

If you are receiving any other SSA benefits, contact SERS immediately. Certain SSA benefits may lead to a larger repayment to SERS. When you reach your full Social Security retirement age, your SERS disability payment will be reduced by the amount of your Social Security pension benefit.

Investigation of Disability Claims

After you receive your first disability payment, the Disability Section may contact you by mail to obtain any information that was not included on your benefit application.

Every January and July a new medical form will be sent to you which must be completed by your physician. An exam is not required if you have seen your physician within the last two months, however the form must be completed and returned to SERS.

Included with the medical form is a Certification of Disability form certifying that you have not earned more than the monthly earnings limitation while receiving your SERS disability benefit.

During your disability, you may be contacted regarding your disability, current medical treatment, and other daily activities. You may also be asked to undergo an independent medical examination. Your cooperation is vital to this disability investigation process.

Working While Disabled

You can work outside of state government and earn up to the calendar quarterly earnings limitation without disrupting your disability benefit.

It is important to remember that you cannot earn more than the calendar quarterly earnings limitation, nor return to work for the State.

If you exceed the calendar quarterly earnings limitation, an overpayment of disability benefits will result. Call the Disability Section at 217-785-7318 if you have questions or need assistance with any aspect of your disability benefit.

Non-Occupational Disability Benefits



TIER 1

*for members hired
before January 1, 2011*



The SERS Disability Section will assist you with your disability claim and process your application as quickly as possible because we do not want the disability application process to create any additional burdens on you. The processing time depends on how quickly you and your agency return the necessary forms to us.

After you receive your first disability check, all future checks are mailed on the 19th of the month, paying you for the previous month. If the 19th falls on the weekend or a state holiday, your check will be mailed on the last working day before the 19th.

To Become Eligible for Non-Occupational Disability Benefits, the Employee Must Meet the Following Conditions:

1. You must have 18 months of creditable service with SERS (Teachers' or State Universities Retirement Systems service can be used to establish 18 months with SERS).
2. All accrued sick days must be used.
3. A medical leave of absence must be granted by your agency.
4. Benefits start 31 days after your absence from work, or the day after you were last paid, whichever occurs last. If your application is not received within 90 days after you are removed from the payroll, benefits will begin on the date the application is received.

5. You must have a medical report submitted to our office by a licensed medical doctor.

6. SERS must find you to be disabled from performing your assigned job duties.

You may be eligible for non-occupational disability benefits while on a maternity leave from your agency. Contact SERS for details.

Non-Occupational Disability Benefits Terminate When One of the Following Events Occur:

1. Your disability has ceased.
2. You resume gainful employment.
3. Your disability payments have been made for a period of time equal to 1/2 of your earned service credit.
4. Up to five years has passed since the beginning of your benefit—if your benefit began after you became age 60.
5. You become age 65—if your benefit began prior to age 60.
6. You fail to cooperate with SERS.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY SERS IMMEDIATELY IF YOU RESUME GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

Disability and Social Security

You may be eligible for Social Security disability benefits if your disability lasts more than twelve months.

SERS contracts with a firm specializing in assisting members through the Social Security disability application process. If your case is accepted by this firm, you will be contacted to begin the application process.



If your case is not accepted, and you remain disabled for more than twelve months, you must apply directly to the Social Security Administration (SSA) for disability benefits. SERS will give you specific directions about the filing process.

While your disability claim is reviewed by the SSA, you receive your full SERS benefit. If you become eligible for Social Security disability benefits, your SERS disability benefit will be reduced by the amount of your Social Security disability benefit.

If your SSA award is retroactive, you may be required to repay SERS the full amount of your award. This lump sum payment must be made from your initial SSA payment. Future increases in Social Security disability benefits will not affect your SERS benefit.