

## Rules for previously deferred members



Members who return to work and active membership following a period of deferred membership fall under specific retirement rules—those that apply to deferred returns. Below are two important examples of how retirement benefits may be calculated for deferred returns.

### Service credit for Tier I

Tier I members who left County employment prior to March 8, 2002—when benefit enhancements took place and Tier A was created—will receive a retirement benefit based on the Tier I benefit calculation formula for service prior to March 8, 2002 and the Tier A benefit calculation formula for service on and after that date. A recent and final court decision has confirmed this method of calculating split service credit will remain in effect.

### Retirement eligibility for deferred returns

To understand eligibility requirements, recall the rules surrounding the amount of service credit you generally must have before you are able to retire. Active members must have at least 10 years of service credit (and be at least age 50) to apply for a service retirement. Members who leave prior to earning 10 years of service credit, but who are vested (have five or more years of service credit) enter deferred membership status.

Deferred members are eligible to retire on the date they would have been eligible for a service retirement had they remained in active status—in other words, the full 10 years must pass and the member must be at least age 50. If a deferred member decides to return to work (and thus to active status), the period of time spent in deferred status is still considered when determining retirement eligibility status.

If the member is at least age 50, his service credit plus deferred time will determine the date he is eligible to retire.

### For example:

Joe is age 51, so he meets the age requirement to apply for a service retirement. He works six years and terminates at age 57. He will have to wait four years in deferred membership status until he is eligible to retire, which means his earliest eligibility date to retire will be when 10 years have passed, and he is age 61. In this case, the service retirement benefit will be based on age 61 and six years of service credit.

If Joe returns to work at age 58, however, he gets to keep his first eligibility date to retire, which will be when he is age 61—even though he would be an active member and have only 9 years of service credit at age 61. This is because he has returned from deferred status, and his eligibility is based on the rules for deferred returns. In this case, the service retirement benefit will be based on age 61 and nine years of service credit.

If you have returned to active membership following a period of deferred status and are curious about when you would be eligible to retire, contact SDCERA for assistance.

### Definitions

#### Active member:

Currently employed permanently, full-time with the County of San Diego

#### Deferred member:

A member who leaves County service with five or more years of SDCERA/reciprocal retirement service credit and leaves retirement accumulations on deposit with SDCERA.

## Board election scheduled

Active Safety members may run for the seventh seat on the Board of Retirement, which represents Safety members. If there are two or more qualified candidates, an election will be held and active Safety members will receive ballots by County mail in early November.

An alternate board member may also be selected if there is at least one candidate from each safety group: active law enforcement and probation officers. The runner-up candidate of the group not represented by the winning candidate is automatically selected as the alternate. The alternate member serves on the board in the absence or vacancy of the second, third or seventh seat.

Active Safety members interested in running may pick up a petition from the SDCERA office beginning Monday, October 1, at 2275 Rio Bonito Way, Suite 200 in Mission Valley. Petitions must be returned in person to SDCERA no later than noon, October 23. The elected candidates serve three-year terms, beginning January 1, 2008.

The Board of Retirement is SDCERA's governing body with exclusive control and fiduciary responsibility for management of the benefits and investments of the retirement fund for the members and beneficiaries. To learn about the responsibilities of a board member, click the **Board of Retirement** page.

Only  
SDCERA

SDCERA is the only organization that can process your retirement application.

Attend an SDCERA Late-Career Seminar when you are within six months to a year of your retirement date, to learn important information about your retirement benefit choices.

When you are within 60 to 90 days of the big day, request an application packet and submit the application to SDCERA no more than 60 days before your retirement date.

## SDCERA *Definitions*

### Un • mod • i • fied ben • e • fit

When you retire, you will have several benefit options from which to choose. The primary difference in these benefit options is the amount of your benefit and also the specific rules regarding who you may name as your beneficiary, and how much money you would like them to receive.

The Unmodified benefit option provides the highest lifetime retirement benefit for you. Additionally, upon your death, your eligible beneficiary (usually a spouse or registered domestic partner that meets eligibility requirements) receives a 60% survivor's continuance (60% of the benefit you were receiving) for their life.

If you do not have an eligible spouse/partner at the time of your death, the survivor's continuance may be paid to any eligible minor child(ren) meeting certain eligibility requirements. If you do not have an eligible spouse/partner or minor child to receive a survivor's continuance at the time of your death, the survivor's continuance will not be paid.

Read more about your benefit options and beneficiary eligibility requirements, by clicking the **Retirement Benefit Options** page.

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