



Your Retirement Guide 2015

Retirement Guide and Instructions
for Defined Benefit Members



This booklet contains information for a CalSTRS Defined Benefit service retirement. If you think you may be eligible for a disability benefit, see the brochure, *Introduction to CalSTRS Disability Benefits*. If you are applying for a disability benefit and wish to apply for a service retirement benefit while your application for disability benefits is being evaluated, complete the *Disability Benefits Application*, available in *Your Disability Benefits Guide*. If you are a Cash Balance Benefit Program participant, complete the appropriate Cash Balance Benefit application. You will find forms and publications at CalSTRS.com.



myCALSTRS | my retirement

Ready to Retire?

Complete and submit your *Service Retirement Application* online at myCalSTRS.com. Or, if you have a complex application, complete it online, then print and mail or fax it to us.

When you complete your application online using myCalSTRS:

- Step-by-step guidance means you complete your application correctly.
- Your member-specific information is auto-filled, saving you time.
- Your application is processed automatically, for a faster turnaround.
- You'll receive immediate email confirmation when CalSTRS receives your application and after it has been processed.
- You'll receive prompt emails if we need additional information to process your application.

Need Help Completing Your Application?

Attend a Retirement Application Roundtable. For dates and locations, or to register, call 800-228-5453, option 3.

Need to Make Changes or Cancel Your Retirement After You Submit Your Application?

Complete the *Service Retirement Application Change Request* form, available on CalSTRS.com. CalSTRS must receive your form no later than 30 days from the date your first retirement benefit payment is issued.

Manage Your Beneficiary Information.

View and update your death benefit recipient. Also view option beneficiary information and make some updates.



Not yet registered for myCalSTRS? View the self-paced, interactive registration guide on myCalSTRS.com.

As a result of the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013, CalSTRS has two benefit structures:

- CalSTRS 2% at 60: Members first hired on or before December 31, 2012.
- CalSTRS 2% at 62: Members first hired on or after January 1, 2013.

Members under the CalSTRS 2% at 60 benefit structure include those who:

- Were a CalSTRS member before 2013, terminated their membership and then returned to active membership on or after January 1, 2013.
- Performed CalSTRS creditable activities that were subject to coverage under a different retirement system, including Social Security, on or before December 31, 2012.
- Were members of a concurrent retirement system on or before December 31, 2012, and who performed activities under that system within six months of becoming a CalSTRS member.

➤ See the *Member Handbook 2015* at CalSTRS.com to learn more.

The information in this booklet is for members under the CalSTRS 2% at 60 benefit structure. If you are a CalSTRS 2% at 62 member and plan to retire under the special circumstances of concurrent retirement, contact us for more information.

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Your CalSTRS Retirement Timeline

This timeline of events from the year before your retirement up to your first benefit payment will give you an idea of what to do and when. Your specific timeline, however, may differ.

- Activate your *myCalSTRS* account, if you haven't already done so. Start at myCalSTRS.com, select *Register Now* and follow the five-step process. You can complete and submit your *Service Retirement Application*, sign up for direct deposit, update your address and more using *myCalSTRS*.
- Prepare for retirement early to avoid delays that may occur during the peak months of April–July.
- Register for a retirement planning workshop at CalSTRS.com/workshops or an individual or group benefits counseling session, described at CalSTRS.com/benefits-counseling, by calling 800-228-5453.

What to Do	When
Step 1	
Activate your <i>myCalSTRS</i> account, if you haven't already.	10–12 months before your retirement date.
Plan and research your retirement decisions (pages 7–21).	
Attend a CalSTRS Retirement Check-Up workshop or a CalSTRS and Your Retirement benefits counseling session.	
Meet with a CalSTRS benefits counselor.	
Check to see if pending or new legislation may affect your benefits or influence the timing of your retirement.	
Step 2	
<p>Complete and submit your <i>Service Retirement Application</i> and other forms online using <i>myCalSTRS</i>. Step-by-step guidance ensures you fill out the application accurately, resulting in faster processing.</p> <p>Or complete the paper version, available at CalSTRS.com. Use the <i>Service Retirement Application</i> checklist on pages 27–28.</p>	<p>No earlier than six months before your requested retirement date.</p> <p>If you submitted your <i>Service Retirement Application</i> and want to make a change or cancel your retirement, CalSTRS must receive your <i>Service Retirement Application Change Request</i> form (SR 1328) no later than 30 days from the date your first benefit payment is issued.</p>
Step 3	
Check your <i>myCalSTRS</i> account, if you submitted your application online. You'll receive an immediate email confirming your application was received.	Within 45 days of your retirement or the date your application is processed, whichever is later.
Review your award letter, which includes the amount of your monthly benefit, how your monthly benefit was calculated and the total amount of your contributions and interest (page 29).	There could be changes in your monthly payment for several months beyond your retirement date as we receive and process additional information from your employer.
Look for your initial benefit payment (page 29).	

The Benefit of a Lifetime

You're approaching one of life's most important passages—retirement from your working career. Your smooth transition to this new stage of your life requires thoughtful planning. You can count on CalSTRS to help you every step of the way.

In addition to this guide, we offer workshops and benefits counseling, both group and one-on-one, with a CalSTRS benefits counselor. Taking advantage of these resources will help you make informed decisions.

Your Retirement Plan

As a CalSTRS member, you participate in a hybrid retirement system that includes traditional defined benefit (Defined Benefit Program), cash balance (Defined Benefit Supplement Program) and voluntary defined contribution (CalSTRS Pension2[®]) plans. You also have survivor and disability benefits.

Your traditional defined benefit pension is based on a formula set by law, not on how much you contributed:

Service Credit x Age Factor x Final Compensation = Your Retirement Benefit

Your monthly retirement benefit is guaranteed for your life and the lives of your beneficiaries, if you choose. It may be your greatest asset.

This booklet takes you through the application process. Inside you'll find tips and checklists to help you plan and prepare for your retirement.



The information in this booklet is for members under the CalSTRS 2% at 60 benefit structure. If you are a CalSTRS 2% at 62 member (you were first hired on or after January 1, 2013) and plan to retire under the special circumstances of concurrent retirement, contact us for more information.

You must submit your *Service Retirement Application* to CalSTRS before you'll receive a CalSTRS retirement benefit. If you are unable to submit your application before your retirement date, you can backdate your effective date of retirement to any day following your last day of work, vacation or authorized leave for your CalSTRS-covered position, but no earlier than January 1, 2012. Service credit purchases must be paid in full before your retirement date.



Planning Checklist

To help you plan for your CalSTRS retirement.

- Read this guide and the retirement planning sections of the Member Handbook.** You must submit the *Service Retirement Application* to receive a retirement benefit.
- Go online to [myCalSTRS.com](https://mycalstrs.com)** to activate your *myCalSTRS* account if you haven't already, so you can complete and submit your application online for faster processing.
- Check to see if pending or new legislation may affect your benefits** or influence the timing of your retirement. Sources include your legislative representative, your union representative or CalSTRS.com/legislation.
- Attend a CalSTRS Retirement Check-Up workshop,** CalSTRS and Your Retirement benefits counseling session or Retirement Application Roundtable. For dates and locations near you, visit CalSTRS.com/workshops and CalSTRS.com/benefits-counseling.
- Estimate your monthly benefit** using the online calculator at CalSTRS.com/calculators or the benefit estimate worksheet in the *Member Handbook*, available at CalSTRS.com.
- Consider purchasing additional service credit** to increase your benefit if you did not purchase it earlier in your career. See the booklet, *Purchase Additional Service Credit*, available at CalSTRS.com/publications. If you are in the process of purchasing service credit, contact us at least 90 days before you plan to retire. Your purchase must be paid in full before your retirement date.
- Consider making a preretirement election of an option** to provide a lifetime monthly benefit to someone if you should die before retirement. The *Preretirement Election of an Option* form is on *myCalSTRS* and at CalSTRS.com/forms.
- Gather clear, unaltered photocopies of the following documents:**
If you are electing an option beneficiary:
 - Birth certificate or other acceptable verifications of birth date, such as a birth record, a passport photo ID page or certain military IDs, for your option beneficiary.
 - Marriage certificate or other proof of a name change, if your option beneficiary's name is different from the name on his or her birth certificate.If you elected an option beneficiary before retirement, you may still need to verify your beneficiary's date of birth.
If a portion of your CalSTRS benefits was awarded to another party:
 - A complete court-filed copy of your community property settlement documents. For more information, see the *Community Property Guide* at CalSTRS.com/publications.
- Make sure your one-time death benefit recipient information is current.** You can find your recipient information on your *myCalSTRS* account. If you haven't named a recipient yet for your one-time death benefit, you can do so on *myCalSTRS* or using the *Recipient Designation* form, available on CalSTRS.com/forms.
- Notify your employer** that you intend to retire from CalSTRS. You'll also need to resign from your job, so ask about any forms your employer may require. Also let your employer know if you plan to set up a health insurance deduction from your CalSTRS benefit payments.
- Complete Section 1 of the Express Benefit Report form,** then submit it to your employer to complete the employer sections even if you don't have unused sick leave. Your employer must report your last day of work, vacation or approved leave, on this form.

Step 1: Plan and Research Your Retirement Decisions

With retirement in sight, you have choices to explore and decisions to make before completing your *Service Retirement Application*. Plan to attend a CalSTRS Retirement Check-Up workshop or a CalSTRS and Your Retirement counseling session conducted by CalSTRS benefits counselors, and research information on your own to help make the best decisions for your retirement.

You can also turn to CalSTRS.com, the *Member Handbook* and your most recent *Retirement Progress Report*. Your *Retirement Progress Report*, available on myCalSTRS, includes your annual statement of accounts and other retirement planning information. For more information, visit CalSTRS.com/retirement-progress-report.

Unfamiliar with a term? See the glossary on page 31.

Questions to Answer

Before making your retirement decisions, you will need to answer these questions:

- Am I eligible to retire?
- How much will my benefit be each month?
- Do I want to provide a monthly benefit to someone after I die?
- How do I want my Defined Benefit Supplement paid?

Retiring before the end of the school year? Talk to a CalSTRS benefits counselor before retiring mid-year to determine how it could affect your retirement benefit.

See page 11

Workshops and Member Education Videos

Register for the Retirement Check-Up workshop at CalSTRS.com/workshops.

In addition, find a series of three-minute member education videos at CalSTRS.com/multimedia. Topics include “Beneficiary Options,” “Defined Benefit Supplement: Choices for Receiving Funds and Tax Considerations,” “Pension2” and more.

Benefits Counseling Sessions

Our benefits counselors can help you plan your CalSTRS retirement by providing retirement estimates and explaining how different choices will affect your benefit. You can talk to a counselor in person or over the phone, or attend a benefits counseling session:

- Prepare for your retirement early. Schedule a CalSTRS and Your Retirement session six to nine months before your retirement date. It’s easier to schedule during the nonpeak months of August–March. For dates and locations, call 800-228-5453, option 3.
- Get help completing your *Service Retirement Application* at a Retirement Application Roundtable. For dates and locations, call 800-228-5453, option 3.
- Schedule an in-person or telephone appointment on myCalSTRS (select the *Schedule a Benefits Counseling Appointment* icon), or by contacting your local benefits counseling office (see page 23) or calling 800-228-5453, option 3.

Your Retirement Decisions

You'll need to make decisions regarding both your Defined Benefit pension and your Defined Benefit Supplement funds.

Defined Benefit

As a member of CalSTRS, you're entitled to a guaranteed, secure, lifetime retirement benefit. Your retirement benefit is based on the following formula, not on your contributions:

$\text{Service Credit} \times \text{Age Factor} \times \text{Final Compensation} = \text{Your Retirement Benefit}$

Member-Only Benefit: The Member-Only Benefit does not provide a monthly lifetime benefit to anyone when you die after retirement. It is the highest monthly benefit you can receive in retirement.

Modified Benefit: The Modified Benefit provides a monthly lifetime benefit to someone after you die. You'll need to choose an option and one or more option beneficiaries. If you elect the Modified Benefit, your monthly retirement benefit will be reduced.

Defined Benefit Supplement

If you have performed service under the Defined Benefit Program on or after January 1, 2001, you have a Defined Benefit Supplement account with CalSTRS that provides additional money for retirement.

Your most recent *Retirement Progress Report* includes annual statements of your Defined Benefit and Defined Benefit Supplement accounts.

Defined Benefit Decisions

Am I eligible to retire?

Your age and service credit are used to determine your eligibility for a CalSTRS retirement benefit. You're eligible to retire under the CalSTRS Defined Benefit Program if you are either age 50 and have at least 30 years of service credit, or age 55 and have at least five years of service credit. You can find your CalSTRS service credit on your *Retirement Progress Report*.

If you're at least age 55 and a member of another public retirement system in California, you may retire with fewer than five years of service credit if you retire for service from both systems at the same time. See page 17 for more information and a list of eligible systems.

To increase your service credit, consider redepositing previously refunded Defined Benefit contributions and interest or purchasing permissive service credit.



How much will my benefit be each month?

Your retirement benefit is based on the formula:
Service Credit x Age Factor x Final Compensation

If you did not already receive a benefit estimate from one of our benefits counselors, calculate it using the *Retirement Benefits Calculator* at CalSTRS.com/calculators or the benefit estimate worksheet in the *Member Handbook*.

If your retirement date is not the first of the month, your first benefit payment will be prorated. Your benefit is subject to state and federal income tax withholding. The amount you receive from your benefit will also depend on other factors, including any deductions for health insurance.

Service Credit

Service credit is the number of school years, including partial years, you have worked and paid into CalSTRS:

- You earn service credit every day you work or are on paid leave.
- You can earn up to 1.00 year of service credit for every school year you work. If you work less than full time, your service credit for the year may be less than 1.00.

If you perform additional duties, your CalSTRS contributions and most of your employer's contributions that exceed one year of service credit go into your Defined Benefit Supplement account.

Age Factor

Age factor is a percentage based on your age on your retirement date. The age factor is set at 2 percent at age 60. It decreases if you retire before age 60 and increases up to 2.4 percent at age 63. If you retire with at least 30 years of service credit, a career factor of 0.2 percent will be added to your age factor, up to a maximum combined age and career factor of 2.4 percent.

Note: If you backdate your retirement benefit effective date, your monthly benefit may be lower if your age factor changes, though you will receive more benefit payments upfront.

Final Compensation

Final compensation is your highest average annual compensation earnable during any period of 12 consecutive months if you have 25 or more years of service credit at retirement, or during any 36 consecutive months if you have fewer than 25 years of service credit.

Compensation Earnable

Your annual compensation earnable for a school year is based on the gross monthly pay you could have earned for creditable service performed full time. If you retire before the end of the school year or if there are months you did not perform creditable service, your final compensation may be affected.

Retirement Incentives

Check to see if your employer offers a retirement incentive program that may increase your service credit. Ask about application deadlines and retirement dates to qualify.

If your employer offers a retirement incentive through CalSTRS and you qualify, it cannot be included in your benefit calculation until we receive the *Express Benefit Report* form and all required documentation from your last employer.

If you receive additional service credit under the CalSTRS Retirement Incentive Program, you'll lose the additional service credit if you take any job, including substitute teaching, within five years of retirement for the employer that offered the incentive.

In addition, if you receive a retirement incentive and subsequently reinstate to active membership, you will lose the additional service credit granted under the incentive.

Neither service credit from a retirement incentive program nor the purchase of nonqualified service credit can be used to qualify for the career factor.

Career Factor

If you retire with at least 30 years of qualified service credit, a bonus of 0.2 percent will be added to your age factor, up to the maximum combined age and career factor of 2.4 percent. In addition, when you retire, up to two-tenths of one year of unused sick leave can count toward qualifying for the career factor. Neither service credit from a retirement incentive program nor the purchase of nonqualified service credit can be used to qualify for the career factor.

Longevity Bonus

If you had at least 30 years of qualified service credit on or before December 31, 2010, you're eligible for a longevity bonus, which adds a set dollar amount to your monthly retirement benefit. CalSTRS will automatically apply the longevity bonus to your retirement benefit.

The amount of the bonus will be based on your total years of qualifying service credit at retirement:

Service Credit	Longevity Bonus
30 years	\$200
31 years	\$300
32 or more years	\$400

Service credit that is projected while you are receiving a Coverage A disability benefit (disability allowance) does not count toward the longevity bonus.

If you have an option beneficiary, your option factor will be applied to your Member-Only Benefit after the longevity bonus is added:

(Your Member-Only Benefit + Longevity Bonus) x Option Factor = Your Modified Benefit

Sick Leave

Additional service credit for unused sick leave will be given at retirement. CalSTRS will convert your unused sick leave to service credit once we receive and process the *Express Benefit Report* form from your employer.

If you work full time, the number of accumulated unused sick leave days will be divided by the number of base service days required to complete the last school year:

If you work part time, the base service days are calculated in proportion to the full-time equivalent.

Sick leave service credit cannot be used to meet eligibility requirements for service retirement. However, up to two-tenths of one year of unused sick leave may be used to qualify for the career

$$\frac{\text{Accumulated days of unused sick leave}}{\text{Number of base days for full-time service}} = \text{Service credit granted}$$

factor, the 25-year threshold for one-year final compensation, and an increased longevity bonus if you qualified for the longevity bonus on or before December 31, 2010.

CalSTRS will accept unused sick leave reported on the *Express Benefit Report* form by each of your employers during the last school year in which you earned service credit if you did not transfer your unused sick leave when you changed jobs. Contact your employer if you have questions.

For retirements effective before January 1, 2013, only your last employer can report unused sick leave by submitting the *Express Benefit Report* form to CalSTRS.



CalSTRS will convert your unused sick leave to service credit at retirement. Each of your employers during the last school year in which you earned service credit may submit an *Express Benefit Report* form.

Your employer is required to submit the *Express Benefit Report* form within 30 days of your retirement date or the date CalSTRS receives your application, whichever is later.

Mid-Year Retirement

If you retire in the middle of the school year, your final compensation may be lower than expected if you received a salary increase toward the end of your career. This is because for a mid-year retirement, unless you have higher salaries earlier in your career, CalSTRS must include the monthly average of your prior year's compensation earnable as part of your final compensation calculation. The calculation will have more of an effect if you have at least 25 years of service, since your final compensation would be based on a 12-month period.

For example, if you have 25 years of service credit, earned \$57,000 last year and would have earned \$60,000 this year, your final compensation calculation for a January 1 retirement date would be:

$$\begin{array}{r} \$57,000 \div 12 = \$4,750 \times 6 \text{ months} = \quad \$28,500 \\ \$60,000 \div 12 = \$5,000 \times 6 \text{ months} = \quad +\$30,000 \\ \hline \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \$58,500 \\ \$58,500 \div 12 = \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \quad \$ 4,875 \end{array}$$

Your final compensation for your 12 months would be \$4,875.

Taking on additional assignments at a lower pay rate may also reduce your final compensation if you choose a mid-year retirement. This is because your annual compensation is prorated to your retirement date and is an average of the various pay rates you receive during that period.

In addition, a mid-year retirement while working under the Reduced Workload Program will result in ineligibility for the program and may negatively affect your service credit and final compensation.

Do I want to provide a monthly benefit to someone after I die?

You can choose to provide a lifetime monthly benefit to someone after you die in exchange for a reduced retirement benefit. Your option beneficiary must be a living person or persons—your beneficiary cannot be an estate, charity, trust or other

entity. This lifetime monthly benefit is separate from the one-time death benefit (see page 15).

Member-Only Benefit

If you do not want to provide a monthly benefit to someone after you die, check the *Member-Only Benefit* box on your *Service Retirement Application*. You will receive your full retirement benefit. This is the highest monthly benefit possible, and it will continue throughout your lifetime. Benefits will stop when you die. Any contributions and interest remaining in your account at the time of your death will be paid to your one-time death benefit recipient.

Modified Benefit

To provide a monthly benefit to someone after you die, check the *Modified Benefit* box on your *Service Retirement Application*. You will need to choose an option and designate one or more option beneficiaries.

Choosing an option will reduce your monthly benefit for as long as you and your beneficiary are still living. The amount of the reduction depends on the option you choose, your age and the age of your beneficiary. You can decide to provide a monthly benefit for one beneficiary by electing the 100% Beneficiary Option, the 75% Beneficiary Option or the 50% Beneficiary Option. You may also elect the Compound Option to provide for one or more option beneficiaries.

If you elect the Compound Option, you must submit the *Compound Option Election* form along with your *Service Retirement Application*. You can complete and submit the form online using myCalSTRS or download the form at CalSTRS.com.

CalSTRS may ask you to verify your birth date as well as the birth dates of your option beneficiaries.

To learn how each option would affect your retirement benefit, meet with a benefits counselor or use the *Retirement Benefit Calculator* at CalSTRS.com/calculators.

To change or cancel your option election after you submit your *Service Retirement Application*, you must submit the *Service Retirement Application Change Request* form (SR 1328) no later than 30 days from the date your first benefit payment is issued.

You cannot change or cancel your option election after you're retired and the 30-day deadline has passed except under limited circumstances. See the *Member Handbook* for details.

Option Descriptions

You can choose one of four options:

100% Beneficiary Option provides your option beneficiary with 100 percent of the amount you were receiving.

75% Beneficiary Option provides your option beneficiary with 75 percent of the amount you were receiving.

50% Beneficiary Option provides your option beneficiary with 50 percent of the amount you were receiving.

For the 100%, 75% and 50% Beneficiary Options, your benefit will rise to the Member-Only Benefit if your option beneficiary dies before you.

The **Compound Option** provides three choices. If your beneficiary dies before you, your benefit will be adjusted accordingly. You may:

- Name one option beneficiary and keep a portion of your benefit as a Member-Only Benefit.

- Name two or more option beneficiaries, with an option choice for each and keep a portion of your benefit as a Member-Only Benefit.
- Name two or more option beneficiaries, with an option choice for each, and *not* keep any of your benefit as a Member-Only Benefit.

If you elected an option before January 1, 2007, your option may have different rules. Verify your current option on *myCalSTRS* or by calling us.

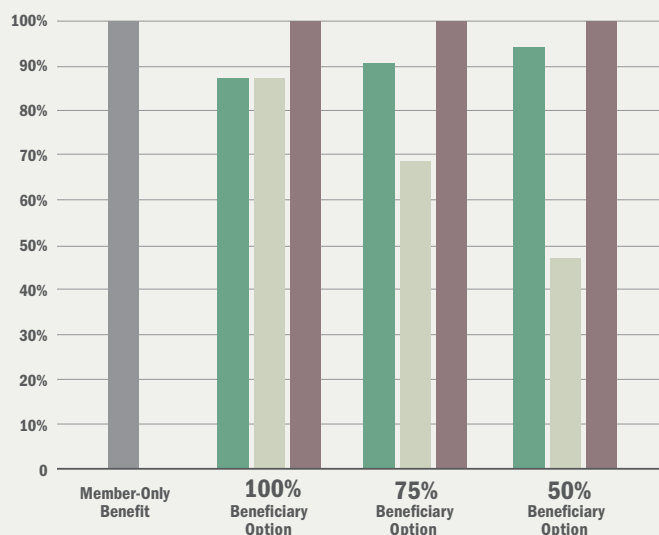
Nonspouse Option Beneficiary Age Rules

If you name someone other than your spouse or a former spouse as your option beneficiary, the type of option you may elect depends on your age and the age of your option beneficiary:

- Under the 75% Beneficiary Option, your nonspouse option beneficiary cannot be more than exactly 19 years younger than you.
- Under the Compound Option, your nonspouse option beneficiaries cannot be either:
 - » More than exactly 19 years younger than you under the 75% Beneficiary Option, or
 - » More than exactly 10 years younger than you under the 100% Beneficiary Option.

These federal age restrictions also apply to registered domestic partners.

Comparing the Defined Benefit Options



This chart compares the Defined Benefit beneficiary options. The examples show reduced retirement benefits for a member, age 60, who designates an option beneficiary, age 57. To find out how each option would affect your retirement benefit, use the *Retirement Benefit Calculator* at CalSTRS.com/calculators or make an appointment with a benefits counselor.

Member-Only Benefit

Member's benefit if no option beneficiary is elected

Modified Benefit

Member's benefit when member and option beneficiary are living at retirement

Option beneficiary's benefit when member dies

Member's benefit if option beneficiary dies after member retires

Reinstatement and Option Elections

If you are re-retiring within 12 months of your most recent reinstatement date, you may not make changes to your retirement option or beneficiaries. If you are retiring after at least one year has passed since your reinstatement, you may keep your same option or make changes. If you make changes, your monthly retirement benefit will be subject to an assessment that may reduce your benefit for your lifetime.

There are two exceptions to this law: If your option beneficiary dies, your option will be canceled automatically and an assessment will apply. For the remainder of the one-year waiting period, you will have the Member-Only Benefit. If you re-retire before the year is over, you will retire with the Member-Only Benefit.

If your option beneficiary is your current or former spouse or registered domestic partner and a final decree of dissolution of marriage or judgment of nullity has been entered, or an order of separate maintenance has been made, your option must be changed or canceled in conjunction with the court order or judgment. In addition, an assessment may apply.

Preretirement Election of an Option

To elect an option to provide your survivors with a lifetime monthly benefit if you should die before your retirement date, you must be eligible to retire and complete the *Preretirement Election of an Option* form. You can complete and submit the form online using *myCalSTRS* or download the form at CalSTRS.com/forms.

If you die before retirement, your beneficiaries will receive a lifetime monthly benefit based on the reduced benefit you would have been paid if you had retired on the date of your death.

If you cancel or change your preretirement election of an option before you retire, your monthly retirement benefit will be subject to an assessment that may reduce your benefit for your lifetime. In addition, if your beneficiary dies before you retire, your monthly retirement benefit may be reduced for your lifetime. If you have questions, talk to a benefits counselor.

Reduced Benefit Election

If you are at least age 55, but under age 60, and have at least five years of service credit, you can apply for retirement under the Reduced Benefit Election. You will **receive one-half of your monthly retirement benefit** calculated as if you were age 60. The reduced benefit will continue for the same number of months after age 60 that you received benefits before age 60. After that, you will receive your normal retirement benefit.

You are not eligible for this program if you previously received a service retirement or disability benefit from CalSTRS, or if you are applying for service retirement while your disability application is being evaluated.

If you want the Reduced Benefit Election, submit the *Reduced Benefit Election* form with your *Service Retirement Application*. You can complete and submit the form online using *myCalSTRS* or download the form at CalSTRS.com. The form includes an example to help determine if this option is right for you.

Meet with a CalSTRS benefits counselor to make sure you fully understand the program and how it could affect your retirement benefits.



Defined Benefit Supplement Decisions

How do I want my Defined Benefit Supplement paid?

If you have performed service in the Defined Benefit Program since 2001, you have a Defined Benefit Supplement account. Your most recent *Retirement Progress Report* shows your Defined Benefit Supplement balance at the end of the last school year.

If you have less than \$3,500 in your Defined Benefit Supplement account when you retire, you'll receive the account balance as a lump-sum payment. Your lump-sum payment may be paid directly to you or rolled over to a qualified plan, such as CalSTRS Pension2, if you have at least \$200 in your account to roll over.

If you have \$3,500 or more in your Defined Benefit Supplement account, you have more choices for receiving these funds. Your choices depend on whether you decide to elect Member-Only Benefit or the Modified Benefit for your retirement benefit.

The Defined Benefit Supplement Annuity Estimate tables at CalSTRS.com/calculators provide estimates for each type of annuity based on various account balances and ages at retirement.

Your Defined Benefit Supplement Annuity Beneficiaries

Your Defined Benefit Supplement lifetime beneficiary is the same person or persons you designate as your Defined Benefit option beneficiary, and the same age restrictions apply (see page 12).

Your Defined Benefit Supplement period-certain annuity beneficiary is your one-time death benefit recipient.

Defined Benefit Supplement Payment Choices

With a Defined Benefit Supplement account balance of \$3,500 or more, you have three payment choices:

1. Lump-Sum Payment

This is a one-time payment of the total amount in your Defined Benefit Supplement account as either a direct payment or a rollover to a qualified plan, such as CalSTRS Pension2, if you have at least \$200 in your account to roll over.

2. Annuity Payments

You can elect to receive your Defined Benefit Supplement funds through a series of monthly payments by electing either a period-certain or a lifetime annuity.

The **Period-Certain Annuity** provides a monthly payment made for any number of whole years from three to 10. The monthly amount you receive is based on the number of years over which the annuity is paid—the lower the number of years, the higher the amount you receive. If you die before the annuity period ends, the remaining payments will be paid to your one-time death benefit recipients.

A period-certain annuity of three to nine years is eligible for rollover to a qualified plan. A period-certain annuity of 10 years is not rollover eligible.

Your Defined Benefit Supplement lifetime annuity beneficiary is the same person you designate as your Defined Benefit option beneficiary. Your Defined Benefit Supplement period-certain annuity beneficiary is your one-time death benefit recipient.



Watch the three Defined Benefit Supplement member education videos at CalSTRS.com/multimedia to learn more.

The **Lifetime Monthly Annuity** provides a monthly payment for your lifetime (if you elect the Member-Only Benefit for your Defined Benefit account) or your lifetime and the lifetimes of your beneficiaries (if you elect the Modified Benefit for your Defined Benefit account). Lifetime annuities are not eligible for rollover—they must be paid directly to you.

- **If you elect the Member-Only Benefit** for your Defined Benefit account and would like to receive lifetime monthly payments from your Defined Benefit Supplement account, you must elect the **Member-Only Annuity**. Any balance remaining upon your death will be paid to your one-time death benefit recipient.
- **If you elect the Modified Benefit** for your Defined Benefit account and would like to receive lifetime monthly payments from your Defined Benefit Supplement account, you must elect a beneficiary annuity. The amount of your monthly annuity payment depends on the percentage of your payment that you choose to have paid to your beneficiaries upon your death:
 - » **100% Beneficiary Annuity.** All of your monthly annuity amount will be paid monthly to your option beneficiary upon your death.

- » **75% Beneficiary Annuity.** Seventy-five percent of your monthly annuity amount will be paid monthly to your option beneficiary upon your death.
- » **50% Beneficiary Annuity.** Fifty percent of your monthly annuity amount will be paid monthly to your option beneficiary upon your death.

- **If you elect the Compound Option** for your Defined Benefit retirement benefit, you may elect to receive your Defined Benefit Supplement as any of the annuities listed here. The annuity you elect will be the same for each of your beneficiaries, and the apportionment of the benefit will be the same as you elect for your Defined Benefit monthly benefit.

See page 12 for nonspouse option beneficiary age restrictions.

3. Combination Lump-Sum and Annuity Payment

You can receive a portion of your Defined Benefit Supplement account as a lump-sum payment and the remaining balance as an annuity. To elect this choice, you must have at least \$3,500 remaining in your Defined Benefit Supplement account after your lump-sum payment is made. If you choose the Combination Lump-Sum and Annuity, you will choose the amount of your lump-sum payment and one of the annuities.

One-Time Death Benefit

Your CalSTRS retirement benefit option beneficiary is different from your one-time death benefit recipient. You can designate a recipient to receive the one-time death benefit online using your *myCalSTRS* account or by completing the *Recipient Designation* form, available at CalSTRS.com/forms. Recipients can be living persons or an estate, trust, charity or other entity.

If you are an active member at the time of your death, your one-time death benefit recipient will receive the balance in your Defined Benefit Supplement account. If you do not elect an option beneficiary to receive your CalSTRS retirement benefit, your one-time death benefit recipient may also receive your contributions and interest in your Defined Benefit account.

Other Considerations

Canceling Your Retirement or Making Changes to Your Application

To make changes to your *Service Retirement Application* or cancel your service retirement, you must submit the *Service Retirement Application Change Request* form. CalSTRS must receive your form within 30 days of the date your first payment is issued. If you cancel your retirement, you must return any retirement benefit payments within 45 days of the payment issue date.

Sign Up for Direct Deposit

Direct deposit gives you the quickest access to your benefit payment. For faster processing, sign up for direct deposit using your *myCalSTRS* account. Or complete the *Direct Deposit Authorization* form, available on [CalSTRS.com/forms](https://www.calstrs.com/forms). If you change your bank or want to cancel direct deposit, update your direct deposit instructions using your *myCalSTRS* account or by submitting a new form.

When you sign up for direct deposit, you authorize CalSTRS to transmit benefit payments by electronic funds transfer to your account at a U.S. financial institution. Your current and past benefit payment statements are available on *myCalSTRS*. If you want to receive statements by mail, you can choose to receive them twice a year—in February, with tax table changes, and in October, with the annual benefit adjustment—or every month.

Community Property Settlements

If you divorced or legally separated or terminated your registered domestic partnership while a CalSTRS member, your benefits may be subject to a community property settlement. When a court order specifically requires your benefits to be divided, CalSTRS must review:

- A complete court-filed copy of your final court judgment of dissolution, legal separation or termination of domestic partnership.
- A full copy of any settlement agreement, including exhibits and attachments.

If your documents have not been reviewed by CalSTRS, you may be asked to provide them. Failure to provide the required documents may result in a delay in your benefit without interest.

For more information, see the *Community Property Guide* at [CalSTRS.com](https://www.calstrs.com).

Receive Retirement Benefits During Evaluation of Your Disability Benefits Application

If you're eligible to retire and you are applying for disability benefits, you may receive retirement benefits during the evaluation of your *Disability Benefits Application*.

Learn more in the *Introduction to CalSTRS Disability Benefits* brochure, available at [CalSTRS.com](https://www.calstrs.com). You'll find the *Disability Benefits Application* in *Your Disability Benefits Guide*, also at [CalSTRS.com](https://www.calstrs.com).

A CalSTRS benefits counselor can help you understand your disability benefit coverage, provide estimates and assist you with an application.

Retiring From Another California Public Retirement System

If you are also a member of another public retirement system in California, you must file for retirement separately with each system.

For some systems, if you service retire from CalSTRS and the other system concurrently, your benefits may be based on the highest average annual compensation earnable earned under all systems as long as you do not work under CalSTRS or another system between the dates you retire from each system.

Your highest average annual compensation earnable under CalSTRS-covered employment will be used to calculate your CalSTRS benefit if you worked under CalSTRS-covered employment and another public retirement system in the same pay period during the period of service used to calculate your final compensation. Even if you earned a higher average annual compensation earnable under the other retirement system, we will use only your CalSTRS salary to determine your final compensation.

The other public retirement systems in California subject to concurrent membership are:

- California Public Employees' Retirement System
- University of California Retirement System
- San Francisco Employees' Retirement System
- Legislators' Retirement System
- The following California county retirement systems enacted under the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937:

Alameda	Sacramento
Contra Costa	San Bernardino
Fresno	San Diego
Imperial	San Joaquin
Kern	San Mateo
Los Angeles	Santa Barbara
Marin	Sonoma
Mendocino	Stanislaus
Merced	Tulare
Orange	Ventura

Ask a CalSTRS benefits counselor if you are eligible for a concurrent retirement. For more information, see the *Member Handbook*.

Keep your mailing and email addresses current to avoid delays in benefits or communications. Submit changes using *myCalSTRS* or the *Address Change Request* form, available at CalSTRS.com.



Medicare Premium Payment Program

Currently the CalSTRS Medicare Premium Payment Program, which pays Medicare Part A hospital insurance premiums for certain eligible retired members, is not being offered to members with a benefit effective date on or after July 1, 2012. With the adoption of a full funding plan, the Teachers' Retirement Board may elect to extend the program in the future. Your most recent retirement date is used to determine your eligibility.

Health Insurance Premium Deductions

CalSTRS does not provide health or dental insurance coverage for members. However, state law requires that school districts offer retiring CalSTRS members the option to continue their medical and dental insurance at their own cost. Your health insurance premiums may be partially or fully paid by your school district after retirement, depending on your collective bargaining agreement. Benefits vary from district to district.

CalSTRS can deduct health premiums from your monthly retirement benefit and forward them to your health insurance carrier, if your carrier has an agreement with us. If you are interested in a health insurance deduction, contact your employer's human resources department. We will set up a deduction for you after we receive the appropriate paperwork from your health insurance provider. To cancel, verify coverage information or change premium amounts, contact your insurance carrier or employer.

Medicare Premium Deductions

If you're enrolled in both Medicare Part A and Part B, you may have your Part B premiums deducted from your monthly benefit by submitting the *Medicare Payment Authorization* form, available at CalSTRS.com, along with a copy of your current unpaid Notice of Medicare Premium Payment Due (Medicare bill).

Dues Deductions

A number of associations, including the California Retired Teachers Association, California Teachers Association and Association of California School Administrators, have arranged to have dues deducted from CalSTRS retirement payments.

If you are interested in having your dues deducted from your payments, contact the association (see listing on page 22). After we receive the appropriate paperwork from the association, we will set up a deduction. To cancel a deduction, you need to contact the association directly.

Your Retirement Benefit and Social Security

As a member of CalSTRS, you don't pay into Social Security, so you don't earn Social Security benefits for your CalSTRS-covered work. If you or your spouse qualifies for Social Security from other employment, your monthly Social Security check may be smaller or you may not receive a check at all because of two federal rules: the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset.

Your CalSTRS retirement benefit will not be reduced or eliminated by these two rules.

To learn more about these two rules, contact Social Security at 800-772-1213 or visit socialsecurity.gov where you'll also find calculators.

- See the *Social Security, CalSTRS and You* fact sheet at CalSTRS.com.

Working After Retirement

You can continue to receive your full CalSTRS retirement benefit, with no earnings limitation, if you take a job outside of CalSTRS-covered employment, including work in:

- Private industry outside of the California public school system
- Private schools
- Public schools outside of California
- University of California or California State University system

If you return to work after service retirement in a CalSTRS-covered position, including substitute teaching, within the California public school system as an employee, an independent contractor or an employee of a third party, except under a very narrow exception, there are restrictions under state and federal law. You cannot:

- Earn any pay without affecting your retirement benefit if you return to work before a 180-calendar day separation from service.
- Earn more than the annual earnings limit without affecting your CalSTRS retirement benefit.
- Work in a classified position except, under certain circumstances, as a teacher's aide.

In addition, if you retired under the Retirement Incentive Program, you will lose the ongoing increase in your benefit from the incentive if you take any job within five years of retirement with the employer that offered the incentive.

Separation-From-Service Requirement

Zero-Dollar Earnings Limit

Your retirement benefit will be reduced dollar for dollar by any compensation earned from CalSTRS-covered employment, including employer contributions to tax-sheltered annuities and other tax-favored products, during the first 180 calendar days following your most recent retirement effective date on or after January 1, 2013, up to your benefit payable during that period.

There are no exemptions from the separation-from-service requirement if you are under normal retirement age or you received a retirement incentive. There is a narrow exemption if you're over the normal retirement age. The requirement may not apply if your employer's governing body, such as a school board, approves your appointment through a resolution adopted at a public meeting, you did not receive any financial inducement to retire, and your termination of service was not the cause of the need to acquire your services.

Your employer must submit the required documentation to CalSTRS substantiating your eligibility for an exemption. CalSTRS must receive the exemption request and required documentation before you can begin working.

CalSTRS is here for you.



Postretirement Earnings Limit

If you return to work in a CalSTRS-covered position within the California public school system as an employee, an independent contractor or an employee of a third party, you can earn up to the annual postretirement earnings limit without affecting your benefit. If your earnings from CalSTRS-covered employment, including employer contributions to tax-sheltered annuities and other tax-favored products, exceed the annual earnings limit, CalSTRS will withhold all of your gross monthly retirement benefit until we collect your excess earnings in full, up to the amount of your annual retirement benefit, minus reductions due to the separation-from-service requirement.

The earnings limit for the 2014–15 school year is \$40,173, and \$40,321 for 2015–16. Any amount you earn in a CalSTRS-covered position during the first 180 calendar days of retirement will also count against the annual postretirement earnings limit for the appropriate fiscal year.

For example: If you return to CalSTRS-covered work in the 2014–15 school year after the first 180 days following retirement and earn \$50,000, you will have exceeded the annual earnings limit of \$40,173 by \$9,827. If your annual retirement benefit is \$9,827 or more, then CalSTRS will withhold your monthly retirement benefits until we collect \$9,827.

Very Narrow Exemption

There is one very narrow exemption to the postretirement earnings limit. If you return to work as a trustee, fiscal adviser, fiscal expert, receiver or special trustee in a position appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, county superintendent of schools, State Board of Education or California Community Colleges Board of Governors to assist schools in financial or academic distress, you may be exempt from the earnings limit through June 30, 2017. You are not eligible for an exemption if you have received a retirement incentive in the previous six months.

Your employer must submit the required documentation to CalSTRS substantiating your eligibility for the exemption. CalSTRS must receive an exemption request and required documentation before you can begin working. It is up to you to contact your employer to verify that the required documentation has been submitted to CalSTRS. CalSTRS will inform you if you have been approved for the exemption.

How the Zero-Dollar Limit and Annual Postretirement Earnings Limit Work

If you retired on June 30, 2014 with an annual benefit of \$34,000 and returned to CalSTRS-covered work earning \$26,000 in the first 180 calendar days following your retirement date, your benefit would be reduced dollar for dollar up to your retirement benefit amount payable during that same period, which was about \$17,000. CalSTRS collects the excess earnings by withholding all of your gross monthly retirement benefit until the entire amount owed is collected in full. If you continued to work in a CalSTRS-covered position for the remainder of the school year and earned an additional \$26,000, your total earnings for the year of \$52,000 would exceed the 2014–15 annual postretirement earnings limit of \$40,173 by \$11,827. CalSTRS will collect these excess earnings from you up to the amount of your annual retirement benefit of \$34,000 minus the previous \$17,000 reduction due to the zero-dollar earnings limit. In this case, we would collect \$11,827.

Exclusion from the Earnings Limit for Certain Third-Party Employers

You may be excluded from the postretirement earnings limit and other postretirement employment requirements if:

- You return to work for a third-party employer that does not participate in a California public pension system.
- The activities performed are not normally performed by employees of a CalSTRS employer and the activities are performed for 24 months or less.

Reinstatement After Retirement

You may voluntarily terminate your retirement and reinstate to active membership any time after the date of your retirement by submitting the *Reinstatement After Retirement* form.

Your reinstatement date can be no earlier than the first day of the month in which CalSTRS receives your signed *Reinstatement After Retirement* form. For example, if you want your retirement to end as of July 15, 2015, CalSTRS must receive your form no later than July 31, 2015.

If you decide to remain retired after submitting your application, you may cancel your reinstatement application as long as we receive your request by the last day of the month in which your reinstatement was to become effective.

If you are re-retiring after reinstating to active service from retirement, your retirement date must be at least one day after the date you reinstated.

If you re-retire within a year of reinstating, you may not make changes to your retirement option or beneficiaries. If you re-retire after 12 months of reinstating, you may change or cancel your election, but your benefit may be subject to an assessment. Once you have retired, you may make a postretirement option change only under limited circumstances. See the *Member Handbook* for more information on postretirement option changes.

To learn how reinstatement could affect your future retirement benefits, meet with a benefits counselor. You'll also find more information in the *Member Handbook*.



Retired Educator Organizations

Organizations for retirees provide services to their members and may be legislative advocates for bills affecting retired educators. Contact information for a number of organizations is provided as a courtesy and not as an endorsement.

<p>Association of California School Administrators 1029 J Street, Suite 500 Sacramento, CA 95814 800-608-2272 acsa.org</p>	<p>California Teachers Association/National Education Association—Retired 1705 Murchison Drive P.O. Box 921 Burlingame, CA 94011-0921 650-697-1400 cta.org</p>
<p>Association of Retired Teachers P.O. Box 57438 Sherman Oaks, CA 91413 323-666-0544 (for Los Angeles Unified School District educators)</p>	<p>Faculty Association of California Community Colleges 1823 11th Street Sacramento, CA 95811 916-447-8555 facc.org</p>
<p>California Federation of Teachers Administrative Office 2550 North Hollywood Way, Suite 400 Burbank, CA 91505 818-843-8226 cft.org</p>	<p>United Educators of San Francisco—Retired Division 2310 Mason Street San Francisco, CA 94133 415-956-8373 uesf.org</p>
<p>California Retired Teachers Association 800 Howe Avenue, Suite 370 Sacramento, CA 95825 916-923-2200 800-523-2782 calrta.org</p>	<p>United Teachers Los Angeles—Retired 3303 Wilshire Boulevard, 10th Floor Los Angeles, CA 90010 213-487-5560 800-556-8852 utla.net</p>

Benefit of a Lifetime



CalSTRS Benefits Counseling Offices



Office Locations	Telephone Numbers	Hours
Auburn	530-886-2012	M-F 8-5
Bakersfield	661-636-4880	M-F 8-5
Eureka	707-441-3953	M-F 8-4:30
Fresno *Visalia	559-497-3797	M-F 8-4:30
Glendale Member Service Center *Culver City, Lancaster, Oxnard, Walnut	800-228-5453, ext. 3	M-F 8-5
Irvine Member Service Center *Downey, Santa Fe Springs	800-228-5453, ext. 3	M-F 8-5
Modesto *Merced	209-238-1614	M-F 8-5
Redlands *Apple Valley, Murrieta, Palm Springs, Riverside	800-228-5453, ext. 3	M-F 8-5
San Diego *San Marcos	619-718-6783	M-F 8-5
Santa Clara Member Service Center *Pleasant Hill, San Francisco	800-228-5453, ext. 3	M-F 8-5
Santa Cruz *Salinas	831-466-5755	M-F 8-5
Santa Maria *Santa Barbara	805-928-0542	M-F 8:30-5
Santa Rosa	800-228-5453, ext. 3	M-F 8-5
Stockton	209-468-4864	M-F 7-5
West Sacramento Member Service Center *Elk Grove, Fairfield, Marysville, Oroville, Redding	800-228-5453, ext. 3	M-F 8-5

*Hours and services vary at satellite offices. Appointments are scheduled through the corresponding CalSTRS counseling office.

All member service centers accept CalSTRS applications and forms. Contact satellite offices directly to find out if they accept forms.

For a current listing of offices, visit CalSTRS.com/localoffices.

Forms for Service Retirement

To apply for service retirement, you'll need to submit the *Service Retirement Application*. You and your employer must submit the *Express Benefit Report* to verify your last day of paid employment and report unused sick leave. You also may need to submit additional forms for special circumstances.

Here is a list of forms and descriptions of their purpose. Except for the *Express Benefit Report* and the *Service Retirement Application Change Request* form, you can complete and submit these forms online using myCalSTRS (the direct deposit authorization on myCalSTRS is not a form).

Form Name	Purpose	Why Use This Form
Required		
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Service Retirement Application</i>	To apply for retirement if you are a Defined Benefit member.	Required for a Defined Benefit retirement. Includes distribution for your Defined Benefit Supplement funds.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Express Benefit Report</i>	To have your employer verify your last day of paid employment and report unused sick leave.	Speeds up the determination of your retirement benefit amount.
Recommended		
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Direct Deposit Authorization</i>	To send your retirement benefit directly to your financial institution.	Provides a convenient and safe way to receive your retirement benefit.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Recipient Designation</i>	To designate a living person or persons, or an estate, trust, charity or other entity to receive the one-time death benefit.	Confirms your death benefit wishes are recorded at CalSTRS and avoids probate for this benefit after your death.
Special Circumstances		
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Justification for Non-Signature of Spouse or Registered Domestic Partner</i>	To explain why your spouse's or registered domestic partner's signature is not on forms that require it.	If you are married or registered as a domestic partner and your spouse or registered domestic partner is unable or refuses to sign forms when required.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Compound Option Election</i> <i>(This is the only option election that requires a special form.)</i>	To designate one or more option beneficiaries—must be a living person—to receive an allocation of your Member-Only benefit with an option choice for each and, if you choose, retain a portion of your benefit.	When you want to elect the Compound Option at retirement and are submitting a <i>Service Retirement Application</i> for the first time.
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Reduced Benefit Election</i>	To elect the Reduced Benefit Election—you must be at least 55 but under 60.	Receive one-half of your monthly benefit calculated as if you were 60 for the same number of months after age 60 that you received payments before 60. After that, you receive your normal benefit. Must be submitted with your <i>Service Retirement Application</i> .
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Service Retirement Application Change Request</i>	To make a change to your application or cancel it.	CalSTRS must receive your form within 30 days of the date of your first benefit payment is issued.

Find current forms on myCalSTRS or CalSTRS.com/forms.

Step 2: Complete and Submit Your Forms

Complete and submit your *Service Retirement Application* online using *myCalSTRS*. It's easy, fast and secure.

When you complete your application online using *myCalSTRS*:

- Step-by-step guidance means you complete your application correctly.
- Your member-specific information is auto-filled, saving you time.
- Your application is processed automatically, for a faster turnaround.
- You'll receive immediate email confirmation when CalSTRS receives your application and after it has been processed.
- You'll receive prompt emails if we need additional information to process your application.

Activate Your *myCalSTRS* Account

Get started now by activating your *myCalSTRS* account if you haven't already done so. If you have a spouse or registered domestic partner, he or she also needs to register for *myCalSTRS* to electronically sign your application. Simply go to myCalSTRS.com, and click on *Register Now*. If you need help, call us at 800-228-5453.

Defined Benefit Supplement Rollovers

Rolling over your Defined Benefit Supplement funds? If you select CalSTRS Pension2 for your rollover, you can submit your application online since CalSTRS will obtain the required financial signatures on your behalf.

If you are rolling over your Defined Benefit Supplement funds to a financial institution other than Pension2, you can still complete your application online but you'll need to print and submit it to CalSTRS because a financial institution representative's signature is required.

Instructions Overview for Paper Forms

Carefully read and follow the instructions for each form to avoid any processing delays. All the forms you may need to retire are listed on page 24. You can find them online at *myCalSTRS* and *CalSTRS.com*. Paper forms can be mailed, faxed or returned to a benefits counselor or benefits counseling office. All paper applications are processed in the order they are received. Incomplete applications are not processed and are returned by mail.

When completing the paper retirement application and other forms, be sure to:

- Carefully read the instructions.
- Make photocopies of the forms beforehand in case you need to start over. You can also download and print new forms from *CalSTRS.com*. If you need to make a correction, draw a line through the error and make your correction, then initial and date next to the change, or use a new form.
- Print clearly in blue or black ink or type all information requested. Do not use pencil, erasable ink or light-colored ink.
- Remember to sign and date your *Service Retirement Application* and other forms. For forms to be legally accepted by CalSTRS, you and your spouse or registered domestic partner must sign and date all forms where indicated. If your spouse or registered domestic partner cannot sign the forms, complete the *Justification for Non-Signature of Spouse or Registered Domestic Partner* form. This form may require supporting documentation.
- Make a copy of each completed form you submit to CalSTRS for your records.

Service Retirement Application Checklist

This checklist will help you avoid common errors that result in your paper application being returned for corrections.

Section 1: Member Information

- Did you complete *all* of the member information?

Section 2: Retirement Information

- Did you provide a retirement date?
- Did you provide the date of your last day of work, vacation or authorized leave?
- Is your retirement date at least one day after your last day of work?
- If you are applying for the Reduced Benefit Election, did you complete and attach the *Reduced Benefit Election* form?
- If you plan to retire concurrently from another California public retirement system, did you complete the required information?

Section 3: Your Defined Benefit

3.1 Defined Benefit Election

- Did you elect either the Member-Only or the Modified Benefit?
If you elect the Modified Benefit and did not previously submit a *Preretirement Election of an Option* form:
 - Did you provide all the required option and beneficiary information?
 - Did you enclose birth date verification for your option beneficiary?
 - If you are applying for the Compound Option Election, did you complete and attach the *Compound Option Election* form?

3.2 Defined Benefit Tax Withholding Preferences

- Did you elect your California state and federal income tax withholding preferences?

Section 4: Your Defined Benefit Supplement

4.1 Defined Benefit Supplement Election

- Did you elect one choice for your Defined Benefit Supplement funds: either the Lump-Sum Payment, the Annuity Payment, or the Combination Lump Sum and Annuity?
- If you elected the Annuity Payment, did you indicate either the Period-Certain Monthly Annuity of 3 to 10 Years or the Lifetime Monthly Annuity?
- If you elected the Combination Lump Sum and Annuity, did you indicate the Lump-Sum amount and choose either a Period-Certain Monthly Annuity of 3 to 10 years or a Lifetime Monthly Annuity?

Service Retirement Application Checklist

4.2 Defined Benefit Supplement Payment Instructions

- If you chose the Lump-Sum Payment or a Period-Certain Annuity of 3 to 9 years, did you elect either Direct Payment or the Rollover?

If you chose the Rollover, did you:

- Choose one of the three plan types: qualified IRA, other eligible plan or Roth IRA?
- Indicate the dollar amount or percentage to transfer?
- Provide the account number?
- Complete the financial institution information?
- Obtain the financial institution representative's signature if the rollover is not to CalSTRS Pension2?

4.3 Defined Benefit Supplement Tax Withholding Preferences

- If you elected the Direct Payment Lump Sum or a Period-Certain Annuity of 3 to 9 years, did you indicate if you want state tax withheld?
- If you elected a Lifetime Monthly Annuity or the Period-Certain Annuity of 10 years, did you choose your state and federal income tax withholding preferences?

Section 5: Required Signatures

- Did you indicate your marital status by checking all boxes that apply to you?
- Did you sign and date the form with your signature date?
- Did you sign within six months of your requested retirement date?
- Did your spouse or registered domestic partner sign and date the form with the signature date?
- If not, did you check the corresponding box and attach the *Justification for Non-Signature of Spouse or Registered Domestic Partner* form?

Section 6: Special Tax Notice: Your Rollover Options

- Did you read and consider this notice when making decisions on rollover-eligible payments?

Before submitting your application:

- Are your name and Client ID or Social Security number on all pages?
- Did you complete all pages of the application?
- Did you initial and and date any corrections?
- Did you make a copy of your application and supporting documents for your records?

Step 3: CalSTRS Role in Your Retirement Process

The information below will help you understand what to expect after you submit your *Service Retirement Application*. If you submit your paper application between April 1 and July 31, processing times will be longer than during nonpeak months. Submit your application using *myCalSTRS* for faster processing of your award letter.



When you complete and submit your application online using *myCalSTRS*, your timeline typically will be much faster.

After you submit your <i>Service Retirement Application</i> , CalSTRS...	When
Reviews your packet for all necessary information.	Within 30 days of receiving your application packet.
Sends a letter to you, acknowledging receipt of your application.	Within two weeks of processing your application or instantly via email if you apply online.
May request additional information from you or your former employer, including any court-ordered community property documents. (The <i>Express Benefit Report</i> form can decrease the need to request additional information from you or your employer.)	Any time during the application process.
Sends an award letter that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of your monthly benefit. • How your monthly benefit was calculated. • The total amount of your contributions and interest as of your effective date of retirement. 	Within 45 days of your retirement date, or the date we process your application, whichever is later.
Sends your <i>first</i> benefit payment based on the information on file at the time of retirement. If your retirement date is not the first of the month, your first benefit payment will be prorated.	Within 45 days of your retirement effective date or the date we process your retirement application and all applicable forms, whichever is later.
Sends your requested Defined Benefit Supplement payment based on the information on file at the time of your retirement.	Within 45 days of your retirement effective date or the date we process your retirement application and all applicable forms, whichever is later.
Sends adjustment letters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your benefit payment generally is adjusted over several months as additional employment information is received from your employer. • Reconciliation of underpayments or overpayments will be made during this period. • Save your most recent adjustment letter to determine your tax liability. 	After your retirement date.
Provides an annual benefit adjustment equal to 2 percent of your initial benefit. These adjustments are not compounded or based on inflation.	Effective September 1 of each year, beginning after the first anniversary of your retirement. The automatic adjustment is reflected in your October 1 payment.

CalSTRS Pension2—Your Personal Wealth Plan

Roll Over Your Funds to Pension2 at Retirement

With retirement in sight, you may be thinking about what to do with the money in your Defined Benefit Supplement account. Consider a rollover to Pension2®, CalSTRS' voluntary supplemental savings plan. Pension2 offers 403(b), Roth 403(b) and 457 plans for additional retirement savings.

Have money in a 403(b) or 457 account administered by another company and don't like the higher fees and expenses? You may be able to roll over your money to Pension2.

Pension2 complements your CalSTRS retirement benefit and promotes smart investing:

- Investment options that match all levels of investment ability. Pension2 provides access to three groups of investments, depending on your comfort in managing your retirement portfolio:

Easy Choice Portfolios—Portfolios are available for target retirement years and for those who are already retired, and are grouped in three risk categories: conservative, moderate and aggressive.

Core Investment Options—Choose your funds from a carefully selected list of core investment fund options and actively design and manage your asset allocations over time.

Self-Directed Brokerage Account—The Self-Directed Brokerage Account gives you access to a greatly expanded range of mutual funds.

- No front- and back-end load fees, no surrender charges, no commissions.

- Simple, low-cost fee structure. Fees are charged for three services: plan administration, investment management and school district-contracted third-party administrator.
- Experienced retirement specialists help you define your retirement income goals, integrating them with your CalSTRS retirement benefit.
- Access to financial learning resources, provided by Voya Institutional Plan Services and its affiliates, including tools for retirement planning, personal finance, estate planning and family finance.
- **Pension2.com**
Learn more about Pension2 plans and low fees. Find an e-enrollment booklet, enrollment forms and educational videos. Or call toll free 844-electP2 (844-353-2872).
- **yourplan.CalSTRS.com**
Find complete information about the plans offered by your employer.
- **403bCompare.com**
Compare fees charged by different mutual funds and insurance products.



At retirement, consider rolling over the funds in your Defined Benefit Supplement or Cash Balance Benefit account into Pension2. Scan to learn more.



Glossary

Age Factor

The percentage of your final compensation that you will receive as a retirement benefit for every year of service credit. The age factor is based on your age on the last day of the month in which your retirement is effective. Under CalSTRS 2% at 60, the basic age factor at age 60, the normal retirement age, is 2 percent. The maximum age factor is 2.4 percent at age 63.

For example, if you retire at age 60 and have 20 years of service, you will receive 2 percent (your age factor at age 60) of your final compensation multiplied by the 20 years you worked, or 40 percent of your final compensation (2 percent x 20).

Annual Benefit Adjustment

An automatic annual increase to your monthly benefit. The increase is effective September 1 of each year after the first anniversary of your benefit effective date and appears on your October 1 payment. Annual benefit adjustments are calculated at 2 percent of your initial benefit. The increase is not compounded or linked to inflation.

Assessment

A reduction applied to your benefit if you change or cancel your preretirement election of an option. The amount is the actuarial equivalent of the coverage you received as a result of the preretirement election. (Assessments of \$0 do not result in a benefit reduction.)

Career Factor

If you retire with at least 30 years of qualified service credit, a bonus of 0.2 percent (two-tenths of 1 percent) will be added to your age factor up to a maximum age factor of 2.4 percent. For example, at age 60 and 3 months, the normal age factor is 2.033. With the career factor added, the age factor would be 2.233.

The increased age factor does not apply if you die before retirement without a *Preretirement Election of an Option* form on file at CalSTRS.

Client ID

A CalSTRS randomly generated number used to identify members. CalSTRS uses it instead of your Social Security number to secure your identity. Your Client ID can be found on your *Retirement Progress Report*.

Compensation Earnable

Your annual compensation earnable for a school year is based on the gross monthly pay you could have earned for creditable service performed full time.

Concurrent Retirement

Retiring for service at the same time from CalSTRS and one of the following California public retirement systems: California Public Employees' Retirement System, San Francisco Employees' Retirement System, University of California Retirement System, Legislators' Retirement System, or those systems established under the County Employees' Retirement Law of 1937. Or retiring for service on different dates as long as you did not perform service creditable to either system between those dates.

Creditable Service

Specific employment activities performed for a school district, community college district, county office of education or eligible charter school, including teaching, vocational or guidance counseling services related to school curriculum, and a variety of administrative duties.

Credited Service

Service credit for which required contributions have been paid.

Defined Benefit Program

A benefit program within the State Teachers' Retirement Plan that provides lifetime retirement benefits (based on a formula using an age factor, service credit and final compensation) and ancillary benefits for California's public school educators who are members of the program.

Defined Benefit Supplement Program

A supplemental benefit program with benefits based on contributions and interest credited to your account. From January 1, 2001, to December 31, 2010, funds came from 25 percent of your monthly CalSTRS contribution. Your entire member contribution now goes into your Defined Benefit account. Compensation earned from service in one school year in excess of one year of service credit will continue to go into your Defined Benefit Supplement account.

Excess Sick Leave Days

Sick leave granted by employers after June 30, 1986, that exceeds one day of sick leave per pay period of at least four weeks.

Final Compensation

The highest average annual compensation earnable during a specified period of CalSTRS-covered paid employment. The period is 12 consecutive months if you have at least 25 years of service credit. The period is 36 consecutive months if you have fewer than 25 years of service credit.

Hybrid Plan

As a CalSTRS member, you participate in a hybrid retirement system that includes traditional defined benefit (Defined Benefit Program), cash balance (Defined Benefit Supplement Program) and voluntary defined contribution (CalSTRS Pension2) plans. You also have survivor and disability benefits.

Longevity Bonus

An increase to your monthly Member-Only Benefit, if you had at least 30 years of qualified service credit on or before December 31, 2010. The bonus will be reduced by the option factor if you choose an option.

Member

You are a member if you have been credited with service in the Defined Benefit Program and have not received a refund for that service.

Member-Only Benefit

The highest monthly benefit you can receive when you retire for service or disability before any reduction to provide for an option beneficiary.

Modified Benefit

A reduction in your Member-Only Benefit to provide an ongoing lifetime benefit to one or more option beneficiaries after your death. The reduction depends on which option you choose, your age and the age of your option beneficiary when the election is made.

One-Time Death Benefit

A one-time benefit paid to your designated recipients (may be an estate, trust, charity, corporation or other entity) after you die.

Option

Plan feature that allows you to distribute your retirement benefit over your lifetime and the lifetimes of other people.

Postretirement Earnings Limits

Separation-From-Service Requirement

Zero-Dollar Earnings Limit

If you return to CalSTRS-covered employment during the first 180 calendar days after retirement, your retirement benefit will be reduced dollar for dollar by the amount you earn up to your benefit payable during the 180 calendar days. There are no exemptions if you are under normal retirement age or received a retirement incentive.

Following the 180-day period, you may return to work under the annual earnings limit. The separation-from-service requirement starts after your most recent retirement.

If you do not have a separation from service, you'll be subject to the annual earnings limit and the zero-dollar earning limit.

Annual Earnings Limit

If you return to work in a CalSTRS-covered position, after the 180-day separation period, including one for a third-party employer on behalf of a California public school, you can earn up to the annual postretirement earnings limit without affecting your benefit. Your CalSTRS benefit will be reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of creditable earnings from public school employment in excess of the earnings limit up to your annual retirement benefit, minus reductions due to the zero-dollar earnings limit.

The Teachers' Retirement Board adjusts the earnings limit annually. The earnings limit for the 2014–15 school year is \$40,173; for 2015–16, the limit is \$40,321.

If you return to CalSTRS-covered employment during the first 180 calendar days after retirement when you are subject to the zero-dollar earnings limit/separation-from-service requirement, any pay you earn will also count against the annual earnings limit for the appropriate fiscal year.

Reduced Benefit Election (Limited-Term Reduction Program)

A retirement alternative for Defined Benefit members. You will receive one-half the monthly benefit amount calculated as if you were age 60. The reduced benefit will continue for the same number of months after age 60 that you received benefits before age 60. After that, you will receive the full retirement benefit. To be eligible, you must be at least age 55, but under age 60, and have at least five years of service credit for retirement. You are not eligible if you previously received a CalSTRS service retirement or disability benefit or if you're applying for service retirement while your disability application is being evaluated.

Service Credit

Accumulated period in years, including partial years, for which you earned creditable compensation and made contributions under the CalSTRS Defined Benefit Program. Your service credit is one of the factors used to determine your eligibility for benefits payable under the Defined Benefit Program. Service credit cannot exceed 1.000 in any given school year.

Vested Member

If you have five years of service credit in the CalSTRS Defined Benefit Program, you are considered a vested member and are eligible for retirement benefits at age 55—or age 50 with 30 years of service credit.

CalSTRS Resources



WEB

CalSTRS.com
Click *Contact Us* to email
myCalSTRS.com
403bCompare.com
Pension2.com

STAY CONNECTED



CALL

800-228-5453
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday through Friday

888-394-2060
CalSTRS Pension2®
Personal Wealth Plan

855-844-2468 (toll free)
Pension Abuse Reporting Hotline



WRITE

CalSTRS
P.O. Box 15275
Sacramento, CA
95851-0275



VISIT

Member Services
100 Waterfront Place
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CalSTRS.com/localoffices



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