)** and **Service Type Elected Officer (ELOF)**. The system will calculate contributions at the applicable rate adopted by the board.

F496 File format users, report compensation paid for a leave of absence to serve as an elected officer of an employee organization using **Member Code Member (1)** and **Assignment Code Elected Officer (37)**. The system will calculate contributions at the applicable rate adopted by the board.

Trustee service (EDC 26403)

Creditable service for the Cash Balance Benefit Program also includes trustee service if the trustee elects to participate in the program for trustee service performed for that employer. To view additional training materials related to the Cash Balance Benefit Program, see the Cash Balance Benefit course at training.calstrs.com.

Contribution File format users report creditable compensation paid for service as a trustee using **Service Type Trustee Service (TRST)**.