



Your annuity and other retiree benefits

As an employee of an institution of higher education, you have the option of contributing to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) or participating in the Optional Retirement Program (ORP). This means your annuity will come from either TRS or your ORP not from ERS.

ERS administers the Texas Group Benefits Program (GBP) benefits, including health insurance for eligible retirees of higher education institutions.

Eligibility for retiree insurance

As a TRS or ORP retiree, you may be eligible for GBP retiree insurance if:

- you have at least 10 years of service with an agency that participates in the GBP; and
- your last place of public employment was with an agency or higher education institution that participates in the GBP (independent school districts, the University of Texas and Texas A&M don't participate in the GBP).

If you participate in the ORP, you will need an ORP account from which you're eligible to start drawing payments. If you withdraw or roll over your account to another account at retirement, you will not be eligible for retiree insurance through the GBP.

ERS doesn't determine your eligibility for retiree insurance. Your benefits coordinator needs to notify ERS of your eligibility for retiree insurance by submitting the TRS/ORP Retiree Insurance Enrollment Form. Be sure to contact your benefits coordinator about submitting this form as soon as you start your retirement process.

Coverage start date

Your years of service and age at retirement play a part in determining when you're eligible for retiree health insurance.

Some members are eligible to retire with health insurance before they turn age 65. Others may be eligible to retire and start receiving a retirement payment before the age of 65, but won't be eligible for retiree health insurance until age 65. Your benefits coordinator determines when you are eligible for retiree health insurance.

If you retire as a contributing member (directly from state employment) you won't have a health insurance waiting period. If you leave employment before you are eligible to retire, and retire at a later date as a non-contributing member, you will have a health insurance waiting period.

Retiree health insurance prior to age 65

Contributing member

If you retire as a contributing member and qualify for health insurance before age 65 you won't have a break in your health or optional coverage.

Non-contributing member

If you retire as a non-contributing member and qualify for retiree health insurance before age 65, you will have a 60-day waiting period after your retirement date before your health insurance starts. You will be eligible for optional coverage the first of the month following your retirement date if your benefits coordinator indicates your eligibility on the TRS/ORP Retiree Insurance Enrollment Form and sends it to ERS.



Benefits at retirement

When you start your retirement process, be sure to work with your benefits coordinator to fill out the TRS/ORP Retiree Insurance Enrollment Form and send it to ERS before your retirement date, to avoid any delay in setting up your retiree coverage. Then ERS will send you your Retiree Insurance Enrollment Statement listing all of the coverage you're enrolled in as well as your options. You'll have 30 days after your retirement date to make changes to your health and dental plans and add dependents to your plan. If you don't already have Optional Term Life Insurance and Dependent Term Life Insurance, you can apply through evidence of insurability (EOI).

Retiree health insurance at age 65

Contributing member

If you retire as a contributing member and you're not eligible for health insurance until age 65, your health insurance coverage will end on your retirement date (you have the option to continue health coverage through COBRA for up to 18 months). You will be eligible to continue optional coverage. Continuation or enrollment in optional coverage isn't automatic. Your benefits coordinator needs to send ERS your TRS/ORP Retiree Insurance Enrollment form. If ERS doesn't receive this form, your optional coverage will end on the same date as your health coverage and you'll be required to submit an evidence of insurability form if you want to enroll in the Fixed Optional Life Insurance (\$10,000 policy) or Dependent Term Life Insurance at a later date.

Non-contributing member

If you retire as a non-contributing member, your health coverage will start the first day of the month after your 60-day waiting period ends. There is no waiting period for optional coverage.

If you had at least five years of service with a GBP participating agency or higher education institution on or before September 1, 2014, the state pays 100% of your retiree health insurance premium (50% if you retired as a part-time employee).

If not, the state's health insurance premium contribution (the amount of the premium the state pays for you) will be based on the number of years of service you have with a GBP participating agency, as follows:

- 100% with 20 or more years;
- 75% with 15 up to 20 years or
- 50% with 10 up to 15 years

Your health coverage and Medicare

Once you're retired and become eligible for Medicare at age 65 you will need to enroll in Medicare Part A – which covers hospitalization, and Medicare Part B – which covers medical services. Your initial enrollment period is the seven-month period that includes the month of your 65th birthday, 90 days before and 90 days after. You could also become Medicare-eligible before age 65 if the Social Security Administration (SSA) certifies you as disabled and you've received payments for 24 months. To enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B contact the SSA toll-free at, (800) 772-1213.

Once you're enrolled in both Medicare Parts A and B, ERS automatically enrolls you in the HealthSelect Medicare Advantage PlanSM, administered by Humana. If you're in the Houston area, you may be eligible for the KelseyCare Medicare Advantage HMO. These plans provide all of your coverage and take the place of traditional Medicare and secondary ERS coverage. If you want to stay with HealthSelect of Texas or an HMO, or if you want to enroll in KelseyCare Medicare Advantage HMO, you can opt out of the HealthSelect Medicare Advantage Plan by calling ERS.

You can't be enrolled in an ERS Medicare Advantage plan and a private Medicare Advantage plan at the same time. For more information about your health coverage and Medicare please see the, "Medicare and Your State Health Insurance" flier.