

BENEFITS

at a glance

Retirement System for Judges

Throughout your career, you contribute part of your salary to the Retirement System. Your employer also contributes. The Retirement System then invests these funds and, when you retire, pays you a guaranteed monthly benefit for the rest of your life. As an active member, you also have life insurance and disability benefits at no cost to you. This publication highlights your current benefits and the one's you'll receive when you retire.

Membership and Contributions

Kansas law requires that all eligible employees must become members. As an active member, you contribute 6 percent of your gross earnings and your contributions earn interest annually.

If you became a member:

- *Before July 1, 1993*, your contributions earn 8 percent interest.
- *On or after July 1, 1993*, your contributions earn 4 percent interest.

You automatically earn service credit for the years you serve in a covered position. You became "vested," when you were elected or appointed. This means you are guaranteed a retirement benefit for the rest of your life.

Basic Life Insurance for Active Members

You have basic group life insurance equal to 150 percent of your annual salary. The State of Kansas pays for the cost of this benefit. The Retirement System also returns your contributions and interest if you die. You can name different beneficiaries for these benefits.

Surviving Spouse Benefit Option

If you die before retirement, your spouse may be able to choose a monthly benefit for the rest of his or her life, instead of receiving your returned contributions and interest. You must have designated your spouse as your sole primary beneficiary.

Situation #1 *If you were eligible to retire*, your spouse begins receiving a monthly benefit immediately.

Situation #2 *If you were not yet eligible to retire but had ten years of service*, your spouse begins receiving a monthly benefit when you would have reached age 55.

You can name contingent beneficiaries or separate beneficiaries for your life insurance without affecting this benefit option.

Optional Life Insurance for Active Members

The State of Kansas offers optional group life insurance through the Retirement System. Check with your designated agent in the Office of Judicial Administration about participation.

Coverage amounts range from \$5,000 to \$250,000 in \$5,000 increments. New members are eligible for an initial \$50,000 of guaranteed coverage *without* proof of good health within 30 days of taking office. You must provide proof of good health for amounts over \$50,000. Optional life insurance premiums are automatically deducted from your pay.

Other Optional Insurance Details

- You can start or increase coverage at *any time* with proof of good health.
- You can enroll for or increase your coverage by up to \$25,000 *without* proof of good health when you have a family status change like marriage, divorce, birth or adoption.
- With the “Accelerated Death Benefit,” if you are diagnosed as terminally ill with 12 months or fewer to live, you may be eligible to receive up to 100 percent of your life insurance *instead* of your beneficiary receiving a death benefit.

Disability Benefits for Active Members

If you become disabled, you may qualify for a disability benefit based on your annual salary. You must be totally and permanently disabled as certified by the Kansas Supreme Court. Your employer provides this long-term disability benefit. You will continue receiving service credit and basic life insurance coverage for approved disability periods. You can also continue any optional insurance coverage.

Disability benefits are based on the following formula:

Final average salary x 3.5 percent x years of service = annual disability benefit

Example: \$100,000 x 3.5% x 15 = \$52,500 annual benefit

The minimum benefit is 50 percent of your final average salary and the maximum is 70 percent.

Leaving Employment Before Retiring

If you leave covered employment, you can take your life insurance coverage with you through a conversion or portability option. You can also choose to withdraw your contributions any time 31 days after your last day on payroll. If you withdraw, you will give up all Retirement System rights, benefits and service credit. Employer contributions made on your behalf stay with the Retirement System. You can receive your contributions and interest as a direct payment to you or roll over the amount into an eligible retirement plan.

You are guaranteed a monthly retirement benefit for the rest of your life if you leave your contributions in your account. Often, if you have a significant amount of service, your vested benefit is more valuable than the amount of your actual contributions. If you keep your contributions with the Retirement System, you can apply for retirement benefits when you become eligible. Your contributions continue to earn interest and you can withdraw them at any time if you change your mind.

When Can You Retire?

Retiring With Full Benefits

- Age 65 with one year of service credit
- Age 62 with ten years of service credit
- Any age when your age and years of service credit added together equal 85 (85 points)

Retiring Early

You can receive reduced benefits beginning at age 55 with ten years of service. The earlier you retire, the more your benefit is reduced.

Mandatory Retirement Age

- All judges must retire at the end of the term in which they reach age 75.

If You Retire Early		
Age	Example	Reduction
65	Full benefit = \$1,500/month	0%
60	Reduced benefit = \$1,425/month	5%
55	Reduced benefit = \$885/month	41%

Calculating Your Retirement Benefit

You can calculate your own estimate online with the benefit calculator at www.kpers.org. Click on “Estimate Your Benefit” and enter your own information from your Retirement System annual statement.

Retirement benefits are calculated using the following formula:

Final average salary x statutory multiplier x years of service = annual benefit

Example: \$100,000 x 3.5% x 15 = \$52,500 annual benefit

The maximum benefit is 70 percent of your final average salary.

Final Average Salary

Your final average salary is an average of the three highest of your last ten years of service.

Statutory Multiplier

If you were appointed *on or after* July 1, 1987, the statutory multiplier is 3.5 percent to a maximum of 70 percent of your final average salary.

If you were appointed *before* July 1, 1987, the statutory multiplier is 5 percent up to ten years and 3.5 percent for each additional year, to a maximum of 70 percent of your final average salary.

Increasing Your Retirement Benefit (Purchasing Service Credit)

You may be able to increase your retirement benefit and possibly retire earlier by purchasing additional public service credit. You can purchase forfeited service, military service or in-state non-federal public service. You also may be able to purchase additional service credit if you first take office after age 60 or return to temporary judicial duties after retirement (Senior Judges service). District magistrate judges have additional options for converting or increasing district magistrate service. Service credit can be purchased by payroll deduction, personal check, Discover Card, or transferred from another retirement plan like a deferred compensation plan, tax-sheltered annuity or an individual retirement account (IRA).

Retirement Benefit Payment Options

As a retired Retirement System member, you will receive a monthly retirement benefit for the rest of your life. In addition, the Retirement System has retirement payment options that add financial flexibility and allow you to provide for loved ones after your death.

Maximum Monthly Payment Option

This option is the maximum monthly benefit you can receive. There is no continued monthly benefit after your death.

Joint-Survivor Option

You can provide a continuing monthly benefit for someone after your death. Survivor benefits are equal to 50 percent, 75 percent or 100 percent of your benefit and are paid for the rest of your survivor's life. To provide this continuing benefit, your monthly benefit is reduced. Your benefit decreases as your joint annuitant's benefit increases.

Life-Certain Option

If you die within a guaranteed period of time from retirement, your beneficiary will receive the same monthly benefit for the rest of that guaranteed period. Your monthly payments are reduced based on whether you chose the five-, ten-, or 15-year life-certain option. You can change beneficiaries at any time.

Partial Lump-Sum Option

You can take part of your retirement benefit in an up-front lump sum at retirement. This lump sum is then combined with one of the other retirement options to provide reduced, regular monthly benefits for the rest of your life. The PLSO is available in 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 percent amounts of the actuarial present value of your benefit.

Retiree Death Benefit

Your beneficiary receives a \$4,000 lump-sum death benefit. If you don't select survivor benefits, any contributions and interest remaining in your account are returned to your beneficiary.

Working After Retirement

After retirement, your benefits will stop if you are again elected or appointed as a judge. You will resume active membership and earn additional service credit. When you retire again, your retirement benefit is recalculated.

You do have certain opportunities to return to limited judicial service without affecting your retirement benefits. If you are a retired district magistrate judge, these contracts or assignments are not available.

- You may enter into a renewable two-year contract to return to temporary judicial duties for up to 104 days a year at 25 percent of the current salary of a judge. You will continue to receive your retirement benefit, but you will not be an active, contributing member of the Retirement System for Judges.
- You may accept assignments from the Kansas Supreme Court to perform judicial services as you are willing to undertake. You are paid on a daily basis (per diem) and also receive compensation for subsistence, mileage and expenses. You will continue to receive your retirement benefit, but you will not be an active, contributing member of the Retirement System for Judges.

Additional Information

For additional information about member benefits, please refer to the Judges Membership Guide, visit our web site or contact the Retirement System office.

You also have someone at your employer to help you. The Judicial Branch has appointed a designated agent in the Office of Judicial Administration for retirement business. He or she has all necessary forms and publications and can answer most of your questions about the Retirement System.

Contacting Us

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In the interest of simplicity, certain generalizations have been made in this publication. Kansas law and the rules adopted by the Retirement System Board of Trustees will control specific situations.

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