



# **SCHOOL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF OHIO**

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## **SPECIAL TAX NOTICE**

### **YOUR ROLLOVER OPTIONS REGARDING YOUR SERS LUMP SUM PAYMENT**

You are receiving this notice because all or a portion of a payment you are receiving from SERS is eligible to be rolled over to an IRA or an employer plan. This notice is intended to help you decide whether to do such a rollover.

Rollover rules that apply to most payments from SERS are described in the "General Information About Rollovers" section. Special rules that only apply in certain circumstances are described in the "Special Rules and Options" section.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT ROLLOVERS**

#### **How can a rollover affect my taxes?**

You will be taxed on a payment from SERS if you do not roll it over. If you are under age 59½ and do not do a rollover, you will also have to pay a 10% additional income tax on early distributions (generally, distributions made before age 59½), unless an exception applies. However, if you do a rollover, you will not have to pay tax until you receive payments later and the 10% additional income tax will not apply if those payments are made after you are age 59½, or if an exception applies.

#### **What types of retirement accounts and plans may accept my rollover?**

You may roll over the payment to either an IRA (an individual retirement account or individual retirement annuity) or an employer plan (a tax-qualified plan, section 403(b) plan, or governmental section 457(b) plan) that will accept the rollover. The rules of the IRA or employer plan that holds the rollover will determine your investment options, fees, and rights to payment from the IRA or employer plan. Further, the amount rolled over will become subject to the tax rules that apply to the IRA or employer plan.

#### **How do I do a rollover?**

There are two ways to do a rollover. You can do either a direct rollover or a 60-day rollover.

**If you do a direct rollover**, SERS will make the payment directly to your IRA or an employer plan. You should contact the IRA sponsor or the administrator of the employer plan for information on how to do a direct rollover.

**If you do not do a direct rollover**, you may still do a rollover by making a deposit into an IRA or eligible employer plan that will accept it. Generally, you will have 60 days after you receive the payment to make the deposit. If you do not do a direct rollover, SERS is required to withhold 20% of the payment for federal income taxes. This means that, in order to roll over the entire payment in a 60-day rollover, you must use other funds to make up for the 20% withheld. If you do not roll over the entire amount of the payment, the portion not rolled over will be taxed and will be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions if you are under age 59½, unless an exception applies.

#### **How much may I roll over?**

If you wish to do a rollover, you may roll over all or part of the amount eligible for rollover. Any payment from SERS is eligible for rollover, except:

- Certain payments spread over a period of at least 10 years or over your life or life expectancy (or the lives or joint life expectancy of you and your beneficiary);
- Required minimum distributions after age 70½, or after death; and
- Corrective distributions of contributions that exceed tax law limitations.

SERS will tell you what portion of a payment is eligible for rollover.

#### **If I don't do a rollover, will I have to pay the 10% additional income tax on early distributions?**

If you are under age 59½, you will have to pay the 10% additional income tax on early distributions for any payment from SERS, including amounts withheld for income tax, that you do not roll over, unless one of the exceptions listed below applies. This tax applies to the part of the distribution that you must include in income and is in addition to the regular income tax on the payment not rolled over.

The 10% additional income tax does not apply to the following payments from SERS:

- Payments made after you separate from service if you will be at least age 55 in the year of the separation;
- Payments that start after you separate from service if paid at least annually in equal or close to equal amounts over your life or life expectancy (or the lives or joint life expectancy of you and your beneficiary);
- Payments made after you separate from service if you are a public safety employee and you are at least age 50 in the year of the separation;
- Payments after your death;
- Corrective distributions of contributions that exceed tax law limitations;
- Payments made directly to the government to satisfy a federal tax levy;
- Payments made under a division of property order (DOPO); and
- Payments for certain distributions relating to certain federally declared disasters.

There are other circumstances when the 10% additional income tax may not apply. You should consult a professional tax advisor or the IRS for additional information.

#### **If I do a rollover to an IRA, will the 10% additional income tax apply to early distributions from the IRA?**

If you receive a payment from an IRA when you are under age 59½, you will have to pay the 10% additional income tax on early distributions on the part of the distribution that you must include in income, unless an exception applies. In general, the exceptions to the 10% additional income tax for early distributions from an IRA are the same as the exceptions listed above for early distributions from a plan. However, there are a few differences for payments from an IRA, including:

- The exception for payments made after you separate from service if you will be at least age 55 in the year of the separation (or age 50 for qualified public safety employees) does not apply.
- The exception for division of property orders does not apply (although a special rule applies under which, as part of a divorce or separation agreement, a tax-free transfer may be made directly to an IRA of a spouse or former spouse).
- The exception for payments made at least annually in equal or close to equal amounts over a specified period applies without regard to whether you have had a separation from service.
- There are additional exceptions for (1) payments for qualified higher education expenses, (2) payments up to \$10,000 used in a qualified first-time home purchase, and (3) payments after you have received unemployment compensation for 12 consecutive weeks (or would have been eligible to receive unemployment compensation but for self-employed status).

#### **Will I owe state income taxes?**

This notice does not describe any state or local income tax rules, including withholding rules.

### **SPECIAL RULES AND OPTIONS**

#### **If your payment includes after-tax contributions**

After-tax contributions included in a payment are not taxed. If a payment is only part of your benefit, an allocable portion of your after-tax contributions is generally included in the payment, so you cannot take a payment of only after-tax contributions.

You may roll over to an IRA a payment that includes after-tax contributions through either a direct rollover or a 60-day rollover. You must keep track of the total amount of the after-tax contributions in all of your IRAs (in order to determine your taxable income for later payments from the IRAs). If you do a direct rollover of only a portion of the amount paid from SERS and a portion is paid to you, the portion directly rolled over consists first of the amount that would be taxable if not rolled over. For example, assume you are receiving a distribution of \$12,000, of which \$2,000 is after-tax contributions. In this case, if you directly roll over \$10,000 to an IRA that is not a Roth IRA, no amount is taxable because the \$2,000 amount not directly rolled over is treated as being after-tax contributions. If you do a direct rollover of the entire amount paid from the Plan to two or more destinations at the same time, you can choose which destination receives the after-tax contributions.

If you do a 60-day rollover to an IRA of only a portion of the payment made to you, the after-tax contributions are treated as rolled over

last. For example, assume you are receiving a complete distribution of your benefit which totals \$12,000, of which \$2,000 is after-tax contributions. In this case, if you roll over \$10,000 to an IRA in a 60-day rollover, no amount is taxable because the \$2,000 amount not rolled over is treated as being after-tax contributions.

You may roll over to an employer plan all of a payment that includes after-tax contributions, but only through a direct rollover, and only if the receiving plan separately accounts for after-tax contributions and is not a governmental section 457(b) plan. You can do a 60-day rollover to an employer plan of part of a payment that includes after-tax contributions, but only up to the amount of the payment that would be taxable if not rolled over.

#### **If you miss the 60-day rollover deadline**

Generally, the 60-day rollover deadline cannot be extended. However, the IRS has the limited authority to waive the deadline under certain extraordinary circumstances, such as when external events prevented you from completing the rollover by the 60-day rollover deadline. Under certain circumstances, you may claim eligibility for a waiver of the 60-day rollover deadline by making a written self-certification. Otherwise, to apply for a waiver from the IRS, you must file a private letter ruling request with the IRS. Private letter ruling requests require the payment of a nonrefundable user fee. For more information, see IRS Publication 590, *Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*.

#### **If you were born on or before January 1, 1936**

If you were born on or before January 1, 1936 and receive a lump sum distribution that you do not roll over, special rules for calculating the amount of the tax on the payment might apply to you. For more information, see IRS Publication 575, *Pension and Annuity Income*.

#### **If you roll over your payment to a Roth IRA**

If you roll over the payment to a Roth IRA, a special rule applies under which the amount of the payment rolled over, reduced by any after-tax amounts, will be taxed. However, the 10% additional income tax on early distributions will not apply, unless you take the amount rolled over out of the Roth IRA within five years, counting from Jan. 1 of the year of the rollover.

If you roll over the payment to a Roth IRA, later payments from the Roth IRA that are qualified distributions will not be taxed, including earnings after the rollover. A qualified distribution from a Roth IRA is a payment made after you are age 59½, or after your death or disability, or as a qualified first-time homebuyer distribution of up to \$10,000, and after you have had a Roth IRA for at least five years. In applying this five-year rule, you count from Jan. 1 of the year for which your first contribution was made to a Roth IRA. Payments from the Roth IRA that are not qualified distributions will be taxed to the extent of earnings after the rollover, including the 10% additional income tax on early distributions (unless an exception applies). You do not have to take required minimum distributions from a Roth IRA during your lifetime. For more information, see IRS Publication 590-A, *Contributions to Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)* and IRS Publication 590-B, *Distributions from Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*.

#### **If you are not a Plan participant**

##### Payments after death of the participant

If you receive a distribution after the participant's death that you do not roll over, the distribution will generally be taxed in the same manner as described above. However, the 10% additional income tax on early distributions and the special rules for public safety officers do not apply, and the special rule described under the section "If you were born on or before January 1, 1936" applies only if the participant was born on or before January 1, 1936.

#### **If you are a surviving spouse**

If you receive a payment from SERS as the surviving spouse of a deceased participant, you have the same rollover options that the participant would have had, as described elsewhere in this notice. In addition, if you choose to do a rollover to an IRA, you may treat the IRA as your own or as an inherited IRA.

An IRA you treat as your own is treated like any other IRA of yours, so that payments made to you before you are age 59½ will be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions (unless an exception applies) and required minimum distributions from your IRA do not have to start until after you are age 70½.

If you treat the IRA as an inherited IRA, payments from the IRA will not be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions. However, if the participant had started taking required minimum distributions, you will have to receive required minimum distributions from the inherited IRA. If the participant had not started taking required minimum distributions from SERS, you will not have to start receiving required minimum distributions from the inherited IRA until the year the participant would have been age 70½.

#### **If you are a surviving beneficiary other than a spouse**

If you receive a payment from SERS because of the participant's death and you are a designated beneficiary other than a surviving spouse, the only rollover option you have is to do a direct rollover to an inherited IRA. Payments from the inherited IRA will not be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions. You must receive required minimum distributions from the inherited IRA.

#### **Payments under a division of property order**

If you are the spouse or former spouse of the participant who receives a payment from SERS under a division of property order (DOPO), you generally have the same options the participant would have (for example, you may roll over the payment to your own IRA or an eligible employer plan that will accept it). Payments under the DOPO will not be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions.

#### **If you are a nonresident alien**

If you are a nonresident alien and you do not do a direct rollover to a U.S. IRA or U.S. employer plan, instead of withholding 20%, SERS is generally required to withhold 30% of the payment for federal income taxes. If the amount withheld exceeds the amount of tax you owe, which may happen if you do a 60-day rollover, you may request an income tax refund by filing Form 1040NR and attaching your Form 1042-S. See Form W-8BEN for claiming that you are entitled to a reduced rate of withholding under an income tax treaty. For more information, see also IRS Publication 519, *U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens*, and IRS Publication 515, *Withholding of Tax on Nonresident Aliens and Foreign Entities*.

#### **Other special rules**

If your payments for the year are less than \$200, SERS is not required to allow you to do a direct rollover and is not required to withhold for federal income taxes. However, you can do a 60-day rollover.

You may have special rollover rights if you recently served in the U.S. Armed Forces. For more information, see IRS Publication 3, *Armed Forces' Tax Guide*. You also may have special rollover rights if you were affected by a federally declared disaster (or similar event), or if you received a distribution on account of a disaster. For more information on special rollover rights related to disaster relief, see the IRS website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

You may wish to consult with a professional tax advisor before taking a payment from SERS. Also, you can find more detailed information on the federal tax treatment of payments from employer plans in: IRS Publication 575, *Pension and Annuity Income*; IRS Publication 590-A, *Contributions to Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*; and IRS Publication 590-B, *Distributions from Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*. These publications are available from a local IRS office, on the web at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), or by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM.