



ONE NEWSLETTER TO RULE THEM ALL

CCCERA News will now be CCCERA's primary newsletter. It will replace the New Roads newsletter mailed to retirees and FYI newsletter mailed to active members. You can expect this newsletter in March, August, and December.

NEARING RETIREMENT? KNOW YOUR NEXT STEPS

There are a few key factors to consider if you are nearing retirement. Here are the steps.

Step 1 - Estimate your eligibility. Pension benefits can only be received if you are eligible, meaning you meet the age and service requirements. Generally, you can retire at:

Legacy Tiers (1, 3, A or C)

- Any age, with 30 (20 for safety members) or more years of service
- Age 50, with 10 or more years of service
- Age 70 or older, regardless of service

PEPRA Tiers (4, 5, D or E)

- Age 52 (50 for safety tiers), with five or more years of service
- Age 70 or older, regardless of service

Step 2 - Attend a group counseling session. Sessions are available year-round to all members but are particularly helpful for those planning to retire within five years. Call CCCERA for more information.

Step 3 - Request a benefit estimate. An estimate will give you a better idea of your income when you retire. It also gives you the opportunity to purchase or convert any eligible service time, consider your estimated benefit amounts at possible ages, and decide at which age retirement will be most advantageous. Calculate your own basic estimate for retirement at cccera.org/pension-calculator.

Step 4 - Meet with a counselor. Once you have decided on a retirement date, call CCCERA to make an appointment with a counselor. If you are ready, the counselor may send you an *Application to Retire*. You can then meet with your counselor to discuss your specific situation and go over your application.

Step 5 - Submit your Application to Retire. Your application must be submitted within 60 days or less of your planned retirement date. By statute, CCCERA cannot accept your application more than 60 days prior to your final day at work. Once you have submitted the application, a notice will be sent to your employer, which states your decision to retire and the effective date.

Your application must include the following documents (please provide copies):

- *Application to Retire*.
- Social Security Card.
- Beneficiary's Social Security Card.
- Birth certificate, or passport.
- Beneficiary's birth certificate or passport.
- Marriage certificate or registration if you are currently married or a State of California Registered Domestic Partner.

- If applicable, court order stating whether your former spouse/partner has any entitlement to your benefit if you were married and divorced, or dissolved a registered domestic partnership during your membership.

If you have any service in Tier 2, you will also need to get a Social Security Estimate for your Tier 2 service from the Social Security Administration before your final benefit calculation can be completed.

After CCCERA receives all the necessary documentation, counselors will process your application. Generally, the time frame from your actual retirement date to receipt of your first benefit check is eight to 12 weeks.

If you have reciprocity with another public retirement system(s), you need to file an application to retire with each system. You must retire concurrently (have the same retirement date) from all reciprocal systems. You can streamline the processing of your benefits by having documents on file with CCCERA before you retire.

Step 6 - Choose your benefit payment option.

An Options Package will be sent for your signature approximately six to 10 weeks after your retirement date. Your option selection must be signed, witnessed, and received by CCCERA before your first pension check can be issued. Please be advised that your option choice is irrevocable. There are five benefit payment options:

- **The Unmodified Allowance** gives you the highest monthly benefit with a 60% continuing benefit after your death to a qualifying beneficiary(ies).
- **Option 1** reduces your benefit but leaves a lump sum amount of the remaining refundable employee contributions, if any, for your beneficiary(ies).
- **Option 2** reduces your benefit, but leaves your beneficiary the same lifetime benefit after your death.

- **Option 3** reduces your benefit and provides a 50% lifetime continuance for your surviving beneficiary.
- **Option 4** reduces your benefit and provides a lifetime continuance for multiple beneficiaries.

More information about reciprocity and retirement benefit options is available at cccera.org.

Update Your Beneficiary

Have you updated your beneficiary since a recent life change, such as a marriage or divorce? You can update your beneficiary by filing the *Beneficiary Designation Form* (Form 102).

This form can be found at cccera.org/forms, in addition to the following forms:

- *Member Mailing Address Change Form* (Form 301)
- *Electronic Funds Transfer Form* (Form 209)
- *Request for Retirement Estimate* (Form 108)
- *Withholding Certificates for Pension Payments* (Form 210)

Forms cannot be submitted electronically and must be mailed. CCCERA must verify your signature to approve changes or requests.

Active Death/Disability Option Protects Your Survivors

It is not very pleasant to consider, but what would happen to your survivors in the event of your death prior to retirement? To prepare for the unexpected, consider filing the *Member Election Form for Non-Service Connected Disability in the Event of Death During Active Membership* (Form 104). This form authorizes CCCERA to file a non-service connected disability on your behalf and allows you to pre-select Optional Settlement 2 or 4 in the event of your death during active service. Please note, there is no guarantee that a non-service connected disability will ultimately be granted.

This option results in the largest continuance to your named beneficiary (up to a 100% continuance of the non-service connected disability retirement benefit). In order to receive this allowance, members must have the *Member Election Form for Non-Service Connected Disability in the Event of Death During Active Membership* on file with CCCERA on or before the date of death to be valid. The form can be found at cccera.org/forms.

This election is only in effect while you are an active member. When you retire, new retirement option forms are completed. At that time you may change your retirement option to provide the best benefit possible to you during your retirement.

Streamline Processing By Having Documents On File Before Retirement

CCCERA needs copies of important documents that may affect retirement and survivor benefits. Having this information on file before you retire or terminate employment will streamline your application.

These documents are not public; they are needed to process your benefit or lump sum payment at termination. Some examples are: marriage dissolutions, your beneficiary(ies) and your own birth certificate or passport, social security cards, and Secretary of State Domestic Partnership Certificates. Please do not send original documents; we need copies only on file.

Retirement Board Updates

The CCCERA Retirement Board recently underwent an election, which resulted in a new board member, David J. MacDonald. MacDonald will hold the second seat on the board, which was previously held by Brian Hast. Hast, a Contra Costa County district attorney, has served on the Board for the past 18 years, and most recently was the chairperson from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015.

Board Trustees

John B. Phillips *Chairperson*
Todd Smithey *Vice-Chairperson*
Scott Gordon *Secretary*
Candace Andersen
Debora Allen
David J. MacDonald
Gabe Rodrigues
Jerry Telles
Russell V. Watts *County Treasurer*
Jerry R. Holcombe *(Appointed Alternate)*
Louie Kroll *(Retiree Alternate)*
William Pigeon *(Safety Alternate)*

CCCERA Business Hours

CCCERA's office is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; counselors are available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The office is closed daily for lunch, from Noon to 12:30 p.m.

CCCERA's voicemail system is available 24 hours a day. Please note that verbal instructions cannot be accepted or acted upon for transactions, applications for benefits and disbursement requests.

Appointments can be made to discuss your specific situation. Group counseling is also available to all members but is particularly helpful for members planning to retire within five years. Sessions are held frequently throughout the year. Call CCCERA for more information.

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.



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1355 Willow Way, Suite 221, Concord, CA 94520
Phone: (925) 521-3960 Fax: (925) 521-3969
cccera.org

2016 CALENDAR DATES

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

CCCERA will be closed:

September 5
Labor Day

November 11
Veteran's Day

November 24 & 25
Thanksgiving Holiday

December 26
Christmas Holiday

GROUP COUNSELING

September 22
October 27
December 13

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS

September 14
September 28
October 12
October 20
October 26
November 2 (Audit Committee Meeting will follow)
December 14

RETIREE PAYROLL DATES

Month	Pay Date	Month	Pay Date
January	February 1	July	August 1
February	March 1	August	September 1
March	April 1	September	October 3
April	May 2	October	November 1
May	June 1	November	December 1
June	July 1	December	January 2