

495—6.3(97B) IPERS coverage for various forms of compensation. The following is a list of various types of compensation and the corresponding IPERS coverage treatment:

6.3(1) *Vacation pay or annual leave pay.* Vacation pay or annual leave pay means the amount paid to an employee during a period of vacation.

6.3(2) *Sick pay.* Sick pay means the amount paid to an employee during a period of sick leave.

6.3(3) *Workers' compensation payments and other third-party payments.* Workers' compensation payments, unemployment payments, or short-term and long-term disability payments made by an insurance company or third-party payer, such as a trust, are not included as wages. Payments for sick leave which are a continuation of salary payments if paid from the employer's general assets, regardless of whether the employer labels the payments as sick leave, short-term disability, or long-term disability, are covered wages.

6.3(4) *Compensatory time.* Wages include amounts paid for compensatory time taken in lieu of regular work hours or when paid as a lump sum. However, compensatory time paid in a lump sum shall not exceed 240 hours per employee per year or any lesser number of hours set by the employer. Each employer shall determine whether to use the calendar year or a fiscal year other than the calendar year when setting its compensatory time policy. The wages reported to IPERS must reflect the employer's policy.

6.3(5) *Banked holiday pay.* If an employer codes banked holiday time as holiday or additional accrued vacation time, the banked holiday pay will be vacation pay under subrule 6.3(1). If an employer codes banked holiday time as compensatory time, the banked holiday pay will be combined with compensatory pay and subject to the limits set forth in subrule 6.3(4).

6.3(6) *Special lump sum payments.* Wages do not include special lump sum payments made during or at the end of service as a payoff of unused accrued sick leave or of unused accrued vacation. Wages do not include special lump sum payments made during or at the end of service as an incentive to retire early or as payments made upon dismissal, severance, or a special bonus payment intended as an early retirement incentive. Wages do not include: catastrophic leave paid in a lump sum, bonuses, tips, honoraria, or student loan repayment compensation. Exclusion of payments as described in this subrule applies whether the payment is in a lump sum or in installments.

6.3(7) *Covered wage treatment for supplemental payments.*

a. Payments excluded from covered wages as bonuses include the following:

- (1) Recruitment payments.
- (2) Retention payments.
- (3) Payments to members who achieve improvements in their employer's financial status or performance ratings.
- (4) Employee performance incentive payments.
- (5) Extraordinary job performance payments.
- (6) Payments for the possession, attainment, or maintenance of special skills or professional certifications (does not apply to advancements in a member's placement in wage or salary schedule, or placement in a higher tier wage or salary schedule).
- (7) Payments to members made in lieu of merit increases because the members' wage or salary scales are capped.
- (8) Payments similar in substance to those enumerated above without regard to the payments' titles, tag lines, labels or classifications by employers.

b. Payments included in covered wages that are not to be treated as bonuses include the following:

- (1) Payments authorized by statute and used to increase the general level of teacher pay, except as otherwise provided in this subrule (for example, when such moneys are used to pay retention bonuses).
- (2) Payments for which additional, or new and different, job duties are required in order to receive the payment.
- (3) Payments for employment longevity.

c. Payments that are otherwise to be treated as covered wages under paragraph "b" shall not be covered if IPERS determines that the payments are made for paragraph "a," subparagraphs (1) to (8), of

this subrule or other subrules, including, but not limited to, recruitment or retention bonuses, retirement incentive and severance payments, reimbursements of business expenses, and payment of allowances.

d. IPERS shall have the final authority to determine if supplemental payments not described in paragraphs “a,” “b” and “c” of this subrule should be treated as excluded bonus payments or covered wages. In making its determination, IPERS may consider, but is not limited to, such factors as the supplemental payments’ similarity to payments described in paragraphs “a,” “b” and “c” of this subrule, whether such payments are discretionary with the employer, and whether, on the one hand, the payments are regular and periodic over the working careers of a broad group of individuals or, on the other hand, are short-term, irregular, or ad hoc payments whose primary effect is to spike certain members’ final average salaries.

6.3(8) *Other special payment arrangements.* Wages do not include amounts paid pursuant to special arrangements between an employer and employee whereby the employer pays increased wages and the employee reimburses the employer or a third-party obligor for all or part of the wage increase. This limitation includes, but is not limited to, the practice of increasing an employee’s wages by the employer’s share of health care costs and having the employee reimburse the employer or a third-party provider for such health care costs. Wages do not include amounts paid pursuant to a special arrangement between an employer and employee whereby wages in excess of the covered wage ceiling for a particular year are deferred to one or more subsequent years. Wages do not include employer contributions to a plan, program, or arrangement that are not included in the employee’s federal taxable income. However, certain employer contributions under IRC Section 125 plans are permitted to be treated as covered wages under rule 495—6.5(97B) subject to the terms of that rule.

Employers and employees that knowingly and willfully enter into the types of arrangements described in this subrule, causing an impermissible increase in the payments authorized under Iowa Code chapter 97B, may be prosecuted under Iowa Code section 97B.40 for engaging in a fraudulent practice. If IPERS determines that its calculation of a member’s monthly benefit includes amounts paid under an arrangement described in this subrule, IPERS shall recalculate the member’s monthly benefit, after making the appropriate wage adjustments. IPERS may recover the amount of overpayments caused by the inclusion of the payments described in this subrule from the monthly amounts plus interest payable to the member or amounts payable to the member’s successor(s) in interest, regardless of whether or not IPERS chooses to prosecute the employers and employees under Iowa Code section 97B.40.

6.3(9) *Wage equivalents.* Items such as food, lodging and transportation are includable as employee income, if they are paid as compensation for employment. The basic test is whether or not such wage equivalent was given for the convenience of the employee or employing unit. Wage equivalents are not reportable under IPERS if given for the convenience of the employing unit or are not reasonably quantifiable. Wage equivalents that are not included in the member’s federal taxable income shall be deemed to be for the convenience of the employer. A wage equivalent is not reportable if the employer certifies that there was a substantial business reason for providing the wage equivalent, even if the wage equivalent is included in the employee’s federal taxable income. Wages paid in any other form than money are measured by the fair market value of the meals, lodging, travel or other wage equivalents.

6.3(10) *Members of the general assembly.* Wages for a member of the general assembly means the total compensation received by a member of the general assembly, whether paid in the form of per diem or annual salary. Wages include per diem payments paid to members of the general assembly during interim periods between sessions of the general assembly. Wages do not include expense payments except that, effective July 1, 1990, wages include daily allowances to members of the general assembly for nontravel expenses of office during a session of the general assembly. Such nontravel expenses of office during a session of the general assembly shall not exceed the maximum established by law for members from Polk County. A member of the general assembly who has elected to participate in IPERS shall receive four quarters of service credit for each calendar year during the member’s term of office, even if no wages are reported in one or more quarters during a calendar year.

6.3(11) *Wages restored following an employer-mandated reduction in hours.* Rescinded IAB 3/15/17, effective 4/19/17.

6.3(12) *Wages paid as a back pay settlement.* IPERS contributions must be calculated on the gross amount of a back pay settlement before the settlement is reduced for taxes, interim wages, unemployment compensation, and similar mitigation of damages adjustments. IPERS contributions must be calculated by reducing the gross amount of a back pay settlement by any amounts not considered covered wages such as, but not limited to, lump sum payments for medical expenses.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a back pay settlement that does not require the reinstatement of a terminated employee and payment of the amount of wages that would have been paid during the period of severance (before adjustments) shall be treated by IPERS as a “special lump sum payment” under subrule 6.3(6) and shall not be covered.

6.3(13) *Limitations on benefits and contributions.*

a. Section 415(b) limitations on benefits. A member may not receive an annual benefit that exceeds the dollar amount specified in Section 415(b)(1)(A) of the Internal Revenue Code, subject to the applicable adjustments in Internal Revenue Code Sections 415(b) and 415(d). For purposes of applying the limits under Internal Revenue Code Section 415(b) (Limit), the following will apply:

(1) With respect to a member who does not receive a portion of the member’s annual benefit in a lump sum:

1. The member’s Limit will be applied to the member’s annual benefit in the first limitation year without regard to any automatic cost-of-living increases;

2. To the extent the member’s annual benefit equals or exceeds the Limit, the member will no longer be eligible for cost-of-living increases under the IPERS trust fund until such time as the benefit plus the accumulated increases are less than the applicable Limit; and

3. Thereafter, in any subsequent limitation year, the member’s annual benefit including any automatic cost-of-living increase shall be tested under the then applicable benefit Limit, including any adjustment to the Internal Revenue Code Section 415(b)(1)(A) dollar limit under Internal Revenue Code Section 415(d) (cost-of-living adjustments) and the regulations thereunder; and

(2) With respect to a member who receives a portion of the member’s annual benefit in a lump sum:

1. The member’s applicable Limit shall be applied taking into consideration automatic cost of living increases as required by Internal Revenue Code Section 415(b) and applicable Treasury Regulations; and

2. In no event shall a member’s annual benefit payable under the system in any limitation year be greater than the Limit applicable at the annuity starting date, as increased in subsequent years pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 415(d) and the regulations thereunder. If the form of benefit without regard to the automatic benefit increase feature is not a straight life or a qualified joint and survivor annuity, then the preceding sentence is applied by either reducing the Limit applicable at the annuity starting date or adjusting the form of benefit to an actuarially equivalent straight life annuity benefit determined using the assumptions required by Treasury Regulations, including the mortality table specified in Revenue Ruling 2001-62 or Revenue Ruling 2007-67, as applicable.

b. Section 415(c) limitations on contributions and other member additions. Member contributions and other additions paid to the system may not exceed the annual limits on contributions and other additions allowed by Internal Revenue Code Section 415(c). For purposes of applying these limits, the definition of “compensation,” where applicable, will be compensation as defined in Treasury Regulation Section 1.415(c)-2(d)(3), or successor regulation. The foregoing definition of compensation will exclude member contributions picked up under Internal Revenue Code Section 414(h)(2) and, for plan years beginning after December 31, 1997, compensation will include the amount of any elective deferrals, as defined in Internal Revenue Code Section 402(g)(3), and any amount contributed or deferred by the employer at the election of the member and which is not includible in the gross income of the member by reason of Internal Revenue Code Section 125 or 457 and, for plan years beginning on and after January 1, 2001, pursuant to Internal Revenue Code Section 132(f)(4).

c. Limitation year. The limitation year is the calendar year.

6.3(14) *Employer payments treated as remuneration counted against the reemployment earnings limit.* All taxable or nontaxable compensation, regardless of the title, tag line, label, or classification attributed to that compensation paid by IPERS-covered employers to retired reemployed IPERS

members, shall be considered remuneration when determining reemployment earnings limits and reductions as set forth under Iowa Code section 97B.48A and rule 495—12.8(97B). This rule shall apply whether the compensation is paid pursuant to individual contracts or otherwise, and regardless of whether it is considered covered or noncovered compensation under Iowa Code section 97B.1A(26) and the administrative rules thereunder, except for:

- a. Contributions to health insurance plans and programs, and
- b. Reimbursements of actual work-related expenses required by the retired reemployed members' jobs.

6.3(15) *Employer contributions as remuneration counted against the reemployment earnings limit.* Employer contributions made on behalf of retired reemployed members to tax qualified and nonqualified retirement and deferred compensation plans and to other fringe benefit arrangements, excluding health insurance plans and programs, shall constitute remuneration from employment which shall be applied to the reemployment earnings limits and reductions set forth under rule 495—12.8(97B). Such contributions, even if counted as remuneration hereunder, shall not be counted as covered wages, unless the facts in the particular case indicate that, under the circumstances, the arrangement should be treated as covered wages under rules 495—6.1(97B) through 495—6.5(97B). Nonelective employer contributions to the following shall constitute remuneration when determining reemployment earnings limits: tax qualified retirement and deferred compensation plans; all nonqualified retirement plans and deferred compensation arrangements; IRAs; rabbi, secular, and other trust arrangements; split dollar and other life insurance arrangements; and long-term care insurance. Bonuses and allowances will also be counted as reemployment earnings.

[ARC 7759B, IAB 5/6/09, effective 4/17/09; ARC 7916B, IAB 7/1/09, effective 8/5/09; ARC 2981C, IAB 3/15/17, effective 4/19/17; ARC 4337C, IAB 3/13/19, effective 4/17/19; ARC 6949C, IAB 3/8/23, effective 4/12/23]