

# Highlights of Your Retirement Benefits

## Consolidated Judicial Retirement System (CJRS)

### Who is eligible to be a member of CJRS?

**You become a member of the Consolidated Judicial Retirement System on the date you take your oath of office as a:**

- Justice of the Supreme Court
- Judge of the Court of Appeals
- Judge of the Superior Court
- Judge of the District Court
- Solicitor or District Attorney
- Clerk of Superior Court
- Public Defender
- Director of Indigent Defense Services
- Administrative Officer of the Courts

### How do I qualify for retirement benefits under CJRS?

**Service Retirement (Unreduced) Benefits are available:**

- at age 65 with 5 years of membership service
- at age 50 with 24 years of creditable service

**Early Retirement (Reduced) Benefits are available:**

- at age 50 with 5 years of membership service

Your early retirement benefit is determined by the same formula as a service retirement benefit multiplied by a reduction percentage based on your age and/or service at early retirement. If you retire before age 65 or completion of 24 years of creditable service, your early retirement benefit will be reduced to the lesser of 3% for each year (prorated by month) that you are under age 65 or have fewer than 24 years of creditable service.

**Disability Retirement Benefits are available:**

- after 5 years of creditable service, if you become permanently

disabled while serving in a judicial capacity under CJRS and are unable to work, as approved by the Medical Review Board.

Your disability benefit is based on the same formula as service retirement; however, final compensation is calculated as of your disability retirement date, and creditable service is counted as though you continue working to age 65, not to exceed 24 years.

**If You Leave The System Before Retirement**, and you meet all eligibility requirements, you may still receive a deferred benefit at a later date, provided you do not withdraw your contributions. Your benefit is determined by the formula in effect on the effective date of your retirement. If you leave the System before you have 5 years of membership service, you are entitled only to a refund of your contributions and interest.

### What formulas are used to calculate retirement benefits under CJRS?

Your annual retirement benefit is based on these formulas:

**District Court Judge, District Attorney, Clerk of Court, Director of Indigent Defense Services, or Public Defender service:**

3.02% of your final compensation  
TIMES  
your years of creditable service

**Superior Court Judge or Administrative Officer of the Courts service:**

3.52% of your final compensation  
TIMES  
your years of creditable service

**Supreme Court Justice or Court of Appeals Judge service:**

4.02% of your final compensation  
TIMES  
your years of creditable service

**Transferred service:**

1.82% of your average final  
compensation  
TIMES  
your years of creditable  
service transferred from the  
Teachers' and State  
Employees' or Legislative  
Retirement Systems

1.85% of your average final  
compensation  
TIMES  
your years of creditable  
service transferred from the  
Local Governmental  
Employees' Retirement  
System

**Your maximum allowance is limited to 75% of your final compensation** when added to any benefits to which you are entitled under the maximum allowance from the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System, Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System, or Legislative Retirement System.

**Final Compensation** is the annual equivalent of the rate of compensation most recently applicable to you as a member of CJRS.

**Average Final Compensation** is the annual average of your 48 consecutive highest-paid months of membership in CJRS.

**Creditable Service** includes your membership service for any period during which you contribute to CJRS, provided you do not withdraw your contributions. Creditable service may also include service credit purchased or granted under the creditable service provisions outlined in *Your Retirement Benefits* handbook located at [www.myncretirement.com](http://www.myncretirement.com).

**Transferred Service** is creditable service and accumulated contributions from the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System, the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System, or the Legislative Retirement System that you transferred to CJRS after you completed 5 years of membership service in CJRS.

Please continue to the next page.

# Highlights of Your Retirement Benefits Consolidated Judicial Retirement System (CJRS)

## What death and survivor benefits are available for active employees under CJRS?

**Death Benefit for Active Employees:** At any age, if you die while employed and being paid salary under CJRS, your beneficiary(ies) will receive a lump sum payment equal to your final annual rate of compensation, plus a refund of your accumulated contributions with interest or, if eligible, a surviving spouse benefit.

**Surviving Spouse Benefit for Active Employees:** If you die in active service under CJRS after reaching age 50 with 5 years of service and your one principal beneficiary is your surviving

spouse, your surviving spouse may choose a monthly surviving spouse benefit instead of a refund of your contributions. This surviving spouse benefit is equal to one-half of the monthly retirement benefit under the maximum allowance to which you would have been entitled on the first day of the month following your death reduced by 2% for each full year your age exceeds that of your spouse. This benefit is payable for life unless the spouse remarries.

## What surviving spouse and guaranteed refund benefits are available for CJRS retirees?

**Surviving Spouse Benefit for Retirees:** After your death, a monthly benefit is payable to your surviving spouse for life or until remarriage. This surviving spouse benefit is equal to one-half of the monthly retirement benefit payable under the Maximum Allowance reduced by 2% for each full year that your age exceeds that of your spouse. This benefit is in addition to any survivorship benefits payable under Options 2, 3, 6-2, or 6-3.

**Guaranteed Refund for Retirees:** If you, and your surviving spouse and your monthly survivorship beneficiary, if any, die before the total of the retirement allowances paid equals the amount of your contributions and interest at the date of retirement, the remaining portion of your contributions and interest will be paid in a lump sum to the beneficiary(ies) you designated to receive the Guaranteed Refund.

## What retirement payment options are available under CJRS?

When you retire, you must elect one of the payment options listed below. *Note: The Surviving Spouse and Guaranteed Refund Benefits for Retirees described above are included under all retirement payment plans listed below.*

**Maximum Allowance - Basic, Straight Life Benefit (No Monthly Survivor)** is paid throughout your lifetime.

**Option 2 - 100% Joint and Survivor (One Monthly Survivor)** is a reduced retirement allowance providing after your death the same reduced retirement allowance to your monthly survivor beneficiary for the remainder of his/her life.

**Option 3 - 50% Joint and Survivor (One Monthly Survivor)** is a reduced retirement allowance providing after your death the same reduced retirement allowance to your monthly survivor beneficiary for the remainder of his/her life.

**Option 4 - Adjustment of Retirement Allowance and Social Security Benefits (No Monthly Survivor)** is a retirement allowance providing for larger monthly payments than you would otherwise be entitled to receive until you become eligible for Social Security at age 62. Beginning at age 62, your monthly payments will be reduced to an amount that is less than what you would otherwise be entitled to receive. However, your reduced retirement payments after age 62, plus your allowance from the Social Security Administration, will be approximately the same amount as the inflated payment you received from the Retirement System before age 62.

**Option 6-2 or 6-3 - Modified Joint and Survivor (One Monthly Survivor)** is a reduced retirement allowance as provided by Option 2 or Option 3, with the added provision that if your monthly survivor beneficiary dies before you do, your retirement allowance will increase to the Maximum Allowance the following month for the remainder of your life.

## Is retiree health coverage available under CJRS?

Under current law, if you were first hired **prior to October 1, 2006**, and retire with 5 or more years of CJRS membership service, the state will pay for your individual coverage under the State Health Plan 70/30 or Medicare Advantage Base Plan. If you were first hired **on or after October 1, 2006**, in order to receive the 70/30 Plan

individual coverage at no cost, you must retire with 20 or more years of retirement service credit; if you have 10 but fewer than 20 years of retirement service credit, you will have to pay 50% of the cost for your coverage, and with 5 but fewer than 10 years, you will have to pay the full cost for your coverage. In all cases, you must pay the full cost of dependent coverage, if elected.

## How do I contact the Retirement System?

**Address:** Consolidated Judicial Retirement System  
North Carolina Department of State Treasurer  
3200 Atlantic Avenue  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27604

**Phone Number:** 1-877-627-3287 toll-free  
**Fax:** (919) 855-5800  
**Web Site:** [www.myncretirement.com](http://www.myncretirement.com)

## Thank you.

DISCLAIMER: The availability and amount of all benefits you might be eligible to receive is governed by Retirement System law. The information provided in this publication cannot alter, modify or otherwise change the controlling Retirement System law or other governing legal documents in any way, nor can any right accrue to you by reason of any information provided or omission of information provided herein. In the event of a conflict between this information and the Retirement System law, Retirement System law governs.