

RCW 41.37.260 Leaves of absence, military service. (1) A member who is on a paid leave of absence authorized by a member's employer shall continue to receive service credit as provided for under RCW 41.37.190 through 41.37.290.

(2) A member who receives compensation from an employer while on an authorized leave of absence to serve as an elected official of a labor organization, and whose employer is reimbursed by the labor organization for the compensation paid to the member during the period of absence, may also be considered to be on a paid leave of absence. This subsection shall only apply if the member's leave of absence is authorized by a collective bargaining agreement that provides that the member retains seniority rights with the employer during the period of leave. The compensation earnable reported for a member who establishes service credit under this subsection may not be greater than the salary paid to the highest paid job class covered by the collective bargaining agreement.

(3) Except as specified in subsection (4) of this section, a member shall be eligible to receive a maximum of two years service credit during a member's entire working career for those periods when a member is on an unpaid leave of absence authorized by an employer. This credit may be obtained only if:

(a) The member makes both the employer and member contributions plus interest as determined by the department for the period of the authorized leave of absence within five years of resumption of service or prior to retirement whichever comes sooner; or

(b) If not within five years of resumption of service but prior to retirement, pay the amount required under RCW 41.50.165(2).

The contributions required under (a) of this subsection shall be based on the average of the member's compensation earnable at both the time the authorized leave of absence was granted and the time the member resumed employment.

(4) A member who leaves the employ of an employer to enter the uniformed services of the United States shall be entitled to retirement system service credit for up to five years of military service. This subsection shall be administered in a manner consistent with the requirements of the federal uniformed services employment and reemployment rights act.

(a) The member qualifies for service credit under this subsection if:

(i) Within ninety days of the member's honorable discharge from the uniformed services of the United States, the member applies for reemployment with the employer who employed the member immediately prior to the member entering the uniformed services; and

(ii) The member makes the employee contributions required under RCW 41.37.220 within five years of resumption of service or prior to retirement, whichever comes sooner; or

(iii) Prior to retirement and not within ninety days of the member's honorable discharge or five years of resumption of service the member pays the amount required under RCW 41.50.165(2); or

(iv) Prior to retirement the member provides to the director proof that the member's interruptive military service was during a period of war as defined in RCW 41.04.005. Any member who made payments for service credit for interruptive military service during a period of war as defined in RCW 41.04.005 may, prior to retirement and on a form provided by the department, request a refund of the funds standing to his or her credit for up to five years of such service, and this amount shall be paid to him or her. Members with one or more

periods of interruptive military service credit during a period of war may receive no more than five years of free retirement system service credit under this subsection.

(b) Upon receipt of member contributions under (a)(ii), (d)(iii), or (e)(iii) of this subsection, or adequate proof under (a)(iv), (d)(iv), or (e)(iv) of this subsection, the department shall establish the member's service credit and shall bill the employer for its contribution required under RCW 41.37.220 for the period of military service, plus interest as determined by the department.

(c) The contributions required under (a)(ii), (d)(iii), or (e)(iii) of this subsection shall be based on the compensation the member would have earned if not on leave, or if that cannot be estimated with reasonable certainty, the compensation reported for the member in the year prior to when the member went on military leave.

(d) The surviving spouse or eligible child or children of a member who left the employ of an employer to enter the uniformed services of the United States and died while serving in the uniformed services may, on behalf of the deceased member, apply for retirement system service credit under this subsection up to the date of the member's death in the uniformed services. The department shall establish the deceased member's service credit if the surviving spouse or eligible child or children:

(i) Provides to the director proof of the member's death while serving in the uniformed services;

(ii) Provides to the director proof of the member's honorable service in the uniformed services prior to the date of death; and

(iii) Pays the employee contributions required under chapter 41.45 RCW within five years of the date of death or prior to the distribution of any benefit, whichever comes first; or

(iv) Prior to the distribution of any benefit, provides to the director proof that the member's interruptive military service was during a period of war as defined in RCW 41.04.005. If the deceased member made payments for service credit for interruptive military service during a period of war as defined in RCW 41.04.005, the surviving spouse or eligible child or children may, prior to the distribution of any benefit and on a form provided by the department, request a refund of the funds standing to the deceased member's credit for up to five years of such service, and this amount shall be paid to the surviving spouse or children. Members with one or more periods of interruptive military service during a period of war may receive no more than five years of free retirement system service credit under this subsection.

(e) A member who leaves the employ of an employer to enter the uniformed services of the United States and becomes totally incapacitated for continued employment by an employer while serving in the uniformed services is entitled to retirement system service credit under this subsection up to the date of discharge from the uniformed services if:

(i) The member obtains a determination from the director that he or she is totally incapacitated for continued employment due to conditions or events that occurred while serving in the uniformed services;

(ii) The member provides to the director proof of honorable discharge from the uniformed services; and

(iii) The member pays the employee contributions required under chapter 41.45 RCW within five years of the director's determination of

total disability or prior to the distribution of any benefit, whichever comes first; or

(iv) Prior to retirement the member provides to the director proof that the member's interruptive military service was during a period of war as defined in RCW 41.04.005. Any member who made payments for service credit for interruptive military service during a period of war as defined in RCW 41.04.005 may, prior to retirement and on a form provided by the department, request a refund of the funds standing to his or her credit for up to five years of such service, and this amount shall be paid to him or her. Members with one or more periods of interruptive military service credit during a period of war may receive no more than five years of free retirement system service credit under this subsection. [2009 c 205 s 3; 2005 c 64 s 11; 2004 c 242 s 32.]

Effective date—2005 c 64 s 11: "Section 11 of this act takes effect July 1, 2006." [2005 c 64 s 12.]