



# Reciprocity Fact Sheet

If you have previously worked in a position covered by another California public retirement system, and you are a member of the San Joaquin County Employees' Retirement Association (SJCEA), you may be eligible to establish reciprocity. Reciprocity allows members who move from one eligible, California public retirement system to another within six months, to retain valuable retirement and related benefit rights.

## ADVANTAGES OF RECIPROCITY

### Highest Final Average Compensation

When you retire, linked reciprocal systems may use your highest final average compensation earned in any other linked reciprocal retirement system to calculate your retirement benefit.

### Vesting and Retirement Eligibility

Service credit earned in linked reciprocal systems may be used to help you meet each system's vesting and retirement eligibility requirements.

### Tier and Member Contribution Rate

If you are eligible for reciprocity and that reciprocal service began before January 1, 2013, SJCEA will place you in Tier 1. Generally, Tier 1 provides a greater retirement benefit at a younger age than Tier 2. By establishing reciprocity, your contribution rate will be based on your age at entry into your earliest, linked reciprocal system, which will result in a lower member contribution rate.

**RECIPROCITY & VESTING**

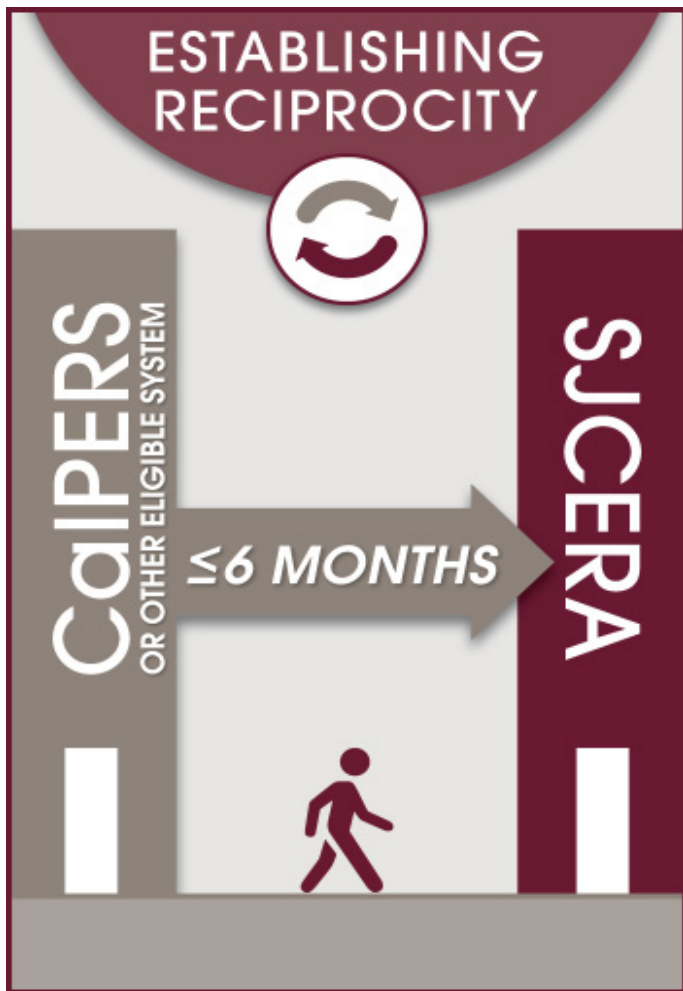
**CalPERS** **SJCERA**  
OR OTHER ELIGIBLE SYSTEM

**2** **+** **3**  
YEARS SERVICE CREDIT    YEARS SERVICE CREDIT

**= 5 YEARS COMBINED SERVICE CREDIT**

**= VESTED. ENTITLED TO A BENEFIT FROM BOTH SYSTEMS ONCE YOU MEET THE AGE AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS.**

## ESTABLISHING RECIPROCITY



To be eligible to establish reciprocity, you must meet each the following requirements:

- Leave one public retirement system and enter the other system within six months.
- Avoid an overlap in service credit. You must terminate employment with your previous employer before you begin employment with your new employer. If there is an overlap, for example, by receiving vacation pay from your former employer after starting work with your new employer, it must be cured in order to establish reciprocity.
- Leave your contributions on deposit and defer retirement with your previous employer's retirement system.
- Apply to establish reciprocity. SJCERA requests newly hired employees to complete a *Member Reciprocal Self-Certification* form upon employment in order to determine the appropriate tier. Once SJCERA receives certification from the previous retirement system, reciprocity will be established. If you believe you are eligible for reciprocity but did not complete the *Member Reciprocal Self-Certification* form when you began working for an SJCERA-covered employer, you may submit your form at any time before you retire.

### After You Establish Reciprocity

Once reciprocity is established, you will retain your membership in your former retirement system and become a member of the system covered by your new employment. There is no transfer of funds or service credit between retirement systems, the rules of each system still apply, and you cannot withdraw your member contributions while you are employed in a position covered by a reciprocal retirement system.

When you retire, you must retire on the same date from each linked reciprocal retirement system in order for the benefits of reciprocity to apply. You will receive a separate retirement allowance from each system. If you break reciprocity (for example, by retiring on different dates), you lose the benefits of reciprocity, and your tier and contribution rate may need to be adjusted, which may cause you to owe additional contributions and interest.

## Disability Retirement

If you are eligible for disability retirement from your current system, you may be entitled to a benefit from a reciprocal system, as long as you retire from all reciprocal systems on the same date. Generally, your benefit from the reciprocal system will be an amount that does not exceed the difference between what you are going to receive from your current system and what you would receive if all your service in all reciprocal systems were credited under your current system. If you apply for a disability retirement with another reciprocal system, please contact SJCERA.

## Terminated Safety Members

If you are a Safety member who previously withdrew your contributions but are now employed under a reciprocal retirement system, you may be able to redeposit your contributions and establish reciprocity. If you think this might apply to you, contact the retirement system from which you withdrew your contributions. Below is a list of retirement systems that have reciprocity with SJCERA.

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## RECIPROCAL SYSTEMS

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- California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS)

All agencies whose employees are members of CalPERS, including state agencies, county schools, various cities, counties and special districts. Approximately 2,000 agencies have employees who are members of CalPERS. New agencies may have contracted with CalPERS for reciprocity since this fact sheet was published. Contact CalPERS at 1-888-CALPERS (225-7377) to find out if your system offers this benefit.

- California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS)
- Legislators' Retirement System (LRS)
- Judges' Retirement System I and II (JRS)
- Any public retirement system that has a reciprocal agreement with CalPERS
- 19 other California counties operating under the County Employee's Retirement Law of 1937 (1937 Act), including:

Alameda	Los Angeles	Sacramento	Sonoma
Contra Costa	Marin	San Bernardino	Stanislaus
Fresno	Mendocino	San Diego	Tulare
Imperial	Merced	San Mateo	Ventura
Kern	Orange	Santa Barbara	

This fact sheet intended to provide you with general information for members who have changes in employment covered by different public retirement systems. Because reciprocity is an agreement between retirement systems and retirement benefit provisions vary, it is important that you know the potential advantages and disadvantages of reciprocity before you change employers. Reciprocity benefits are governed by the plan documents of the various retirement systems and are subject to change. If a conflict arises between the applicable law and any statement in this fact sheet, the law will govern.

To request this material in an alternative format, call 209.468.2163, or TTY 711.

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