

495—11.5(97B) Bona fide retirement and bona fide refund.

11.5(1) *Bona fide retirement—general.* To receive retirement benefits, a member under the age of 70 must officially leave employment with all IPERS-covered employers, give up all rights as an employee, and complete a period of bona fide retirement. A period of bona fide retirement means four or more consecutive calendar months for which the member qualifies for monthly retirement benefit payments. The qualification period begins with the member's first month of entitlement for retirement benefits as approved by IPERS. A member may not return to covered employment before filing a completed application for benefits. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the continuation of group insurance coverage at employee rates for the remainder of the school year for a school employee who retires following completion of services by that individual shall not cause that person to be in violation of IPERS' bona fide retirement requirements.

A member will not be considered to have a bona fide retirement if the member is a school or university employee and returns to work with the employer after the normal summer vacation. In other positions, temporary or seasonal interruption of service which does not terminate the period of employment does not constitute a bona fide retirement. A member also will not be considered to have a bona fide retirement if the member has, prior to or during the member's first month of entitlement, entered into verbal or written arrangements with the member's former employer(s) to return to employment after the expiration of the four-month bona fide retirement period.

Effective July 1, 1990, a school employee will not be considered terminated if, while performing the normal duties, the employee performs for the same employer additional duties which take the employee beyond the expected termination date for the normal duties. Only when all the employee's compensated duties cease for that employer will that employee be considered terminated.

The bona fide retirement period shall be waived for an elected official covered under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(8) "a"(1), and for a member of the general assembly covered under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(8) "a"(2), when the elected official or legislator notifies IPERS of the intent to terminate IPERS coverage for the elective office and, at the same time, terminates all other IPERS-covered employment prior to the issuance of the retirement benefit. Such an elected official or legislator may remain in the elective office and receive an IPERS retirement without violating IPERS' bona fide retirement rules. If such elected official or legislator terminates coverage for the elective office and also terminates all other IPERS-covered employment but is then reemployed in covered employment, and has not received a retirement as of the date of hire, the retirement shall not be made. Furthermore, if such elected official or legislator is reemployed in covered employment, the election to revoke IPERS coverage for the elective position shall remain in effect, and the elected official or legislator shall not be eligible for new IPERS coverage for such elected position. The prior election to revoke IPERS coverage for the elected position shall also remain in effect if such elected official or legislator is reelected to the same position without an intervening term out of office.

The bona fide retirement period will be waived if the member has been elected to public office as a part-time elected official or a member of the general assembly and the member's term begins during the normal four-month bona fide retirement period. This includes elected officials who shall be covered under this chapter as defined in Iowa Code section 97B.1A. This waiver does not apply if the member was an elected official who was reelected to the same position for another term.

Effective July 1, 2000, a member does not have a bona fide retirement until all employment with covered employers, including employment which is not covered under this chapter, is terminated for at least one month, and the member does not return to covered employment for an additional three months. In order to receive retirement benefits, the member must file a completed application for benefits before returning to any employment with a covered employer.

Effective July 1, 2023, a member will not have a bona fide retirement if the member enters into a verbal or written arrangement to perform duties for the member's former employer(s) as an independent contractor prior to or during the member's first month of entitlement, and the member shall not perform any duties for the member's former employer(s) as an independent contractor prior to receiving one month of retirement benefits.

11.5(2) *Bona fide refund.* For a member to be eligible for a lump sum refund, the member must terminate the member's covered employment and incur a bona fide separation from service and remain out of employment for at least 30 days with all covered employers. The 30-day bona fide refund period shall be waived for an elected official covered under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(8)"a"(1), and for a member of the general assembly covered under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(8)"a"(2), when the elected official or legislator notifies IPERS of the intent to terminate IPERS coverage for the elective office and, at the same time, terminates all other IPERS-covered employment prior to the issuance of the refund. Such an official may remain in the elective office and receive an IPERS refund without violating IPERS' bona fide refund rules. If such elected official terminates coverage for the elective office and also terminates all other IPERS-covered employment but is then reemployed in covered employment, and has not received a refund as of the date of hire, the refund shall not be made. Furthermore, if such elected official is reemployed in covered employment, the election to revoke IPERS coverage for the elective position shall remain in effect, and the public official shall not be eligible for new IPERS coverage for such elected position.

The prior election to revoke IPERS coverage for the elected position shall also remain in effect if such elected official is reelected to the same position without an intervening term out of office. The waiver granted in this subrule shall be applicable to such elected officials who were in violation of the prior bona fide refund rules on and after November 1, 2002, when such individuals have not repaid the previously invalid refund.

If a member takes a refund in violation of the bona fide refund requirements of Iowa Code section 97B.53(4), the member may return the refund during the bona fide retirement period and restore the member's account. If the repayment is not made, the member shall receive no credit for the period covered by the refund. At retirement, the member may purchase, at actuarial cost, the service credit covered by the refund.

11.5(3) *Part-time appointed members of boards or commissions receiving minimal noncovered wages.* Solely for purposes of determining whether a member has severed all employment with all covered employers and has remained out of employment as required under Iowa Code section 97B.52A, persons who have been appointed as part-time members of boards or commissions prior to or during their first month of entitlement and who receive only per diem and reimbursements for reasonable business expenses for such positions will be deemed not to be in employment prohibited under Iowa Code section 97B.52A.

For purposes of this subrule, per diem shall not exceed the amount authorized under Iowa Code section 7E.6(1)"a" for members of boards, committees, commissions, and councils within the executive branch of state government. This limit shall apply regardless of whether or not the position in question is within the executive branch of state government.

Members of boards and commissions not exempted under this subrule include: (a) those who are entitled to the payment of per diem regardless of attendance at board or commission meetings, and (b) those who would have received per diem in excess of the amount authorized under Iowa Code section 7E.6(1)"a" were it not for an agreement by the member to waive such compensation.

Persons appointed as part-time board or commission members who receive only per diem as set forth above and reimbursements of reasonable business expenses may continue in or accept appointments to such positions without violating the bona fide retirement rules under Iowa Code section 97B.52A.

11.5(4) *Members of the national guard who are called into state active duty.* Effective May 25, 2008, members of the national guard who are called into state active duty as defined in Iowa Code section 29A.1 in noncovered positions during the required period of complete severance will not be in violation of the bona fide retirement requirements of Iowa Code section 97B.52A.

[ARC 8929B, IAB 7/14/10, effective 6/21/10; ARC 9068B, IAB 9/8/10, effective 10/13/10; ARC 0662C, IAB 4/3/13, effective 5/8/13; ARC 3684C, IAB 3/14/18, effective 4/18/18; ARC 4100C, IAB 10/24/18, effective 11/28/18; ARC 4337C, IAB 3/13/19, effective 4/17/19; ARC 5027C, IAB 4/8/20, effective 5/13/20; ARC 6949C, IAB 3/8/23, effective 4/12/23]