

# Becoming a Retirement Systems' Participating Employer

The South Carolina Retirement System (SCRS) and the Police Officers Retirement System (PORS) are defined benefit retirement plans administered by PEBA. This flyer provides a brief overview of benefits for Class Three members and outlines the process of becoming a participating employer.

## Employer eligibility

Local governments, charter schools, special purpose districts and other governmental entities in South Carolina may apply to become a participating employer. Employers seeking PORS participation must employ police officers or firefighters and meet other eligibility requirements.

## Membership

When you become a participating employer, current employees may elect to opt out of membership in the retirement system, unless they already have an account in the system. Future employees must generally become members as a condition of employment. Employees will be Class Three members of the systems unless they have service in SCRS or PORS prior to July 1, 2012.

## Benefit highlights

- Retirement benefit is based on a member's years of service, average final compensation and a benefit multiplier, not on a member's account balance at retirement.
- Annual benefit adjustment of 1 percent of retired member's annual annuity up to a maximum of \$500 per year.

- Plan assumes investment and life expectancy risks.
- A Class Three member of SCRS must have at least eight years of earned service and either meet the Rule of 90 or be at least 65 years old in order to be eligible for an unreduced service retirement benefit. The Rule of 90 means the member's age and years of service add up to at least 90. If a member retires after age 60 but before age 65 and without meeting the Rule of 90, the member receives a reduced benefit.
- A Class Three member of PORS must have at least eight years of earned service and either have at least 27 years of service credit or be at least 55 years old in order to be eligible for a service retirement benefit.
- A Class Three member of SCRS or PORS must have at least eight years of earned service in order to be eligible for disability retirement benefits, unless the disability is the result of an on-the-job injury. To be approved for disability retirement under SCRS, a member must be approved for disability benefits from the Social Security Administration; under PORS, a member must be found permanently incapacitated from the further performance of his job duties by a three-physician medical board.

## Optional death benefits

Optional incidental death benefit coverage provides beneficiaries of active members and working retirees with a payment equal to one year's earnable

compensation if the member has at least one year of service on the date of death. If the member's death is a result of a job-related injury, the one-year requirement is waived. The beneficiary of a non-working retiree may be eligible for a benefit of \$2,000, \$4,000 or \$6,000 based on the retiree's years of service.

Optional Accidental Death Program coverage is available for PORS members. This coverage provides a benefit for the survivor of a PORS member who dies as a result of an injury sustained in the line of duty.

An employer can decide whether to offer incidental death benefit and/or Accidental Death Program coverage, and must pay for coverage if offered.

### Coverage effective date

SCRS coverage is effective at the beginning of a quarter. PORS coverage is effective at the beginning of a quarter; however, PORS firefighter coverage requires a July 1 effective date.

SCRS optional incidental death benefit coverage requires a July 1 effective date. PORS optional incidental death benefit coverage and Accidental Death Program coverage require a July 1 effective date.

### Fiscal year 2022 membership costs

The current employer contribution base rates are 16.41 percent for SCRS and 18.84 percent for PORS. To the base rate, add 0.15 percent (SCRS) or 0.20 percent (PORS) for the incidental death benefit. Add an additional 0.20 percent if you are a PORS employer who opts to provide Accidental Death Program coverage.

SCRS members contribute a tax-deferred 9 percent of their gross pay and PORS members contribute a tax-deferred 9.75 percent of their gross pay.

## How to request participation

1. Complete and submit the [Employer Eligibility and Determination Request](#) (Form 6500) for verification of your organization's eligibility for participation.
2. If eligible, PEBA will notify you by email. To make the final decision to join SCRS or PORS, complete and submit an *Employer Resolution and Application* ([Form 6501](#) for participation in SCRS, and/or [Form 6501P](#) for participation in PORS). Your organization's governing body must take formal action to adopt this resolution and application.
3. If you would like to provide incidental death benefit coverage as an SCRS employer, complete and submit the [Application to Append Coverage for Incidental Death Benefit \(SCRS\)](#) (Form 6502).
4. If you request participation in PORS and will provide incidental death benefit coverage, coverage for firefighters and/or Accidental Death Program coverage, indicate the coverages on the [Application to Append Coverage for Incidental Death Benefit, Accidental Death Program and/or Firefighters Coverage \(PORS\)](#) (Form 6502P).

## New employer training

It is important for your benefits and payroll staff to become familiar with the requirements and procedures for SCRS and PORS. Therefore, we offer new employer training online at [peba.sc.gov/retirement-training](https://peba.sc.gov/retirement-training).

## More information

- Read the [Covered Employer Procedures Manual](#).
- Contact PEBA at 803.737.6800, 888.260.9430 or [peba.sc.gov/contact](https://peba.sc.gov/contact).

Required forms for participation are available online at [peba.sc.gov/forms](https://peba.sc.gov/forms).