

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### “2.7 at 55” Retirement Benefits Workshop (non-safety employees; non- AFSCME represented employees) 7-8-2020

#### Retirement Incentives

1. Is the County offering retirement incentives due to the budget situation?
  - a. The County is currently **in discussions with labor organizations** to explore cost savings measures including separation incentives. **If something is agreed upon and approved by the Board of Supervisors, employees will be promptly notified.**

#### Retiree Medical/Retiree Health Insurance

2. Do retirees who move out of state still qualify for the Retiree Medical Grant?
  - a. **Yes**, for County **PPO** plans (Sharewell or Wellwise) as well as some insured PPO plans through Anthem Blue Cross;
  - b. **No**, for County offered **HMO** plans.
3. Can I take the Retiree Medical Grant in cash to purchase non-County health insurance?
  - a. No
4. How much is the Retiree Health Grant for 2020?
  - a. \$24.14 per year for each year of service up to 25 years. See slides 14 and 15 for more details.
5. If I officially **defer** my retirement for a few years (e.g. retire at 55 and wait to draw my retirement until I turn 60), will I still be eligible for the retiree medical grant?
  - a. Yes

#### Pension Benefits

1. **Who can I speak with at OCERS about my pension benefits?**
  - a. If you plan to retire in the next 90 days, you may contact your Retirement Program Specialist to obtain information via phone. Once your retirement application is received, your Retirement Program Specialist will contact you to schedule your retirement appointment. They are assigned to County Agencies/Departments. Find your specialist here: <https://www.ocers.org/member-services-directory>
  - b. You can also learn a lot about your specific benefits in your “MyOCERS” portal and obtain a benefit estimate:  
<https://mss.ocers.org/v3ssprod/app?service=page/MemberPages:MemberLogin>
  - c. See here for information on how to initiate the retirement process:  
<https://www.ocers.org/post/initiate-my-retirement>
2. **Do my survivors or beneficiaries keep getting my pension after I die?**
  - a. Benefit Payment Options are described here: <https://www.ocers.org/retirement-benefit-payment-options>
  - b. Additional Survivor Benefit Information: [https://www.ocers.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/survivor\\_benefits\\_after\\_retirement.pdf?1534439268](https://www.ocers.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/survivor_benefits_after_retirement.pdf?1534439268)

- 3. I worked for other employers and paid into Social Security. Will the pension from the County affect my Social Security eligibility?**
  - a. Learn more about the Government Pension Offset and Windfall Elimination laws here: <https://www.ocers.org/social-security>
  
- 4. I worked in a reciprocal system (e.g. CalPERS), how does that work?**
  - a. Depending on your specific circumstances and if reciprocity was established when you began your County employment, you will likely draw two separate pension checks from the respective retirement systems. Learn more here: [https://www.ocers.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/reciprocity\\_1.pdf?1558047413](https://www.ocers.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/reciprocity_1.pdf?1558047413)
  
- 5. What is included in Final Average Salary that determines my monthly pension benefit?**
  - a. For members of the 2.7 at 55 “legacy” plan, learn what is counted towards your “compensation earnable” here: [https://www.ocers.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/comp\\_earnable\\_legacy\\_general.pdf?1534438951](https://www.ocers.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/comp_earnable_legacy_general.pdf?1534438951)
  
- 6. Do overtime hours count towards final average salary?**
  - a. No
  
- 7. Does my final cash out of vacation, comp time or annual leave calculated towards my final average salary?**
  - a. No, only vacation or AL that is **earned and cashable** during a one year period, which is applied to each year in a 3 year measuring period. For example, if you are eligible to cash out up 60 hours of vacation time (see your MOU/collective bargaining agreement) AND you earned at least 60 hours of time during the year, those hours count towards your final average salary. Also, you don’t have to actually cash them out, they have to be eligible for cash out. If you use up all your vacation or AL during the fiscal year, then it would have not been cashable and is not counted.
  
- 8. I worked several months extra help before becoming regular status. Can I buy that time?**
  - a. Yes, extra help time worked typically qualifies for buyback. Contact the Purchase Service Credit/Buyback specialist at OCERS: <https://www.ocers.org/member-services-directory>
  
- 9. I took a leave of absence and went off payroll. Can I buy that time?**
  - a. Yes, that typically qualifies for buyback. Contact the Purchase Service Credit/Buyback specialist at OCERS: <https://www.ocers.org/member-services-directory>
  
- 10. Does time I took off using vacation, annual leave or sick time count towards retirement?**
  - a. Yes, retirement contributions are deducted from those hours and service hours accrue just like with your regular paid work hours.