

Retirement Plan Summary

Fact sheet for active and deferred Tier C members



Once vested, you are eligible for a lifetime retirement benefit as soon as you meet retirement eligibility requirements and choose to retire.

SDCERA is an independent association established by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937. SDCERA administers retirement and associated benefits for eligible employees of the County of San Diego (and other participating employers). SDCERA responsibilities include collecting contributions, depositing and investing earnings, and managing the retirement fund with direction from a nine-member Board of Retirement.

You become a member of SDCERA after you are appointed to a permanent position and work at least half time, or 20 hours weekly. Membership is mandatory for eligible employees beginning with the first biweekly payroll period in the month following your appointment. This is also when deductions from your biweekly wages for required member contributions begin.

Contributions

Your biweekly contribution is based on your membership classification (General or Safety). Contribution rate charts are available at www.sdcera.org or from SDCERA. You receive personalized account information that includes membership details within a month after entering membership and then annually in a member statement.

Use the Contribution Calculator at www.sdcera.org to determine the amount of your member contribution to be deducted from each paycheck.

Member classifications

Safety members are those in active law enforcement positions, or those who otherwise qualify for Safety membership. General members are those *not* in active law enforcement positions.

Members first hired on or after December 1, 2012, who meet one of the following criteria are classified as Tier C:

- have never been a member of another California public retirement system
- establish reciprocity for a period of reciprocal service that began on or after January 1, 2013
- do not establish reciprocity

Additionally, retired or refunded SDCERA members who return to active membership on or after December 1, 2012, with a different SDCERA employer (e.g., a former County employee returning to work with the court) after a break of more than six months are classified as Tier C. Refunded Tier I, Tier A or Tier B members who redeposit their previously withdrawn contributions plus interest will change tiers. If they do not redeposit, they will remain in Tier C. Tier C members who receive a refund of their contribution account and are rehired will retain their tier. Refer to the *Refunds* fact sheet for more information.

General members contribute to both Social Security and to SDCERA from their employment wages. Safety members do not contribute to Social Security from their employment wages.

Vesting

You are vested when you have five years of SDCERA retirement service credit or a combination of SDCERA and reciprocal retirement system service credit. Once vested, you are eligible for a lifetime retirement benefit as soon as you meet minimum age requirements and choose to retire.

Termination from work

If you are vested when you terminate but do not retire immediately, you may leave your contributions and interest on deposit with SDCERA and apply for retirement benefits in the future when you are eligible and choose to retire.

If you are not vested, you may request a refund of your member contributions and interest upon termination. Alternatively, you have the option of leaving your member contributions and interest on deposit, which continue to accrue interest and may be refunded at any time.

If you leave your contributions and interest on deposit and later become vested (see above) you will be eligible for a lifetime retirement benefit.

Eligibility to retire

General, Tier C members are first eligible to retire at age 55 with five years of service credit.

Safety, Tier C members are first eligible to retire at age 50 with five years of service credit.

Service retirement benefit

Your benefit is based on a formula that considers your age at retirement, service credit and monthly final average compensation (based on your highest-paid three consecutive years).

The benefit formula per year of service credit is 2.5% at age 67 for General, Tier C members and 2.7% at age 57 for Safety, Tier C members. Therefore, if you are a General, Tier C member and you retire at age 67, you can expect 2.5% of your final average compensation per year of service credit. This example estimates an Unmodified retirement benefit option.

Use the Retirement Benefit Calculator at www.sdcera.org to determine benefit estimates at various ages and with varying lengths of service.

You are vested when you have five years of SDCERA retirement service credit or a combination of SDCERA and reciprocal retirement system service credit.

BOOKLETS

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- Dividing Community Property
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FACT SHEETS

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Disability retirement benefit

If you become permanently incapacitated due to an illness, injury or disease, and as a result are unable to perform the duties of your job, you may be eligible for a disability retirement benefit. There are two types of disability retirement: service-connected and nonservice-connected. There is no minimum age requirement for either type of disability retirement.

Service-connected disability relates to a permanent incapacity caused by your job. There is no minimum service credit requirement. The formula for a service-connected disability retirement is 50% of your monthly final average compensation.

Nonservice-connected disability relates to a permanent incapacity *not* caused by your job. You must have at least five years of SDCERA/reciprocal service credit to be eligible for this benefit. The benefit formula for a nonservice-connected disability retirement generally provides no more than 33 1/3% of your monthly final average compensation, but can be less.

If you are eligible for a service retirement benefit and a disability retirement benefit, you will be paid the higher of the two benefits.

Survivor benefits

If an active member dies, eligible survivor benefits may include a lump-sum payment. An eligible spouse, registered domestic partner or eligible children of a vested active member may choose the lump sum, or a monthly survivor benefit. A combination benefit is another option available to a surviving spouse or partner. Members or beneficiaries may contact SDCERA for more details.

When a retired member dies, any benefit paid to an eligible survivor is a percentage based on the benefit option chosen at the time of retirement. Usually, the basic survivor benefit for a spouse or registered domestic partner is 60% upon death, but can be 50% or 100%. Other beneficiaries may also be eligible for benefits. For additional resources on survivor and beneficiary information, visit www.sdcer.org.

Cost-of-living adjustment

Retired Tier C members and survivors receiving monthly benefits are eligible for an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) based on changes in the Consumer Price Index for the San Diego area. Increases are not guaranteed, but can be up to 2% annually.

This material is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact 619.515.6800.

This fact sheet provides disclosure of certain terms and conditions of SDCERA membership and benefits available to members. It is designed to give you this information as simply and accurately as possible as of the date of issuance of this fact sheet. SDCERA is governed by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (Government Code Section 31450 et seq.) and by the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (Government Code Section 7522 et seq.) as they have been adopted and implemented by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors and the SDCERA Board of Retirement. If there is any inconsistency between this fact sheet and the governing law, the law will govern. Decisions relating to the plan will be made after reference to the statutes and any resolutions, regulations and policies governing administration of SDCERA as they exist at the same time of the decisions.

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT ASSOCIATION
2275 RIO BONITO WAY, SUITE 200
SAN DIEGO, CA 92108-1685