New York State Employees Retirement System (NYSERS)

NYSERS is a defined benefit pension plan that provides benefits to hourly and salaried Cornell contract college employees and Cornell County Cooperative Extension Associations who have enrolled in NYSERS. The benefits provided include:

- Retirement benefit (see benefit formula table bel0w)
- Disability retirement benefits for both on-the-job and non-job-related disabilities
- Death benefits
- Loans for contributing members
- Membership transfer to and from other public retirement systems and New York State
- Crediting of withdrawn New York State service from another public retirement system

If you are a contract college nonexempt employee working full-time for at least 12 months then you must participate in NYSERS as required by New York State. An exempt contract college employee working full-time for at least 12 months must elect to participate in NYSERS or the Optional Retirement Program (ORP).

Part-time employees and those with provisional or temporary appointments have the option to join a retirement plan at any time. Employees who are not full-time regular employees can waive membership by completing a waiver form (pdf).

Your service retirement, ordinary and accidental disability and death benefits vary depending on your tier and/or plan coverage. Benefits are provided under one of six available tiers based on date of membership. New hires who are not previous members of NYSERS will become Tier 6 members (see Tier 6 details bel0w). To determine which tier you may be in, and the corresponding benefits, see the chart below or visit the NYSERS website.

[accordion]

Forms

To enroll in NYSERS, form RS5420 must be submitted.

- RS 5420 Form (pdf): NYSERS Enrollment Form

Other forms:

- NYSERS Waiver Form (pdf)
- RS 5127 Form (pdf): Beneficiary Designation Form
- NYSERS Forms Webpage

Benefit Formula Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier</th>
<th>Membership Date</th>
<th>Vesting Schedule</th>
<th>Your Contribution</th>
<th>Retirement Date</th>
<th>Benefit Amount (Full Benefits)</th>
<th>Reduced Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### Employee Contribution for Tier 6 based on Salary Ranges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Salary</th>
<th>Employee Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$45,000 or less</td>
<td>3.0% required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between $45,000 and $55,000</td>
<td>3.5% required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Between $55,000 and $75,000  
4.5% required

Between $75,000 and $100,000  
5.75% required

Between $100,000 or more  
6.0% required

Additional limits may apply to benefit formulas listed above.

* Final Average Salary is generally the average of the wages earned during the three highest consecutive years of service, with a two-year look back for tiers 1-5. Tier 6 is generally the average of the wages earned during the five highest consecutive years of service, with a four-year look back.

** Early Retirement Benefits Reduction Schedule: Tiers 2, 3, and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Retirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Reduction</th>
<th>Age at Retirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Reduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** Early Retirement Benefits Reduction Schedule: Tier 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Retirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Reduction</th>
<th>Age at Retirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Reduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>18.33%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38.33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**** Early Retirement Benefits Reduction Schedule: Tier 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age at Retirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Reduction</th>
<th>Age at Retirement</th>
<th>Percentage of Reduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Years of service is generally the full time years of credited member service you accrue while an active member of NYSERS. Note that Cornell service time may be different from NYSERS credited membership time. Contact NYSERS directly about your NYSERS service credit.

**Additional Service Credit:** You may be able to receive credit under certain scenarios. See [NYSERS website](https://www.nysers.com) for more information regarding prior service, service before your date of membership, military service, and more.

**Getting Credit for Previous Public Service**

**Getting Credit for Previous Public Service:** You may be able to obtain credit for your previous public employment. It is very important that you claim all the service you are entitled to receive, as early as possible, because records documenting your previous service may become lost or destroyed with the passage of time.

**Prior Service**

**Prior Service:** This is any period of time you received salary from a participating employer before that employer elected to participate in the Retirement System. To receive this credit, you must earn at least two years of credited service as a Retirement System member.

**Service Before Your Date of Membership**

**Service Before Your Date of Membership:** You may receive credit for working for a public employer in New York State before you joined the Retirement system. To obtain the credit, you must earn at least two years of credited service as a Retirement System member.

**Military Service**

**Military Service:** You may be able to receive credit for some or all of your military service. To determine your eligibility, please send form RS 5509 and a copy of your Report of Transfer or Discharge Record (DD-214) to NYSERS, 110 State Street, Albany, NY 12244. For more information about one of the programs, Article 20, that allows for military service credit go to the military service credit page on the NYSERS website.

**Service from a Previous Membership**

If you previously were a member of NYSERS, or another public retirement system in New York State, your service may be recredited and your date of membership and tier restored. NYSERS will initiate reinstatement to tier 3, 4, or 5 or an earlier date within tier 6 by sending you information about your eligibility and giving you the opportunity to purchase credit for your withdrawn service. If your previous tier 3, 4 or 5 membership was with another retirement system, please write to NYSERS Member & Employer Services Bureau. For reinstatement to tier 1 or tier 2, you must send NYSERS a completed Application to Reinstall a Former Tier 1 or 2 Membership (RS 5506). You can get this form from either NYSERS or HR Services & Transitions Center.

**Payment of a Service Credit**

As a Tier 3, 4, 5 or 6 member, you will usually be required to pay for service currently not credited to you. These payments are known as "arrears." There are two kinds of arrears: mandatory and optional. Mandatory arrears are required for service you earned as a member but for which you made no (or insufficient) contributions. Optional arrears are payments you choose to make to purchase credit for a period of previous or military service. Once you have made payment and have accrued two years of service credit as a member, you can receive that credit. Before you purchase optional arrears, though, you must pay for any outstanding mandatory arrears.
Applying for Previous Service Credit

To receive credit for any type of previous service, send a written request (which must be received before your effective date of retirement) to NYSERS Member & Employer Services Bureau. Please include as much information as you can about the period of employment you are seeking to receive credit for. We will determine your eligibility to receive the credit and any cost involved.

By requesting credit for your previous public employment as early in your career as possible:

- It will be less expensive than if you wait to purchase it at a later date.
- You will stop making the 3% contribution sooner.
- Your retirement benefit will be processed more quickly if your service credit is in order.
- If your purchased service brings your total credited service to 10 or more years, you will no longer be eligible to withdraw your contributions and end your membership.

It is strongly recommended that you schedule an appointment with HR Services & Transitions Center prior to retiring. You may also schedule an appointment with a NYSERS representative, following their consultation schedule.