

WAC 415-100-055 Retirement benefit options. RCW 2.10.146, enables the department to provide retiring members with four retirement benefit options. The member must choose an option when applying for service or disability retirement.

(1) **Option One: Benefit option without survivor features (standard allowance).** The department pays the retiree a monthly retirement allowance based solely on the single life of the member, in accordance with RCW 2.10.146. When the retiree dies, all benefits cease. Any remaining balance of the retiree's accumulated contributions will be paid to:

(a) Such person or persons, trust, or organization as the judge has nominated by written designation duly executed and filed with the department of retirement systems; or

(b) If there is no such designated person or persons still living at the time of the judge's death, then to the surviving spouse; or

(c) The member's estate; or

(d) If there is neither such designated person or persons still living at the time of death nor a surviving spouse, then to the judge's legal representative.

(2) **Benefit options with a survivor feature.**

(a) A retiring member is allowed to select from several retirement options which create an actuarially equivalent benefit that includes a survivor feature. The survivor feature entitles the survivor to receive a monthly allowance after the retiree dies. If the member chooses one of the survivor options, the monthly benefit the member will receive is actuarially reduced to offset the cost of the survivor feature. After the retiree dies, the department pays the survivor an allowance for the duration of his or her life. If the retiree and the survivor both die before the retiree's accumulated contributions are exhausted, all benefits cease. Any remaining balance of the retiree's accumulated contributions will be paid to:

(i) Such person or persons, trust, or organization as the judge has nominated by written designation duly executed and filed with the department of retirement systems; or

(ii) If there is no such designated person or persons still living at the time of the judge's death, then to the surviving spouse; or

(iii) The member's estate; or

(iv) If there is neither such designated person or persons still living at the time of death nor a surviving spouse, then to the judge's legal representative.

(b) Option Two (joint and whole allowance). When the retiree dies, the department pays the survivor a monthly retirement allowance equal to the gross monthly allowance received by the retiree.

(c) Option Three (joint and one-half allowance). When the retiree dies, the department pays the survivor one-half of the amount of the retiree's gross monthly retirement allowance.

(d) Option Four (joint and two-thirds allowance).

(i) Option Four is available to members retiring on or after January 1, 1996.

(ii) When the retiree dies, the department pays the survivor two-thirds (66.667%) of the member's gross monthly retirement allowance.

(3) **Benefit increases when survivor predeceases retiree (pop-up provision).**

(a) This subsection applies to members retiring on or after January 1, 1996, who selected Option Two, Three, or Four.

(b) If the survivor dies before the retiree, the retiree's monthly retirement allowance will increase, effective the first day of the following month, to:

(i) The amount that would have been received had the retiree chosen Option One described in subsection (1) of this section; plus

(ii) Any cost-of-living adjustments received prior to the survivor's death based on original selection.

(c) Pop-up recalculation example.

Agnes retires in 1996 (Year 0). She would like Beatrice, her daughter, to receive a monthly allowance after Agnes dies. Therefore, Agnes selects a retirement benefit option with a survivor feature. As a result her monthly allowance is reduced from \$2,000 (standard allowance) to \$1,750. Unfortunately, Beatrice dies in January 2001 (Year 5). Under the pop-up provision, Agnes' monthly benefit will increase to the amount she would have received had she chosen Option One (standard allowance) plus her accumulated COLA's:

| Year | Option One (Standard Allow.) | Survivor Option (2,3,4) plus COLAs | COLA incr. (3% max) | \$ Increase |
|----------|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 0 (1996) | 2,000.00 | 1,750.00 | (ineligible) | 0.00 |
| 1 (1997) | | 1,750.00 | .02 | 35.00 |
| 2 (1998) | | 1,785.00 | .03 | 53.55 |
| 3 (1999) | | 1,838.55 | .025 | 45.96 |
| 4 (2000) | | 1,884.51 | .03 | 56.54 |
| 5 (2001) | 2,000.00 | 1,941.05 | — | — |
| | | | Total COLAs | 191.05 |
| | Original Option One Benefit Amount | + Total COLAs | | = New Benefit Amount |
| | \$2000 | + \$191.05 | | = \$2,191.05* |

* In the future (i.e., Year 5), Agnes' COLA will be based on the increased benefit amount (\$2,191.05).

(d) If the survivor dies and the retiree's benefit increases under this subsection, and thereafter the retiree also dies before all contributions are exhausted, all benefits cease. Any remaining balance of the retiree's accumulated contributions will be paid to:

(a) Such person or persons, trust, or organization as the judge has nominated by written designation duly executed and filed with the department of retirement systems; or

(b) If there is no such designated person or persons still living at the time of the judge's death, then to the surviving spouse; or

(c) The member's estate; or

(d) If there is neither such designated person or persons still living at the time of death nor a surviving spouse, then to the judge's legal representative.

(4) **Survivor.** For the purposes of this section, "survivor" means a person nominated by the member to receive a monthly benefit allowance after the member dies. A member nominates the survivor at the time of retirement by filing a completed form provided by the department, verified by a notarized signature or other means acceptable to the department.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 41.50.050. WSR 20-13-065, § 415-100-055, filed 6/15/20, effective 7/16/20. Statutory Authority: RCW

41.50.050(5), 2.10.052, 2.10.070(6), 2.10.140 - [2.10.]146, 2.12.030.
WSR 01-13-009, § 415-100-055, filed 6/8/01, effective 7/9/01. Statuto-
ry Authority: RCW 2.10.146, 41.26.460, 41.32.530, 41.50.050,
41.32.785, 41.40.188 and 41.40.660. WSR 96-01-047, § 415-100-055,
filed 12/14/95, effective 1/14/96. Statutory Authority: RCW 34.05.050
and 1990 c 249. WSR 91-03-013, § 415-100-055, filed 1/7/91, effective
2/7/91.]