

# Earnings After Retirement



**By law, the amount of post-retirement income that you may earn in New York State public employment while collecting a service retirement allowance from TRS may be restricted to \$35,000 per year. Please read this brochure carefully to learn how these restrictions may affect you specifically.**

## **Unrestricted Post-Retirement Employment**

In the following circumstances, there are no restrictions on the amount of money that you may earn as a retiree:

- If you are a service retiree who reached age 65 during or before the year of your post-retirement earnings; or
- If you work in private employment, in public service outside New York State, or with a nonprofit organization; or
- If you work in certain types of public employment within New York State (*i.e.*, jury duty, a position as a poll or ballot clerk under the election law, a position in the office of the Inspector of Elections, or a position as a notary public or commissioner of deeds); or
- If your TRS membership began before May 31, 1973, and after retirement you are hired as a consultant in public service with New York State or any of its political subdivisions (*e.g.*, New York City); or
- If you work for a Public Benefit Corporation, such as MTA New York City Transit, the New York City Housing Authority, or MTA Bridges and Tunnels (Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority).

If you work in any type of New York State public employment that is not included in the list above, and you are less than 65 years old, your earnings in that position will be subject to limits, as described in the following sections.

**Note:** Due to a legislative exemption, through June 30, 2027, retiree earnings from New York State public school employment do not count toward the annual earnings limit.

## **Restricted Post-Retirement Employment**

Service retirees who are subject to earnings limitations may be eligible for the Section 211 or Section 212 Waivers (pursuant to the New York State Retirement and Social Security Law (RSSL)) discussed in this brochure. Section 211 and 212 Waivers enable you to earn a specified amount of money in New York State public employment without affecting your retirement allowance; disability retirees are not eligible for these waivers.

If you receive an annuity under the Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) Program, your monthly TDA payments will not be affected by the amount of your post-retirement income.

- **If you are a service retiree who files a Section 211 or 212 Waiver**, you may earn up to the annual limit provided under your waiver. If your earnings exceed your limit, you must repay the excess earnings (see “General Information” on page 3); otherwise, your retirement allowance will be suspended. Under a Section 211 Waiver, the suspension will continue until the amount of your suspended retirement allowance equals the excess earnings. Under a Section 212 Waiver, the suspension will continue for the rest of the calendar year or until the missed suspension time has been made up.
- **If you are a disability retiree, or service retiree who does not file a Section 211 or 212 Waiver**, the total pension portion of your retirement allowance payments and post-retirement earnings must be less than \$1,800 annually. If your earnings equal or exceed this amount, you must repay the excess earnings (see “General Information” on page 3); otherwise, the pension portion of your retirement allowance will be suspended for a period of time equal to the length of your public employment since you exceeded the \$1,800 limit.

### **Section 212 Waiver**

If you are a service retiree under age 65, you may return to public employment with New York State or any of its political subdivisions and earn up to a designated limit each calendar year without jeopardizing your retirement allowance.

In this case, you must file a Section 212 Waiver with TRS in the secure section of our website. This Waiver must be renewed each calendar year that you continue in public employment in New York State until the year in which you reach age 65. Failure to do so may result in the suspension of your retirement allowance.

If you earn more than the Section 212 maximum during a calendar year while working under a Section 212 Waiver, your retirement allowance will be suspended, usually for the rest of the calendar year. TRS generally sends retirees reminder letters approximately four weeks before they are projected to reach their earnings limit. If TRS does not learn in time about earnings that exceed the Section 212 limit, the suspension of your retirement allowance

will continue into the next calendar year, but only long enough to make up for the missed suspension time.

Alternatively, you may repay the excess earnings to your employer (not TRS) to avoid suspension of your retirement allowance.

**Note:** If you are employed by the New York City Department of Education (DOE), your certified check or money order must be made payable to the **New York City Department of Finance**.

### **Section 211 Waiver**

If you anticipate that your earnings in public employment with New York State or any of its political subdivisions will exceed the Section 212 limit for the calendar year, you must comply with Section 211 of the RSSL to continue receiving a retirement allowance (subject to certain restrictions).

Under Section 211, your employer must obtain approval for the employment from the appropriate source; for example, the City or State Civil Service Commission, the Chancellor of the New York City DOE, the Trustees of the City University of New York (CUNY), or the Chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY). The employer determines when the Section 211 Waiver expires and may grant a maximum two-year waiver, which is renewable. Please note that you may still have restrictions on your earnings under a Section 211 Waiver. You must contact TRS to request an estimate of your earnings limit prior to filing a Section 211 Waiver with your employer.

**You must file a Section 211 Waiver with your employer, not with TRS.** If you currently work for the DOE, you may call (718) 935-2900 to obtain a Section 211 Waiver. CUNY employees may contact their college Benefits Officer. Other service retirees may contact the following locations, as applicable:

New York State Education Department  
Office of Teaching Initiatives  
5N Education Building  
Albany, NY 12234  
(518) 474-3901 [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov)

New York State Department of Civil Service  
Alfred E. Smith State Office Building  
80 South Swan Street  
Albany, NY 12239  
(877) 697-5627 [www.cs.state.ny.us](http://www.cs.state.ny.us)

## Once You Have a Section 211 Waiver

After employment is approved, different rules apply depending on whether you return to work for the same public employer or a different public employer. “Same employer” is generally defined as the organization from which you retired.

- If you work for the same public employer, earnings in a calendar year cannot exceed the difference between the following: (1) the **greater** of the current salary of the position from which you retired or your Final Average Salary (FAS); and (2) the sum of your maximum retirement allowance (excluding reductions for any payment options) and any cost-of-living increases for that year.

**Note:** The difference between (1) and (2) is rounded to the next higher multiple of \$500.

- If you work for a different public employer, no limit is placed on your earnings.

If you earn more in a calendar year than the maximum allowed under a Section 211 Waiver, your retirement allowance will be suspended until the amount of your suspended retirement allowance equals your excess earnings.

Alternatively, you may repay the excess earnings to your employer (*not* TRS) to avoid suspension of your retirement allowance.

**Note:** If you are employed by the DOE, your certified check or money order must be made payable to the **New York City Department of Finance**.

If you were employed under Multiple Employment Membership (MEM) status during your active service, you should note that this status may affect your post-retirement earnings restrictions. Returning to service with any prior MEM employer would be considered to be working for the “same employer” as before retirement; earnings would be subject to the restrictions explained in the first bullet of this section. (For example, if you worked for both the DOE and CUNY immediately before retiring under MEM status, and if you are re-employed by either employer after retirement, you will be considered to be working for the same employer and subject to the more restrictive earnings limit.) However, both salaries would be included in the formula to calculate the earnings limit under Section 211.

## Department of Education Restrictions on Section 211 Waivers

Earnings after retirement are restricted on a calendar-year basis. However, the DOE approves Section 211 Waivers on a school-year or semester basis. This difference complicates earnings limits for retirees who are granted waivers by the DOE. If you have any questions about Section 211 Waivers, please call the DOE at (718) 935-2900.

## General Information

- Service retirees working in public employment in New York State are required to have a valid waiver form on file if they expect the total of the pension portion of their retirement allowance plus their post-retirement earnings to be more than \$1,800 annually (see page 2). Therefore, if you file a Section 211 Waiver with your employer, you should also file a Section 212 Waiver with TRS in the secure section of our website; this will allow you to earn up to the Section 212 limit while awaiting approval of your Section 211 Waiver. As a reminder, all paperwork necessary for a Section 211 Waiver must be obtained from your employer.
- You may voluntarily suspend your retirement allowance if you think you will exceed the Section 211 or Section 212 earnings limit by filing a “Retirement Allowance Suspension/Resumption Form” (code RP88) with TRS. This form is available at [www.trsnyc.org](http://www.trsnyc.org).
- Earnings limits apply to the year in which they are earned, even if the earnings are received in a different calendar year.
- One-time payments, such as payouts for annual leave balances, do not count toward your earnings limit.
- If you repay excess earnings, your employer will make any required adjustments to your W-2 form for the applicable year.
- TRS determines whether your earnings have exceeded your limit based on records of reported wages supplied by your employer. If you believe that the information is incorrect, you should check your employer’s records. You may also provide your pay stubs to TRS, so that we can verify your employer’s records.

- In addition, if any of your earnings during a calendar year included income that you earned before retirement (e.g., vacation pay, sick pay, termination pay, retroactive pay for a salary increase), you must submit a “Report of Income Earned Before Retirement” (code RP86) along with relevant documentation (e.g., pay stubs) to TRS. Providing this documentation will ensure that these earnings will not count toward your post-retirement earnings.
- If TRS ultimately determines that your earnings have exceeded your Section 211 or 212 limit, your retirement allowance will be suspended. If you do not obtain a Section 211 or 212 Waiver, and you exceed the applicable limit, the pension portion of your retirement allowance will be suspended. In accordance with applicable provisions of the RSSL, you may avoid suspension by making a lump-sum payment in the amount of your excess earnings directly to your employer (not to TRS); to do so, you must

submit an “Overpayment of Post-Retirement Earnings Form” (code RP92) to TRS. You must make payment within 30 days of the date of your final notification letter from TRS.

**Note:** If you are employed by the DOE, your certified check or money order must be made payable to the **New York City Department of Finance**.

- If you work for two or more New York State public employers, your combined earnings from those positions cannot exceed your earnings limit.
- Any pay from your post-retirement summer employment and vacation pay will count toward your post-retirement earnings.
- A TRS service retiree who receives compensation from an elected public office of New York State or a political subdivision thereof is subject to pension suspension.

For your convenience, TRS forms and publications are available on our website.

*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.*



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