



# Defined Contribution Retirement Program (DCRP) Enrollment Due to Maximum Compensation Limits

**Information for:**  
 Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS)  
 Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF)  
 Police and Firemen's Pension Fund (PFRS)  
 State Police Retirement System (SPRS)

The Defined Contribution Retirement Program (DCRP) was established July 1, 2007, under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 43:15C-1 et seq. The DCRP provides eligible members with a tax-sheltered, defined contribution retirement benefit, along with life insurance and long-term disability coverage.

## ELIGIBILITY

This fact sheet addresses DCRP membership for employees already enrolled in the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS), Teachers' Pension and Annuity Fund (TPAF), Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS), or State Police Retirement System (SPRS) whose salary exceeds the maximum pensionable compensation limit. The *Defined Contribution Retirement Program (DCRP) if Ineligible for PERS or TPAF Enrollment* and the *Defined Contribution Retirement Program (DCRP) for Elected and Appointed Officials* Fact Sheets are also available on our website at: [www.nj.gov/treasury/pensions](http://www.nj.gov/treasury/pensions)

Employees enrolled in the PERS or TPAF on or after July 1, 2007, or enrolled in the PFRS or SPRS after May 21, 2010, are subject to a maximum compensation limit for pension contributions. The maximum compensation is based on the annual maximum wage for Social Security (see chart) and is subject to change at the start of each calendar year.

Therefore, an eligible employee who earns in excess of the annual maximum wage will be enrolled in the DCRP in addition to the PERS, TPAF, PFRS,

or SPRS (as appropriate). Employees can contribute to DCRP on wages up to the annual contribution limit under IRC section 401(a)(17), \$345,000 in 2024.

PERS/TPAF ANNUAL MAXIMUM WAGE	
YEAR	MAXIMUM WAGE
2009, 2010, and 2011	\$106,800
2012	\$110,100
2013	\$113,700
2014	\$117,000
2015 and 2016	\$118,500
2017	\$127,200
2018	\$128,400
2019	\$132,900
2020	\$137,700
2021	\$142,800
2022	\$147,000
2023	\$160,200
2024	\$168,600

Employees who participate in the DCRP will receive service credit in their retirement system account and will be eligible to retire under the rules of the retirement system. The final salary or final compensation at retirement will be limited to the maximum compensation amounts in effect when the salary was earned.

Employees who participate in the DCRP because their salary exceeds the maximum pensionable com-

penetration limit will receive additional income above their pension amount, which is based on the amount invested in the DCRP.

## Optional Waiver

A PERS, TPAF, PFRS, or SPRS member who is also eligible for the DCRP due to the maximum compensation limit can choose to voluntarily waive participation in the DCRP by submitting a *DCRP Waiver of Retirement Program Participation* form to the New Jersey Division of Pensions & Benefits (NJDPB).

If a member waives DCRP participation and later wishes to participate, he or she can apply for DCRP enrollment, with membership to be effective January 1 of the following calendar year.

## ENROLLMENT

Eligible members are enrolled in the DCRP when the annual salary exceeds the maximum compensation limit. This may occur either:

- Upon enrollment into the PERS, TPAF, PFRS, or SPRS when an annual base salary is reported on the *Enrollment Application* that exceeds the maximum compensation; or
- When an eligible member's annual salary is increased to a level that exceeds the maximum compensation and it is reported by the employer to the NJDPB (either by directly contacting the NJDPB, or when submitted by the employer on the Quarterly Report of Contributions).

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When enrolled in the DCRP, members contribute 5.5 percent of the base salary in excess of the maximum compensation limit to a tax-deferred investment account established with Empower (formerly Prudential), which jointly administers the DCRP investments with the NJDPB. Member contributions are matched by a three percent employer contribution based on the salary in excess of the maximum compensation limit.

It is important that an employer enroll a DCRP-eligible member as soon as it is known that the employee's annual salary will exceed the maximum compensation so the DCRP account can be established in advance of collection of any required contributions. Contributions are required from the date of DCRP eligibility. If any back deductions are owed, employers must schedule and remit them to the DCRP.

## Transfers

Employees who transfer employment will not be subject to maximum compensation limits or DCRP enrollment if:

- The transferring employee was a member of the PERS or TPAF on or before June 30, 2007; or
- The transferring employee was a member of the PFRS or SPRS on or before May 21, 2010; and
  - If the member is transferring to an eligible position without a break in service; or
  - If any break in service is 24 months or less from the date of the last contribution to the retirement system and the member's account has not been withdrawn; or
  - If any break in service is 24 months or less from the end of an approved leave of absence.

If a member transfers after a break in service that falls beyond the 24-month exceptions described above, the member will be subject to the maximum compensation rules and DCRP enrollment.

## Vesting

A PERS, TPAF, PFRS, SPRS, or Alternate Benefits Program (ABP) member who becomes eligible and is enrolled in the DCRP is immediately vested in the DCRP. As a vested member, you have a right to a benefit at retirement based on both the employee and employer contributions to the DCRP.

## WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal occurs when a DCRP member separates from covered employment and submits a request to Empower for a withdrawal of contributions. Only the member's contributions are available for withdrawal — employer contributions are forfeited. After a withdrawal, the individual is eligible for re-enrollment in the DCRP or enrollment in another New Jersey State-administered retirement system upon return to covered employment.

## RETIREMENT

Retirement occurs when a DCRP member separates from covered employment and elects to receive a distribution of funds containing both employer and employee contributions plus interest. This action deems the former participant as retired and, therefore, ineligible to re-enroll in the DCRP or participate in any other New Jersey State-administered retirement system.

An *ABP/DCRP Withdrawal Request Acknowledgment Receipt* must be completed in order to receive funds. This form is available in the "Publications" section of our website.

## Applying for Retirement

Six months before retirement, a member should contact his/her employer and Empower for information regarding DCRP benefits and options.

A DCRP member may elect to receive all or a portion of his/her account in a lump-sum distribution, or in a variety of periodic payment methods. Please contact your administrative services provider for more information. All returns of contributions and earnings are considered taxable in the year they are received; therefore, the type of payout plan should be considered carefully prior to retirement.

There is no minimum retirement age under the DCRP. The member will automatically be considered retired, regardless of age, if there is any distribution of vested contributions.

A member may take a distribution at any time after termination of employment; however, if you return to public employment in New Jersey, you cannot participate in any New Jersey State-administered retirement system. DCRP members considering future employment in a position covered by any of the New Jersey State-administered retirement systems should carefully consider this impact before requesting a distribution.

## Health Benefits at Retirement

Please note that service time from enrollment in the DCRP cannot be used to qualify for State Health Benefits Program (SHBP) or School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) coverage at retirement; however, retirement system members who also participate in the DCRP through earnings in excess of the maximum wage will continue to earn credit toward SHBP/SEHBP coverage through their retirement system service.

# Defined Contribution Retirement Program (DCRP) Enrollment Due to Maximum Compensation Limits

This fact sheet is a summary and not intended to provide all information. Although every attempt at accuracy is made, it cannot be guaranteed.

Please contact your employer's human resources office or benefits administrator to ask about health benefit coverage options available in retirement.

## LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE

While employed, PERS, TPAF, PFRS, or SPRS members enrolled in the DCRP are covered by employer-paid life insurance, payable to their designated beneficiaries in the amount of 1.5 times the annual base salary on which DCRP contributions are based. This coverage is available without a medical examination to members under age 60. Newly enrolled members 60 years of age or older must undergo a medical examination to qualify.

DCRP members will continue to be insured for up to two years if on an approved leave of absence without pay for personal illness.

**Note:** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) classifies all life insurance coverage over \$50,000 as a fringe benefit subject to taxation. While the amount of the life insurance coverage is not taxable, the premium required to pay for the life insurance coverage is taxable. Members can elect to waive insurance coverage over \$50,000 at any time.

Upon retirement, life insurance under the DCRP is reduced to 3/16 of the annual base salary on which DCRP contributions were based.

This life insurance coverage is available in retirement only to:

- PERS, TPAF, PFRS, or SPRS members enrolled in the DCRP who are age 60 or older if the member has completed 10 years of participation in the DCRP, PERS, TPAF, PFRS, or SPRS; or
- PERS, TPAF, PFRS, or SPRS members enrolled in the DCRP who are any age if the member has completed 25 years of participation in the DCRP, PERS, TPAF, PFRS, or SPRS.

The member also must have been an active employee in the 12 months immediately preceding the initial receipt of a retirement annuity payment.

## LONG-TERM DISABILITY COVERAGE

A member is eligible for employer-paid long-term disability insurance coverage after one year of participation in the DCRP.

The member becomes eligible for the long-term disability benefits after six consecutive months of total disability due to an occupational or nonoccupational condition.

To be considered totally disabled due to sickness or accidental bodily injury, the member must be unable to perform any and every duty pertaining to his/her occupation. The member need not be confined to home, but must be under a doctor's regular care.

If a member is totally disabled, he/she is eligible to receive a regular monthly income benefit up to 60 percent of the base salary on which DCRP contributions were based during the 12 months preceding the onset of the disability. While disabled, the member's and the employer's mandatory contributions are automatically credited to the member's retirement account.

The monthly income benefit is offset by any other periodic benefit the member may be receiving, such as Workers' Compensation, short-term disability, or Social Security.

Eighteen months after the onset of long-term disability eligibility, the member must be unable to engage in any gainful occupation for which he/she is reasonably suited by education, training, or experience. Total disability is not considered to exist if the member is gainfully employed, incarcerated, or if the disability resulted from an act of war or was intentionally self-inflicted.

Long-term disability benefits will be paid as long as the member remains disabled or until the member attains age 70. Should the member begin receiving payments under the retirement annuity, these benefits terminate.

## CONTACTING THE DCRP

For more information regarding the DCRP, please visit Empower's DCRP website at: <https://empower.com/njplans> or call toll-free 866-657-3327.

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*This fact sheet has been produced and distributed by:*

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