

Answers to Your Questions about Purchasing Retirement Credit for Waiting Time (Service with a PERS Employer Before Contributions Began)

1. What is a “PERS waiting-time period?”

When you are first employed in a PERS-covered position, there is a six-month wait before you become a member and contributions to PERS begin. This waiting period is the “qualifying period,” more commonly referred to as waiting time. You may purchase this time if you have at least 10 years of creditable service including prior service.

2. How could someone have more than one waiting-time period?

If you are reemployed in a PERS-covered position after having terminated and withdrawn your PERS account, you must serve a new waiting-time period. You will then have two (or more) waiting periods.

3. Is it possible for a waiting-time period to be less than six months?

Yes, if you are reemployed within five years of terminating your employment. Within one year of reemployment, you can redeposit the amount withdrawn plus interest to restore the service you forfeited.

If this redeposit is made during the waiting-time period, you will regain membership and the waiting-time period will end on the first of the month following the redeposit. It is therefore possible to serve a qualifying time of less than six full months.

4. Do I have to purchase my PERS waiting periods?

No. Purchase is voluntary.

5. If I have more than one waiting period, can I choose which period I want to purchase?

No. Any election to purchase waiting periods applies to all periods.

6. How much does it cost?

You pay the employee and employer contributions which would have been made based on the salary paid during the waiting period(s). You do not pay any interest.

For an estimate of the cost, please write to:

Customer Service Center

P.O. Box 23700

Tigard, OR 97281-3700,

or call PERS Customer Service Center at 503-598-PERS (7377).

7. When can I make this purchase?

You can make the purchase anytime within the 90 days prior to your effective retirement date.

8. I left public employment some time ago and left my contributions in PERS but have not applied for my benefit yet. Will I be eligible to purchase waiting periods when I do apply for benefits?

Yes, as long as you have 10 years or more of creditable service and prior service.

9. If I purchase this time, what effect will it have on my benefit?

Waiting time can help establish benefit eligibility. General Service and Police and Firefighter (P&F) members are eligible for unreduced benefits with 30 years of service, regardless of age.

P & F members may retire with 25 years of service at age 50 with unreduced benefits.

Waiting time can also increase your benefit under the Full Formula and Formula Plus Annuity benefit calculation methods. Both of these methods base part of your benefit on your length of service.

Since the waiting-time purchase counts as creditable service, it would give you more service time in the benefit formula. The employee contribution portion of the purchase cost increases your account balance.

This Q&A is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to provide legal advice. If there is any conflict between this brochure and federal law, Oregon law, or administrative rules, the law and administrative rules shall prevail.