

the required paperwork verifying your eligibility to the Retirement Systems. You must complete a retirement application with the South Carolina Retirement Systems before your supplemental benefits will begin.

If you are a National Guard member who is no longer active but is vested and eligible to receive a deferred benefit, you should contact the Retirement Systems six months prior to your 60th birthday to request a retirement application.

It is imperative that you maintain a current address with the Retirement Systems.

Retirement Checks

Monthly benefit payments are directly deposited into your bank account on the last business day of each month. Electronic distribution of monthly benefit payments reduces risks to both recipients and the state, as well as reduces costs to the retirement plans.

You may add or change your direct deposit information any time by logging into the Retirement Systems' secure, online Member Access system at <https://online.retirement.sc.gov/MemberAccess/welcome> or contact our office to request a *Direct Deposit Authorization* (Form 7204).

To Find Out More

- Contact the South Carolina Retirement Systems by telephone at 803-737-6800, toll free at 800-868-9002 (within S.C. only), by email at www.retirement.sc.gov/contact/email.htm, or by live chat by clicking on the "Customer Service Chat Now" button in the header of our homepage (www.retirement.sc.gov)
- You may also visit us, with or without an appointment, at 202 Arbor Lake Drive, Columbia, SC 29223

THE INFORMATION IN THIS BROCHURE IS MEANT TO SERVE AS A GUIDE AND DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A BINDING REPRESENTATION OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA RETIREMENT SYSTEMS. TITLE 9 OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS CONTAINS A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE RETIREMENT BENEFITS, THEIR TERMS AND CONDITIONS, AND GOVERNS ALL RETIREMENT BENEFITS OFFERED BY THE STATE. STATE STATUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. CONTACT THE RETIREMENT SYSTEMS FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION.

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The South Carolina Retirement Systems is a division of the South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority.

South Carolina Retirement Systems

National Guard Retirement System

July 2012

South Carolina
Public Employee Benefit Authority

A Quick Guide to Your Supplemental Benefits Plan

This brochure contains an abbreviated description of the retirement benefits provided by the National Guard Retirement System. For more detailed information, visit our website at www.retirement.sc.gov.

General Information

Effective January 1, 2006, the South Carolina Retirement Systems (Retirement Systems) assumed administration of the National Guard Retirement System (NGRS), a defined benefit pension plan established to provide supplemental benefits to National Guard members who served in South Carolina. While NGRS was previously closed to new entrants as of July 1, 1993, legislation reopened the system effective January 1, 2007, to any new entrants since June 30, 1993.

As a National Guard member, you are considered a federal employee; therefore, the pension benefit that the state provides through NGRS is intended only to supplement the retirement benefit you receive or will receive from the federal government.

NGRS Membership

There are three categories of NGRS membership:

- Active members are those who have not yet been discharged from the National Guard.
- Deferred vested members are those who have been discharged from the National Guard but have not yet reached age 60.
- Retired members are those who have been discharged from the National Guard and are at least 60 years old.

Benefit Eligibility

To qualify for an NGRS benefit, you must:

- Be separated from service with an honorable discharge;
- Be at least 60 years of age; and
- Have at least 20 years total creditable military service.

At least 15 of your 20 years must be from service in the South Carolina National Guard, and additionally, the last 10 years must also be from service in the South Carolina National Guard.

Determining Your NGRS Service Credit

Your years of service credit are determined by the State Adjutant General's Office based on the military point system. Service is granted on a strictly chronological basis. For example, if you began service on May 30, 1982, your service credit also began on that date.

State law does not provide for the prorating of NGRS service credit; therefore, if you have less than a full year of service you receive no retirement credit for the partial year and your total service is rounded down to the next whole year to determine your NGRS benefit. For example, if you have 21 years and six months of qualifying National Guard service, you would receive 21 years of NGRS service credit.

Your NGRS Benefit

If you have 20 years of creditable service upon your discharge from the military and you meet the South Carolina National Guard service requirements mentioned above, you qualify for a \$50 monthly benefit. The amount of the monthly benefit is increased by \$5

for each additional year of creditable service you have beyond 20 years up to a maximum benefit of \$100 per month.

Your NGRS benefit is taxable for federal income tax purposes, but is exempt from the South Carolina income tax.

Your monthly benefit is payable for your lifetime. Upon your death, no continuing survivor payment will be made to any beneficiaries or to your estate. However, if upon your death your benefit for the month in which you die has not yet been paid to you, the final monthly benefit will be issued to your estate.

Applying for Your NGRS Benefit

When you leave National Guard service, you should have an opportunity to meet with a representative from the State Adjutant General's Office to determine all military benefits for which you are eligible, including federal benefits.

If you are eligible for supplemental benefits from NGRS, the State Adjutant General's Office will forward