



TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OKLAHOMA 2006-2007 PLAN SUMMARY

BEGINNINGS

The Teachers' Retirement System of Oklahoma (TRS) was established July 1, 1943, to provide retirement allowances and other specified benefits for qualified employees of state-supported educational institutions.

ADMINISTRATION

A 13-member Board of Trustees oversees the administration of the System and acts as fiduciary for investing its funds.

REVENUE

The four primary sources of revenue for TRS are contributions from active members, contributions from local schools, dedicated revenue from the State of Oklahoma, and investment income. As a participating member, you contribute 7% of your total compensation.

Statutes also require employers to contribute a percentage of applicable employee earnings. Local schools pay a contribution rate of 7.05%, and the state's contribution for Fiscal Year 2007 is 4.5% of annual sales and income tax revenues. The state's contribution is scheduled to increase to 5% by Fiscal Year 2008.

MEMBERSHIP

All classified personnel, as defined in statutes at 70 O.S., § 17-101, which includes teachers and other certified employees of common schools, faculty and administrators in public colleges and universities, and administrative personnel of state educational boards and agencies who are employed at least half-time, must join TRS. Membership is optional for all other regular employees of public educational institutions who work at least 20 hours per week.

Employees of a charter school may join the Teachers' Retirement System if the TRS Board of Trustees approves the school's application for membership.

New employees at the University of Oklahoma, OU Health Sciences Center, and Oklahoma State University have the option to participate in an alternate retirement plan provided by the universities. Employees choosing the alternate retirement plan are not eligible to participate in TRS as long as they remain employees of the universities.

SERVICE CREDIT

You must work at least six full school months to qualify for one year of membership. A school month is 20 school days of at least six hours. You will receive partial credit for employment of fewer than six months or between four and six hours per school day. You also may purchase credit for out-of-state service, military service, service with certain Oklahoma governmental entities, and employment in Oklahoma schools before your date of membership.

Retiring members may count up to 120 days of unused accumulated sick leave toward an additional year of service credit.

RETIREMENT ANNUITY

TRS offers five retirement plans, each providing a lifetime benefit to the member and, after the member's death, either a lump sum payment to the member's designated beneficiary(ies), or continued payments to one beneficiary.

A vested member can receive benefits after satisfying eligibility requirements. You are fully vested after five years of contributory Oklahoma membership service.

Members joining TRS before July 1, 1992, may retire with unreduced benefits when age and years of creditable service total 80 (Rule of 80). Members joining TRS after June 30, 1992, may retire with unreduced benefits when age and years of creditable service total 90 (Rule of 90).

You may retire at age 62 with unreduced benefits after completing five years of Oklahoma service.

You may retire with reduced benefits as early as age 55, if you have at least five years of creditable Oklahoma service.

Retirement benefits are based on a formula of 2% x final average salary x years of service. For Rule of 80 members, average salary is an average of the three highest years of contributory service. For Rule of 90 members, the average salary is an average of the highest five consecutive years of contributory service.

All years of service prior to July 1, 1995, will be calculated using an average salary no greater than \$40,000. Certain employees at OU, OUHSC, and OSU who were employed before July 1, 1995, may have retirement benefits adjusted for years when their contributions were less than total compensation.

Legislation enacted in 2006 allows K-12, career-tech and two-year college employees who work beyond "normal retirement age" to move two years to the higher calculation level for each year worked after reaching normal retirement age.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

You may qualify for disability retirement benefits if a medical condition keeps you from performing your regular duties as a public school employee. You may be considered for a TRS disability retirement benefit if you have at least 10 years of contributory TRS service, you submit a disability retirement application detailing your medical condition (which must have existed while you were employed by the public schools of Oklahoma), and your application is approved by the TRS Medical Review Board and the Board of Trustees.

If you are awarded Social Security Disability benefits, you qualify for TRS disability benefits if you incur the disability while employed by the public schools and provide TRS with proof of the Social Security award.

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HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFIT

If you have at least 10 years of creditable service and retire or terminate your employment, you may elect to continue coverage in the insurance program your employer provides to active employees.

If you are not enrolled in the state plan, coverage is subject to the provisions of the plan in which you are enrolled.

Dependent and dental coverage is available if you are enrolled in the State and Education Employees Group Health and Dental Insurance Plan.

Once you begin receiving monthly retirement checks, TRS will pay the first \$100 to \$105 of monthly premiums for you, but not for your dependents. The actual amount paid by TRS is determined by your total service and average salary at retirement.

If you have fewer than 10 years of employment, you have certain rights under federal law to continue health insurance coverage after your employment ends. You should request information about continued coverage from your school's payroll office or the State and Education Employees Group Insurance Board before termination.

SURVIVOR BENEFITS

Your designated beneficiary or estate is entitled to survivor benefits if you are a TRS member when you die.

If you are an active in-service member when you die, your beneficiary(ies) will receive an \$18,000 death benefit, plus the contributions in your account and interest on those contributions. "Active in-service" is defined in the TRS rules, but generally means a member currently employed by an Oklahoma public education institution.

If you have five or more years of service, have reached age 55, or you have met the Rule of 80 or Rule of 90, and you have one designated primary beneficiary, he or she may choose a monthly benefit instead of the lump sum payment.

If you are an inactive member when you die, your beneficiaries will receive the amount of the contributions in your TRS account, plus interest on those contributions, but will not qualify for the \$18,000 death benefit or the monthly retirement benefit payment payable to the surviving beneficiary of active in-service members.

If you die after you retire, your beneficiary or estate will receive a \$5,000 death benefit, plus the survivor benefits provided by your chosen retirement plan. Certain retirement plan options provide your surviving beneficiary(ies) with a continuing monthly retirement benefit.

WITHDRAWING YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

If you leave the job that qualified you for TRS membership, you may request a refund of your contributions any time after your last day on that job. You will be eligible to receive the refund four months after you leave your job. The refund includes all contributions made by you or on your behalf by your employer, plus any applicable portion of interest earnings. When you accept a refund, you forfeit all TRS service credit.

If you return to qualifying employment, you may redeposit your withdrawn account after you contribute to TRS for 12 months.

Redepositing your withdrawn contributions reinstates your initial membership date. If you do not redeposit your withdrawn contributions, your official membership date will be the date you rejoined TRS.

If you decide to redeposit, you must redeposit the entire amount you withdrew and pay 10% simple interest on that amount

for each year your account was withdrawn. You may pay this amount in one lump sum or through installment payments for up to 60 months.

Only an optional member (support personnel) can terminate membership in TRS without terminating employment. If you are an optional member and withdraw your account without leaving your job, the IRS requires that contributions made on a pre-tax basis cannot be refunded until you leave your job.

If you continue working for your employer after terminating your TRS membership, you can rejoin TRS only under special provisions of an Internal Revenue Service private letter ruling, which requires a period of non-membership and loss of the right to redeposit withdrawn service or purchase prior service credits. In this case, you would become a new member as of the date you rejoin.

You also may leave your contributions in your account. If you are vested (have at least five years of Oklahoma service), your account will continue earning interest until you withdraw it or begin drawing your retirement benefit. If you are not vested, your account will continue earning interest for five years, unless you withdraw it before then.

TAX-SHELTERED ANNUITY PLAN

The System administers a tax-sheltered annuity program qualified under § 403(b) of the Internal Revenue Code. As a TRS member, you may deposit funds into this plan if your local Board of Education or other governing board adopts a resolution making the plan available to its employees and you sign a salary reduction agreement with your employer. Contributions to the annuity plan are restricted to an annual "exclusion allowance" determined by the IRS Code. Withdrawals from the plan are subject to various withdrawal restrictions and tax penalties mandated by the Internal Revenue Code.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

TRS publications provide answers to general questions. You are responsible for resolving any questions about your retirement account. You are entitled to counseling from the TRS staff concerning any question you have about your retirement account. TRS will not be held accountable for information that is contrary to statutes or administrative rules, regardless of who provides that information.

For details of how statutes and administrative rules may affect your retirement account, contact:

TEACHERS' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OKLAHOMA

MAILING ADDRESS

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<http://www.ok.gov/TRS/>

This Plan Summary provides general information summarizing the basic benefits available to TRS members. If any conflict arises between information contained in this summary and state statutes or official TRS rules, the law and/or rule takes precedence. 20,000 copies of this Teachers' Retirement System of Oklahoma Plan Summary have been printed by the Office of Public Affairs, Central Printing Division, at a cost of \$1,075. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

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