

WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §16-5V-6c

§16-5V-6c. 911 personnel.

(a) In accordance with the provisions of this article, the board shall administer the voluntary transfer of 911 personnel who are members of the Public Employees Retirement System to the Emergency Medical Services Retirement System.

(b) 911 personnel, employed by a participating public employer, who are actively contributing members of the Public Employees Retirement System shall be eligible to participate in a vote directly to the board pursuant to subsection (c) of this section: *Provided*, That the 911 personnel are employed with a participating public employer in the month prior to the election and for the duration of the election and that their participating public employer does not choose to opt-out of this option to transfer existing employees. The board will notify all participating public employers with 911 personnel of their option to opt-out of transferring existing employees prior to the election. Participating public employers with 911 personnel have until June 28, 2024, to opt out. Participating public employers with 911 personnel who opt out and Public Employees Retirement System employers who are not participating public employers in this plan in the month prior to the election will be barred from future options to transfer existing 911 personnel into this plan for a period of no less than three years from the election and must pay any future transfer costs to the board. In addition, for any future transfers, the board will calculate the initial pro rata share of costs that would have been assessed at the initial transfer and those costs must be paid to the plan.

(c) The election period for the vote shall conclude on August 30, 2024. All election forms received by the board on or before August 30, 2024, shall be counted, and any members eligible to vote who do not submit an election form to the board prior to or on August 30, 2024, shall be counted as not electing to transfer to the plan. If at least 75 percent of members eligible to vote pursuant to subsection (b) of this section affirmatively elect to transfer to the plan within the period provided in this subsection, then the board shall notify the employers of all members who affirmatively elected to do so during that period, and contributions to the plan shall begin during October 2024 for those electing to transfer. If more than 25 percent of those members eligible to vote pursuant to subsection (b) of this section do not affirmatively elect to transfer to the plan within that period, the Public Employees Retirement System continues as the retirement system for all 911 members eligible to vote. The vote pursuant to this subsection shall be directly to the board and the results shall be unknown to all employers until the time period for voting ends: *Provided*, That any employee eligible to vote pursuant to subsection (b) of this section shall have access through his or her employer to educational materials regarding the vote provided by the board. All members who complete an election form and all participating public employers with 911 personnel eligible to vote shall be notified in writing by the board by September 30, 2024, of the results of the election.

(d) Any costs incurred by the board attributable to this section shall be borne by all 911 personnel employers of persons eligible to transfer in proportion to the number of persons employed by that employer who are eligible to transfer. The board shall determine its costs incurred attributable to this election to transfer and shall determine the pro rata share of these costs to be borne by the 911 personnel participating employers.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this article to the contrary, a person employed as 911 personnel may be a member of this retirement plan subject to the provisions of this section. Full-time employment as 911 personnel satisfies the definition of "covered employment" as defined in this article.

(f) Any 911 personnel who elects to become a member of the plan does not qualify for active membership in any other retirement system administered by the board, so long as he or she remains employed in covered employment: *Provided*, That any 911 personnel who has concurrent employment in an additional job or jobs which would require the 911 personnel to be an active member of the West Virginia Deputy Sheriffs Retirement System, the West Virginia Municipal Police Officers and Firefighters Retirement System, or the West Virginia Natural Resources Police Officer Retirement System shall actively participate in only one retirement system administered by the board, and the retirement system applicable to the concurrent employment for which the employee has the earliest date of hire shall prevail. Any 911 personnel shall continue to receive his or her accrued benefit of other retirement systems administered by the board, except in the case of Public Employees Retirement System, when credit and assets are transferred to the Emergency Services Retirement System.

(g) Any 911 personnel who was employed as 911 personnel prior to July 1, 2024, but was not employed on July 1, 2024, shall become a member upon rehire as 911 personnel. For purposes of this section, the member's years of service and credited service prior to July 1, 2024, may be counted so long as the 911 personnel has not received the return of his or her accumulated contributions in the Public Employees Retirement System pursuant to §5-10-30 of this code. The member may request in writing to have his or her accumulated contributions and employer contributions from covered employment in the Public Employees Retirement System transferred to the plan and will receive two percent of the member's final average salary for each year transferred. If the conditions of this subsection are met, all years of the 911 personnel's covered employment shall be counted as years of service for the purposes of this article.

(h) Any 911 personnel employed in covered employment on July 1, 2024, who has timely elected to transfer into this plan as provided in subsection (b) of this section shall be given credited service at the time of transfer for all credited service then standing to the 911 personnel's service credit in the Public Employees Retirement System regardless of whether the credited service, as defined in §5-10-2 of this code, was earned as a 911 personnel. All credited service standing to the transferring 911 personnel's credit in the Public Employees Retirement System at the time of transfer into this plan shall be transferred into the plan created by this article, and the transferring 911 personnel shall be given the same credit for

the purposes of this article for all service transferred from the Public Employees Retirement System as that transferring 911 personnel would have received from the Public Employees Retirement System as if the transfer had not occurred but with accrued benefit multipliers subject to the provisions of §16-5V-12 of this code. In connection with each transferring 911 personnel receiving credit for prior employment as provided in this subsection, a transfer from the Public Employees Retirement System to this plan shall be made pursuant to the procedures described in this article: *Provided*, That any member of this plan who has elected to transfer from the Public Employees Retirement System into this plan pursuant to subsection (g) of this section may not, after having transferred into and becoming an active member of this plan, reinstate to his or her credit in this plan any service credit relating to periods in which the member was not in covered employment as a 911 personnel and which service was withdrawn from the Public Employees Retirement System prior to his or her elective transfer into this plan.

(i) Once made, the election made under this section is irrevocable. All 911 personnel electing to become members as described in this section, shall be members as a condition of employment and shall make the contributions required by this article.