

Article 16 FRINGE BENEFITS FOR RETIREES

§ 16.1 Definition

§ 16.1.1 Throughout Article 16 the term “regular retiree” refers to all retirees who are not participating in the Early Retirement Option. In all aspects of retiree benefits, including retirement stipends, coverage is extended to include domestic partners, subject to provider approval.

§ 16.1.2 Unit members who retire from services shall be entitled to all the negotiated retiree benefits for which they qualify. These benefits shall be coordinated with Medicare benefits.

§ 16.2 Stipend Eligibility

16.2.1 Stipend

Eligible retired unit members qualify for a stipend of \$84.00 per month retiree only, or \$136.50 per month for retiree and spouse/domestic partner. In 2023-2024, the stipend will be the 2023 cost of the lowest Medicare Part B premium for a single stipend for a retiree without dependents (\$164.90/month) or a double stipend for a retiree with a spouse/domestic partner (\$329.80/month). Beginning in 2024-25, on October 1 of each fiscal year, the stipend will be adjusted by the lower of the change in the CPI for that year or the change in the Medicare Part B premium for single and double as of July 1 of that year. In the event of a negative change, the stipend would remain the same.

The amount of the stipend above is considered taxable income under IRS regulations.

16.2.2 Eligibility for Stipend

To qualify for the medical/dental stipend, the retiree must be minimally fifty-five (55) years of age and have completed a minimum of fifteen (15) full-time years of service. The total of age and years of service must equal eighty (80) years or greater. Calculation of years of classified service shall be based on 1720 hours in paid status worked per fiscal year. Unpaid leaves of absence will not be considered in the computation of years of service. SRJC “service” may be any combination of regular classified, management or regular faculty service; regular service at less than 100% FTE will be computed on a pro-rata basis. Stipend-eligible retirees who do not participate in the medical portion of the ERO as described in 16.3 will begin receiving the medical/dental stipend immediately upon their retirement. Stipend-eligible retirees who participate in the medical portion of the ERO as described in 16.3 will begin receiving the medical/dental stipend once the benefits provided under the ERO have ended (i.e., if the employee elects to withdraw from coverage or on the 1st day of the month of their 65th birthdate).

Article 16 FRINGE BENEFITS FOR RETIREES (Continued)

§ 16.3 Early Retirement Option

The Early Retirement Option (ERO) shall be available to any unit member who meets the minimum qualifications for eligibility.

A. Incentive Plan

1. The individual who chooses the Early Retirement provisions will be granted the same medical/dental benefit package that is received by currently employed full-time classified unit members employed at that time by the District. These benefits will cease on the first day of the month in which the retiree reaches the age of Medicare eligibility. If the Early Retiree dies before age 65, the spouse/domestic partner coverage under the Early Retiree Option will cease the first day of the month in which the retiree would have reached the age of 65. At such time, the eligible survivor will receive the single retiree stipend amount.
2. Alternate early retirement provisions for medical coverage:
 - a. Monthly payment option. Upon request, early retirees who reside out of the District's medical service area will be granted a monthly payment equal to the amount of the premium that would otherwise be paid to the medical coverage provider for said individual upon proof that the retiree is securing medical benefits elsewhere.
 - b. No guarantee of reinstatement. There is no guarantee that a retired classified member who elects this monthly payment option will be eligible for reinstatement into the health plan at a later date, if the retiree should want to return to the plan.
3. On the first day of the month in which the retiree reaches age 65 and becomes eligible for Medicare, the incentive benefits will be converted to the medical/dental stipend then being received by regular retirees of equal or greater age with no other eligibility criteria applied.
4. It is the responsibility of each potential early retiree to carefully evaluate their personal economic situation with respect to all applicable retirement systems and other retirement income prior to applying for early retirement. Once the signed application and agreement form(s) are approved by the Superintendent/President and the Board of Trustees, the decision to resign and retire may not be rescinded. Candidates for early retirement are encouraged to consult with their appropriate retirement system advisor and pursue all other advisory sources that will clarify their personal financial situation upon retirement.
5. All early retirements commence at the beginning of the month following the last date of service.

Article 16 FRINGE BENEFITS FOR RETIREES (Continued)

§ 16.3 Early Retirement Option (Continued)

B. Eligibility for unit members hired prior to 10/1/2013

1. The unit member must have completed a minimum of fifteen years of full-time employment with the District, five of which must have been as a regular unit member. Calculation of years of unit member service shall be based on 1720 hours worked per year. Unpaid leaves of absence will not be considered in the computation of years of service. Regular service at less than 100%, including 9-month employees, will be computed and accumulated on a pro rata basis.
2. The unit member must have attained a minimum age of fifty-five (55) years or a maximum age of 64 on, or before their final month of service.
3. The unit member must satisfactorily complete and submit the necessary Early Retirement Application and Agreement Form(s) at least 120 calendar days prior to the effective date of retirement.
4. If the early retiree subsequently becomes employed after retiring from the District, the benefits provided by the Sonoma County Junior College District under the Early Retirement provisions become secondary to those provided by the new employer.
5. Should the early retiree terminate their medical/dental benefits package with the Sonoma County Junior College District, the District cannot guarantee that the early retiree will be reinstated by the insurance carrier under group coverage currently provided to currently employed unit members. However, if the early retiree maintains the SRJC medical/dental benefits throughout their early retirement status, then on the first day of the month in which the retiree reaches age sixty-five, they will automatically be eligible to enroll in and purchase any existing SRJC retiree group medical/dental options, subject to provider approval.

C. Eligibility for unit members hired on or after 10/1/2013

1. The unit member must have completed a minimum of seventeen years of full-time employment with the District, five of which must have been as a regular unit member. Calculation of years of classified service shall be based on 1720 hours worked per year. Unpaid leaves of absence will not be considered in the computation of years of service. Regular service at less than 100%, including 9 month unit members, will be computed and accumulated on a pro rata basis.
2. The unit member must have attained a minimum age of sixty-two (62) years or a maximum age of 64 on, or before their final month of service.
3. The unit member must satisfactorily complete and submit the necessary Early Retirement Application and Agreement Form(s) at least 120 calendar days prior to the effective date of retirement.

Article 16 FRINGE BENEFITS FOR RETIREES (Continued)

§ 16.3 Early Retirement Option (Continued)

4. If the early retiree subsequently becomes employed after retiring from the District, the benefits provided by the Sonoma County Junior College District under the Early Retirement provisions become secondary to those provided by the new employer.
5. Should the early retiree terminate their medical/dental benefits package with the Sonoma County Junior College District, the District cannot guarantee that the early retiree will be reinstated by the insurance carrier under group coverage currently provided to currently employed unit members. However, if the early retiree maintains the SRJC medical/dental benefits throughout their early retirement status, then on the first day of the month in which the retiree reaches age sixty-five, they will automatically be eligible to enroll in and purchase any existing SRJC retiree group medical/dental options, subject to provider approval.

D. Procedures

1. Early Retirement Application and Agreement Form(s) may be obtained from Human Resources.
2. To be considered for Early Retirement under the provisions of the incentive program, the application form(s) must be completed and submitted to Human Resources at least 120 calendar days prior to the effective date of retirement.
3. All applications will be reviewed by the Superintendent/President and the Vice President of Human Resources. The applications of those candidates who qualify for the program will then be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for appropriate action at the next regular Board meeting. Any questions that arise regarding the eligibility of an individual will be reviewed with the unit member.
4. If extenuating circumstances arise, exceptions to the application deadline will require approval by the Superintendent/President and by the Board of Trustees.

§ 16.4 Spouse/Domestic Partner Eligibility

If a regular retiree's death precedes their spouse or domestic partner, the spouse/domestic partner is still entitled to remain on the group coverage and partially offset the cost with the single stipend.

§ 16.5 Dental

Any classified SRJC retiree may enroll in and purchase the SRJC retiree dental plan at their own cost.

Article 16 FRINGE BENEFITS FOR RETIREES (Continued)

§ 16.6 Open Enrollment

All new and existing regular retirees and early retirees who are enrolled in a SRJC group retiree medical plan are entitled to participate in the District's annual group Open Enrollment process, including receiving advance written notification.

§ 16.7 Administration

The administration of retiree benefits will occur in the same manner as the administration of active employee benefits (refer to Article 9). There will be a retired unit representative on the "Fringe Benefits Committee" to serve in an advisory capacity, providing input on the research and review of proposed and existing programs. All classified retiree medical and dental benefits will be negotiated on an annual basis at the unit members' negotiating table.

This page intentionally left blank.