

A NEW ERA FOR PENSION ADMINISTRATION

Retirees and Payees, Active Members

Over the past four years, our team has been hard at work developing a brand-new pension administration software system, built to meet the specific needs of our members and employers. Every feature has been thoughtfully designed to make the system more efficient, secure, and user-friendly. Balancing this major project with our daily operations has been a tremendous effort, but we're proud of what we've achieved and excited about what's ahead.

This new system will also make managing and accessing your pension easier than ever before through an online member portal. We're now entering the final stages of preparation. In the coming weeks, we'll begin introducing the system to our employers, with a full rollout to members planned in the months that follow. While there may still be a few fine-tuning steps along the way, we're committed to ensuring a smooth and successful launch.

As we complete this transition, our staff may be busier than usual. Although our commitment to serving you remains our top priority, some processes may take a bit longer during this period.

We sincerely appreciate your patience and understanding as we take this important step forward to improve how we serve you.

PLANNING TO RETIRE THIS SPRING? EXPLORE YOUR BENEFIT CHOICES NOW

Active Members

Planning for retirement involves more than simply choosing a date — it also means selecting the benefit option that best supports your long-term goals. The benefit payment plan you choose can influence the total amount you receive over time, so it's important to understand how each option works and what it means for your future financial security.

The Unmodified Option

The unmodified option pays you the highest monthly benefit during your lifetime. Then, upon your death, if you have an eligible spouse or registered domestic partner (who meets specific criteria), they would receive 60% of your monthly benefit for their lifetime. If you have only minor children, or if you don't have a spouse or minor children, the benefit may instead be paid as a lump sum of your contributions and interest to your designated beneficiary.

Options 1 – 4

In contrast, Options 1 – 4 allow you to reduce your monthly benefit in exchange for different forms of survivor or beneficiary benefits:

- **Option 1** reduces your monthly benefit but may leave a lump-sum payment to your designated beneficiary at your death.

- **Option 2** also reduces your benefit, but guarantees the same reduced monthly amount to your named beneficiary for their lifetime after your passing.
- **Option 3** reduces your benefit and provides your beneficiary with a lifetime monthly payment equal to 50% of what you were receiving.
- **Option 4** lets you name multiple beneficiaries and choose a reduced benefit to provide lifetime allowances to each. Note: if a named beneficiary pre-deceases you, you cannot re-allocate their portion.

Options 1 – 4 involve an actuarial reduction based on your age at retirement, your beneficiary's age (if applicable), and life-expectancy assumptions. Once your first benefit payment is made, your option election is irrevocable, so it's wise to consider your situation carefully.

To help you make an informed decision, take time to review the available choices and how they align with your retirement plans. You can explore all of CCCERA's retirement options in more detail at cccera.gov/retirement-options.

TIP: If retiring this spring, submit your documents early! Mail CCCERA applicable copies of:

- Marriage certificates or Secretary of State Domestic Partnership Certificates
- Marriage dissolutions
- Your beneficiary(ies) and your own birth certificate or passport
- Your beneficiary(ies) and your own Social Security cards

These documents are required to process your benefit and can be submitted at any time during your career. Many retirements get delayed because of missing documents - don't let yours be one of them!

ANNUAL PENSIONABLE COMPENSATION LIMITS

Active Members

Each year, federal and state laws set limits on the amount of compensation that can be used to calculate retirement contributions and benefits for CCCERA members. These limits vary depending on whether you are a Legacy or PEPRAs member.

Once a member's compensation reaches the annual limit, both member and employer contributions to CCCERA stop. Both member and employer contributions resume with the next calendar year.

Legacy Tiers (1, 3, A, or C)

Legacy members who joined CCCERA on or after January 1, 1996, are subject to the federal Internal Revenue Code Section 401(a)(17) compensation limit. Members who joined before that date are not subject to this limit.

- 2026 limit: \$360,000

PEPRA Tiers (4, 5, D, or E)

For PEPRA members, the annual compensation limit depends on whether you are enrolled in Social Security.

- 2026 limit (with Social Security): \$159,733
- 2026 limit (without Social Security): \$191,679

For more information, visit cccera.gov/compensation-limits.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT RETIREMENT CHECKS AFTER A RETIREE'S DEATH

Retirees and Payees

It is important that members and their beneficiaries report any changes that impact receiving benefits. This includes reporting deaths, changes to contact information, or changes to bank information. This assists CCCERA with making benefit payments timely and accurately.

Did you know that cashing a retirement check or accepting a direct deposit for a deceased retiree is not simply considered an "overpayment" that needs to be repaid? This action may be considered fraudulent and dishonest and may be subject to serious consequences including civil and criminal prosecution. While rare, CCCERA will take necessary steps to recover the funds obtained by fraud which may include lawsuits and criminal prosecution. Any suspected fraud should be reported immediately to CCCERA for investigation. In addition to repayment, with interest, convicted fraudsters may be subject to fines and/or jail time. To easily report any suspected fraud CCCERA provides an anonymous reporting portal at cccera.gov/submit-ethics-or-fraud-report.

WHAT TO DO WHEN A MEMBER PASSES AWAY

Retirees and Payees, Active Members

To notify CCCERA about the death of a member, call our office or visit cccera.gov/report-death. A retirement counselor will guide survivors through the required procedures, forms, and certificates that must be submitted.

NEED HELP WITH YOUR COUNTY HEALTH BENEFITS?

Retirees and Payees

We know many retirees reach out to CCCERA with questions about their county health benefits. While we're always happy to assist with your retirement questions, health benefits are managed directly by Contra Costa County's Human Resources department.

For assistance with health plan options, coverage, or billing, please contact the County Benefits Office:

Phone: (925) 655-2100

Email: benefits@hrd.cccounty.us

Their team can provide the most accurate and up-to-date information about your retiree health benefits.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Retirees and Payees, Active Members

Subscribe to our emails

Receiving notifications for board meetings, newsletters, and updates by subscribing to our emails at cccera.gov/emailupdates.

Follow us on social media

CCCERA has a Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube account! Follow us @CCCERA1945.

Update your address

To update your address retirees and payees must submit the Member Mailing Address Change Form (Form 301), available at cccera.gov/forms. Active members must update their address with their employer.



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OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Closed noon to 12:30 p.m.
Closed at noon 3rd Friday of each month

CALENDAR DATES

UPCOMING HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

December 25 Christmas	January 1 New Year's Day
January 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	February 16 President's Day

PRE-RETIREMENT WORKSHOPS

Pre-retirement workshops provide a basic overview of the retirement process and are helpful for members planning to retire within five years. Reservations are required and fill up fast; please call CCCERA to sign up. Visit cccera.gov/retirement-counseling for more information.

January 13 March 10	February 10
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UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

January 7 February 4 March 4	January 21 February 18 March 18
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RETIREE PAYROLL DATES

Month	Pay Date	Month	Pay Date
Nov. '25	December 1	June	July 1
Dec. '25	January 2	July	August 3
January	February 2	August	September 1
February	March 2	September	October 1
March	April 1	October	November 2
April	May 1	November	December 1
May	June 1	December '26	January 4

Payroll dates are available at cccera.gov/payroll-dates.



NOTICE

This newsletter is intended to provide members with general information about the benefits available through CCCERA, but it does not describe every plan provision in detail. CCCERA is governed by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937 (CERL, Government Code Section 31450 et. seq.) and the California Public Employees' Pension Reform Act of 2013 (PEPRA). The laws governing public retirement systems are complex. If conflict arises between this newsletter and the law, the law shall govern.