

Georgia Military Pension Fund (GMPF) Plan Guide



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This Handbook summarizes the main provisions of laws that provide benefits to members of the Georgia National Guard who discharge from service on or after July 1, 2002. Unless otherwise specifically indicated, the Handbook describes these laws as in effect on July 1, 2014.

It is important to remember that this Handbook is only a summary of the law, and therefore provides only general information. A summary cannot deal with every possible set of circumstances. Also, from time to time, the laws will be amended, and while every effort is made to update this Handbook in a timely fashion, there may be a period of time during which the Handbook does not reflect recent changes in the law. If something is not covered in detail in this summary, or if this summary can be read to be inconsistent with the governing laws, the law will control.

It is important that you read the entire handbook. Reading only portions can be confusing and misleading.



About The Benefits Described in this Handbook

The Georgia Military Pension Fund (GMPF) was established on July 1, 2002, for the purpose of providing Georgia National Guard members a state benefit. This state benefit is intended to be in addition to other retirement income.

Laws governing GMPF, enacted through the Georgia General Assembly, provide for a lifetime retirement benefit for GMPF Members retiring after July 1, 2002, who earn enough years of service to qualify. Employer Contributions are paid into the pension fund for the welfare of the Members. All benefits are paid from this fund. Members who discharge from service prior to meeting the service requirements will not receive a benefit from the GMPF.

An independent actuarial firm specializing in pension and retirement plans examines the fund every year. The actuarial firm prepares an annual valuation which evaluates the ability of the fund to meet future obligations, and every five years performs an actuarial experience study. The fund is also examined annually by an independent accounting firm.

A Board of Trustees is responsible for the administration of GMPF. Daily operations are under the direct administration of the Executive Director and staff of the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia (ERSGA). Prior to retirement, data is maintained by the Georgia Department of Defense.

Other retirement systems included under the authority of ERSGA are:

- Employees' Retirement System (ERS)
- Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS)
- Legislative Retirement System (LRS)
- Georgia Judicial Retirement System (GJRS)
- Georgia Defined Contribution Plan (GDCCP)

ERSGA also administers:

- Group Term Life Insurance (GTLI) program
- Peach State Reserves program (PSR) — the state's 457 and 401(k) Plans

Information about these plans can be found on our website.

Online Tools

ERSGA maintains a website at <http://www.ers.ga.gov>. Through this website, you can:

| Before Retirement | After Retirement |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Download this Handbook• Review frequently asked questions• Obtain information about legislation under consideration by the Georgia General Assembly• Link to other websites | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register for your Account Access• View your monthly pension payments• Update your home address, tax withholding elections, and direct deposit information• View and print your 1099R information |

Inquiries related to retirement or general inquiries about GMPF can be emailed to: contact@ers.ga.gov.

Contacting ERSGA

Mailing Address:

Employees' Retirement System of Georgia
Two Northside 75, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30318

Phone:

General Number: (404) 350-6300
Toll free: 1-800-805-4609 (outside metro Atlanta area)
Fax: (404) 350-6310

Hours of Operation: 8:00 am to 4:30 pm ET

Eligibility for Membership

If you were a member of the Georgia Air or Army National Guard on or after July 1, 2002, you are a Member of the GMPF.

Please note: *The final conviction of certain crimes can affect a person's GMPF status, as well as the claim to any benefits earned through GMPF. Please contact ERSGA directly with questions regarding the right to benefits under these circumstances.*

The retirement benefits paid through GMPF are funded entirely through Employer Contributions.

Employee Contributions

You are not required nor permitted to make contributions to the plan.

Employer Contributions

The State of Georgia makes contributions to the fund in order to provide for your benefit. The Employer Contribution amount is an actuarially determined amount that is approved by the Board. It is not refundable to you or to any other person.



Creditable Service is used to determine:

- Whether a Member has earned a right to a retirement benefit
- The amount of benefits payable upon a Member's retirement

For more information about how a Member's rights to retirement benefits are determined, please see the Handbook section titled "Benefits Eligibility".

Creditable Service is made up of:

- Membership Service, plus
- Prior Service, plus
- Other Service

For more information about how retirement benefits are calculated, please see the Handbook section titled "Retirement Benefit".

Membership Service

A year of Membership Service is earned for each year as a member of the Georgia National Guard after becoming a Member of GMPF.

Prior Service

Prior Service means service with the Georgia National Guard before July 1, 2002.

Other Service

Members who have past service with a branch of the United States military which meets the requirement for service as determined for non-regular service retirement under Chapter 67 of Title 10 of the United States Code, will have that service counted as Creditable Service under GMPF. This is applicable to the following branches of the United States military:

- US Army, Army Reserve, and/or Army National Guard
- US Air Force, Air Force Reserve, and/or Air Force National Guard
- US Navy, Navy Reserve, and/or Marine Corps
- US Coast Guard

No service which is used to qualify a Member for retirement based on length of service, age, or physical disability from any of the regular components of the United States Armed Forces shall be used as Creditable Service under GMPF.

The retirement benefits available to a Member under GMPF are based upon Creditable Service. Benefits are funded solely through Employer Contributions. You must earn a right to receive benefits as follows:

- Complete a minimum of 20 years of Creditable Service, at least 15 of which are with the Georgia National Guard,
- Serve at least 10 consecutive years of service in the Georgia National Guard immediately prior to discharge (time during activation into other branches of the United States Armed Forces during this period will count toward this requirement), and
- Receive an honorable discharge.

Your benefit may be forfeited under the following situations:

- Discharge prior to meeting the benefit eligibility requirements, or
- Conviction of a state or federal public employment-related crime.

A Member who has met the above service eligibility requirements and has attained age 60 may apply for retirement benefits under GMPF. Complete the GMPF Retirement Application, available on the ERSGA website at <http://www.ers.ga.gov>, and return it to ERSGA.

If you discharge from service prior to age 60, but have met the service requirements, your benefit becomes payable as early as the first of the month coincident with or next following your 60th birthday. You must apply for your benefit in order for it to become payable.

The Retirement Benefit under GMPF is determined as follows:

An initial base benefit of \$50 per month, plus an additional \$5 per month for each year of Creditable Service in excess of 20 years, up to a maximum benefit of \$100 per month

Your benefit commences at age 60, or your discharge if later, and provides a monthly payment for your lifetime. Upon your death, your benefit ceases and no further benefits are due to anyone.

Retirement Calculation Example

Assumptions

| Age at Commencement of Benefits | Years of Service |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 60 | 24 |

Step 1: Calculate the the additional Retirement Benefit attributable to service over 20 years

Creditable Service minus 20 x \$5
24 years - 20 years = 4 years
4 x \$5 = **\$20** additional benefit per month

Step 2: Calculate the the total benefit

Basic benefit plus the additional benefit
\$50 + \$20 = **\$70**, monthly benefit payable to you

Limitations on Benefits

Monthly benefits are limited to \$100 per month regardless of years of service.

Section 415 of the federal Internal Revenue Code limits the amount of benefits you can receive from GMPF. You will be notified if the benefit that you would otherwise be eligible to receive under GMPF exceeds this limit.



Correcting a Benefit Error

The Board of Trustees of GMPF is in charge of all records of the retirement fund. If you receive more or less than the benefit to which you are entitled due to an error, the error will be corrected upon discovery and your benefit will be adjusted accordingly. With errors, there is a potential for underpayments or overpayments. Underpayments will be made to you as soon as possible. For any overpayments, your repayment is required and repayment options will be discussed with you.

Deductions

Your GMPF retirement benefit is generally not assignable. This means that only limited deductions may be made from your retirement check, such as:

- Federal income tax
- Georgia state income tax
- Some credit unions

Taxes

Your monthly payment is taxable. Each year you receive benefits, a 1099R will be issued to you showing the taxable retirement amount for your use when filing your income tax return. This form may also be downloaded from the secure Retiree section of <http://www.ers.ga.gov> after the end of January for the previous tax year.

Withholding forms (W-4P for federal and G-4P for Georgia state taxes) are included in your retirement packet. Retirees can change their tax withholding and direct deposit elections at any time on the secure Retiree section of <http://www.ers.ga.gov>, or by contacting ERSGA directly.

Re-employment after Commencement of Retirement Benefits

If you return to GMPF-covered employment after retirement, your monthly allowance will cease and you will automatically become an active Member upon rehire. Your retirement benefit is suspended, and you accrue additional Creditable Service while active. Once you retire again, the sum of all of your Creditable Service will be used to determine your final retirement benefit.