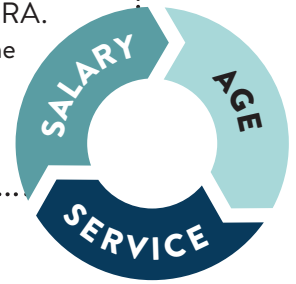


During your career, you might take a leave of absence from your public position covered by PERA. PERA uses three factors to determine your monthly benefit: service, age, and salary. Two of the factors—service and salary—may be affected by your leave. You may purchase missing employee and employer contributions plus interest to restore service (which automatically includes salary) or salary lost during an authorized leave. The leave purchase is optional, but could result in a larger benefit.



## WHAT LEAVES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR PURCHASE?

### 1. Authorized leave and workers' compensation leave

**What can I purchase?** Up to 12 months of your authorized leave period. For workers' compensation, you may purchase the full leave period.

**What is the cost?** The amount of your missing employee and employer contributions during the leave period, plus interest. Payment is based on your average salary rate in effect during your leave period, excluding overtime.

**How long do I have to purchase the leave?** Payment must be made in full within 12 months after you return to public service, or 30 days after termination of public service, whichever is earlier.

**Other criteria:** If you previously purchased 12 months of salary credit, you must return to active public service for at least three months to be eligible to purchase any subsequent leaves.



### 2. Employer-sponsored leave

**What can I purchase?** The period of reduced pay during the calendar year as part of an employer-sponsored budgetary, furlough, or special leave program.

**What is the cost?** The amount of your missing employee and employer contributions during your leave period, plus interest. Payment is based on your average salary rate in effect during your leave period, excluding overtime. Eligible members will receive a salary purchase statement from PERA.

**How long do I have to purchase the leave?** Payment must be made in full within 12 months after the end of the calendar year in which you took the leave, or within 30 days of your termination of public service, whichever is earlier.

### 3. Military Leave

**What can I purchase?** Up to five years of your military leave period.

**What is the cost?** The amount of your missing employee contributions during the leave period. Payment is based on the average salary rate you would have earned from your employer during the military leave. Law requires your employer to pay the employer portion plus interest. You may make partial payments.

**How long do I have to purchase the leave?** Payment must be made within three times the length of the leave (minimum of one year, maximum five years) or within 30 days after the termination of public service, whichever is earlier. For example, if your leave is eight months, you have 24 months to repay your service.

**Other criteria:** To qualify, you must be honorably discharged and return to your same employer. You must submit a *DD Form 214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty*, to process your purchase.

### 4. Strike

**What can I purchase?** Up to 12 months in which you participate in a public strike without pay.

**What is the cost?** The amount of your missing employee and employer contributions during the strike period, plus interest. Payment is based on your average salary rate in effect at the end of the strike period.

**How long do I have to purchase the leave?** Payment must be made in full within 12 months after you return to public service, or 30 days after termination of public service, whichever is earlier. If more than one year but less than five years has elapsed since the strike, only service credit may be purchased on an actuarial basis.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### How do I request leave purchase information?

After you return from your leave or terminate your position, provide the *Leave Verification* form to your employer to complete. The form, which is available on our website, must be returned to PERA within the allowable purchase period. When PERA receives the completed form, PERA will mail you leave purchase information and benefit estimates.

### Will the purchase increase my PERA benefit?

#### Purchasing service

Yes. The more service credit you earn, the higher the percentage of your average salary you will receive as your monthly benefit. When you purchase service, you are automatically purchasing salary associated with that month.

#### Purchasing salary

It depends on if the salary purchase is in your high-5 salary period. If you terminate, retire, or go on disability shortly after your leave, and the leave is in your high-5 salary period, then the purchase likely will increase your PERA benefit. If you plan to work for a while after you return from your leave and earn a higher salary, then the purchase may not increase your PERA benefit as the leave purchase may not be in your high-5 salary period.



#### HIGH-5 SALARY:

Your high-5 salary is the gross salary you earn during the 60 consecutive months in which your salary was greatest—not calendar or fiscal year.

### Do I pay the employer share?

Yes, in most situations. Your employer may elect to pay the employer share for you, but they are under no obligation to do so. If they elect to pay the employer portion, it is your responsibility to coordinate the purchase payment with your employer. You need to send both the member and employer portion together to PERA.

### Can I make a purchase if I apply for PERA disability benefits?

With the exception of workers' compensation, no other leave purchase may be made after the occurrence of a disability for which you have filed a disability benefit application.

### What if my purchase period expired?

Unfortunately, we are unable to accept payment after the authorized purchase period.

However, if you are missing service during a leave that occurred prior to Jan. 1, 2002, you may receive:

- up to two months service credit for a parental leave
- up to 12 months of service credit for an authorized unpaid medical or workers' compensation leave



### Questions?

For more information, visit [mnpera.org](http://mnpera.org) or contact a PERA Service Representative.



Public Employees Retirement Association  
60 Empire Drive, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55103-2088  
1-800-652-9026 | 651-296-7460 | [mnpera.org](http://mnpera.org)