

## Retirement Plan Summary

Fact sheet for active and deferred members



Once vested, you are eligible for a lifetime retirement benefit as soon as you meet retirement eligibility requirements and choose to retire.

SDCERA is an independent association established by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937. SDCERA provides retirement and associated benefits for eligible employees of the County of San Diego (and other participating employers). SDCERA responsibilities include collecting contributions, depositing and investing earnings and managing the retirement fund with direction from a nine-member Board of Retirement.

You become a member of SDCERA after you are appointed to a permanent position and work at least half time, or 20 hours weekly. Membership is mandatory for eligible employees beginning with the first biweekly payroll period in the month following your appointment. This is also when deductions from your biweekly wages for any required member contributions begin.

### Contributions

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Your biweekly membership contribution is based on your age (to your nearest birthday) when you enter SDCERA membership, as well as your tier, membership class and representation unit. Contribution rate charts are available at [www.sdcera.org](http://www.sdcera.org) or from SDCERA. In addition, you receive personalized account information that includes entry age and membership detail within a month after entering membership and then annually in a member statement.

Use the contribution calculator at [www.sdcera.org](http://www.sdcera.org) to determine the amount of your member contribution to be deducted from each pay check.

### Membership classifications

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Safety members are those in active law enforcement positions, or those who otherwise qualify for Safety membership.

General members are those *not* in active law enforcement positions. Effective March 8, 2002, General members who are hired or re-hired are classified as General, Tier A members. If you are uncertain of your classification, contact SDCERA.

SDCERA is an integrated retirement plan for General members, which means General members contribute to both Social Security and to SDCERA from their employment wages. Safety members have a non-integrated plan, which means Safety members do not contribute to Social Security from their employment wages.

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## Vesting

You are vested when you have five years of SDCERA retirement service credit or a combination of SDCERA and reciprocal retirement system service credit. Once vested, you are eligible for a lifetime retirement benefit as soon as you meet retirement eligibility requirements and choose to retire.

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## Termination from work

If you are vested when you terminate but do not retire immediately, you may leave your contributions and interest on deposit in SDCERA and apply for retirement benefits in the future when you are eligible and choose to retire.

If you are not vested when you terminate, you have the option of leaving your member contributions and interest on deposit, which continue to accrue interest and may be refunded to you at any time. Alternatively, you may request a refund of your member contributions and interest upon termination.

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## Eligibility to retire

Most members are first eligible to retire at age 50 with 10 years of service credit, or age 70 regardless of service credit. You may also retire regardless of your age after 30 years of service credit (General members) or 20 years of service credit (Safety members).

If you are vested when you terminate, but do not have 10 years of service credit, you may retire when you would have had 10 years of service credit had you remained working, but generally not earlier than age 50.

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## Service retirement benefit

Your benefit will be based on a formula that uses your age at retirement, your total service credit and your final average monthly compensation. Benefits increase up to age 60 (General, Tier A) or up to age 50 (Safety).

The benefit formula per year of service credit is approximately 3% at age 60 for General, Tier A members and 3% at age 50 for Safety members. Therefore, if you are a General, Tier A member and you retire at age 60, you can expect about 3% of your final compensation per year of service credit. This example estimates an Unmodified retirement benefit option. There is one additional step for the General member calculation that includes an adjustment for Social Security. The maximum benefit available for all members is 100% of your highest final average monthly compensation.

Use the retirement benefit calculator at [www.sdcera.org](http://www.sdcera.org) to determine benefit estimates at various ages and with varying lengths of service.

## Disability retirement benefit

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If you become permanently incapacitated due to an illness, injury or disease, and as a result, are unable to perform the duties of your job, you may be eligible for a disability retirement benefit. There are two types of disability retirement: service-connected and nonservice-connected. There is no minimum age requirement for either type of disability retirement.

Service-connected disability relates to a permanent incapacity caused by your job. There is no minimum service credit requirement. The formula for service-connected disability retirement is 50% of your final average monthly compensation.

Nonservice-connected disability relates to a permanent incapacity *not* caused by your job. You must have at least five years of SDCERA/ reciprocal service credit to be eligible for this benefit. The benefit formula for a nonservice-connected disability retirement is generally 1.8% of your final average monthly compensation per year of service credit, but can be less.

If you are eligible for a service retirement benefit and a disability retirement benefit, you will be paid the higher of the two benefits.

## Survivor benefits

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If an active member dies, eligible survivor benefits may include a lump sum payment. An eligible spouse, registered domestic partner or eligible children of a vested active member may choose the lump sum, or a monthly survivor benefit. A combination benefit is another option available to a surviving spouse or partner. Members or beneficiaries may contact SDCERA for more detail.

When a retired member dies, any benefit paid to an eligible survivor is a percentage based on the benefit option chosen at the time of your retirement. Usually, the basic survivor benefit for a spouse or registered domestic partner is 60% upon death, but can be 50% or 100%. Other beneficiaries may also be eligible for benefits. The *Survivor and Beneficiary Information* booklet has details and is a good reference guide for you and your family.

## SDCERA library of publications

### Booklets

Disability Retirement  
Dividing Community  
Property  
Health Insurance Program  
for Retired Members  
Now that You are Retired  
Retirement Plan  
Survivor and Beneficiary  
Information

### Fact sheets

Considerations after  
Termination  
Considerations before  
Purchasing Service Credit  
Deferred Membership  
Disability Retirement  
Earning Service Credit  
Health Insurance Allowance  
Health Insurance Plans  
Medicare Information for  
SDCERA Health Plans  
Purchasing Service Credit  
Reciprocity  
Refunds  
Retirement Benefit Options  
Retirement Plan Summary  
Rollover/Transfer for  
Purchasing Service Credit  
Supplemental Benefit  
Allowance

## Cost of living adjustments

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Retired members and survivors receiving monthly benefits are eligible for annual cost of living adjustments based on changes in the Consumer Price Index for the San Diego area. Increases are not guaranteed, but can be up to 3% annually.

This fact sheet provides disclosure of certain terms and conditions of SDCERA membership and benefits available to members. It is designed to give you this information as simply and accurately as possible as of the date of issuance of this fact sheet. SDCERA is governed by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (Government Code Section 31450 et. seq.) as it has been adopted and implemented by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and the SDCERA Board of Retirement. If there is any inconsistency between this fact sheet and the governing law, the law will govern. Decisions relating to the plan will be made after reference to the statutes and any resolutions, regulations and policies governing administration of SDCERA as they exist at the same time of the decisions.  
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