



Rules for Governor-Appointed Officials

The following rules apply to governor-appointed officials who choose to be covered by the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) Plan 1 while in office. You are eligible to participate in PERS Plan 1 while in office if:

- You were appointed to office directly by the governor, your appointment was confirmed by the legislature, and you are either:
- A PERS Plan 1 member when appointed to office, or
- You are a former PERS Plan 1 member (even if you withdrew funds from your retirement account).

You are not required to join PERS membership while serving in your elected position. However, if you would like to become a member while in office, you must apply to the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS).

When can I apply for membership?

You may apply for membership at any time while you are serving in your appointed position. If you enter membership after your appointment has begun, membership will be retroactive to the first day of your appointment to office. You will be required to pay employee contributions plus interest back to the first day of your appointment.

As a governor-appointed official, you are not eligible to purchase service credit for previous terms of governor-appointed service. However, you are entitled to establish membership and service credit for service in previously held **elected** positions.

If you have been appointed by the governor to a position that does not have a set term of office, your “current term of office” includes all uninterrupted service beginning with the first day of your current appointment.

Your membership decision is final: Once you have established retirement system membership, you must remain a member until you separate from all eligible public employment. If you serve an additional term of office with the same employer without a break in service, you will remain a retirement system member.

Can I receive credit for past elected service?

As a governor-appointed official, you are not eligible to purchase service credit for previous terms of governor-appointed service. However, you are entitled to establish membership and service credit for service in previously held elected positions retroactive to the first day of any previous PERS elected term or terms of office.

To receive service credit you must pay the required employee and employer contributions and interest for your previous term or terms of elected service as determined by DRS. Your employer may elect to pay the required employer contributions and interest for you.



How much service credit will I earn?

As a Plan 1 governor-appointed official, you receive one month of service credit for each month during which you earn compensation in your appointed position.

If you were governor-appointed to serve as a member of a board, committee or commission, you earn service credit as follows:

- For service on or after July 1, 1976, you receive one month of service credit for each month during which you are compensated for at least 70 total hours of work.
- For service on or after September 1, 1991, you receive one-quarter month of service credit for each month during which you are compensated for less than seventy total hours of work.

What will my retirement benefit be?

The amount you will receive for a service retirement benefit is based on the formula:

2 percent x service credit years x Average Final Compensation (AFC) = Monthly benefit

Average Final Compensation is the monthly average of your 24 consecutive highest-paid service credit months. This may include lump-sum payments for deferred sick leave or annual leave.

How much will I contribute to my retirement plan?

As a PERS Plan 1 non-elected official, you will contribute six percent of your “compensation earnable” each month to your retirement plan. Compensation earnable is the salary and wages you earn during a payroll period for service rendered.

What if I am retired when appointed?

If you are a retired PERS Plan 1 member who is appointed to office by the governor, you have the option of remaining retired and continuing to receive your retirement benefit while serving in office, or returning to active member status while serving in office.

If you return to active member status, you will stop receiving a monthly retirement benefit, and you will resume making contributions to your retirement system and accumulating service credit prospectively from the first day of the month following the date the department accepts your application for membership.

How do I enroll?

To begin, continue or reestablish PERS 1 membership, contact DRS and provide the following information:

- Name
- Social Security number
- Address and phone number
- Position title and employer
- Beginning date of current governor-appointed service
- Beginning and ending dates of any prior elected official service

DRS will send you a letter and application once you provide us with all of these items.



To Learn More

More information about elected or governor-appointed officials is available on the DRS Web site or by contacting DRS. Additional rules governing all PERS Plan 1 members are summarized in the *PERS Plan 1 Member Handbook*. To obtain a copy of a member handbook, visit the DRS Web site at www.drs.wa.gov or contact DRS.

Web site: www.drs.wa.gov

Telephone: 1-800-547-6657; or (360) 664-7000 in the Olympia area
TDD: 1-866-377-8895; or (360) 586-5450 in the Olympia area

E-mail: recep@drs.wa.gov

Address: P.O. Box 48380
Olympia WA 98504-8380

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Summary Description

The provisions governing elected or governor-appointed officials are contained in the Revised Code of Washington. This publication is a summary of those provisions, not a complete description of the law. If there are any conflicts between what is written in this publication and what is contained in the law, the applicable law will govern.