

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 (same or different sex), 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

Eligible retired unit members qualify for an \$84.00 per month retiree only, or \$136.50 per month for retiree and/or spouse/domestic partner/dependents’ medical and/or dental stipend. For regular retirees the age minimum must equal fifty-five (55) years and years of service must equal a minimum of fifteen (15) full-time years. The total must equal eighty (80) years or greater. Calculation of years of classified service shall be based on 1720 hours 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; regular service at less than 100% *FTE* will be computed on a pro-rata basis. Stipend-eligible retirees will begin receiving the medical/dental stipend immediately upon their retirement.

§ 16.3 Spouse Eligibility

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

§ 16.4 Dental

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

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§ 16.5 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 medical insurance plans' Open Enrollment process, including receiving advance written notification.

§ 16.6 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 act 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.

§ 16.7 Early Retirement Option

The Early Retirement Option (ERO) shall be available to any classified 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 employees employed at that time by the District. These benefits will continue until the retiree reaches the age of Medicare eligibility. If the Early Retiree dies before age 65, the spouse/domestic partner and/or eligible dependents will continue on the Early Retiree coverage until the retiree's 65th birthday. At such time, the eligible survivor will receive the single retiree stipend amount.
2. Alternate early retirement provisions for medical/dental 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 and dental benefits elsewhere.

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§ 16.7 Early Retirement Option (Continued)

- 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 following the sixty-fifth birthday and the eligibility for Medicare of the individual choosing the Early Retirement option, the incentive benefits will be converted to the medical/dental stipend then being received by regular retirees of equal or superior age.
4. It is the responsibility of each potential early retiree to carefully evaluate his/her 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 President and the Board of Trustees, the decision to resign and retire may not be rescinded. Candidates for early retirement are encouraged to consult a PERS 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.

B. Eligibility

1. The regular classified staff 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 classified 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 employees, will be computed and accumulated on a pro rata basis.
2. The applicant 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 applicant 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.

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§ 16.7 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 his/her 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 classified staff. However, if the early retiree maintains the SRJC medical/dental benefits throughout his/her early retirement status, then on the first day of the month following their 65th birthday, he/she will automatically be eligible to enroll in and purchase any existing SRJC retiree group medical/dental options, subject to provider approval.

C. Procedures

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

See Appendix L – Memorandum of Understanding.