Judicial
Retirement System

JRS Benefits at a Glance

Membership

The Georgia Judicial Retirement System (JRS) was established on July 1, 1998.

JRS provides benefits for: Superior Court Judges, District Attorneys, State Court Judges, Solicitors-General of the State Courts, Juvenile Court Judges, the State-wide Business Court Judge, Georgia Tax Court Judges, Head of Prosecuting Attorney Qualifications Commission, and Legislative Counsel of the Georgia General Assembly.

Anyone assuming one of these offices after July 1, 1998, with some limited exceptions, is required to become a member of JRS. Certain employees of the Attorney General's Office hired before July 1, 2005 are also covered under JRS. No employees hired on and after July 1, 2005 by the Attorney General's Office are eligible to become members of JRS.

Employee Contributions

Contributions of 7.5% of your earnable compensation are deposited to your Employee Contributions account each month. For some members, the employer pays some or all of this contribution on your behalf. This is called a pick-up contribution. You are responsible for the balance of the 7.5% contribution.

If you are covered under the Group Term Life Insurance (GTLI) program, you will pay an additional 0.25% of your earnable compensation toward the GTLI benefit each month. This GTLI contribution is not deposited in your Employee Contribution account.

Interest

Interest at 6% (compounded annually) is credited each June 30th on all contributions that have been in your account for at least a year.

Spousal Coverage

If you became a member prior to July 1, 2012 and have contributed toward Spousal Coverage for at least 10 years, upon your death, your Spouse or Non-Spouse beneficiary will receive a monthly annuity payable for their life. Spousal contributions are 2.5% of your earnable compensation and are contributed for a maximum of 16 years. You may elect to contribute toward Spousal Coverage within 90 days of first becoming a member of JRS, or within 90 days of your marriage or re-marriage while a member of JRS. Spousal Contributions are deposited to your Employee Contributions account each month.

If you became a member prior to July 1, 2012, and previously rejected spousal coverage, you may elect retroactive coverage by notifying JRS and paying the appropriate retroactive cost for the coverage.

Note: If you became a member on or after July 1, 2012, different provisions apply.

Benefit Salary

Superior Court Judges: This is the state paid salary for a Superior Court Judge at retirement. Retirement Benefits for service as a Superior Court Judge are available upon attainment of age 65 with at least 10 years of Vesting Service.

(Benefit Salary Continued)

District Attorney: This is the state paid salary for a District Attorney at retirement. Retirement Benefits for service as a District Attorney are available upon attainment of age 65 with at least 10 years of Vesting Service.

For Superior Court Judges and District Attorneys who leave JRS after becoming Vested in their JRS benefit but before age 60:

> Retirement benefit will be based on the state paid salary in effect at the commencement of their pension benefit, not on the salary at their termination of service.
>
> A Superior Court Judge or District Attorney retiring before age 65, who has JRS service other than as a Superior Court Judge, can start their retirement benefit as early as age 60 based on their non-Superior Court Judge service. The benefit based on their Superior Court Judge service will become payable at age 65.

For Judges and Solicitors-General of State Courts, Juvenile Court Judges, State-wide Business Court Judges, Georgia Tax Court Judges, Head of Prosecuting Attorney Qualifications Commission, and members of the Law Department and Legislative Counsel:

> Benefit Salary is defined as your average compensation during the 24 consecutive months of creditable service producing the highest average. Only compensation from state funds is considered. Certain limitations apply.

If the employer pays some or all of your 7.5% contribution, this employer-paid contribution is included in determining your Benefit Salary.

Creditable Service

You earn a month of Creditable Service for each full month for which contributions are paid on your behalf. In addition, if you were previously a member of JRS or a predecessor system, and took a refund of your Employee Contributions account, you can repay that refund, plus 6% interest compounded annually from the date of withdrawal, to re-establish your previous service.

Important: Certain JRS members who previously participated in the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia (ERS) have 90 days from first becoming a member in JRS to request a costing to transfer or repay their ERS contributions to establish the ERS service in JRS.

Part-Time Service

If a member transfers from a part-time to a full-time position and retires from the full-time position, they will receive full Vesting Service for the part-time service, and pro-rated Creditable Service.

Vesting

After completing 10 years of Creditable Service, you are vested in your JRS benefit and are irrevocably entitled to receive a monthly retirement benefit upon retirement. If you leave JRS before becoming vested, you will only be eligible for a refund of your Employee Contributions account.

Retirement

For more information, refer to section 6.2 Retirement Eligibility in the JRS Plan Handbook.

Retirement benefits for all JRS service, except as a Superior Court Judge or District Attorney, are available upon attainment of age 60, with at least 10 years of Vesting Service.

Retirement benefits for service as a Superior Court Judge or District Attorney are available upon attainment of age 65 with at least 10 years of Vesting Service.

With 16 or more years of Creditable Service, your benefit is determined as 66.66% of your Benefit Salary, plus an additional 1% of your Benefit Salary for each year of service between 16 and 24 years. With between 10 and 16 years of Creditable Service, you are eligible for a retirement benefit equal to 66.66% of your Benefit Salary times your Creditable Service divided by 16. For calculation examples of Service Retirement benefits, refer to section 7.2 Retirement Calculation Examples in the JRS Plan Handbook.

(Retirement Continued)

You can generate an Estimate of your Retirement Benefit at various age and service combinations by logging in to your secure online account from the ERSGA website, and choosing Generate Benefit Estimate once you are logged into your account.

After Retirement

A retiree of JRS can return to state employment for up to 1,040 hours in a calendar year without affecting their JRS retirement benefit. If that retiree works over 1,040 hours in state employment, the JRS monthly retirement benefit will be suspended for the balance of that calendar year. Service performed as a Senior Judge does not affect JRS retirement benefits.

Disability Retirement

If you become totally and permanently disabled from performing your job, and have at least four years of Creditable Service, you can apply for a Disability Retirement. See handbook for more details.

Group Term Life Insurance (GTLI)

If you became a member of JRS on or after July 1, 2009, you are not eligible for Group Term Life Insurance.

If you became a member of JRS prior to July 1, 2002, you were given a one-time option to participate in the Group Term Life Insurance program in 2002. If you became a member between July 1, 2002 and June 30, 2009, you are automatically covered under the Group Term Life Insurance program. The base GTLI benefit is 18 times your earnable compensation. Once you turn age 60, the salary used to calculate your benefit is frozen and the amount of your benefit begins to reduce by ½% per month until you reach age 65. At age 65, or upon your retirement before age 65, your GTLI coverage reduces to 70% of your coverage at age 60. Once you retire, you remain covered for GTLI and pay no further premiums for this coverage. If you leave JRS before retiring and have less than 18 years of Creditable Service at that time, your GTLI coverage stops.

Pension Death Benefits

If you became a member prior to July 1, 2012: If you have at least 10 years of Spousal Coverage, your spouse or designated non-spouse beneficiary, will receive a monthly benefit for life. Otherwise, your beneficiary will receive a refund of your Employee Contributions account.

If you became a member on or after July 1, 2012: If you are Vested, your Spouse will receive a monthly benefit for life. Otherwise, your beneficiary will receive a refund of your Employee Contributions account.

Beneficiaries

Designate a beneficiary today! Naming a beneficiary is an important part of protecting your retirement benefits and ensuring your wishes are carried out. Do not name your trust or estate as your beneficiary. A lifetime monthly pension benefit can only be paid to a designated living person.

You can update your beneficiary designation at any time by logging in to your secure online account on the ERSGA website. If you die without a designated beneficiary, or if your beneficiary predeceases you, your Estate will receive any GTLI benefit and only a refund of your Employee Contributions account.

Important: A lifetime monthly pension benefit cannot be paid to your Estate or trust. To ensure this benefit is available, you must designate a living beneficiary.

Learn more about JRS at: ers.ga.gov

Note: This is a summary, and therefore provides only general information. If something is not covered in detail in this summary, please refer to the JRS Member Handbook, available at ers.ga.gov. If this summary can be read to be inconsistent with the governing laws, the law will control.