

# Benefits in Brief

## Welcome to TRS!

The Teachers' Retirement System of the City of New York (TRS) is a New York City retirement system established in 1917. We are one of the largest public pension systems in the United States, serving more than 200,000 in-service members, retirees, and beneficiaries. TRS membership is available to certain educators who work for the New York City Department of Education (DOE), the City University of New York (CUNY), and participating New York City Charter Schools.



All TRS members participate in the Qualified Pension Plan (QPP), a retirement plan administered under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). The QPP provides the security of a guaranteed, defined-benefit pension—a rarity these days. In addition, our Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) Program offers members the option to build additional retirement income. The TDA Program is a defined-contribution plan maintained under Section 403(b) of the IRC.

Read on for an overview of TRS membership, and visit [www.trsnyc.org](http://www.trsnyc.org) for more information.

### Benefits of TRS Membership

- ✓ **A guaranteed retirement allowance**  
*through the QPP upon meeting age and service requirements*
- ✓ **A supplemental retirement plan,**  
*known as the TDA Program, to help you save more for retirement*
- ✓ **Loan availability**  
*from both retirement plans*
- ✓ **Disability retirement benefits**  
*upon meeting certain requirements*
- ✓ **Death benefits**  
*for your surviving beneficiaries*

### TRS Member Services

- ✓ **Online account access**  
*Secure transactions and account statements through our website*
- ✓ **Member Services Center**  
*Representatives available by phone or in person, plus a toll-free, 24/7 information line*
- ✓ **Educational programs**  
*Free presentations on TRS topics offered throughout the year*
- ✓ **Newsletters**  
*News and updates delivered to your mailbox twice per year*

► New members should note the reminders on page 4 about completing their enrollment in TRS.



Teachers' Retirement System of the City of New York  
55 Water Street, New York, NY 10041

[www.trsnyc.org](http://www.trsnyc.org) • 1 (888) 8-NYC-TRS •    

## TRS Membership and Eligibility

TRS membership is mandatory for most New York City educators, including DOE teachers, pedagogues, and paraprofessionals in educational titles. Membership is also mandatory for any full-time CUNY educators/administrators who do not join the Optional Retirement Program. TRS membership is optional if you are:

- An adjunct or substitute teacher employed by CUNY. (Please contact your Benefits Officer for a complete list of eligible titles.)
- A substitute teacher, per-diem/per-session instructor, or other job title represented by the UFT and employed by the DOE.

## TRS' Qualified Pension Plan

As a new TRS member, you must contribute a percentage of your pay to the Qualified Pension Plan (QPP). Contribution rates are based on annual wages earned during each “plan year” (January to December), as indicated below. Pension contributions are deducted directly from your pay and continue throughout your employment. They earn 5% interest and are federally tax-deferred.

Annual Wages	Contribution Rate
\$45,000 and less	3.00%
More than \$45,000 to \$55,000	3.50%
More than \$55,000 to \$75,000	4.50%
More than \$75,000 to \$100,000	5.75%
More than \$100,000	6.00%

TRS members belong to one of five pension “tiers,” usually based on their date of membership in TRS. Members joining TRS after 2012 generally belong to Tier VI. However, if you were previously a member of a New York City or New York State public retirement system, you may qualify for reinstatement to a previous membership/tier.

[More Info ▶ Tier VI Summary Plan Description](#)

## TRS' Tax-Deferred Annuity Program

TRS offers you the opportunity to build additional retirement savings through the TDA Program, our supplemental retirement plan. You may contribute up to a designated amount each year, as set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). For calendar year 2025, the general contribution limit is \$23,500; members aged 50 and older may make additional “catch-up” contributions.

In a traditional TDA plan, contributions are deducted from your pay before taxes, thereby reducing the amount of your gross taxable income. And taxes on your contributions and investment earnings are generally deferred until you receive the funds as income. In 2026, the TDA Program will expand to offer a Roth (after-tax) option.

TRS offers you seven different investment options, known collectively as the Passport Funds. You may personalize your investment strategy by investing your TDA account in any combination of the Passport Funds. You can change your investment mix on a quarterly basis, and you may change your contribution rate at any time. However, since the TDA Program is designed as a retirement plan, the IRS places restrictions on withdrawals before retirement.

[More Info ▶ Your Tax-Deferred Annuity Program](#)

## Loans

You are generally eligible to take loans against your QPP and TDA funds after one year of participation. The minimum loan amount is \$1,000 and the maximum is \$50,000, subject to some restrictions. Loans must be repaid within 5 years (60 months), generally through payroll deductions.

[More Info ▶ QPP Loans; TDA Loans](#)

## Service Credit

Your Total Service Credit helps determine your eligibility for a retirement allowance under the QPP, as well as the amount of your benefits. When you reach 5 years of Total Service Credit, you are considered vested.

If you are in a full-time position, you receive credit for each full school year of service you work. If you are in a part-time position, you can receive prorated service credit, but you may need to meet a minimum number of hours or days in that position in order to receive credit. Members can receive a maximum of 1 year of service credit in a given school year.

If you worked for a New York City or New York State public employer before joining TRS, you may be able to purchase credit for that prior service.

[More Info ▶ \*Service Credit for Tier VI Members\*](#)

## Separating from Service before Retirement

If you leave your position before you retire, you will have choices to make about your TRS membership. Your options may include the following:

- ✓ Maintaining your TRS membership
- ✓ Withdrawing your TRS funds and ending your TRS membership
- ✓ Transferring your membership to another eligible retirement system, or
- ✓ Becoming a transferred contributor to TRS

In general, if you are vested, you can maintain your membership rights and retire at age 63. If you are not vested, your TRS membership will expire 7 school years after you separate from service. In that case, you will have to withdraw all of your TRS funds and will not receive retirement income from TRS.

## Service Retirement Benefits

Once you are vested and meet age requirements, you qualify for service retirement under the QPP. You can retire with full benefits upon reaching age 63. You can retire with reduced benefits as early as age 55 as long as you file for retirement while on active payroll or on a leave of absence.

Your retirement allowance is partially funded by the pension contributions you make while working, and it is based on a calculation that considers your Total Service Credit and Final Average Salary (FAS). Your FAS is generally the average of your highest three consecutive annual salaries, with some exceptions. The pension calculation is more beneficial if you have at least 20 years of Total Service Credit. The result of the calculation is the pension portion of your retirement allowance.

Your retirement allowance may include a second portion that is based on any supplemental contributions from the Department of Education.

[More Info ▶ \*Service Retirement Plans and Benefits for Tier VI\*](#)

## Disability Retirement Benefits

If you become physically or mentally incapable of performing your work duties, you may qualify for disability retirement benefits. To qualify for ordinary disability retirement benefits, you must generally have at least 10 years of Total Service Credit. However, if you are disabled as a result of an accident sustained in the performance of your duties while in active service, the Total Service Credit requirement will be waived. Qualification for any disability retirement benefit is subject to the approval of TRS' Medical Board. Special disability retirement provisions exist for members who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness.

[More Info ▶ \*Ordinary Disability Retirement; Accident Disability Retirement; Lump-Sum Disability Benefit\*](#)

## Options at Retirement

As a TRS retiree, you will receive monthly retirement allowance payments under the QPP for as long as you live. At retirement, you will have a choice of payment options. The Maximum Payment Option gives you the highest monthly retirement allowance; other options offer a reduced monthly allowance in order to provide payments to beneficiaries.

If you participate in the TDA Program, you can keep your account after retiring. You will have full access to your TDA funds, including the option to receive them as an annuity to supplement your QPP retirement allowance. Members who maintain a TDA account after retirement are subject to the IRS' Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) rules.

[More Info ▶ Retirement Payment Options: Tiers III/IV/VI](#)

## After You Retire

Calculating and processing a retirement generally takes three to five months, provided that TRS has all required service and salary information. In the meantime, we will issue advance payments to provide you with retirement income as soon as possible. During your retirement, you may become eligible for an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

As a retiree, you may continue to receive health coverage through the City's Health Benefits Program. You may also be eligible to receive supplementary health benefits through your union. TRS does not administer these programs, but deductions will be taken from your monthly payments if you participate.

After retiring, if you work in public employment in New York State, your earnings may be restricted. However, through June 30, 2027, retiree earnings from New York State public school employment do not count toward the annual earnings limit.

[More Info ▶ Earnings After Retirement](#)

*Benefits in Brief was prepared for Tier VI members of TRS. If you became a member of TRS before April 1, 2012, certain aspects of your benefits may vary from those stated here.*

*This publication should not be solely relied upon, as it is based on currently available information that is subject to change. In all cases, the specific provisions of the governing laws, rules, and regulations prevail.*

## Death Benefits

Death benefits coverage begins after your first year of TRS membership. If you die while in active service, the QPP death benefit payable is:

- ▶ 1 year's salary after 1 year of service
- ▶ 2 years' salary after 2 years of service
- ▶ 3 years' salary after 3 or more years of service

If you die after retirement, a different lump-sum benefit is payable to your beneficiaries. This benefit is in addition to any benefit resulting from the payment option you elect for your retirement allowance.

You must make a beneficiary designation for each TRS account. We strongly encourage you to keep your designations current at all times; this will help ensure that your death benefits are distributed as you intended.

[More Info ▶ Guide to Death Benefits for Beneficiaries of Non-Retired Members](#)

Additional information is available at [www.trsnyc.org](http://www.trsnyc.org).

### Reminders for New Members

- ✓ Register for access to the secure section of our website
- ✓ Designate your beneficiaries
- ✓ Submit proof of your date of birth
- ✓ Inform TRS about membership in any other New York City/State public retirement system or TIAA
- ✓ Inform TRS about any creditable prior service

Do all these things online at [www.trsnyc.org](http://www.trsnyc.org)!

[More Info ▶ Enrolling in TRS](#)