Retirement Terms

Vesting
Members become vested for retirement benefits upon the earlier of: (1) completion of 10 years of NHRS Creditable Service; or (2) on or after attainment of the NHRS normal retirement age while in service, regardless of years of Creditable Service.

Retirement
This is not the same as “termination” or the last day of employment. In order to begin collecting a lifetime pension, members must file a retirement application with NHRS and meet certain deadlines.

Accumulated Contributions
The total amount a member has paid into the retirement system plus credited interest. Employer contributions are not included.

In Service
Members will be considered in service if both the member and employer are actively contributing to NHRS and the member is earning Creditable Service. Members may also be considered in service for certain benefits if employment is suspended as a result of the Family Medical Leave Act, workers’ compensation, or active military duty.

Creditable Service
The number of months and years of service credit earned as an NHRS member. Creditable Service is one of the factors used to calculate the pension benefit.

Service Credit
Members may be eligible to increase their amount of Creditable Service through purchasing one or more types of service credit.

Average Final Compensation (AFC)
The average of a member’s five highest years of Earnable Compensation in NHRS-covered employment. AFC may be subject to Earnable Compensation limits and other statutory provisions. AFC is one of the factors used to calculate the pension benefit.

About NHRS
The New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS, the retirement system) is a defined benefit plan. That means the plan provides lifetime pension benefits that are determined at retirement under a formula prescribed by law, not based on investment returns or contributions. NHRS benefits are funded by member contributions, employer contributions, and net investment returns.

All benefits are set by state law (RSA 100-A). NHRS is also governed by administrative rules and policies, and the Internal Revenue Code.

Retirement Benefits

Service Retirement
Group II members are eligible to retire at age 52.5 with 25 years of Group II Creditable Service or at age 60 regardless of their years of Creditable Service.

Benefit formula
Member’s AFC multiplied by 2% then multiplied by Creditable Service. (example: AFC of $40,000 x .02 = $800; $800 x 25 years of service = $20,000)

Early Retirement
Members with at least 25 years of Creditable Service may retire between the ages of 50-52.5. Early Retirement results in a permanently reduced pension. The reduction factor is 1/4% per month for each month prior to age 52.5 that the member receives a pension benefit.

Vested Deferred Retirement
Members with at least 10 years of Creditable Service who terminate their NHRS-covered employment prior to attaining retirement eligibility and leave their accumulated contributions with the retirement system may begin receiving an unreduced pension at the earlier of age 60 or when they would have completed 25 years of Group II service, but not before age 52.5.

Disability Retirement
Members who are no longer able to perform the duties of their NHRS-covered employment due to an incapacity (either mental or physical) that is likely to be permanent may qualify for a Disability Retirement benefit. There are two types of disability benefits, both of which are subject to independent medical review.

Ordinary Disability is a non job-related permanent incapacity. Members must have 10 or more years of Creditable Service to qualify for the benefit.

Accidental Disability is a job-related permanent incapacity. There is no minimum service required to qualify.
Other Benefits

Death Benefits
Certain pre- and post-retirement death benefits may be available to eligible beneficiaries of members who die while they are in service and to eligible beneficiaries of retirees.

Among the retiree death benefits is the option to leave a lifetime pension to any one person or to a retiree’s children and/or spouse. If a survivorship option is elected the retiree will receive a reduced pension based on the option selected, the retiree’s age, and the age of the primary beneficiary(ies).

Members are encouraged to keep up-to-date beneficiary information on file with the retirement system. Beneficiary forms are available online or by contacting NHRS.

Health Insurance
NHRS does not provide health insurance.

State of NH members, depending on their date of hire, length of service, and eligibility in Group I or Group II, may be eligible for post-retirement health care coverage through the state. Health insurance benefits for retired state employees are administered by the NH Division of Personnel, which may be contacted at (603) 271-1432 or https://das.nh.gov/riskmanagement/retiree/index.aspx.

Political subdivision members may elect to remain on the group health insurance plan of their last NHRS-covered employer. Employers are not required to pay any portion of the premiums, although some may. Members should contact their employer for details.

Retirement Topics

Approaching Retirement
Members who are approaching retirement may request a benefit estimate from NHRS or schedule a personal appointment with an NHRS Benefits Specialist.

Pre-Selection of a Survivorship Option
Active contributing members who remain in service beyond their normal retirement age may be eligible to elect a maximum Survivorship Option for a beneficiary(ies) in the event of the member’s death while in service and before filing an Application for Service Retirement. The lifetime pension will be equal to the 100% Survivorship Option calculated as if Service Retirement had occurred on the day before the member’s date of death.

This is not an automatic benefit. Members must complete a form to qualify. The election expires when NHRS receives an Application for Service Retirement from the member.

Filing for Retirement
Members must file their retirement application with NHRS 30-90 days prior to the effective date of retirement, which is always the first of a month. Members must also terminate NHRS-covered employment prior to their effective date of retirement.

Pension Benefit Increases
Cost-of-living adjustments and/or other Temporary Supplemental Allowances (one-time, lump sum payments) are not automatic. They must be approved by the NH Legislature.

Working after Retirement
Retirees may work full-time for a non-NHRS employer and collect a pension. Retirees may not occupy a full-time NHRS-covered position and concurrently receive a pension. State law limits the hours a retiree may work “part-time” for an NHRS participating employer to a maximum of 1,352 hours per calendar year. A retiree who exceeds this limit will forfeit the state annuity portion of his or her pension, and any cost of living adjustments, for 12 months. New retirees must also wait 28 days from their effective date of retirement before commencing part-time employment with a participating employer.

Retirees in receipt of a Disability Retirement may be subject to gainful occupation limits.

Contact NHRS
54 Regional Drive, Concord, NH 03301
Phone: (603) 410-3500 — Email: info@nhrs.org

Learn More

There are several ways for members to learn more about NHRS and stay abreast of issues affecting their retirement.

Email Updates
Sign up for email updates to receive news releases, newsletters, and other important notices from the retirement system.

My Account
Members and retirees may access their personal account information online, including account balances, demographics (i.e. address, phone number, email), and beneficiary information.

Education Sessions
NHRS offers member education sessions throughout the state, as well as online. During these general information programs, members of all ages and in various stages of their career will receive a basic overview of NHRS benefits.