



# Virginia Retirement System **Hybrid Retirement Plan**

Handbook for Members

*Helping You Plan for Tomorrow, Today*

## Virginia Retirement System Hybrid Retirement Plan Handbook for Members

You are covered under the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan if your membership date is on or after January 1, 2014 and you are:

- a general state employee
- an employee who elected the Hybrid Retirement Plan instead of an optional retirement plan (ORP) authorized or administered by VRS
- a teacher or other professional employee of a local public school division
- a general employee of a VRS-participating political subdivision (city, county, town, authority, commission or non-professional employees of a public school division)
- a local law enforcement officer, firefighter or emergency medical technician if your employer does not provide enhanced hazardous duty benefits
- a justice or judge of a court of record of the Commonwealth of Virginia, judge of a district court of the Commonwealth of Virginia other than a substitute judge, or a commissioner of the State Corporation Commission or the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission if you were appointed or elected to an original term on or after January 1, 2014

**If your membership date is before January 1, 2014** and you elected to transfer to the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan from the VRS Plan 1 or the VRS Plan 2, your coverage is effective July 1, 2014. If you were previously employed in a covered position and took a refund of your defined benefit member contributions and interest or withdrew your full account balance in an optional retirement plan (ORP), you will be rehired under the Hybrid Retirement Plan if you return to a position eligible for the plan. If you return to a position providing eligibility for either the hybrid plan or an ORP, you will elect one of these retirement plans upon reemployment.

### Contact VRS

**Website:** [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org)

**Toll-Free Telephone Number:** 1-855-291-2285

**TDD:** 804-289-5919

**Email:** [vrs@varetire.org](mailto:vrs@varetire.org). **Important email notice:** Do not send personal or confidential information, such as your Social Security number, by email. VRS will send only non-confidential replies.

**VRS Retirement Counseling Center:** 1111 East Main Street in downtown Richmond

**VRS Administrative Offices:** 1200 East Main Street in downtown Richmond

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 2500, Richmond, VA 23218-2500

### Contact ICMA-RC

**Website:** [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org)

**Toll-Free Telephone Number:** 1-877-327-5261 – select Option 1

**TDD:** 804-289-5919

**Email:** [vrsemployersupport@icmarc.org](mailto:vrsemployersupport@icmarc.org)

**ICMA-RC Virginia Service Center:** 919 E. Main Street, Richmond, VA 23219

**Mailing Address:** 777 N. Capitol St. NE, Suite 600, Washington, D.C., 20002

**Note:** The information contained in this document is governed by Title 51.1 of the *Code of Virginia*. This information is intended to be general. It cannot be complete in all details and cannot supersede or restrict the authority granted by the *Code of Virginia*, which may be amended from time to time.

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# 1. Welcome to VRS

Helping you prepare to meet your future retirement goals.

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**Plan Eligibility**

**How Your Benefit Works**

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# 1. Welcome to VRS

Plan Eligibility · How Your Benefit Works · What do I do if...

As a member covered under the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) Hybrid Retirement Plan, you have an opportunity to actively prepare for meeting your future retirement needs.

**In practical terms, preparing for retirement is about taking the steps necessary to ensure you can meet your retirement income needs.** Most financial planning experts recommend 80 percent of your current earnings as a retirement income target. The basic components are:

- Your retirement benefit and retirement savings through the defined benefit and defined contribution components of the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan;
- Social Security; and
- Additional savings you put aside for your future. You may be eligible to participate in the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, a 403(b) plan or a tax-deferred savings or supplemental retirement plan your employer may offer. Contact your employer, your financial institution or a financial advisor for more information.

Even if you're not sure what retirement means to you, increasing the amount you save throughout your career and understanding how your plan fits into your financial planning strategy will help you prepare for your future.

## Getting started is easy:

1. Make saving for retirement a regular part of your family budgeting.
2. Take time to learn how to maximize your plan's features to meet your future retirement needs.
3. Take advantage of online planning tools and member education and counseling about your retirement and other VRS benefits, financial planning and investments. These resources are free to members.

**You have plenty of help.** Your employer and VRS are here to support you as you work toward your retirement goals:

- In addition to your own contributions, your employer contributes to the defined benefit and defined contribution components of your plan as well as participates in Social Security. Your employer also helps coordinate your VRS benefits.

- VRS administers retirement and other benefit programs, manages the investments of the VRS fund and pays benefits to you and your beneficiaries. VRS also has partnered with ICMA-RC, a nonprofit independent financial services corporation, to assist you with understanding your investment options and making investment decisions through the defined contribution component of your plan.

**The VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan Handbook for Members is one of your most important resources.** It explains the components of your plan and how they work together to provide for your future retirement. It also describes other benefits that protect you and your loved ones while you are employed and after you retire.

## Plan Eligibility

**You are eligible for the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan if your membership date is on or after January 1, 2014 and you are:**

- a general state employee
- an employee who elected the Hybrid Retirement Plan instead of an optional retirement plan (ORP) authorized or administered by VRS
- a teacher or other professional employee of a local public school division
- a general employee of a VRS-participating political subdivision (city, county, town, authority, commission or non-professional employees of a public school division)
- a local law enforcement officer, firefighter or emergency medical technician if your employer does not provide enhanced hazardous duty benefits
- a justice or judge of a court of record of the Commonwealth of Virginia, judge of a district court of the Commonwealth of Virginia other than a substitute judge, or a commissioner of the State Corporation Commission or the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission if you were appointed or elected to an original term on or after January 1, 2014

**If your membership date is before January 1, 2014** and you elected to transfer to the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan from the VRS Plan 1 or the VRS Plan 2, your coverage is effective July 1, 2014. If you were previously employed in a covered position and took a refund of your defined benefit member contributions and interest or withdrew your full account balance in an optional retirement plan (ORP), you will be rehired under the Hybrid Retirement Plan if you return to a position eligible for the plan. If you return to a position providing eligibility for either the hybrid plan or an ORP, you will elect one of these retirement plans upon reemployment.

**Most positions covered under the hybrid plan** are full-time permanent salaried positions. Some part-time permanent salaried state and non-adjunct faculty positions requiring at least 20 hours but fewer than 40 hours a week also are covered under the hybrid plan.

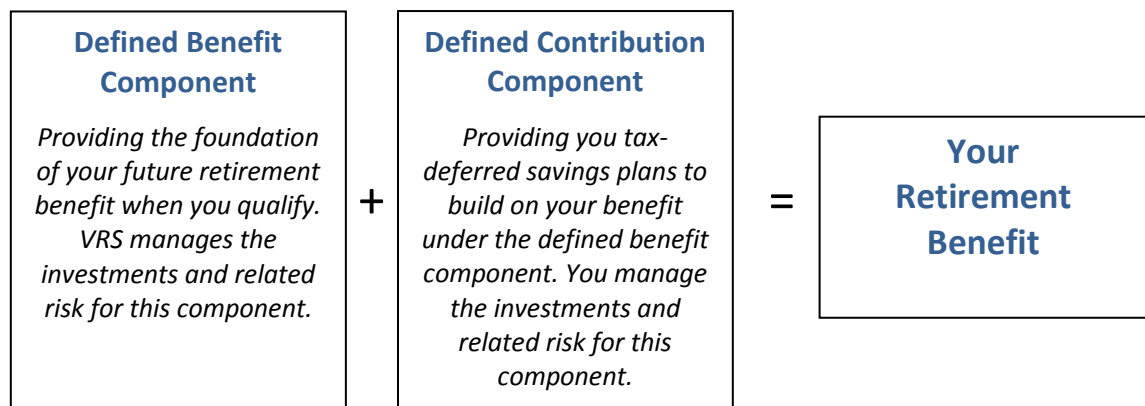
### You are not eligible for the Hybrid Retirement Plan if:

- You are returning to VRS-covered employment and have creditable service under the defined benefit Plan 1 or Plan 2;
- Your position is covered under the State Police Officers' Retirement System (SPORS) or the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System (VaLORS);
- You are a local law enforcement officer, firefighter or emergency medical technician and your employer provides enhanced hazardous duty benefits; or
- You are a member of the Judicial Retirement System (JRS) appointed or elected to an original term before January 1, 2014.

For more information about your plan, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

### Here's how your plan works to provide for your future benefit. \*

A hybrid retirement plan is a combination of two types of plans: a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan. These plans form the components of the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan:




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\* Some provisions described in the following section are subject to pending technical amendments to the current provisions in the *Code of Virginia*.



	Defined Benefit (DB) Component	Defined Contribution (DC) Component
<p><b>How is the benefit determined?</b></p> <p><i>See Chapter 2 - Your Retirement.</i></p>	<p>Under this component, the benefit is determined (“defined”) by a formula based on your age, years of creditable service and average final compensation at retirement. This benefit is paid monthly after you retire. Average final compensation is the average of your 60 consecutive months of highest creditable compensation as a covered employee.</p>	<p>Under this component, the benefit is determined (“defined”) by the amount of contributions and net investment earnings on contributions. You select a distribution (payment) option at retirement.</p>
<p><b>Where does the money come from?</b></p> <p><i>Your contributions to both components are tax deferred until you receive them as part of your retirement benefit or as a refund or distribution.</i></p> <p><i>See Chapter 2 - Your Retirement.</i></p>	<p>You contribute a mandatory 4 percent of your creditable compensation each month to your defined benefit member contribution account. Your employer makes a separate contribution directly to VRS on behalf of all covered employees. VRS manages the investments and related risk for member and employer contributions under this component.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If your membership date is before January 1, 2014 and you elected to transfer to the Hybrid Retirement Plan from the VRS Plan 1 or the VRS Plan 2, your member contribution account may include member contributions paid by your employer.</p>	<p>The defined contribution component provides two plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan</b>, which is a defined contribution plan. You contribute a mandatory 1 percent of your creditable compensation each month to your 401(a) plan account. Your employer also contributes a mandatory 1 percent as well as matching contributions on any voluntary contributions you make, which are deposited to this account. You invest these contributions through your hybrid 401(a) plan.</li> <li>• <b>Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan</b>, which allows you to accumulate additional voluntary contributions you make tax free until you leave or retire and withdraw the money from your plan. The maximum amount of voluntary contributions you can contribute is 4 percent of your creditable compensation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Total Possible Hybrid Retirement Plan Contributions</b></p>		

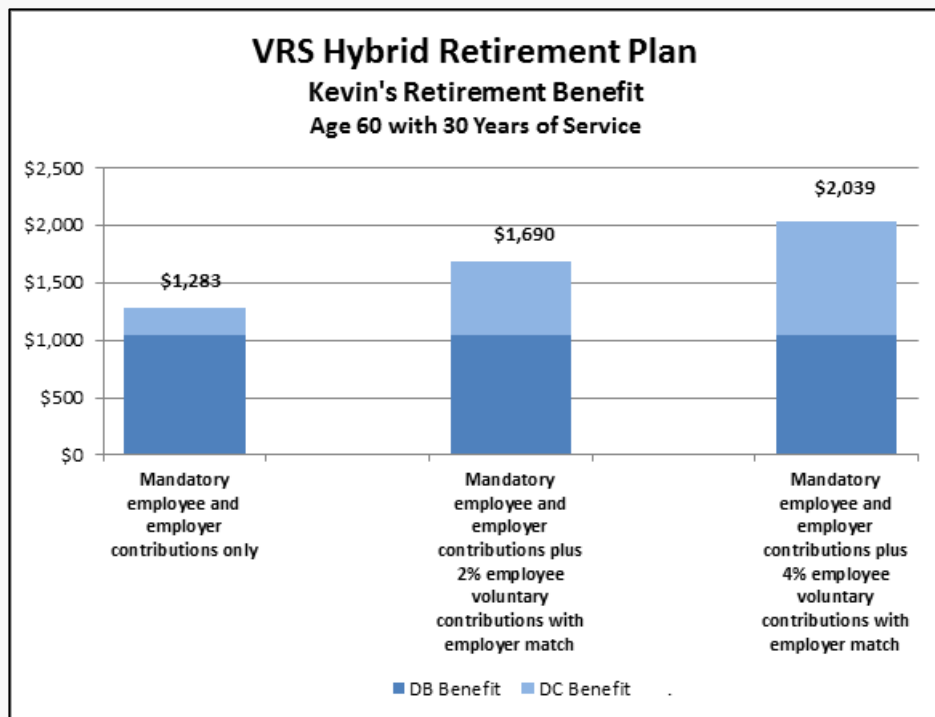
Your Contributions		Your Employer's Contributions	
Defined benefit mandatory contributions	4.00%	Defined benefit mandatory contributions	Actuarially determined rate
Defined contribution mandatory contributions	1.00%	Defined contribution mandatory contributions	1.00%
Defined contribution voluntary contributions if you contribute the maximum amount	Up to 4.00%	Defined contribution employer matching contributions if you contribute additional voluntary contributions	Up to 2.50%
<b>Total Possible Member Contributions</b>	<b>9.00%</b>	<b>Total Employer Contributions</b>	<b>Actuarially determined rate, which includes contributions to the DC 401(a) and 457 plans, up to 3.50%</b>

	Defined Benefit (DB) Component	Defined Contribution (DC) Component
<p><b>When do I qualify for retirement under the Hybrid Retirement Plan?</b></p> <p><i>See Chapter 2 - Your Retirement.</i></p>	<p>You qualify for an unreduced retirement when you reach your normal Social Security retirement age and have at least five years of creditable service or when your age and service equal 90 (Rule of 90). <i>Example:</i> Age 60 with 30 years of creditable service.</p> <p>You can retire with a reduced benefit as early as age 60 if you have at least five years of creditable service.</p>	<p>Upon retiring or leaving employment, you can withdraw 100 percent of your hybrid 457 deferred compensation plan account balance.</p> <p>You also are eligible to withdraw your Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan account balance. Withdrawals of your 401(a) employer contributions and net investment earnings on employer contributions are subject to a vesting schedule (see "When do I become vested?").</p> <p>There are a variety of distribution options under the defined contribution component.</p>

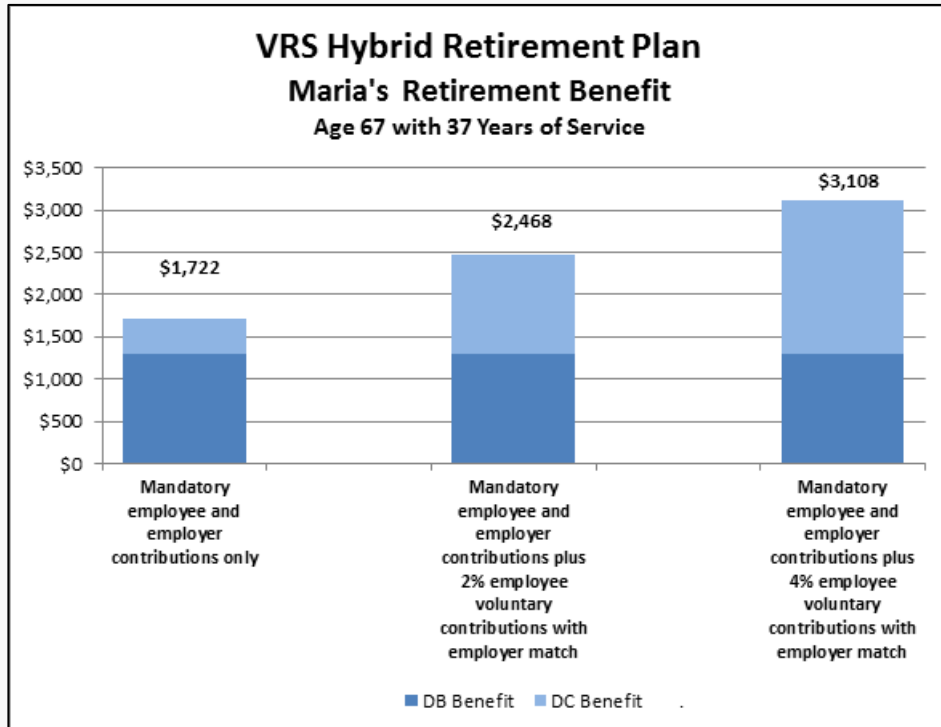
Here's how the two components work together to provide for your future retirement benefit:

Your Hybrid Retirement Plan benefit can increase when you make additional voluntary contributions to the defined contribution (DC) component of the plan. In each example below, the graph shows, first, the mandatory contributions only, then the increased value when adding 2 percent voluntary contributions and 4 percent voluntary contributions.

**Kevin's retirement.** Kevin was hired at age 30. His salary increases have averaged 2 percent per year. He is retiring at age 60 with 30 years of creditable service (Rule of 90) and an average final compensation of \$42,000, giving him a monthly benefit payable from the defined benefit component of \$1,050.



**Maria's retirement.** Like Kevin, Maria was hired at age 30 and has received salary increases averaging 2 percent per year. She is retiring at age 67, her normal Social Security retirement age, with 37 years of creditable service and an average final compensation of \$42,000, giving her a monthly retirement from the defined benefit component of \$1,295.



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**Defined Benefit (DB) Component**
**Defined Contribution (DC)  
Component**


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**When do I  
become  
vested?**

*See Chapter 2 -  
Your Retirement.*

You become vested when you have at least five years (60 months) of creditable service.

Vesting is one of the requirements for retirement under the defined benefit component. If you leave employment and request a refund, you will receive your own contributions and interest; vesting will be required to receive any contributions made by your employer to your member contribution account after July 1, 2010 and the interest on these contributions (see p. 12, "If I leave employment before retirement, what are my options").

**Note:** If your membership date is before January 1, 2014 and you elected to transfer to the Hybrid Retirement Plan from the VRS Plan 1 or the VRS Plan 2, your member contribution account may have some member contributions paid by your employer.

You are immediately vested to any funds that you contribute to the hybrid plan, this includes all voluntary contributions you make to the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan as well as the 1 percent mandatory contributions you make to the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan.

You become vested to funds your employer contributes over a period of four years according to the following schedule:

- If you have fewer than two years of creditable service, you will forfeit the employer contributions and net investment earnings on these contributions upon leaving employment.
- After two years of creditable service, you will be 50 percent vested in the employer contributions and may be eligible to withdraw 50 percent of these contributions plus net investment earnings.
- After three years of creditable service, you will be 75 percent vested in the employer contributions and may be eligible to withdraw 75 percent of these contributions plus net investment earnings.
- After four or more years of creditable service, you will be 100 percent vested in the employer contributions and may be eligible to withdraw 100 percent of these contributions plus net investment earnings.

**Creditable service** includes active service as well as credit for any service you may purchase or additional service you may be granted. Creditable service counts toward vesting under the defined benefit and defined contribution components of the Hybrid Retirement Plan.

Defined Benefit (DB) Component	Defined Contribution (DC) Component
<p><b>If I leave employment before retirement, what are my options?</b></p> <p><i>See Chapter 2 - Your Retirement, and Chapter 4 - If You Leave Employment Before Retirement.</i></p> <p>You can take a refund of your defined benefit member contributions and interest. Taking a refund cancels your VRS membership and eligibility for any future VRS benefits.</p> <p>You must be vested (have at least five years of creditable service) to be eligible for any member contributions in your account made by your employer after July 1, 2010 and the interest on these contributions, unless you are involuntarily separated from employment for causes other than job performance or misconduct.</p> <p>You have the option of leaving your member contributions and interest with VRS and becoming a deferred member. As a deferred member, you will retain your VRS membership and eligibility for any future benefits.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> If you leave employment and wish to withdraw your retirement money, you are not required to withdraw all of your account balances. You can withdraw and/or leave your money in one or more of your accounts under either component of your plan.</p>	<p>You can withdraw 100 percent of your Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan account balance. You also are eligible to withdraw your Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan account balance. Withdrawals of your 401(a) employer contributions and net investment earnings on employer contributions are subject to a vesting schedule (see p. 11, “When do I become vested?”). There are several distribution options.</p> <p>You have the option of leaving your money in your hybrid 401(a) plan and/or your hybrid 457 plan and continuing to manage your investments.</p>
<p><b>Am I eligible to participate in an employer-sponsored tax-deferred savings or supplemental retirement plan?</b></p> <p><i>See Defined Contribution Component in Chapter 2 - Your Retirement.</i></p>	<p>Saving on a tax-deferred basis is one of the easiest ways to put aside additional income for retirement. You may be eligible to participate in the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, a 403(b) plan or another tax-deferred savings or supplemental retirement plan your employer may offer.</p> <p>If your employer participates in the Virginia Cash Match Plan or offers a matching contribution through another plan, you are eligible for the employer match only after your voluntary contribution is greater than the maximum (4 percent) being contributed to your hybrid 457 plan (see “Where does the money come from?”).</p> <p>If your employer does not provide a savings or supplemental plan, consider saving through another retirement vehicle. Contact your financial institution or a financial advisor for more information.</p>

	<b>Defined Benefit (DB) Component</b>	<b>Defined Contribution (DC) Component</b>
<p><b>Are my contributions portable?</b></p> <p><i>See Chapter 4 - If You Leave Employment Before Retirement.</i></p>	<p>If you are moving to a non-VRS participating Virginia public employer with which VRS has a portability agreement, you can arrange to transfer your assets in the defined benefit component to your new employer's plan. VRS has portability agreements with the City of Charlottesville, City of Danville, City of Newport News, City of Norfolk, City of Richmond, City of Roanoke and Fairfax County.</p> <p>You can request a rollover of your defined benefit member contributions and interest to an individual plan that accepts rollovers, such as a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA).</p>	<p>Your contributions and net investment earnings in your Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan are fully portable. You can transfer 100 percent of your hybrid 457 plan balance to another employer's plan.</p> <p>You also can transfer the vested portion of your Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan balance to another employer's plan. Your 401(a) employer contributions and net investment earnings on employer contributions are subject to a vesting schedule (see "When do I become vested?").</p> <p>You can request a rollover of your defined contribution plan account balances to an individual plan that accepts rollovers, such as a traditional Individual Retirement Account. The vesting schedule will apply to employer contributions and investment earnings in your 401(a) plan.</p>
<p><b>If I die while I am an active member, will my beneficiary or survivor receive a benefit?</b></p> <p><i>Beneficiary designations for your accounts under each component are separate.</i></p> <p><i>See Chapter 3 - Protection for You and Your Loved Ones.</i></p>	<p>Your named beneficiary or your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent may be eligible for a death-in-service benefit under the defined benefit component. The benefit may be a refund of your member contributions and interest, a monthly benefit or both. This is in addition to any VRS group life insurance benefits you may have.</p>	<p>Your named beneficiary or survivor may be eligible for a distribution from your plans in the defined contribution component. There are a variety of distribution options.</p>

Defined Benefit (DB) Component	Defined Contribution (DC) Component
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**Do I have other benefits in addition to retirement?**

*Note: You must maintain your defined benefit member contribution account to remain eligible for other VRS benefits.*

*See Chapter 3 - Protection for You and Your Loved Ones.*

**Other VRS benefits include**

- Coverage under the VRS Group Life Insurance Program if your employer provides this program.
- If you are a state employee you are eligible for disability and long-term care coverage through the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP). There are qualifying periods for some disability benefits. For more information, please refer to the VSDP handbook.
- If you are a school division or a political subdivision employee, disability and long-term care coverage through the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) if your employer provides this program. There are qualifying periods for some disability benefits. You are not covered under VLDP if your employer provides a comparable disability program. For more information, please refer to the VLDP handbook.
- Opportunity to purchase additional long-term care coverage at group rates through the Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program if your employer participates in this program.
- A health insurance credit in retirement if offered by your employer.

**Contact your human resource office for more information about your other benefit coverage.**



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## What to do if I...

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### How do I access my member information?

See *Financial Planning Tools and Resources in Chapter 2 - Your Retirement.*

**myVRS** provides secure online access to information from your VRS record. That includes your current creditable service, defined benefit member contribution account balance, account balances under the defined contribution component and account balances in your Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, if you participate in this plan. Thirty days after enrollment, you can create a secure online account by selecting **myVRS Access** from the VRS website at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

### How do I update my personal information or beneficiary designation?

For more information about beneficiary designations, see *Chapter 3 - Protection for You and Your Loved Ones.*

If you change your name, your human resource office will handle updating your record. Your human resource office also can assist you with a change of address, or you can change your address by updating your Personal Profile in **myVRS**.

You can designate a beneficiary or beneficiaries for your accounts under the defined benefit and defined contribution components of your plan as well as the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, if you participate in this plan. These designations are separate; however, you can name the same beneficiary (or beneficiaries) for all accounts or different beneficiaries for each account. Forms to make your defined contribution component designations are available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) under the *Defined Contribution Plans* tab.

**If your personal or family situation changes, review your beneficiary designations as soon as possible.** VRS is required by law to pay benefits according to the latest beneficiary designation in your record. If there is no valid beneficiary designation on file at the time of your death, VRS will be required to pay benefits according to legal order of precedence in the *Code of Virginia*.

### How do I make arrangements for someone to act on my behalf?

See *VRS Durable Power of Attorney in Chapter 3 - Protection for You and Your Loved Ones.*

If you no longer can take actions on your own behalf, an agent named under a power of attorney can act on your behalf. To name an individual as your agent for VRS matters, submit a VRS Durable Power of Attorney (VRS-901). The form is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

### Want to know more about your benefits as a retiree?

See *Chapter 5 - Benefits in*

In addition to a retirement benefit, you are eligible to qualify for a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for your benefit under the defined benefit component during years a COLA is provided. You also may qualify for other VRS retiree benefits.

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*Retirement at a  
Glance.*

**Have a question or need assistance?** For the defined benefit component, contact your human resource office or call VRS toll-free at 1-855-291-2285. For the defined contribution component, call toll free 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261-select Option 1) and ask to speak to an Investor Services Representative.

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## Benefit Information and Planning Resources at a Glance

### Member Resources and Education at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org)

The VRS website at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) is your online resource for secure access to your member information as well as financial and retirement planning tools. You also can find the latest publications and forms, and sign up for member education sessions offered online and on-site. These resources are free to members.

### Counseling

- **Defined benefit component.** Meet with a counselor at the VRS Retirement Counseling Center at 1111 East Main Street in downtown Richmond. Sessions are held on a first-come, first-served basis with limited scheduled appointments available. The hours are 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Go to [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) for directions to the center and the parking deck.
- **Defined contribution component.** VRS has contracted with ICMA-RC as the third-party record keeper for the defined contribution component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan and other defined contribution plans administered by VRS. ICMA-RC's services include education and counseling about your investment and distribution options under this component. To speak to a Defined Contribution Plans Retirement Specialist, call toll free at 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261 select Option 2).

### Other Key Contacts

- American Association of Retired Persons: 1-888-OUR-AARP (1-888-687-2277); [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)
- Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield (State Employees): 1-800-552-2682; [www.anthem.com/cova](http://www.anthem.com/cova)
- Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Defined Contribution Plan: 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261-select Option 1).
- Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program: Genworth Life, 1-866-859-6060; [www.genworth.com/cov](http://www.genworth.com/cov)
- Group Life Insurance Program: Minnesota Life, 1-800-441-2258
- Internal Revenue Service: 1-800-829-1040; [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)
- Medicare: 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227); [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)
- Social Security Administration: 1-800-772-1213; [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (state employees): [www.dhrm.virginia.gov](http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov)
- Virginia Department of Taxation: 804-367-8031; [www.tax.virginia.gov](http://www.tax.virginia.gov)
- Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) for School Division and Political Subdivision Employees if provided by your employer: Unum, 1-877-225-2712; [www.unum.com/claimant](http://www.unum.com/claimant); VLDP Long-Term Care Plan: Long Term Care Group, Inc., 1-800-761-4057. Contact your human resource office regarding your disability coverage.
- Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP) for State Employees: Unum, 1-800-652-5602; [www.unum.com/claimant](http://www.unum.com/claimant); VSDP Long-Term Care Plan: Long Term Care Group, Inc., 1-800-761-4057
- Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission: 1-877-664-2566; [www.vwc.state.va.us](http://www.vwc.state.va.us)

## About VRS

**Plan:** The Virginia Retirement System (VRS) administers defined benefit, defined contribution and hybrid plans qualified under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, based on a plan year July 1 to June 30.

**Administration:** VRS is an independent state agency. As provided under the *Constitution of Virginia*, VRS funds are separate from other state funds and can be used only to administer and pay benefits for members, retirees and beneficiaries. Benefit plans include defined benefit plans through VRS, the State Police Officers' Retirement System (SPORS), the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System (VaLORS) and the Judicial Retirement System (JRS); the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan; defined contribution plans, including optional retirement plans for certain employees and the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation and Cash Match Plans; VRS Group Life Insurance Program; Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP) and VSDP Long-Term Care Plan for state employees; Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) and VLDP Long-Term Care Plan for eligible school division and political subdivision employees; Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program; disability retirement option for members not covered under VSDP or VLDP; and the Retiree Health Insurance Credit Program.

A board of trustees administers the investment program and benefit plans of VRS. Nine members serve on the VRS Board of Trustees. Their appointment is shared between the executive and legislative branches of state government. The Governor appoints five members, including the chairman. The Joint Rules Committee of the Virginia General Assembly appoints four members. The General Assembly confirms all appointments. Of the nine Board members, four must be investment experts; one must be experienced in employee benefit plans; one must be a local government employee; one must be an employee of a Virginia public institution of higher education; one must be a state employee; and one must be a public school teacher. The public employee members may be active or retired. The following individuals currently serve on the Board of Trustees:

Diana F. Cantor, Chairman  
Robert L. Greene, Vice Chairman  
A. Marshall Acuff Jr.  
Edwin T. Burton III, Ph.D.  
Wallace G. "Bo" Harris, Ph.D.

W. Brett Hayes  
Mitchell L. Nason  
Troilen Gainey Seward, Ed.S.  
Colette Sheehy

The Board appoints the director of the Virginia Retirement System, as well as the chief investment officer and the internal audit director. The following individuals currently serve in these positions: Robert P. Schultze, Director; Ronald D. Schmitz, Chief Investment Officer; and Franklin O. Berry, Internal Audit Director.

**Employees Eligible for Membership:** Membership in VRS is automatic with employment in a covered position. Covered employment is a full-time permanent, salaried position with a VRS-participating employer. Some part-time permanent, salaried state positions also are covered under VRS. Participating employers include state agencies, public colleges and universities, local public school divisions and political subdivisions that have elected to participate in VRS.

**VRS' Relationship with Employers:** VRS administers benefits on behalf of employers that participate in VRS. Employers are not agents of VRS nor do they act at the direction of VRS. A list of participating employers is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

## 2. Your Retirement\*

Learn more about your plan and the member resources available to help you arrive at your retirement destination.

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**Defined Benefit Component: The Foundation of Your Retirement Benefit**

**Purchase of Prior Service**

**Defined Contribution Component: Building Your Retirement Benefit**

**Financial and Retirement Planning Resources: Planning Your Retirement Destination**

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\* Some provisions described in this chapter are subject to pending technical amendments to the current provisions in the *Code of Virginia*.

## Defined Benefit Component

### The Foundation of Your Retirement Benefit

[Retirement Contributions](#) · [Creditable Service](#) · [Purchase of Prior Service](#) · [Vesting and Eligibility for Retirement](#) · [Calculating the Defined Benefit](#) · [Benefit Payout Options](#) · [Death-in-Service Benefits](#)

The defined benefit component of the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan provides the foundation of your retirement benefit. The benefit under this component is based on your age, total creditable service and average final compensation at retirement.

VRS manages the investments and related risk for member and employer contributions under this component. If you are eligible for retirement, you will receive this benefit monthly over your lifetime. On this foundation you will build retirement income through the defined contribution component of your plan to meet your retirement goals.

### Retirement Contributions

The defined benefit component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan is funded through contributions you make to your member contribution account and a separate contribution your employer makes to VRS on behalf of hybrid covered employees. These funds are held in a trust protected by the *Constitution of Virginia*. This trust may be used only to administer and pay benefits for VRS members, retirees and beneficiaries.

#### What is creditable compensation?

Creditable compensation is your salary reported to VRS by your employer. It does not include payments for overtime, temporary duties or extra duties, such as coaching or special advising if you are a teacher. It also does not include payments such as bonuses.

#### Your Contributions

You contribute a mandatory 4 percent of your creditable compensation each month to your defined benefit member contribution account on a pre-tax salary reduction basis. Your contributions are tax deferred until you withdraw them as part of your retirement benefit or as a refund. Your member contribution account accrues 4 percent interest, which is compounded annually on the balance as of the previous June 30. The *Code of Virginia* prohibits borrowing from your member contribution account.

#### If your membership date is before January 1, 2014

and you elected to transfer to the Hybrid Retirement Plan from the VRS Plan 1 or the VRS Plan 2, your member contribution account may have employer-paid member contributions and interest. Contact your human resource office for more information.

If you leave your position before retirement, you can request a refund of your member contributions and interest. If you are vested (you have at least five years of creditable service) or involuntarily separated from employment for causes other than job performance or misconduct, you will receive a full refund of your account balance, including any member contributions made to your account by your employer after July 1, 2010 and the interest on these contributions. If you are not vested, you will forfeit these employer-paid member contributions and interest, if any.

**Learn more about your options if you leave your job.** See Chapter 4 - If You Leave Employment Before Retirement.

**Taking a refund cancels your VRS membership and eligibility for any future VRS benefits.**

### Your Employer's Contributions

The separate contributions your employer makes directly to VRS are based on the payroll of all covered employees. The VRS actuary determines the rate your employer pays. This rate is based on several factors, including the number of employees eligible for benefits; the number of retired employees; and employee salaries, ages and mortality rates and the investment returns. You are not eligible for a refund of the separate employer contributions.

**Learn more about beneficiary designations for your accounts under the defined benefit and defined contribution components.** See Chapter 3 - Protection for You and Your Loved Ones.

## Creditable Service

You earn service for each month you are working in a covered position and are being reported to VRS by your employer. This is called "creditable service." In addition to active service, it can include credit for prior service you may purchase or additional service you may be granted.

Creditable service is one of the factors used to determine your eligibility for retirement and to calculate your retirement benefit under the defined benefit component. It also counts toward vesting in the defined benefit and defined contribution components of your plan.

**If you are a justice or judge of the Commonwealth of Virginia or a commissioner of the State Corporation Commission or the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission appointed or elected to an original term on or after January 1, 2014,** you receive one month of service credit multiplied by a weighting factor for each month you are serving in this position. The weighting factors are 1.5 if you were appointed or elected before age 45; 2.0 if you were appointed or elected between ages 45 and 54; or 2.5 if you were appointed or elected at age 55 or older.

**Covered employment** is a full-time permanent salaried position with a VRS-participating employer. Some part-time permanent salaried state and non-adjunct faculty positions requiring at least 20 hours but fewer than 40 hours a week also are covered under VRS.

**Non-covered employment** is a part-time position with a VRS-participating employer. Non-covered positions do not provide eligibility for benefits. Part-time positions typically require less than 80 percent of the hours of comparable full-time permanent positions. Some full-time positions may be considered non-covered if they are temporary and require less than 80 percent of the hours per year that would be considered full-time and permanent for that position.

## Vesting and Eligibility for Retirement

You become vested in the defined benefit component of your plan when you have at least five years (60 months) of creditable service. Vesting under this component means you are eligible to qualify for retirement, if you meet the age and service requirements for your plan, or to receive a full refund of your member contribution account balance, if you leave employment before retirement and request a refund.

**If you are a VRS Plan 1 or Plan 2 member and opt-in to the Hybrid Retirement Plan**, be sure to include any contributions in your defined benefit account made by your employer after July 1, 2010 and the interest on these contributions when calculating vesting and eligibility for retirement.

**Is your membership date before January 1, 2014?** If you elected to transfer to the Hybrid Retirement Plan from the VRS Plan 1 or VRS Plan 2 and have at least five years of creditable service by July 1, 2014, you will be vested in the defined benefit component of your plan. If you have fewer than five years of service by July 1, 2014, you will need to earn the remaining service to become vested. *Example:* If you have three years of defined benefit creditable service by July 1, 2014, you must accrue two more years of service to become vested in the defined benefit component.

### Eligibility for Retirement

**Unreduced retirement.** You become eligible for an unreduced retirement benefit under the defined benefit component when you reach your normal Social Security retirement age and have at least five years of creditable service or when your age and service equal 90 (Rule of 90). *Example:* Age 60 with 30 years of creditable service.

Year of Birth	Normal Retirement Age	Year of Birth	Normal Retirement Age
1937 or earlier	65 years	1955	66 + 2 months
1938	65 + 2 months	1956	66 + 4 months
1939	65 + 4 months	1957	66 + 6 months
1940	65 + 6 months	1958	66 + 8 months
1941	65 + 8 months	1959	66 + 10 months
1942	65 + 10 months	1960 or later	67 years
1943-54	66 years		

**Reduced retirement.** You may retire with a reduced benefit as early as age 60 if you have at least five years of creditable service. To determine your reduced benefit, VRS will apply an early retirement reduction factor to the benefit you would receive if you retired with an unreduced benefit.



## Calculating the Defined Benefit

The retirement benefit under the defined benefit component of your plan is calculated using the following formula:

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Average Final Compensation} \\ \text{X} \\ \text{1.0\%} \\ \text{(Retirement Multiplier)} \\ \text{X} \\ \text{Total Creditable Service} \\ \text{=} \\ \text{Annual Basic Benefit amount} \end{array}$$

**Average final compensation** is the average of your 60 consecutive months of highest creditable compensation as a covered employee. **Creditable compensation** is your salary reported to VRS by your employer. It does not include payments for overtime, temporary duties or extra duties, such as pay for coaching or special advising if you are a teacher. It does not include additional payments such as bonuses.

### Average Final Compensation Example

60 consecutive months (five years) of highest creditable compensation over your career	\$ 40,650
	41,463
	42,293
	42,455
	43,139
Total	\$ 210,000
	÷ 5
<b>Average final compensation</b>	<b>\$ 42,000</b>

### Defined Benefit Multiplier for Opt-In Members

For members who opt into the Hybrid Retirement Plan, the defined benefit multiplier will change to reflect the period under which the member earned the service.

A Plan 1 member who opts into the Hybrid Retirement Plan would have a 1.7- percent multiplier applied to any service earned, purchased or granted prior to July 1, 2014 and a 1 percent multiplier applied to any earned, purchased or granted service that occurs after July 1, 2014.

Plan 2 members who opt into the Hybrid Retirement Plan would have a 1.7 percent multiplier applied to any earned, purchased or granted service that occurred prior to January 1, 2013, a 1.65 percent multiplier for the service that occurs between January 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, and a 1 percent multiplier for service after July 1, 2014.

## Unreduced Basic Benefit Calculation Examples

The following examples are in today's dollars.

### Kevin's Benefit

Kevin is retiring under the Rule of 90 at age 60 with 30 years of creditable service.

Average final compensation	\$ 42,000.00 <sup>1</sup>
x 1.0% retirement multiplier <sup>2</sup>	x .01
x Years of creditable service at retirement	x 30
<b>Annual benefit amount</b>	<b>\$ 12,600.00</b>
÷ 12 months	÷ 12
<b>Monthly benefit amount before taxes and other deductions</b>	<b>\$ 1,050.00</b>

### Maria's Benefit

Maria is retiring at age 67, her Social Security normal retirement age, with 37 years of creditable service.

Average final compensation	\$ 42,000.00 <sup>1</sup>
x 1.0% retirement multiplier <sup>2</sup>	x .01
x Years of creditable service at retirement	x 37
<b>Annual benefit amount</b>	<b>\$ 15,540.00</b>
÷ 12 months	÷ 12
<b>Monthly benefit amount before taxes and other deductions</b>	<b>\$ 1,295.00</b>

**What is a retirement multiplier?** A retirement multiplier is a factor that determines how much of your average final compensation will be used to calculate your benefit under the defined benefit component of your plan.

**See Defined Contribution Component for how Kevin and Maria will build on their benefit.**

<sup>1</sup>The Internal Revenue Code limits the amount of compensation that may be used to calculate retirement benefits. The current limits are \$255,000 for those whose membership date is on or after April 9, 1996 and \$380,000 for those whose membership date is before April 9, 1996.

<sup>2</sup>If you were employed before January 1, 2014 and elected to transfer to the Hybrid Retirement Plan, service you earned, purchased or were granted prior to January 1, 2014 will be based on different retirement multipliers. For more information, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

## Benefit Payout Options

When you apply for retirement, you choose how you want to receive your benefit. The payout options are the Basic Benefit, Survivor Option, Partial Lump-Sum Option Payment (PLOP) and Advance Pension Option. **The option you elect is irrevocable;** you cannot change it after you retire, with the exception of the Survivor Option under some conditions.

**The retirement benefit begins following a bona fide break in service.** A bona fide break in service is a break of at least one full calendar month from your last day of employment that occurs over a period you normally would work. Leave with or without pay, summer breaks, intersession periods, educational leave and sabbaticals do not count toward satisfying this break in service.

### Basic Benefit

The Basic Benefit is a monthly benefit in retirement based on a formula (see “Vesting and Eligibility for Retirement”). You can elect this option with an unreduced or reduced benefit. If you retire with a reduced benefit, VRS will first determine the amount of your unreduced benefit and then apply an early retirement reduction factor to calculate your reduced benefit.

The Basic Benefit does not provide a continuation of a benefit to a survivor. However, any balance remaining in your member contribution account upon your death will be paid in a lump sum to your named beneficiary.

### Survivor Option

With this option, you elect to receive a lower monthly benefit during your retirement so that your survivor can receive a monthly benefit after your death. You can elect this option with an unreduced or a reduced benefit. You will choose a whole percentage of your benefit, between 10 percent and 100 percent, to go to your survivor. A survivor reduction factor will be applied to your unreduced benefit amount based on the percentage you choose to continue to a survivor, your age and the age of your survivor at your retirement date.

**Naming a survivor.** You can name any living person as your survivor; you also can name more than one survivor. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may limit the amount of your benefit that can go to a non-spouse survivor. Additional information, including a chart on maximum survivor option percentages, is available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

After you retire, you can name a new survivor or revert to the Basic Benefit under one of the following conditions. You can change your survivor only once when:

- Your survivor dies;
- Your survivor is your spouse and you divorce with fewer than 20 years of marriage;

**How do contributions and interest finance my benefit under the defined benefit component?** When you retire, your benefit is paid first from your member contribution account. After these funds have been paid out, your benefit is paid from the separate contributions your employer makes to VRS and investment earnings.

**Learn more about beneficiary designations.** See Chapter 3 - Protection for You and Your Loved Ones.

- Your survivor is your spouse, you divorce after 20 or more years of marriage, and your spouse dies, remarries or consents in writing to a change in benefit; or
- You provide VRS a written consent from your survivor giving up claim to a benefit along with proof of your survivor's good health.

**Note:** If VRS has an Approved Domestic Relations Order (ADRO) on file, your benefit will be paid as directed by the ADRO. For more information, see [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

### Partial Lump-Sum Option Payment (PLOP)

If you work at least one year beyond the date you first become eligible for an unreduced retirement benefit, you can elect to receive a one-time Partial Lump-Sum Option Payment (PLOP) with the Basic Benefit or Survivor Option. This option reduces the amount of your monthly benefit and will reduce the balance in your member contribution account available to your beneficiary upon your death in retirement, if you choose the PLOP with the Basic Benefit. If you choose the PLOP with Survivor Option, your designated survivor will receive a monthly retirement benefit in lieu of a refund of contributions and interest.

### Partial Lump-Sum Payment (PLOP) Amounts

You can choose a lump sum equal to one, two or three times the amount of your annual Basic Benefit. The amount depends on how long you work beyond the date you first become eligible for an unreduced retirement benefit, as shown in the following table:

Active Service after Reaching Unreduced Retirement Eligibility	PLOP Amount	Example <i>Based on an annual Basic Benefit of \$12,600</i>
12 months	1 x annual Basic Benefit amount (one-year PLOP)	\$12,600
24 months	1 or 2 x annual Basic Benefit amount (one- or two-year PLOP)	\$12,600 or \$25,200
36 months or more	1, 2 or 3 x annual Basic Benefit amount (one-, two- or three-year PLOP)	\$12,600, \$25,200 or \$37,800

**Qualifying for the PLOP.** Prior service credit or credit for other service you may be granted counts toward eligibility for unreduced retirement. However, to qualify for a PLOP, you must be working as an active member beyond the date you become eligible for an unreduced retirement benefit. Prior service credit or granted service credit cannot substitute for this active service.

**Taxes on the PLOP.** If you have the PLOP paid directly to you, VRS will deduct 20 percent for federal income taxes and, if you live in Virginia, 4 percent for state income taxes. The IRS also may impose an additional 10 percent tax penalty if you receive the PLOP before age 59½; there are exceptions to this rule. You can roll over the PLOP to a qualified plan that accepts rollovers. For more information, read the

IRS 402(f) Special Tax Notice available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org); or contact a tax advisor or the IRS toll-free at 1-800-829-1040, or [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## Advance Pension Option

With this option, you elect to increase your monthly benefit temporarily. The temporary increase will begin when you retire and continue until an age you choose, between age 62 and the age you become entitled to a full Social Security benefit. At that point, your benefit will be permanently reduced.

You can elect this option with an unreduced retirement benefit or if you retire at age 60 or older and are vested. You cannot elect this option with other benefit payout options. The Advance Pension Option also does not provide a continuation of a benefit to a survivor; however, any balance remaining in your member contribution account will be paid in a lump sum to your named beneficiary upon your death.

**The Advance Pension Option does not affect the amount of your Social Security benefit.** You also may draw your Social Security when you are eligible for it, regardless of the age you choose for your VRS benefit to reduce. For more information about Social Security, visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

**Calculating the Advance Pension Option.** To figure your benefit amount, VRS will add a percentage of your estimated monthly Social Security benefit to your monthly Basic Benefit amount. The percentage is based on several factors, including your age when you retire and the age you want your benefit to permanently reduce. When the temporary increase ends, your benefit will be reduced by the estimated Social Security benefit used to determine your temporary increase. However, it will never be reduced by more than 50 percent of your Basic Benefit amount.

**Estimating and electing the Advance Pension Option.** You will need a Social Security benefit estimate adjusted for purposes of estimating and electing this option. The estimate must be less than 12 months old, assume you will have no future earnings after leaving your position, and be based on your Social Security earnings record. For detailed instructions, go to [www.varetire.org/apo](http://www.varetire.org/apo).

## Benefit Payout Options and the COLA

The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is an annual increase in the retirement benefit under the defined benefit component of your plan, which you will begin receiving after you qualify for the COLA. The VRS COLA is based on the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) and is calculated according to the benefit payout option you elect at retirement:

- For the Basic Benefit or Advance Pension Option, the calculation is based on the Basic Benefit amount.
- For the Basic Benefit with the PLOP, the Survivor Option or the Survivor Option with the PLOP, the calculation is based on the reduced benefit amount.

During years of no inflation or deflation, the COLA will be 0 percent. For more information about the COLA, see Chapter 5 - Benefits in Retirement at a Glance.

## Death-in-Service Benefits

Under the defined benefit component of your plan, a death-in-service benefit is a payment of any member contributions and interest in your defined benefit member contribution account to your named beneficiary or to your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent in the event of your death as an active member (while you are in service). The benefit may be a lump-sum payment, a monthly benefit or both. This payment is in addition to any VRS group life insurance benefits you may have.

[Learn more about distribution options for your beneficiary or survivor under the defined contribution component of your plan.](#)

### Non-Work-Related Cause of Death

If you die while you are an active member from a non-work-related cause, your named beneficiary or your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent will be eligible for a death-in-service benefit according to whether or not you are vested (you have at least five years of creditable service) at the time of your death:

- If you are vested and your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent is one of your named beneficiaries, or is your beneficiary based on order of precedence, he or she will be eligible for a lump-sum payment of any balance remaining in your member contribution account or a monthly benefit to the exclusion of all other primary beneficiaries.
- If you are not vested, your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent will be eligible for a lump-sum payment only, which will be shared with any other primary beneficiaries you have designated.

**Non-work-related monthly benefit calculation.** The non-work-related monthly benefit is calculated based on your average final compensation, your total creditable service, your age and the age of your named beneficiary or your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent at the time of your death. Your age and the age of your named beneficiary or survivor are calculated as follows:

- If you die before age 60, you are presumed to be age 60 for purposes of calculating the benefit. If your named beneficiary or your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent is younger than you, the age difference is subtracted from age 60 to arrive at his or her adjusted age. If your named beneficiary is older than you, the age difference is added to age 60 to arrive at his or her adjusted age.
- If you die at age 60 or older, your age and the actual age of your named beneficiary or your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent are used to calculate the benefit.

### Work-Related Cause of Death

A work-related cause of death is the result of an occupational illness or injury that occurs on the job and the cause is determined to be compensable under the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act. If you die while you are an active member from a work-related cause, your named beneficiary or your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent will be eligible for a lump-sum payment of any balance remaining in your member contribution account. In addition, your spouse, natural or legally adopted minor child or parent will be eligible for a monthly benefit according to an order of precedence. If this individual also is your named beneficiary, he or she will receive both benefits.

**Work-related monthly benefit calculation:**

- If your spouse, natural or legally adopted child or parent is eligible for Social Security survivor benefits, the VRS work-related benefit will be equal to 33½ percent of your average final compensation at the time of your death. If your spouse, natural or legally adopted child or parent is not eligible for Social Security survivor benefits, the VRS work-related benefit will be equal to 50 percent of your average final compensation at the time of your death.
- If your spouse, natural or legally adopted child or parent is eligible for a workers' compensation survivor benefit, the VRS work-related benefit will be offset by the workers' compensation benefit. The VRS benefit also may be exempt from income taxes.

**Lump-sum payments of pre-tax member contributions and interest are subject to income taxes.** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) also may impose an additional 10 percent tax penalty on member contributions received before age 59½; there are exceptions to this rule.

**To defer taxes,** the payment can be rolled over to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or another qualified plan that accepts rollovers. For more information, read the IRS 402(f) Special Tax Notice available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org); or contact a tax advisor or the IRS toll-free at 1-800-829-1040 or [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

**Death-in-Service Order of Precedence**

As required by law, VRS will pay a death-in-service benefit according to the following order of precedence if you die from a non-work-related cause and there is no valid beneficiary designation on file or your named beneficiary is deceased. If you die from a work-related cause, your spouse, natural or legally adopted child or parent will be eligible for a monthly benefit as well as a lump-sum payment of any balance remaining in your member contribution account, if he or she also is your named beneficiary.

**First, to your spouse**

If your spouse is eligible for a monthly benefit, the benefit will continue if your spouse remarries. It will end when your spouse dies.

**If no spouse, to your natural or legally adopted minor child or children**

If you have more than one natural or legally adopted minor child, each child will receive an equal share of the death-in-service benefit. If they are eligible for a monthly benefit, the youngest child's age will be used to calculate the benefit. As each child reaches age 18, his or her share of the benefit will be redistributed equally among the remaining minor children. The benefit will end when the last child reaches age 18.

**If none of the above, to your parent or parents**

If both parents are living, each parent will receive an equal share of the death-in-service benefit. If they are eligible for a monthly benefit, the youngest parent's age will be used to calculate the benefit. When one parent dies, the other parent will receive the deceased parent's share. The benefit will end when the surviving parent dies.

**If none of the above**

Any balance remaining in your member contribution account will be paid in a lump sum accordingly:

- To your natural or legally adopted adult child or children
- If none, to the descendants of your deceased natural or legally adopted adult child or children
- If none, to the duly appointed executor or administrator of your estate
- If none, to your next of kin under the laws of the state where you resided at the time of your death

**Note:** A cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be applied to the monthly death-in-service benefit, if your beneficiary or survivor is eligible for a monthly benefit. The COLA will go into effect on July 1 following one full calendar year (January 1-December 31) from the date the monthly benefit begins. For more information about the COLA, see Chapter 5-Benefits in Retirement at a Glance.

**More information.** In the event of your death, *Losing a Loved One: Guide for Families* will help your beneficiary or survivor know what to do regarding benefit claims. The publication is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

**Other contacts:**

- For more information about distributions under the defined contribution component if you die in service, your beneficiary can call ICMA-RC toll-free 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261-select Option 1) and ask to speak to an Investor Services Representative.
- For more information about Social Security survivor benefits, your beneficiary or survivor should contact the Social Security Administration toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 or visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).
- For more information about workers' compensation survivor benefits, your beneficiary or survivor should contact your human resource office.



## Purchase of Prior Service

Types of Prior Service · Eligibility Period and Cost · Payment Methods · Applying for PPS

You may be eligible to purchase service from previous public employment, federal or other public service, active duty military service, VRS refunded or non-covered service, or certain types of authorized leave as prior service credit in the Hybrid Retirement Plan.

Prior service credit may increase your future retirement benefit or allow you to qualify for retirement at an earlier date under the defined benefit component. It also counts toward vesting in the defined benefit and defined contribution components of your plan as well as toward qualifying for the retiree health insurance credit if offered by your employer (see Chapter 5 – Benefits in Retirement at a Glance).

**To be eligible to purchase prior service**, you must be an active member. If you are on leave without pay, you also may be eligible; contact the Hybrid Retirement Plan Support Team for more information. You are not eligible to purchase prior service if you are employed in a non-covered position such as a wage position, are a deferred member or are receiving a VRS retirement benefit.

### Types of Prior Service

You can purchase up to 48 months of each of the following types of prior public service. With the exception of some types of active duty military service, this service must not be used to qualify you for a benefit under another retirement plan.

**Active duty military service.** You can purchase service with the Armed Forces Reserves or the National Guard even if it is being used to qualify you for a military pension. For all other types of military service, you can purchase it only if it is not being used to qualify you for a military pension.

**Full-time salaried federal service.** This is service in a civilian position with the federal government.

**Full-time salaried public service other than previous VRS service.** This is service with a public employer or a school system of another state or United States territory, or with a Virginia public employer that does not participate in VRS.

**Non-covered service with a VRS-participating employer.** If you worked in a temporary, part-time or other non-covered position for an employer that participates in VRS, you may be eligible to purchase this service.

**Approved leave for the birth or adoption of a child.** You must be on leave from a VRS-covered position. If your spouse is also an active VRS member and was also granted birth or adoption leave, he or she also may purchase this leave.

**Approved educational leave.** You must be on leave from a VRS-covered position.

**Note:** If you are eligible for and approved to purchase multiple service periods, you must purchase the most recent period first. You may not buy the least expensive service first unless it is the most recent period.

**Non-ported service.** If you move to a VRS-covered position from a non-VRS participating employer with which VRS has a portability agreement, you can elect to transfer your retirement assets from your previous employer's plan to purchase service credit in the defined benefit component of the hybrid plan. If some of your previous service does not transfer, you can purchase the remainder as non-ported service, not to exceed 48 months.

Your previous employer will determine the amount of assets eligible for transfer. VRS will determine the amount of prior service credit the transferred assets will purchase. Any non-ported service you are eligible to purchase will be determined during the portability process. If you have more than 48 months of non-ported service, you can purchase the remainder as public service, not to exceed 48 months of all eligible public service you may have previously purchased.

You also may purchase VRS refunded service, apply for no-cost military leave or convert unused sick leave at retirement to service credit if you are eligible. This does not apply to VSDP participants.

**VRS has portability agreements with the following Virginia public employers:**

- City of Charlottesville
- City of Danville
- City of Newport News
- City of Norfolk
- City of Richmond
- City of Roanoke
- Fairfax County.

**VRS refunded service.** If you leave covered employment and take a refund of your defined benefit member contributions and interest, your VRS membership and eligibility for any future VRS benefits will be canceled. If you return to covered employment, you can purchase up to the full amount of the service represented by the refund.

Please contact the Hybrid Retirement Plan Support Team for information concerning the cost to purchase this service. The cost will be based on your compensation or average final compensation at the time of retirement, whichever is higher or depending on the payment method. If you do not purchase your refunded service within three years of your rehire date, you will be required to purchase the service using a lump-sum payment, rather than the other payment methods. You do not have to purchase all of your refunded service at the same time as long as you purchase more than one month with each payment.

For more information about refunds, see Chapter 4 – If You Leave Employment Before Retirement.

**No-cost military leave.** You may receive prior service credit at no cost for each occurrence of leave from a covered position for active duty military service. You can apply for no-cost military leave at any time, provided you are not dishonorably discharged, return to covered employment within one year of discharge and do not take a refund of your member contributions and interest.

**Workers' compensation.** If you are on disability receiving only a workers' compensation benefit and retirement contributions are not being withheld from this payment, you may be eligible to purchase service credit for this period. Please contact the Hybrid Retirement Plan Support Team for more information. For more information about disability benefits, see Chapter 3 – Protection for You and Your Loved Ones.

## Eligibility Periods and Cost

**One-year eligibility period.** Your one-year eligibility period begins upon employment in a VRS-covered position or upon returning from a period of leave eligible for purchase. VRS will base the cost on an

approximate normal cost rate as a percentage of your compensation or average final compensation at the time of purchase, whichever is higher. You will need to contact VRS to determine the actual cost to purchase the service. If you do not purchase your prior service and leave your job, you will remain eligible to purchase it if you return to covered employment; however, your eligibility period will still be in effect. (*Exception:* If you go on active duty military leave and return to covered employment, your eligibility period will be extended by the amount of time you were on military leave.) If you accrue eligible prior service after leaving your position and then return to covered employment, your eligibility period to purchase this service will begin upon your rehire date.

**After the one-year eligibility period.** If you have not formally arranged with VRS to purchase prior service within one year of becoming eligible, your cost rate may increase. Please contact the Hybrid Retirement Plan Support Team for more information.

**For information regarding the cost of purchasing prior service, please contact the Hybrid Retirement Plan Support Team at 1-855-291-2285 for more information.**

### Payment Methods

**Lump-sum payment.** You can purchase prior service with a personal check, a trustee-to-trustee transfer of funds or a pre-tax rollover of funds.

**Note:** You cannot use funds from the defined contribution component to purchase service in the defined benefit component.

**After-tax payroll deduction contract.** If you are within your one-year eligibility period, you can purchase prior service through an after-tax payroll deduction contract.

**Pre-tax salary reduction contract.** If you are within your one-year eligibility period, you may purchase prior service through a pre-tax salary reduction contract if your employer offers this option. If you have more than 12 months to purchase and elect to purchase 12 months at a time, **you must enter into a new contract before your current contract lapses.**

If your contract lapses and you are within your eligibility period, you can enter into another pre-tax salary reduction contract or purchase the remaining service with a lump sum. If your eligibility period has ended and you wish to purchase the balance please contact the Hybrid Retirement Plan Support Team for more information.

**Combination lump-sum payment and contract methods.** You may purchase a portion of your prior service in a lump sum and the remainder with a payroll deduction contract or salary reduction contract.

**Changing employers?** If you move to a position with another VRS-participating employer and are purchasing prior service on a contract, you must submit a new contract to continue purchasing your service upon employment with the new employer. For more information, contact your human resource office.

### Applying for Purchase of Prior Service

To apply for purchase of prior service, please contact the Hybrid Retirement Plan Support Team for more information.

**Application requirements:**

- If you are eligible for and approved to purchase multiple service periods, you must purchase the most recent period first.
- The previous employer with which you earned the following types of service must certify your prior service:
  - No-cost military leave. Obtain a copy of your DD214 or a copy of your orders for National Guard service)
  - Full-time salaried federal service or other public service. Certification from your previous retirement system also is required.
  - Non-covered service with a VRS-participating employer.
  - Leave for the birth or adoption of a child or educational leave.
- Certification from a previous employer is not required for the following types of prior service:
  - Active duty military service. Provide a copy of your DD214 or a copy of your orders for National Guard service to your current employer.
  - VRS refunded service.
  - Non-ported service. You do not need to apply to purchase non-ported service. The amount of service you are eligible to purchase will be determined during the application process.

**Cost Letter**

You will receive a cost letter that will explain the cost of purchasing the service, the months of service you may purchase and the payment method available to you. The cost letter is valid for 90 days. If your eligibility period has passed or your compensation has increased, your purchase cost should be recalculated because your actual cost to purchase the service may increase.

## Defined Contribution Component

### Building Your Retirement Benefit

Retirement Contributions and Rollovers · Vesting · Choosing Your Investment Path · Distributions · Saving for Retirement through Other Plans

The defined contribution component of the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan is based on contributions and net investment returns on contributions. You manage the investments and related risk for this component to build on the retirement benefit provided through the defined benefit component.

### Retirement Contributions and Rollovers

#### Mandatory Contributions and Employer Matching Contributions

The defined contribution component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan provides the **Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan**, which is a defined contribution plan, for mandatory contributions. You contribute a mandatory 1 percent of your creditable compensation each month to your 401(a) plan account. Your employer also contributes a mandatory 1 percent as well as matching contributions on any voluntary contributions you make, which are deposited to this account. You invest these contributions through your hybrid 401(a) plan.

**Manage your defined contribution plans online with Account Access.**  
See Defined Contribution Component Resources.

#### Employee Voluntary Contributions

The defined contribution component also provides the **Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan**, which allows you to accumulate additional voluntary contributions tax free until you leave or retire and withdraw the money from your plan. The maximum amount of voluntary contributions you can contribute is 4 percent of your creditable compensation.

**Learn more about beneficiary designations for your accounts under the defined benefit and defined contribution components.**  
See Chapter 3 - Protection for You and Your Loved Ones.

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**Defined Contribution (DC) Component Contributions**


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<b>Employee Mandatory Contributions Hybrid 401(a)</b>	<b>Employer Mandatory Contributions Hybrid 401(a)</b>	<b>Employee Voluntary Contributions Hybrid 457</b>	<b>Employer Matching Contributions Hybrid 401(a)</b>
1.00%	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%
		0.50%	0.50%
		1.00%	1.00%
		1.50%	1.25%
		2.00%	1.50%
		2.50%	1.75%
		3.00%	2.00%
		3.50%	2.25%
		4.00%	2.50%

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**Total Possible Hybrid Retirement Plan Contributions**


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<b>Your Contributions</b>		<b>Your Employer's Contributions</b>	
Defined benefit mandatory contributions	4.00%	Defined benefit mandatory contributions	Actuarially determined rate
Defined contribution mandatory contributions	1.00%	Defined contribution mandatory contributions	1.00%
Defined contribution voluntary contributions if you contribute the maximum amount	Up to 4.00%	Defined contribution employer matching contributions if you contribute additional voluntary contributions	Up to 2.50%
<b>Total Possible Member Contributions</b>	<b>9.00%</b>	<b>Total Employer Contributions</b>	<b>Actuarially determined rate including up to 3.50% to the DC component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan</b>

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### Auto-Escalation Effective January 1, 2017

A feature that will automatically increase your voluntary contributions by 0.5 percent every three years will begin in January 2017. This feature is independent of your membership date. The automatic increase will continue until you reach the maximum 4 percent in voluntary contributions. If you wish to opt out of auto-escalation, you must do so between October 1 and December 15 before the next automatic increase goes into effect on January 1, 2017.

#### Examples:

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>Ellen</b> | Ellen's hybrid plan membership date is March 1, 2014. Her first automatic 0.5 percent increase will occur when auto-escalation goes into effect on January 1, 2017. Her next automatic 0.5 percent increase will occur on January 1, 2020 and so on every three years until she reaches the maximum 4 percent in voluntary contributions or opts out.   |
| <b>Steve</b> | Steve's hybrid plan membership date is November 1, 2019. Because he is hired during the auto-escalation opt-out period (October 1-December 15), he is not eligible for the automatic increase effective January 1, 2010. His first automatic 0.5 percent increase will occur on January 1, 2023. His next automatic 0.5 percent increase will occur on January 1, 2026 and so on every three years until he reaches the maximum 4 percent in voluntary contributions or opts out. |

**To opt out of auto escalation, call ICMA-RC toll free at 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261-select Option 1) and ask to speak to an Investor Services Representative.**

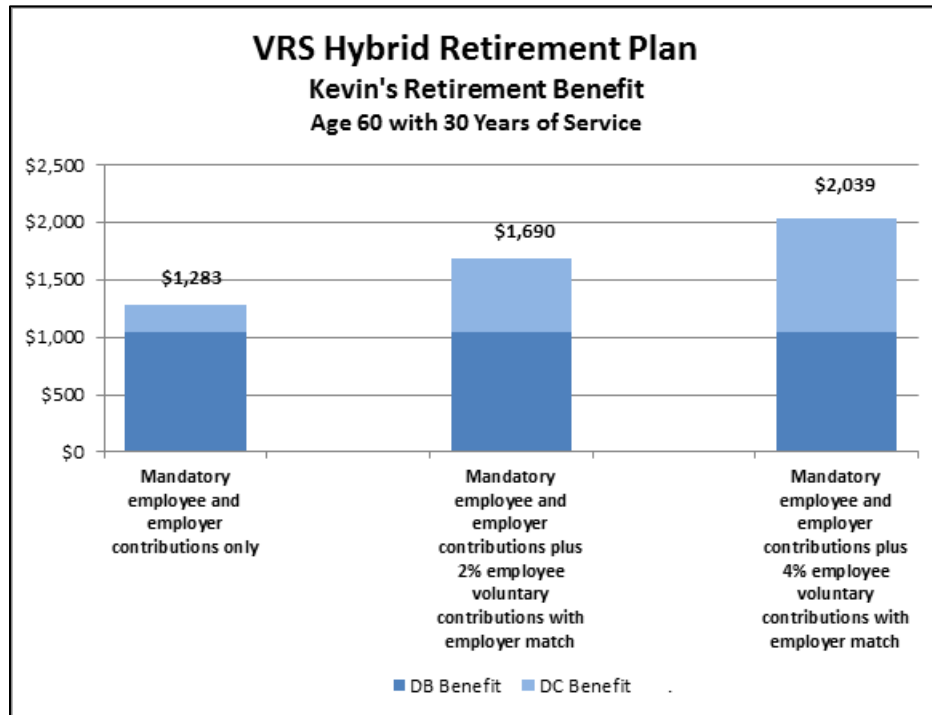
**Increasing your voluntary contributions.** You can change the amount of your voluntary contributions at any time in increments of 0.5 percent. If you request a change up until the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month of the quarter end (March, June, September and December), it will go into effect in the next quarter; if you request a change after the 15<sup>th</sup>, it will go into effect in the subsequent quarter. *Example:* You are currently contributing 1.5 percent in voluntary contributions and want to increase your voluntary contribution to 2.5 percent. If you request an increase on March 1, it will take effect on April 1; if request an increase on March 18, the increase will take effect on July 1, which begins the next quarter.

## How Voluntary Contributions Increase Your Retirement Benefit

The following examples are in today's dollars and do not include a Social Security benefit. For an example of an estimated benefit with Social Security, see Saving for Retirement Through Other Plans.

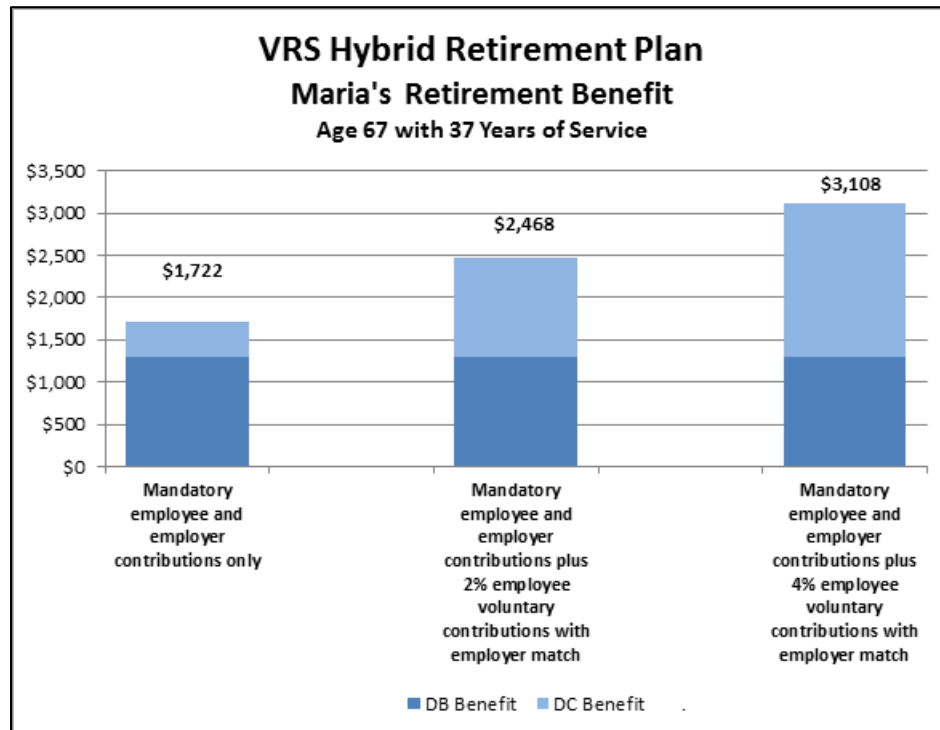
### Kevin's estimated retirement benefit before taxes and other deductions.

See Defined Benefit Component for how Kevin's and Maria's benefit under this component was calculated.





### Maria's estimated retirement benefit before taxes and other deductions.



#### Rollovers:

You can roll over money from other plans in which you are eligible to take distributions to your hybrid 457 deferred compensation plan. A rollover is a contribution of a pre-tax, lump-sum payment to another qualified plan. A rollover allows you to continue to defer income taxes until you withdraw the money from your plan.

#### Eligible plans:

- 401(a) plan other than the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan (you cannot roll over money from other plans to your hybrid 401(a) plan)
- 401(k)
- 457(b) and 403(b) plans
- Federal Thrift Savings Plan
- Traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA)

## Vesting

Vesting to your contributions in your Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan is immediate. Upon retiring or leaving employment, you can withdraw 100 percent of your hybrid 457 plan account balance.

You also are eligible to withdraw your Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan balance upon retiring or leaving employment. Withdrawals of your 401(a) employer contributions and net investment earnings on employer contributions are subject to the following vesting schedule:

### What are net investment earnings?

Net investment earnings include investment gains and losses on contributions.

[Learn more about becoming vested in the defined benefit component of your plan.](#)

### Employer Contribution Vesting Schedule

Years of Creditable Service	Vesting Schedule	Allowable Withdrawals
<b>One year</b>	You will be 0 percent vested in the employer contributions.	You will forfeit the employer contributions and the net investment earnings on these contributions if you take a distribution.
<b>Two years</b>	You will be 50 percent vested in the employer contributions.	You may be eligible to withdraw 50 percent of these contributions plus net investment earnings.
<b>Three years</b>	You will be 75 percent vested in the employer contributions.	You may be eligible to withdraw 75 percent of these contributions plus net investment earnings.
<b>Four or more years</b>	You will be 100 percent vested in the employer contributions.	You may be eligible to withdraw 100 percent of these contributions plus net investment earnings.

**Note:** Credit for prior service you may purchase or additional service you may be granted counts toward the service required for vesting to your 401(a) employer contributions and net investment earnings on employer contribution. [For more information about purchasing prior service](#), see Chapter 2 – Purchase of Prior Service.

**Is your membership date before January 1, 2014?** If you elected to transfer to the Hybrid Retirement Plan from the VRS Plan 1 or the VRS Plan 2 and have at least four years of creditable service as of July 1, 2014, you will be considered fully vested in the employer contributions and net investment earnings in the defined contribution component. If you have fewer than four years of creditable service as of July 1, 2014, you will become vested when you earn the remaining creditable service. *Example:* If you have three years of creditable service from Plan 1 or Plan 2 as of July 1, 2014, you must accrue one more year of service to become fully vested in your employer contributions and net investment gains on employer contributions.

## Choosing Your Investment Path

The defined contribution component allows you to accumulate contributions and net investment earnings on contributions to build on your retirement benefit under the defined benefit component. You manage the investments and related risk for this component of your plan.

**The investment options for the defined contribution component are organized into three pathways to make it easier for you to implement your investment decisions according to your knowledge of investments and investment style.** The path approach is flexible; you do not need to choose just one path or investment option. You can mix and match investment options within each path to help you meet your objectives. You also can move existing balances between investment paths as well as change how your future contributions are invested.

**The Target Date Portfolios included in the Do-It-For-Me Path serve as the default investment for members who choose not to make an election on their own.** These investments provide a simple way to save for retirement by offering the ease and convenience of a professionally managed, diversified portfolio in one easy step. While target date portfolios offer a simple investing solution, you should continue to monitor your plan account and increase contributions to stay on track with your retirement objectives. Learn more about these options and others available to you online at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

**VRS has contracted with ICMA-RC as the third-party record keeper for the defined contribution component of your plan.** ICMA-RC's services include education and counseling about your investments as well as distribution options and other topics to help you maximize the features of the defined contribution component in support of your retirement goals. For more information, call toll-free 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261, select Option 1) and ask to speak to an Investor Services Representative. See also Financial and Retirement Planning Resources, for more information about resources provided by ICMA-RC.

### Path

#### Do-It-For-Me Path

The *Do-It-For-Me Path* includes a series of target date portfolios for participants who prefer a pre-mixed portfolio that is already diversified. Participants select portfolios based on a projected retirement date and individual needs.

#### Help-Me-Do-It Path

The *Help-Me-Do-It Path* includes a carefully selected menu of 11 funds for participants who prefer to take a more active role in investing and want to construct a portfolio that addresses their individual needs.

#### Do-It-Myself Path

The *Do-It-Myself Path* includes a self-directed brokerage account (SDBA) for those who believe they are skilled and knowledgeable about investments. Investments include mutual funds, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and individual securities.

## Understanding Investment Basics

Managing your investments through the defined contribution component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan includes managing risk. You decide how to invest your money and assume all risk associated with your investments.

Understanding risk and other investment basics can help you design an investment strategy related to your personal circumstances, including your age, income sources, when you expect to retire and tolerance for risk, consistent with your retirement income needs.

### Types of Risk

Investing involves risk that can result in the loss of money over short or long periods of time. Risks include but are not limited to:

- **Market:** the risk that the price of securities in a fund will rise or fall, sometimes rapidly or unpredictably, due to factors such as real or perceived adverse economic conditions, political developments and/or investor sentiment generally. During a general downturn in the securities markets, multiple asset classes may decline in value simultaneously. Stocks generally have greater price volatility than bonds (see “Asset Classes”).
- **Inflation:** the risk that your account will lose value because your returns are not outpacing the cost of living.
- **Longevity:** the risk that you will live longer than expected, with the potential result that you run out of money before you die.
- **Interest rate:** the risk that if interest rates rise, bonds will decline in value.
- **Income:** the risk that a fund’s income will decline due to falling interest rates.
- **Default (credit):** the risk that an issuer will fail to pay interest or principal when due or in a timely manner, or that negative perceptions of an issue’s ability to make such payments, will cause the price of the security to decline.
- **Business:** the risk that an investment will lose value because of a decline in a specific company or industry.
- **Country:** the risk that domestic events, laws and/or regulations will negatively impact a country’s securities markets.
- **Currency:** the risk that the value of a foreign investment, measured in U.S. dollars, will have a negative impact on fund returns because of unfavorable changes in currency exchange rates.

### Asset Allocation and Diversification

Asset allocation and diversification are strategies that can help balance the risk-reward trade-off consistent with your retirement objectives:

- **Asset allocation** assigning specific percentages of your investments to different asset classes (see next section) according to your financial goals, risk tolerance and investment time horizon.
- **Diversification** involves spreading your money among different securities, sectors, industries and strategies within a number of asset classes.

Asset allocation and diversification do not guarantee a profit or protection against loss.

## Asset Classes

An asset class is a group of securities that typically behave similarly in the marketplace when compared to other groups of securities. The most well-known asset classes are stocks, bonds, cash equivalents and stable value investments. Within each class is a range of investment types or sub-asset classes, each with its own risk factors.

**Stocks.** By investing in stocks, also called equity investments, you are buying shares of ownership in companies. Stocks may have a higher potential for growth over the long term but carry a higher degree of risk.

One way of classifying stocks is through market capitalization. Market capitalization, or market cap, measures a company's size by multiplying the number of shares outstanding (shares currently owned by investors) by the stock's current market price per share. For example, if a company has 10 million shares outstanding at a price of \$50 per share, the company market cap is equal to \$500 million. Market cap size is often categorized as large ("large cap"), medium ("mid-cap") and small ("small cap").

**Bonds.** By investing in bonds, also called fixed-income investments, you are loaning money to an organization, such as a corporation or government, in exchange for interest payments. Although bond values fluctuate, they ordinarily do not fluctuate as much as stocks. Bond investment options may help offset the higher risk of stocks in a more aggressive portfolio. They also may help generate higher income than money market instruments in a more conservative investment portfolio.

**Cash equivalents and stable value investments.** Cash equivalents, such as money market funds and U.S. Treasury bills, are short-term securities that pay interest. Their objectives are current income and preservation of capital. An investment in a money market fund is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency.

While cash equivalent investments have a place in many portfolios, their returns may not outpace inflation. Stable value investments seek to provide safety of principal while earning interest income and providing liquidity. Stable value funds typically invest in short to intermediate duration, high-quality bonds.

For more information about investing, refer to the Investment Guide available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) under the Defined Contribution Plans tab.

## Distributions

A distribution is a payment from your defined contribution component accounts, which you may request upon retiring or leaving employment. You can take a distribution from your Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan and/or your Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. Distributions of your 401(a) employer contributions and net investment earnings are subject to a vesting schedule.

**Distributions begin following a bona fide break in service from your last day of employment.** A bona fide break in service is a break of at least one full calendar month from your last day of employment that occurs during a period you normally would work. Leave with or without pay, summer breaks, intersession periods, educational leave and sabbaticals do not count toward satisfying this break in service. A required minimum distribution will begin if you have not arranged to receive payments from your plan by age 70½ or when you leave your position, whichever is later.

**Note:** The Hybrid Retirement Plan does not allow for loans or unforeseen emergency withdrawals.

### Distribution Options

- You can request;
  - To receive a full or partial lump sum distribution of your account balance.
  - To receive periodic payments.
  - To receive a partial lump sum distribution combined with periodic payments.
  - To purchase an annuity with all or a portion of your account balance.
  - To roll over all or a portion of your account balance to another employer's plan or to another qualified plan that accepts rollovers such as a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA). The Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan can be rolled into the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan.

**Upon retiring or leaving employment, any distributions you or your named beneficiary or survivor receives will be subject to federal and state income taxes.** The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) also may impose an additional 10 percent tax penalty for distributions received before age 59½; there are exceptions to this rule.

For more information, see the IRS 402(f) Special Tax Notice available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org); or contact a tax advisor or the IRS toll-free at 1-800-829-1040 or [www.irs.org](http://www.irs.org).

To request a distribution you must submit the appropriate distribution form to ICMA-RC by mail or by fax. The form can be found at [varetire.org](http://varetire.org) (under the Defined Contribution Plans tab). A separate form is required for distributions from both the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan. For more information on requesting a distribution *contact* ICMA-RC, call toll free at 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261-select Option 1) and ask to speak with an Investor Services Representative.

## Death-in-Service Distributions

If you die while you are an active member, your named beneficiary or survivor may be eligible for a distribution from the defined contribution component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan. There are a variety of distribution options that may be available. Members may designate beneficiaries for the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan and the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan by calling ICMA-RC toll-free 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261-select Option 1) and ask to speak to an Investor Services Representative. If beneficiaries are not designated, funds are distributed by order of precedence.

**More information.** In the event of your death, *Losing a Loved One: Guide for Families* will help your beneficiary or survivor know what to do regarding benefit claims. The publication is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

### Other contacts:

- For more information about distributions from your defined contribution component if you die in service, your beneficiary can call ICMA-RC toll-free 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261-select Option 1) and ask to speak to an Investor Services Representative.
- For more information about Social Security survivor benefits, your beneficiary or survivor should contact the Social Security Administration toll-free at 1-800-772-1213 or visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).
- For more information about workers' compensation survivor benefits, your beneficiary or survivor should contact your organization's human resource office.

## Saving for Retirement Through Other Plans

### Closing the “Gap.” About the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan

#### Closing the “Gap”

To maintain a reasonable standard of living when you retire, experts say you will need at least 80 percent of your current earnings during retirement. Saving on a tax-deferred basis is one of the easiest ways to help you close the gap between your total estimated retirement income and your retirement income goals.

#### Saver’s Credit: An Added Bonus

If your income is low to moderate, you may be eligible for a credit on your federal taxes that can help you afford to save. The credit is available if your adjusted gross income does not exceed \$59,000 if you are married and file a joint return, or \$29,500 if you are single or married and file a separate return. The following chart shows the amount of the tax credit according to your income and tax filing status:

Tax credit	Joint return AGI	Single (other filers) AGI
50%	Less than \$35,500	Less than \$17,750
20%	\$35,501 - \$38,500	\$17,751 - \$19,250
10%	\$38,501 - \$59,000	\$19,251 - \$29,500
0%	\$59,001 and over	\$29,501 and over

**Saving a little bit each month now can reap big rewards later.** It may surprise you how putting aside as little as \$20 a month through a plan such as the Commonwealth of Virginia’s 457 Deferred Compensation Plan or an employer-sponsored on individual tax-deferred savings plan will grow over time. The Plan Features and Highlights Guide includes different savings scenarios based on when members start saving and how much they contribute, which can help you target your own savings goals according to your retirement income needs. The guide is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) under the Defined Contribution Plans tab.

For more information, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).



## About the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan

**If you are a state employee**, you are eligible to participate in the Commonwealth’s 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. To participate, you will need to contribute at least \$10 per pay period. If you are contributing the maximum 4 percent voluntary contribution to your Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, you also will be eligible for an employer match through the Virginia Cash Match Plan equal to 50 percent of your contributions, not to exceed \$20 per pay period.

**See Retirement Contributions and Rollovers for more information about “maxing out” on your voluntary contributions to your hybrid 457 deferred compensation plan.**

**If you are a higher education employee**, you are eligible to participate in a 403(b) plan as well as the Commonwealth’s 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. If you participate in both plans and “max out” on your hybrid 457 deferred compensation voluntary contributions, you will be eligible to receive one employer match equal to 50 percent of your contributions, not to exceed \$20 per pay period.

**Learn more the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan.** Visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) (select the Defined Contribution Plans tab).

**If you are a higher education or a school division employee**, contact your human resource office for more information about the 403(b) plan.

**If you are a school division or a political subdivision employee**, you may be eligible to participate in the Commonwealth’s 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, a 403(b) plan or another tax-deferred savings or supplemental retirement plan if offered by your employer, which also may provide an employer matching contribution. You must “max out” on your hybrid 457 deferred compensation voluntary contributions to receive any additional contributions from your employer. Contact your human resource office for more information about tax-deferred savings opportunities that may be available to you.

### Allowable Contribution Amounts

**Regular contribution limit.** Each year, you may contribute up to 100 percent of your includible compensation to the Commonwealth’s 457 Plan, not to exceed the limit set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) which is updated from time to time. If you go on active duty military leave, you also may be able to contribute the amount of deferrals you were unable to make during this period.

If you are within three years of your normal retirement age, you are eligible for the **Standard Catch-Up**, which allows you to contribute up to twice the regular IRS contribution limit or the amount of your Standard Catch-Up credit, whichever is less. If you are age 50 or older, you are eligible for the **Age 50+ Catch-Up**, which allows you to contribute an additional amount over the regular IRS contribution limit. You cannot use the Standard Catch-Up and the Age 50+ Catch-Up in the same calendar year.

**Current annual contribution limits.** For current annual contribution limit information, please visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

## Rollovers

If you participate in the Commonwealth's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and have a Virginia Cash Match Plan account, you can use your account to consolidate your retirement money, such as rolling over money from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or another qualified plan. Additionally, if you terminate employment or retire, the plans allow you to further consolidate by allowing rollovers between most of the VRS Defined Contribution Plans. If you retire and choose the Partial Lump-Sum Option Payment (PLOP), you may roll over some or all of it. As provided under the Internal Revenue Code, you cannot contribute cash severance payments to the Commonwealth's 457 Plan.

## Distributions

If you participate in the Commonwealth's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and leave your position, your contributions to your plan as well as any employer matching contributions you may be receiving will stop. However, you can continue to manage your account or request a distribution in the form of a lump-sum or partial lump-sum payment, a variety of periodic payment options, or a combination of these methods.

Payments from the Commonwealth's 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and 401(a) Cash Match Plans are subject to federal and state income taxes. The IRS also may impose an additional 10 percent tax penalty on Virginia Cash Match Plan distributions received before age 59½; there are exceptions to this rule. There is no penalty for early withdrawals from the Commonwealth's 457 plan. When you reach age 70½, you can withdraw your money from your plan at any time, regardless of your employment status.

**Note:** If you experience a hardship or unforeseen emergency, you also may be eligible for a withdrawal from the Commonwealth 457 Plan. For more information, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) (select the Defined Contribution Plans tab).

## Financial and Retirement Planning Resources

### Closing in on Your Retirement Destination

*myVRS: At Your Service* · *myVRS Planning Tools* · Member Education and Counseling for the Defined Benefit Component · Defined Contribution Component Resources

As a member of VRS, you have financial and retirement planning resources and tools to help you target your retirement income goals.

### *myVRS: At Your Service*

You have access to *myVRS*, one of your most important resources. This secure, online system is your personal avenue toward preparing for your financial future. It provides up-to-date benefit information based on your member record and tools to help you plan ahead.

#### What you can view in *myVRS*:

- Defined benefit member contribution account balance and total creditable service
- Your earliest retirement eligibility dates and estimated benefit amounts if you are vested in the defined benefit component (you have at least five years of creditable service)
- Account balances under the defined contribution component
- Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan balance if you participate in this plan
- Compensation and employment history
- Basic group life insurance coverage for natural death if applicable

#### Creating Your *myVRS* Member Online Account



Select *myVRS* Access from [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) and then Members-Register, and follow the simple step-by-step instructions. Each time you log into your *myVRS* member account, you come to your Account Home page. From the left column, you can select links to other information in your member record. From the top tabs, you can navigate to the Retirement Planner and your Personal Profile.

#### Security and Privacy

VRS is committed to protecting the security and privacy of your information. Before you are allowed access to your information, your identity is authenticated through the online account creation process. You set up your own username and password, which you use each time you log into *myVRS*.

VRS does not sell your information to anyone. Information is shared only with your employer and third-party administrators authorized to help coordinate benefits and services for VRS members, retirees and beneficiaries. For security tips and more information, select *myVRS* Access from [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

## Assistance with myVRS

- Select *myVRS* Help from the bottom of any screen for general information.
- While you are logged in, select Explain this Page at the top right for help with information on a particular screen.
- If you get locked out, call VRS toll-free at 1-888-VARETIR (1-888-827-3847).

For additional questions, call VRS or email [myvrs@varetire.org](mailto:myvrs@varetire.org). **Important email notice: Do not send confidential or personal information, such as your Social Security number, by email even when you are logged into your account. VRS will send only non-confidential replies.**

## myVRS Planning Tools

How much would your estimated retirement benefits be based on different benefit payout options for both the defined benefit and defined contribution components of the Hybrid Retirement Plan? What would your retirement income look like if you included other income sources? How would that compare to average living expenses in retirement and other things you may want to afford after you retire?

The following online tools allow you to create a retirement income plan designed to anticipate your retirement needs. These tools are useful throughout your career: from time to time, you should update your plan or create new plans as your personal circumstances and income change. Periodic updates can tell you if you need to put aside additional savings for retirement or adjust your investment strategy.

**ICMA-RC can assist you with understanding the investment options available to you.** Call toll-free 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261;select Option 1) and ask to speak to an Investor Services Representative, or visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org). See also Investment Basics.

## Defined Benefit Member Resources

The following resources for the defined benefit component of your plan are free, convenient and help you plan a successful future.

### Member Education

Courses are offered through webinars, e-learning and on-site sessions. Topics cover your VRS benefits, planning for retirement and using *myVRS*, and the retirement application process, among others. You also can learn more about banking, home finance, taxes and other financial topics through “Money Matters” e-learning modules.

For more information, schedules and online registration, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org)

**If your employer participates in the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, be sure to sign up for a Deferred Compensation Plan Regional Education meeting.** These meetings are held at sites across the state and cover topics such as long-term planning for financial security, managing your plan and distribution strategies. Find a schedule of these meetings online at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) under the Defined Contribution Plans tab.

## Retirement Counseling

Meet with a counselor at the VRS Retirement Counseling Center at 1111 East Main Street in downtown Richmond. Sessions are offered on a first-come, first-served basis between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Limited scheduled appointments are available. Go to [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) for directions to the center and the parking deck; the first hour of parking is free.

## Defined Contribution Component Account Access, Counseling/Education Resource Overview

The following resources for the defined contribution component of your plan are free, convenient and help you plan a successful future.

### Publications

Publications include the Plan Features and Highlights Guide, Investment Guide and Guide to Automatic Enrollment. You can find these resources at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) (select the Defined Contribution Plans tab).

### Retirement Counseling

Registered plan representatives also are available for one-on-one counseling. Call toll-free 1-VRS-DC-PLAN1 (1-877-327-5261) or visit the local plan representative at 919 East Main Street in downtown Richmond. Counseling hours are 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday. (Appointments are required between noon and 1 p.m.)

Registered representatives also will conduct group meetings to provide information related to the investment options available in the defined contribution component.

### 3. Protection for You and Your Loved Ones

As a member of the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan, you have other benefits in addition to retirement.

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**VRS Group Life Insurance Program**

**Beneficiary Designations and the VRS Durable Power of Attorney**

**Long-Term Care Programs**

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**Note: To remain eligible for these benefits after leaving employment, you must maintain your member contribution account and may be subject to additional eligibility requirements. For more information about your member contribution account, see the Defined Benefit Component in Chapter 2.**

## VRS Group Life Insurance Program

Basic Group Life Insurance Program · Designating a Beneficiary · Optional Group Life Insurance Program · Additional Information about Your Life Insurance Coverage

As a member of the Hybrid Retirement Plan, you have group life insurance coverage through the VRS Group Life Insurance Program if your employer provides this program.

### Basic Group Life Insurance Program

If you are eligible for the VRS Group Life Insurance Program, your employer may pay your portion of the premiums. Basic group life insurance coverage provides the following benefits:

**Natural Death Benefit** The natural death benefit is equal to your creditable compensation rounded to the next highest thousand and then doubled. *Example:* If your creditable compensation is \$41,400, that amount will be rounded to \$42,000 and then doubled for a natural death benefit of \$84,000.

**Accidental Death Benefit** The accidental death benefit is double the natural death benefit. *Example:* If your natural death benefit is \$84,000, that amount will be doubled for an accidental death benefit of \$168,000.

**Accidental Dismemberment Benefit** For the accidental loss of one limb or the sight of one eye, the dismemberment benefit is equal to your creditable compensation rounded to the next highest thousand. For the accidental loss of two or more limbs, total loss of eyesight or the loss of one limb and the sight of one eye, the benefit is equal to your creditable compensation rounded to the next highest thousand and then doubled.

**Safety Belt Benefit** If you are killed or dismembered in an accident while driving or riding in a private passenger vehicle, your life insurance will pay an amount equal to 10 percent of your accidental death or dismemberment benefit, or \$50,000, whichever is less. You must have been using a safety restraint. No benefit is payable if you or another person was driving without a license or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or was otherwise impaired.

**Repatriation Benefit** If you die in an accident 75 miles or more from your home, your life insurance will pay up to \$5,000 for the cost of transportation to return your remains.

**Felonious Assault Benefit** Your basic group life insurance coverage provides additional benefits if you die or are dismembered as a result of a felonious assault while performing your job duties. The incident must have occurred at your employer's normal place of business or while you were on work-related travel. The assaulter must have used force with intent to cause harm and be charged with a misdemeanor or felony. No benefit is payable if the assaulter is an immediate family member. Felonious assault benefits

include:

- \$50,000 or 25 percent of your accidental death or dismemberment benefit, whichever is less.
- Virginia Education Savings Trust account for each dependent child if you die as a result of the assault. The amount is approximately equal to tuition and mandatory fees to attend a public college or university in Virginia. Your child may attend any accredited college or university in the United States that participates in federal student financial aid programs.

**Accelerated Death Benefit Option** If you are diagnosed with a terminal condition and have fewer than 12 months to live, you can withdraw some or all of your life insurance proceeds to use for any purpose. Your beneficiary or survivor will receive any remaining amount upon your death.

**Look up your VRS group life insurance coverage in myVRS.** If you are covered under the VRS Group Life Insurance Program, you can view the amount of your current life insurance coverage through *myVRS*. To log in or create a secure online account, select *myVRS* Access from [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).



**VRS has contracted with Minnesota Life as the insurer for the Group Life Insurance Program.** For more information about your coverage, call Minnesota Life toll-free at 1-800-441-2258.

**If you are not sure of your life insurance coverage, contact your human resource office for more information.**

## Optional Group Life Insurance Program

If you are covered under the Basic Group Life Insurance Program, you may purchase additional coverage for yourself through the Optional Group Life Insurance Program. If you elect this coverage, you also can cover a spouse and dependent children. Optional group life insurance provides benefits for natural and accidental death or dismemberment. You pay the premiums through payroll deduction.



## Coverage Options

**Yourself** You can select one of the four coverage options shown below to cover yourself, up to a maximum of \$700,000.

**Your spouse** You can cover your spouse for up to half the maximum amount of the coverage you select for yourself, not to exceed \$350,000. Coverage for your spouse ends when your coverage ends or if you and your spouse divorce. If both you and your spouse are eligible to participate in the Optional Group Life Insurance Program, neither of you can buy additional coverage for the other.

**Your dependent children** You can cover each dependent child who is at least 15 days old for \$10,000, \$20,000 or \$30,000, depending on the coverage option you select for yourself. Coverage for dependent children ends when your coverage ends or your child marries, becomes self-supporting, reaches age 21, or reaches age 25 as a dependent attending college full time. Coverage continues for dependent unmarried children who are disabled.

<b>Options</b> <i>Select one of the following</i>	<b>Your insurance amount</b> <i>Not to exceed \$700,000</i>	<b>Insurance amount for your spouse</b> <i>Not to exceed \$350,000</i>	<b>Insurance amount per dependent child</b> <i>At age 15 days</i>
<b>1</b>	1 x your compensation	½ x your compensation	\$10,000
<b>2</b>	2 x your compensation	1 x your compensation	\$10,000
<b>3</b>	3 x your compensation	1½ x your compensation	\$20,000
<b>4</b>	4 x your compensation	2 x your compensation	\$30,000

**Proof of good health.** Coverage is guaranteed if you enroll in the Optional Group Life Insurance Program within 31 days of your employment date or a qualifying event, such as marriage or the birth or adoption of a child. Proof of good health (evidence of insurability) is required if:

- You apply after 31 days from your employment date or a qualifying event
- You wish to add your spouse or dependent child to your coverage after 31 days from your employment date
- You wish to purchase more than \$350,000 for yourself
- You wish to increase your optional life insurance coverage for yourself or your spouse
- Your spouse's insurance amount is more than half your salary

## Additional Information About Your Life Insurance Coverage

<b>Coverage while on leave without pay</b>	If you go on leave without pay or go on military leave, your basic group life insurance coverage will continue for up to 24 months or for as long as you are on military leave, provided the premiums are paid. If you have optional group life insurance, your coverage will continue as long as you pay the premiums and remain covered under the Basic Group Life Insurance Program.
<b>Irrevocable assignment</b>	You own your rights in your group life insurance coverage. That means you can designate a beneficiary or exercise the accelerated death benefit option of your policy. You may give your ownership rights to another living person or entity. However, <b>this is an irrevocable assignment</b> ; you cannot change it once it is made. Before making an irrevocable assignment, contact a legal advisor or Minnesota Life toll-free at 1-800-441-2258 for assistance.
<b>Loans prohibited</b>	You may not borrow from or use your group life insurance coverage to secure a loan.
<b>Imputed income taxes</b>	Imputed income is the cost of life insurance in excess of \$50,000, as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). It is subject to FICA (Social Security and Medicare) taxes and income taxes, and is reflected in the W-2 you receive from your employer. When you retire, VRS will deduct FICA taxes and report taxable or imputed income for as long as your group life insurance coverage exceeds \$50,000.
<b>Child support liens</b>	The Department of Social Services may file child support liens against proceeds payable under the VRS Group Life Insurance Program. VRS is required to pay life insurance proceeds to the Department of Social Services to satisfy any outstanding child-support obligations at your death.

# Beneficiary Designations and the VRS Power of Attorney

## Designating a Beneficiary

### Defined Benefit Component

You can name any living person as your beneficiary. You also can name an entity such as an eligible trust or charity. Upon your death, your named beneficiary will be eligible for benefits under the VRS Group Life Insurance Program, if you are covered under this program, as well as a lump-sum payment of any balance remaining in your member contribution account.

### Primary and contingent beneficiaries:

- You can name more than one primary beneficiary to share in life insurance benefits and any balance remaining in your member contribution account upon your death, or a different primary beneficiary for each benefit.
- You can name a contingent beneficiary or beneficiaries. If your primary beneficiary or beneficiaries are deceased at the time of your death, your contingent beneficiary or beneficiaries will receive benefit payments according to your designation.

**To name your beneficiary,** complete and submit a Designation of Beneficiary (VRS-2) to VRS. The form is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org). Be sure to keep a copy for your records. You will not receive a copy or confirmation of receipt.

**Naming multiple beneficiaries.** The Designation of Beneficiary (VRS-2) allows you to name up to three individuals as your beneficiaries. If you wish to name more than three, list the additional beneficiaries on the Designation of Beneficiary-Continuation (VRS-2A) and submit this form with the VRS-2.

**Changing your beneficiary.** VRS is required by law to pay benefits according to the latest beneficiary designation in your VRS record. Review your beneficiary designation after a personal milestone such as a change in marital status, the birth or adoption of a child or as you near retirement. To change your beneficiary, submit a new Designation of Beneficiary (VRS-2) to VRS as soon as possible. If you cannot remember your designation, submit a new VRS-2 or write to Minnesota Life, P.O. Box 1193, Richmond, VA 23218-1193. Neither Minnesota Life nor VRS can provide your beneficiary designation over the phone.

**Members can designate a beneficiary for the defined contribution component of the Hybrid Plan** by filling out the Beneficiary Designation form available online at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) under the Defined Contributions Tab or call Investor Services at 1-VRS-DC-PLAN1 (1-877-327-5261) and provide the change via phone. A confirmation letter will be sent out to members confirming the updated information. Current beneficiaries also appear on the quarterly statement as a reference for members.

### The following are resources that are available to hybrid members for the defined contribution component:

- On-site seminars conducted by Defined Contribution Plans Retirement Specialists
- Recorded webinars
- Call Center: Call toll-free 1-VRS-DC-PLAN1 (1-877-327-5261)
- Press 1 to speak with an Investor Services Representative, weekdays 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
- Press 2 to speak with a Defined Contribution Plans Retirement Specialist or reach the Virginia Service Center, weekdays 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Quarterly Statement
- Website – Go to [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org), select the Hybrid Plan under the Defined Contribution Plans tab

**Order of precedence.** If there is no beneficiary designation on file, or your primary beneficiary or beneficiaries are deceased at the time of your death and there is no contingent beneficiary or beneficiaries, VRS is required by law to pay benefits according to the following order of precedence:

- First, to your spouse
- If no spouse, to your natural or legally adopted children and descendants of your deceased natural or legally adopted children
- If none of the above, to your parents equally or to the surviving parent
- If none of the above, to the duly appointed executor or administrator of your estate
- If none of the above, to your next of kin under the laws of the state where you resided at the time of your death

**Note:** The Designation of Beneficiary (VRS-2) allows you to elect the order of precedence instead of designating a beneficiary.

## VRS Power of Attorney

The **VRS Durable Power of Attorney (VRS-901)** allows you to name a person as your agent to take actions on your behalf. Your agent would also be able to take actions on your behalf in the event you can no longer handle your own affairs.

### Your agent can:

- Sign and file your application for retirement
- Name or update your beneficiary or survivor
- Request information about your benefits
- Change the investment option for your defined contribution accounts
- Take other VRS actions on your behalf, such as setting up a direct deposit, submitting a change of address or filing your tax withholding

The authority granted by the VRS-901 is limited to matters relating to your VRS record. The Virginia Uniform Power of Attorney Act allows you to be specific about the VRS matters your agent can handle. Be sure to submit a new VRS-901 if you need to name a new agent or update the specific authority granted to your current agent.

You can create a power of attorney by writing and signing a statement as simple as: "I hereby grant my agent the authority to do or perform all acts that I could do." This statement would allow your agent to perform all acts under the Virginia Uniform Power of Attorney Act that did not require specific authority. It also would give your agent authority over other matters besides VRS benefits, such as bank accounts and personal property. You may wish to consult a legal advisor regarding this type of power of attorney.

**Authorization to Discuss VRS Account Information (VRS-900).** The VRS-900 allows you to name one or more individuals to speak to a VRS representative about your VRS benefits and account information. It does not allow individuals to take actions on your behalf.

The authority granted to an agent named in the VRS Durable Power of Attorney (VRS-901) includes speaking with a VRS representative about your information. If you want this individual to have this authority, you do not need to file a VRS-900.

The VRS-900 and the VRS-901 forms and instructions are available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

## Income Protection for Non-Work-Related and Work-Related Disabilities

State employees covered under the Hybrid Retirement Plan have disability and long-term care benefits through the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP). VSDP provides income protection if you can't work because of a non-work-related or work-related illness, injury or other condition, such as surgery, pregnancy, complications from pregnancy or a catastrophic or major chronic condition. You must satisfy qualifying periods for some benefits. **For additional information, refer to the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program Handbook for State Employees available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org). Members who are enrolled in a comparable long-term care benefits plan should see their HR office for eligibility details.**

School division or political subdivision employees covered under the Hybrid Retirement Plan have disability and long-term care benefits through the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) or a comparable program provided by the employer. However, comparable plans provided by employers are not required to offer long-term care benefits. VLDP provides income protection if you can't work because of a non-work-related or work-related illness, injury or other condition, such as surgery, pregnancy, complications from pregnancy or a catastrophic or major chronic condition. You must satisfy qualifying periods for some benefits. **For additional information, refer to the Virginia Local Disability Program Handbook for School Division and Political Subdivision Employees available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).**

**VRS has contracted with Unum as the third-party administrator for the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP) and Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP).** If you have questions about your coverage, call Unum toll-free at 1-888-859-1293 or visit [www.unum.com/claimant](http://www.unum.com/claimant).

## Long-Term Care Programs

### VSDP and VLDP Long-Term Care Plans · Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program

The Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP) and the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP) provide long-term care coverage at no cost to you. You also may be eligible for the employee-paid Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program.

### VSDP and VLDP Long-Term Care Plans

The long-term care plans under the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP), for state employees, and the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP), for school division and political subdivision employees whose employers participate in VLDP, provide assistance with the cost of:

- Care in a nursing home or hospice facility
- Assisted living facility care
- Community-based care
- Home healthcare services
- Informal care-giving
- Alternative or transitional care

**If you are a school division or a political subdivision employee in a comparable disability program provided by your employer, you are not eligible for the VLDP Long-Term Care Plan.** However, your employer may provide a long-term care plan or participate in the Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program. Contact your human resource office for more information about long-term care coverage that may be available to you.

#### You may be eligible for benefits if a licensed healthcare professional certifies that:

- You are unable to perform at least two of six activities of daily living; or
- You have a severe cognitive impairment.

The maximum daily benefit amount is \$96 with a lifetime maximum of \$70,080. Refer to the *Virginia Sickness and Disability Program Handbook for State Employees* or the *Virginia Local Disability Program: Handbook for Employees in the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan whose School Division or Political Subdivision Participates in VLDP* for more information about covered services. The handbooks are available [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

#### Six activities of daily living:

1. Bathing
2. Transferring, such as getting in and out of bed
3. Dressing
4. Toileting (using the bathroom)
5. Continence
6. Eating (ability to feed oneself)

**If you leave or retire from your position**, your long-term care coverage will end. You can elect to continue your coverage, which will be retroactive to your last day of employment; you will pay the premiums. You will qualify for the same benefits as active participants and must meet the same eligibility requirements when submitting a claim for covered services. To continue your coverage, submit the Long-Term Care Plan Authorization of Coverage Retention (VRS-170) and the Long-Term Care Plan Protection Against Unintentional Lapse (VRS-171) to the Long Term Care Group, Inc. within 60 days of your last day of employment at P.O. Box 64011, St. Paul, MN 55164-0011. The forms are available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org). This option is not available after 60 days.

**How to File a Claim.**, VRS has contracted with the Long Term Care Group, Inc. as the third-party administrator for the VSDP and VLDP Long-Term Care Plans. Call the Long Term Care Group, Inc. toll-free at 1-800-761-4057 within 60 days of certification by a licensed healthcare professional that you qualify for benefits. A family member or friend

## Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program

The employee-paid Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program provides a maximum monthly benefit for covered long-term care expenses. VRS has contracted with the Genworth Life Insurance Company as the insurer for the program.

**If you are a state employee, or an employee of a school division or a political subdivision that has elected to participate in the program**, you are eligible to apply for coverage for yourself and select family members between the ages of 18 and 79. Family members include a spouse, adult children, parents, parents-in-law, step parents, step parents-in-law, grandparents, grandparents-in-law, step grandparents and step grandparents-in-law.

**If you are a deferred member and have at least five years of creditable service, or a retiree receiving a retirement benefit under the defined benefit component**, you are eligible to apply for the COV Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program, provided you are under age 80. Your employer is not required to have elected the program. Medical underwriting will be required. Visit [www.genworth.com/cov](http://www.genworth.com/cov) for more information.

**For more information**, contact Genworth Life toll-free at 1-866-859-6060 or visit [www.genworth.com/cov](http://www.genworth.com/cov).

**Premium payment methods.** If you elect to pay the premiums to Genworth on a quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis, you may be eligible for a premium discount. Or, you can pay the premiums through a monthly Electronic Fund Transfer from your checking or savings account. Some employers may offer employees the option to pay premiums through a payroll deduction; contact your human resource office for more information.

### Other program features:

- Coverage is guaranteed if you apply within 60 days of employment. Medical underwriting (proof of good health) will be required after 60 days and for any family members who apply.

- At group rates, your premiums may be more affordable. Premium rates are guaranteed through March 1, 2020 and will change only if you make changes to your coverage.
- You can choose one of three benefit increase options that will allow you to increase your coverage over time to help protect against the rising cost of care.



## 4. If You Leave Employment Before Retirement

Learn more about your options for your account balances, impact on benefit coverage and severance benefits.

**Your Options**

**Impact on Other VRS Benefits**

**Severance Benefits**

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## Your Options

[Defined Benefit Component](#) · [Defined Contribution Component](#) · [Refund and Distribution Scenarios](#) · [Impact on Other Benefits](#) · [Severance Benefits](#)

If you separate employment, you can take a refund of your defined benefit member contribution account and/or take a distribution from the defined contribution component. Or, you can choose to leave your retirement funds in the Hybrid Retirement Plan.

### Defined Benefit Component

You can take a refund of your defined benefit member contribution account balance or leave your member contributions and interest with VRS and become a deferred member. Taking a refund cancels your VRS membership and eligibility for any future VRS benefits. Taking a refund of the defined benefit component does not require you to take a distribution from the defined contribution component.

**If you request a refund** and are not vested (you have fewer than five years of creditable service), you will receive your own contributions and interest in your member contribution account. If you have any member contributions paid by your employer in your account, you will forfeit these contributions and interest. If you are vested, you will receive a full refund of your member contribution account balance, including any employer-paid member contributions and interest.

**If your membership date is before January 1, 2014** and you elected to transfer to the hybrid plan from the VRS Plan 1 or the VRS Plan 2, your member contribution account may have member contributions made by your employer. Contact your human resource office for more information.

Additionally, if you request a refund and are not vested in the defined contribution component (fewer than four years of creditable service) you will forfeit any non-vested employer contributions in your Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan.

**If you leave your member contributions and interest with VRS and become a deferred member**, you will retain your VRS membership and eligibility for any future benefits.

### Defined Contribution Component

If you separate employment, you are not required to take a distribution. However, you may take a distribution from your Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan and/or your Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. If you leave a balance in one or both plans, you will continue to manage

your investments. Taking a distribution from the defined contribution component does not require you to take a refund from the defined benefit component.

If you decide to take a distribution, you may withdraw 100 percent of your account balance in the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. You also may take a distribution from the 401(a) Cash Match Plan. However, the employer contributions are subject to a vesting schedule. Non-vested employer funds are forfeited when you request a distribution.

## Requesting a Distribution

There are a variety of distribution options available to you, see Distribution Options. To request a distribution you must submit the appropriate distribution form to ICMA-RC by mail or by fax. The form can be found at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) (under the Defined Contribution Plans tab). A separate form is required for distributions from both the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan and the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan. A required minimum distribution will begin if you have not arranged to receive payments from your plan by age 70½ or when you separate employment, whichever is later.

**When to expect your distribution.** You are eligible for a distribution following a bona fide break in service of at least one full calendar month after you have left all employment and are no longer being reported to VRS by your employer. Periods of leave with or without pay, summer breaks, intersession periods, educational leave and sabbaticals do not count toward this break in service.

**For more information on requesting a distribution** contact ICMA-RC, call toll-free at 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261-select Option 1) and ask to speak with an Investor Services Representative.

**Taxes on distributions.** Generally, if you have a distribution paid directly to you, ICMA-RC will withhold federal taxes of 20 percent and, if you live in Virginia, state taxes of 4 percent. However, you may request to have additional taxes withheld at the time of distribution. If you take a distribution from the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan paid directly to you before age 59½, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may impose an additional 10 percent tax penalty for early withdrawal; there are exceptions to this rule. There is no early withdrawal penalty if you take a distribution from the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. For more information, read the IRS 402(f) Special Tax Notice available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org); or contact a tax advisor or the IRS toll free at 1-800-829-1040, or [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## If You Return to VRS-Covered Employment

**If were previously employed in a covered position and took a refund of your defined benefit member contributions and interest**, you will be rehired under the applicable VRS retirement plan for your position as follows:

- If you return to a position eligible for the Hybrid Retirement Plan, you will be rehired under the hybrid plan.
- If you return to a position covered under the State Police Officers' Retirement System (SPORS) or the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System (VaLORS), you will be rehired under the SPORS Plan 2 or the VaLORS Plan 2.

**For more information about the defined benefit Plan 1 and Plan 2**, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

- If you return to a position with a political subdivision that provides enhanced hazardous duty benefits, you will be rehired under the VRS Plan 2.

**If you are a deferred member** in VRS, SPORS, VaLORS or JRS Plan 1 or Plan 2 or the Hybrid Retirement Plan and return to covered employment, you will be rehired under Plan 1, Plan 2 or the Hybrid Retirement Plan.

*Examples if you are a deferred member:*

- If you were previously employed under the SPORS Plan 1 and return to covered employment as a teacher, you will be rehired under the VRS Plan 1.
- If you were previously employed under the Hybrid Retirement Plan as a local librarian and return to covered employment as a general state employee, you will be rehired under the Hybrid Retirement Plan.

### Requesting a Refund

Complete a Defined Benefit Request for Refund (VRS-3) and submit it to your human resource office. If you request a refund after six months from leaving your job, submit the form to VRS. Defined contribution refund forms are available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) under the Defined Contributions tab.

**When to expect your refund.** Refunds are processed after at least one full calendar month after you have left all employment, including non-covered employment, under the defined benefit component and are no longer being reported to VRS by your employer. Periods of leave with or without pay, summer breaks, intersession periods, educational leave and sabbaticals do not count toward this break in service.

*Examples:*

- You leave your job as an administrative assistant at the Virginia Department of Taxation effective June 12 and request a refund. The earliest VRS can process your refund is August.
- You are a teacher on a contract for the period August 1 to May 31. You leave your position at the end of your contract and request a refund. The earliest VRS can process your refund is October.

**Before leaving your position.** If you are not taking a refund, submit a Name and Address Declaration for Deferred Members (VRS-3A) to VRS. Use the VRS-3A to notify VRS of any future address changes. The form is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

**Taxes on refunds.** If you have your refund paid directly to you, VRS will withhold federal taxes of 20 percent and, if you live in Virginia, state taxes of 4 percent. Any after-tax member contributions in your refund will not be taxed again. If you have your refund paid directly to you before age 59½, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) may impose an additional 10 percent tax penalty for early withdrawal of member contributions; there are exceptions to this rule.

You can defer taxes by rolling over your refund to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or another qualified plan that accepts rollovers. For more information, read the IRS 402(f) Special Tax Notice available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org); or contact a tax advisor or the IRS toll-free at 1-800-829-1040 or [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

### Becoming a Deferred Member

If you leave your member contribution account balance in the defined benefit component with VRS, you will become a deferred member. You may retain your defined contribution account but it has no

standing on deferred member status. If you are vested (you have at least five years of creditable service), you may be eligible for a future retirement benefit if you meet the age and service requirements for your plan. If you return to covered employment, member contributions and the service you earn upon reemployment will be added to your member record. As a deferred member, you will remain eligible to request a refund of your member contributions and interest.

**Deferring retirement.** If you have reached retirement eligibility when you leave covered employment, you can defer receiving a retirement benefit until a later date. If you defer retirement and do not apply for retirement by April 1 following the calendar year in which you turn age 70½, VRS will be required by law to begin paying you a monthly retirement benefit. If you do not submit a retirement application, you will receive the Basic Benefit (see Benefit Payout Options).

**VRS communication.** As a deferred member, you will have access to *myVRS* where you can view information from your member record and plan for retirement online. See Financial and Retirement Planning Resources for more information.

### What Option is Best for Me?



For assistance with your options for your account balances under the defined contribution component, contact an ICMA-RC Investor Services representative toll-free at 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261, select Option 1).

### Impact on Other VRS Benefits

#### VRS Group Life Insurance

**Basic group life insurance.** If you are covered under the VRS Group Life Insurance Program and leave covered employment before you are eligible to retire, or if you take a refund of your member contributions and interest from the defined benefit component, your basic group life insurance coverage will end within 31 days of the end of the month in which the last premium is paid. If you die before the end of this period, your beneficiary will receive your natural death benefit. You can convert your coverage to an individual policy if you leave employment before you reach retirement eligibility. If you have reached retirement eligibility but defer retirement and do not take a refund of your defined benefit member contributions and interest, some basic life insurance benefits will continue after you leave your position.

**Optional group life insurance.** If you have optional group life insurance coverage and leave covered employment, you may convert your coverage to an individual policy. If you do not convert your coverage and you die within 31 days of the end of the month in which the last premium is paid, your beneficiary will receive your optional group life insurance natural death benefit.

**Converting your group life insurance.** If you wish to convert your coverage to an individual policy, you must do so within 31 days of your last day of employment; you will pay the premiums. Proof of good health will not be required. This option is not available after 31 days. Submit a Conversion of Group Life Insurance Enrollment (VRS-35E) to Minnesota Life at P.O. Box 1193, Richmond, VA 23218-1193. The form is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org). For more information, call Minnesota Life toll-free 1-800-441-2258.

## Health Insurance

**If you are a state employee**, your health insurance coverage will end on the last day of the month in which you leave covered employment. You may elect to extend your health insurance for up to 18 months from this date or convert your coverage to an individual policy; you will pay the premiums. For more information, visit the Department of Human Resource Management website at [www.dhrm.virginia.gov](http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov), or call Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield toll-free at 1-800-552-2682.

**If you are a school division or a political subdivision employee**, check with your human resource office about health insurance coverage if you leave employment.

## Disability Coverage

If you leave your position, your coverage under the Virginia Sickness and Disability Program (VSDP), if you are a state employee, or the Virginia Local Disability Program (VLDP), if you are a school division or a political subdivision employee, will end with your last day of employment. Check with your HR office for more information if your employer provides a comparable plan in lieu of VLDP.

## Long-Term Care Coverage

If you are covered under VSDP or VLDP and leave or retire from your position, your long-term care coverage will end. You can elect to continue your coverage, which will be retroactive to your last day of employment; you will pay the premiums. You will qualify for the same benefits as active participants and must meet the same eligibility requirements when submitting a claim for covered services. To continue your coverage, submit the Long-Term Care Plan Authorization of Coverage Retention (VRS-170) and the Long-Term Care Plan Protection Against Unintentional Lapse (VRS-171) to the Long Term Care Group, Inc. within 60 days of your last day of employment at P.O. Box 64011, St. Paul, MN 55164-0011. The forms are available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org). This option is not available after 60 days.

If you leave employment and are enrolled in the Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program, you can continue your coverage by paying the premiums directly to Genworth Life, the insurer for the program. If you are not enrolled, you can apply for coverage if you are a vested deferred member or a retiree, provided you are under age 80. Your employer is not required to have elected the program. Medical underwriting will be required. For more information, call toll-free 1-866-859-6060 or visit [www.genworth.com/cov](http://www.genworth.com/cov).

## Sick Leave and Annual Leave

**If you are a state employee** and leave your position, you are not eligible for a payment of unused sick leave; however, you may be eligible for a payment of unused annual leave. Contact your human resource office for more information.

## Severance Benefits

You may be eligible for severance benefits under the defined benefit component of your plan if you are involuntarily separated from employment. Involuntary separation is a layoff because of a budget reduction, agency reorganization, workforce downsizing or another cause not related to job performance or misconduct. Please see your Human Resources office for eligibility details.

**Special waiver for selected positions.** If you hold one of the following positions, are involuntarily separated from employment for reasons other than cause, and have 20 or more years of creditable service at the time of separation, you may be eligible to retire with an unreduced benefit as early as age 60:

- Agency head appointed by the Governor or a state board, commission or council
- School superintendent
- County, city or town manager or attorney
- Constitutional officer (if your position is abolished)

Your employer must certify your eligibility on the Certification of Exception from General Early Retirement Provisions (VRS-8). If you return to covered employment, you will be subject to the normal provisions for unreduced and reduced retirement under the defined benefit component, unless you are in a position that qualifies for this special waiver.

**Your employer will notify you if you are involuntarily separated from employment and coordinate your severance benefits.** For more information, contact your human resource office. For more information about your options under the defined contribution component of your plan, call toll-free 1-VRS-DC-Plan1 (1-877-327-5261, select Option 1) and ask to speak with an Investor Services representative.

**If you are involuntarily separated from employment, you are eligible to take a distribution from your hybrid 401(a) and hybrid 457 plans under the defined contribution component.** See Defined Contribution Component for more information about distribution options.

## 5. Benefits in Retirement at a Glance

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**How Can I Receive My Payments?**

**Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)**

**Insurance in Retirement**

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Visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org) for more details about benefits in retirement.



## How Can I Receive My Payments?

**Direct Deposit** After you retire, your monthly benefit from the defined benefit component will be deposited to the financial institution account you designate on the Authorization for Direct Deposit of Monthly Benefit (VRS-57). Benefit payments are deposited on the first of the month for the preceding month's benefit. If the first falls on a weekend or holiday, the payment will be deposited on the last business day of the preceding month. If the net amount of your benefit changes, you will receive an earnings statement from VRS reflecting the new amount.

The defined contribution component offers a variety of payment options. Through ICMA-RC you can request direct deposit, a check; or for an additional fee a wire transfer. At the time of your request you can choose any date for direct deposit.

**myVRS: At your service after you retire.** After you retire, you can create a secure online myVRS retiree account to access information about your benefit payments, taxes, the COLA and more. Your retiree account is based on information you provide when you apply for retirement and information your employer reports to VRS.



**Taxes** Your retirement benefit under the defined benefit component will be subject to federal income taxes and, if you live in Virginia, state income taxes. Distributions from the defined contribution component will be subject to federal as well as state income taxes if you live in a state that taxes income.

**1099-R form.** After you retire, you will receive a 1099-R form from VRS and ICMA-RC each January for the previous calendar year's benefit payments and tax withholdings. You will receive a 1099-R form from ICMA-RC for any defined contribution account distributions. You will file this form with your federal and state income tax returns.

**Imputed income taxes.** You also will receive a W-2 from VRS if you participate in the VRS Group Life Insurance Program and have imputed income. Imputed income is the cost of VRS group life insurance over \$50,000 on the premiums paid by VRS and is subject to income taxes and FICA (Social Security and Medicare) taxes.

**Social Security** You will be eligible for a full Social Security retirement benefit when you reach your normal Social Security retirement age. Normal Social Security retirement age for people born in the year 1960 or later is age 67. You may qualify for a reduced benefit as early as age 62.

For more information, call the Social Security Administration toll-free at 1-800-772-1213, visit [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) or contact your local Social Security Administration office. A chart showing all normal retirement ages under Social Security is available at [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

### If You Divorce

In the event of a divorce, your retirement benefit may be regarded as marital property in a property settlement. The *Code of Virginia* authorizes a direct payment to a former spouse if he or she is awarded part of your benefit by the court. VRS implements the court decision when it receives a certified copy of an Approved Domestic Relations Order (ADRO). For more information, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org). The *Code of Virginia* also allows other attachments to your VRS benefit, such as IRS tax levies, debt to an employer, child support or other marital rights as stated in an ADRO or divorce decree.

**Note:** VRS will not release information about your benefit to anyone other than you without your written authorization, unless your information is subpoenaed.

### Working after Retirement

If you decide to work after you retire, you can work for any employer that does not participate in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and continue to receive your retirement benefits. If you return to covered employment with a VRS-participating employer, you will become an active member and your retirement benefits and distributions will stop.

In some cases, you can work in a non-covered position with a VRS-participating employer and continue to receive your retirement benefits. Non-covered employment is a part-time position with a VRS-participating employer. Non-covered positions do not provide eligibility for benefits. Part-time positions typically require less than 80 percent of the hours of comparable full-time permanent positions. Some full-time positions may be considered non-covered if they are temporary and require less than 80 percent of the hours per year that would be considered full-time and permanent for that position. Note that some part-time permanent salaried state positions are covered under VRS.

If you return to non-covered employment with the employer from which you retired, you must have a bona fide break in service of at least one full calendar month from your retirement date over a period you normally work to continue receiving your benefits. The Commonwealth of Virginia, including all state agencies and public colleges and universities, is considered one employer. Public school divisions and political subdivisions are considered separate employers.

For more information about working after retirement, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

## Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)

A cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) allows your retirement benefit under the defined benefit component to keep pace with inflation. The COLA is based on the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The COLA is applied to your monthly retirement benefit under the defined benefit component after your COLA goes into effect:

### COLA Effective Dates

- If you retire with an unreduced benefit or with a reduced benefit with at least 20 years of creditable service, or if you are involuntarily separated from employment and retire under the Workforce Transition Act or the Transitional Benefits Program, the COLA will go into effect on July 1 after one full calendar year (January 1 to December 31) from your retirement date. For more information about severance benefits, see Chapter 4 - If You Leave Employment Before Retirement.
- If you retire with a reduced benefit with fewer than 20 years of creditable service, the COLA will go into effect on July 1 after one full calendar year (January 1 to December 31) from the date you would have become eligible for an unreduced benefit.

For more information about the COLA, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

The COLA is calculated using the first 2 percent increase in the CPI-U and half of any additional increase (up to 2 percent), for a maximum COLA of 3 percent. During years of no inflation or deflation, the COLA is 0 percent.

## Insurance in Retirement

### Group Life Insurance

**Basic group life insurance.** If you are covered under the VRS Group Life Insurance Program and meet the qualifications for retirement upon leaving employment, your coverage will provide:

- **A death benefit** equal to your creditable compensation at retirement, rounded to the next highest thousand and then doubled. If you retire with 20 or more years of creditable service, the death benefit will be based on your highest creditable compensation as a covered employee, even if your salary at retirement is lower. This benefit is payable if you die of natural or accidental causes.
- **The accelerated death benefit option.** If you are diagnosed with a terminal condition and have fewer than 12 months to live, you can withdraw some or all of your life insurance proceeds to use for any purpose. Your beneficiary or survivor will receive any remaining amount upon your death.

**Optional group life insurance.** If you are enrolled in the Optional Group Life Insurance Program, you may continue a portion of your coverage into retirement or convert your coverage to an individual policy. You as well as your spouse and dependent children, if enrolled, must have been continuously covered during the 60 months preceding your retirement date. You must elect to continue or convert your coverage within 31 days of your retirement date. This option is not available after 31 days.

### Retiree Health Insurance

**If you retire as a state employee,** you are eligible to enroll in the State Retiree Health Benefits Program. You can elect coverage when you apply for retirement or within 31 days of your last day of employment. **Note:** If you defer receiving a retirement benefit, you will not be eligible to enroll in the program; if you waive coverage, you will not be able to enroll at a later date. For more information, visit the Department of Human Resource Management website at [www.dhrm.virginia.gov](http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov).

**If you are a school division or a political subdivision employee,** contact your human resource office for more information about retiree health insurance your employer may offer. Some employers have arranged with VRS to deduct the premiums from the monthly benefit payment under the defined benefit component.

### Health Insurance Credit

If you retire with at least 15 years of creditable service, you may be eligible for the health insurance credit. This is a tax-free benefit that assists with health insurance premiums you pay for single coverage under qualifying health plans, excluding any portion of the premiums covering a spouse or dependents.

Eligible employees include:

- State employees
- Teachers and school administrators

- General registrars and their employees, constitutional officers and their employees and local social service employees
- Employees of political subdivisions that have elected to provide the health insurance credit

The health insurance credit is applied to your monthly benefit payment under the defined benefit component of your plan. If you do not receive a monthly benefit, VRS will reimburse you for the amount. The credit ends upon your death.

For health insurance credit amounts, see [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

### Long-Term Care Coverage

Your coverage under the **Virginia Sickness and Disability Program Long-Term Care Plan** or the **Virginia Local Disability Program Long-Term Care Plan** will end when you retire. You can elect to continue your coverage, which will be retroactive to your last day of employment; you will pay the premiums. This option is not available after 60 days from your retirement date.

**Note:** If you are a school division or a political subdivision employee and are covered under a comparable program offered by your employer, you are not eligible for the VLDP Long-Term Care Plan. Contact your human resource office about long-term care coverage your employer may offer and whether you can continue this coverage after you retire.

If you are enrolled in the **Commonwealth of Virginia (COV) Voluntary Group Long Term Care Insurance Program** when you retire, you can continue your coverage by paying the premiums directly to Genworth Life, the insurer for the program. If you are not enrolled, you can apply as a retiree, provided you are under age 80. Your employer is not required to have elected the program. Medical underwriting (proof of good health) will be required. Visit [www.genworth.com/cov](http://www.genworth.com/cov) for more information.

For more information about these retiree benefits, visit [www.varetire.org](http://www.varetire.org).

## 6. Frequently Used Terms\*

<b>Active Member</b>	You are an active member if you are working in a covered position with an employer that participates in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS).
<b>Active Service</b>	Active service is the number of months and years you work in a covered position. You earn service for each month you are employed and being reported to VRS by your employer.
<b>Actuarial Equivalent Rate</b>	Actuarial equivalent rate represents the amount of money needed in today's dollars to pay for the increase in your future retirement benefit or earlier retirement eligibility date resulting from purchasing prior service. If you purchase prior service after your eligibility period, your cost will be based on this rate.
<b>Actuarially Determined Rate</b>	A contribution rate established by the Plan actuary, using the actuarial methods, assumptions, and funding policy approved by the VRS Board that are used to generate employer and employee contributions necessary to fund the full amount of money needed to pay member benefits by the time a member retires. These contributions rates take into consideration the employee's life expectancy, normal retirement age, annual retirement benefit amounts, and the potential for employee turnover using past experience as a guide. The actuarially determined rate consists of a normal cost rate, the cost to pay for an additional year of service, plus a contribution to make up any unfunded liabilities that may have occurred due to past experience or plan changes.
<b>Advance Pension Option</b>	The Advance Pension Option is one of the benefit payout options available at retirement under the defined benefit component. This option allows you to temporarily increase your monthly benefit amount until an age you select, between age 62 and your normal retirement age under Social Security. At that point, your benefit is permanently reduced.
<b>Approved Domestic Relations Order (ADRO)</b>	An Approved Domestic Relations Order (ADRO) is a court order related to marital property rights and other attachments to your benefit such as child support at the time of divorce. If you divorce, your VRS benefit may be regarded as marital property in a property settlement.
<b>Asset Allocation</b>	A method of investing by which investors include a range of different investment classes such as stocks, bonds and cash equivalents in their portfolios.
<b>Asset Classes</b>	A group of securities or investments that have similar characteristics and behave similarly in the marketplace. Three common asset classes are equities (e.g., stocks), fixed income (e.g., bonds), and cash equivalents (e.g., moneymarket funds).
<b>Auto-Escalation – Hybrid 457 Deferred</b>	The Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan under the defined contribution component provides a feature that automatically increases your voluntary

\* Some provisions described in this section are subject to pending technical amendments to the current provisions in the *Code of Virginia*.

<b>Compensation Plan</b>	contributions 0.5 percent every three years. This feature goes into effect on January 1, 2017.
<b>Average Final Compensation</b>	Average final compensation is the average of your 60 consecutive months of highest creditable compensation as a covered employee. It is one of the factors used to calculate your retirement benefit under the defined benefit component.
<b>Basic Benefit</b>	The Basic Benefit is a monthly benefit in retirement under the defined benefit component. It is based on your age, total creditable service and average final compensation. The Basic Benefit does not provide a continuation of a benefit to a survivor; however, any balance remaining in your member contribution account upon your death will be paid in a lump sum to your named beneficiary.
<b>Beneficiary Designations</b>	Upon your death, your named beneficiary is eligible for a payment of any balances remaining in your accounts under the defined benefit and defined contribution components as well as any VRS group life insurance benefits you may have. Beneficiary designations for each account are separate; you can designate the same or different beneficiaries for each account.
<b>Benefit Payout Options</b>	When you apply for service retirement under the defined benefit component, you elect how you want to receive your benefit. You choose from four benefit payout options, depending on your eligibility: Basic Benefit, Survivor Option, Partial Lump-Sum Option Payment (PLOP) or Advance Pension Option. The option you elect is irrevocable; you cannot change it once you retire, with the exception of the Survivor Option under some conditions.
<b>Bona Fide Break in Service</b>	A bona fide break in service is a break of at least one full calendar month from your last day of employment. This break must occur over a period you normally would work. Periods of leave with or without pay, summer breaks, intersession periods, educational leave or sabbaticals do not count toward satisfying this break in service.
<b>Child-Support Liens</b>	The Department of Social Services may file child-support liens against proceeds payable under the VRS Group Life Insurance Program. VRS is required to pay life insurance proceeds to the Department of Social Services to satisfy any outstanding child-support obligations at your death.
<b>Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers</b>	The VRS cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is based on the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPI-U is defined as a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for goods and services such as food, housing, apparel, transportation, medical care, recreation, education, communication and other goods and services.
<b>Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)</b>	Cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) allow your retirement benefit under the defined benefit component to keep pace with inflation once you retire and qualify for the COLA. It is based on the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U), published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and updated each July 1. During years of no inflation or deflation, the COLA will be 0 percent.
<b>Covered</b>	Covered employment is a full-time permanent salaried position with a VRS-

<b>Employment</b>	participating employer. Some part-time permanent salaried state and non-adjunct faculty positions requiring at least 20 hours but fewer than 40 hours a week also are covered under VRS.
<b>Creditable Compensation</b>	Creditable compensation is your salary reported to VRS by your employer. It does not include payments for overtime, temporary duties or extra duties, such as coaching or special advising if you are a teacher. It also does not include payments such as bonuses.
<b>Creditable Service</b>	Creditable service includes active service for each month you are working in a covered position as well as credit for prior service you may purchase or additional service you may be granted. Creditable service counts toward vesting in the defined benefit and defined contribution components. Creditable service is used to determine your eligibility for retirement and to calculate your retirement benefit under the defined benefit component. It also counts toward qualifying for the retiree health insurance credit if offered by your employer.
<b>Death-in-Service Benefit</b>	If you die while you are an active member (“in service”), your named beneficiary or your survivor may be eligible for a death-in-service benefit in addition to any VRS group life insurance benefits you may have under the defined benefit component.
<b>Deferred Member</b>	You are considered a deferred member if you have left covered employment but have not withdrawn your defined benefit member contributions and interest and have defined benefit service credit with VRS.
<b>Defined Benefit Component</b>	The defined benefit component provides a retirement benefit based on your age, total creditable service and average final compensation at retirement. VRS manages the investments and related risk for member and employer contributions under this component.
<b>Defined Benefit Plan 1 and Plan 2</b>	VRS administers two defined benefit plans through the Virginia Retirement System (VRS Plan 1 and VRS Plan 2), the State Police Officers’ Retirement System (SPORS Plan 1 and SPORS Plan 2), the Virginia Law Officers’ Retirement System (VaLORS Plan 1 and VaLORS Plan 2) and the Judicial Retirement System (JRS Plan 1 and JRS Plan 2). The retirement benefit under these plans is based on age, total creditable service and average final compensation at retirement.  Members whose membership date is before July 1, 2010 and who were vested as of January 1, 2013 are covered under Plan 1. Members whose membership date is before July 1, 2010 and who were not vested as of January 1, 2013, or those whose membership date is on or after July 1, 2010, are covered under Plan 2. The exception is members in the VRS Plan 1 or the VRS Plan 2 who elected to transfer to the Hybrid Retirement Plan effective July 1, 2014.
<b>Defined Contribution Component</b>	The defined contribution component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan provides a retirement benefit based on member and employer contributions and net investment gains on contributions. You manage the investments and related risk for this component.
<b>Defined Contribution Plans</b>	The defined contribution plans administered or authorized by VRS include the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation and Cash Match Plans; the



	Optional Retirement Plan for Political Appointees, Optional Retirement Plan for School Superintendents and Optional Retirement Plan for Higher Education; and the Virginia Supplemental Retirement Plan for certain school employees. The benefit under a defined contribution plan is based on contributions and net investment gains on contributions.
<b>Distribution</b>	<p>A distribution is lump-sum payment, a periodic payment or an annuity. Upon leaving employment, you can elect one of these payments methods for your account balances in the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan and the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. The employer contributions and net investment earnings on employer contributions are subject to a vesting schedule; see Vesting-Defined Contribution Component.</p> <p>If you participate in the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, you can request a lump-sum payment, a periodic distribution or a combination of these methods upon retiring or leaving employment.</p>
<b>Diversification</b>	The practice of investing in multiple asset classes and securities with different risk characteristics to reduce the risk of owning any single investment. Using diversification as part of your investment strategy neither assures nor guarantees better performance and cannot protect against loss in declining markets.
<b>Employer Contributions</b>	<p>Your employer makes a separate contribution to VRS toward funding current and future benefits for all covered employees in the defined benefit Plan 1 and Plan 2 and the defined benefit component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan. Members are not eligible for a refund of this separate employer contribution. See Actuarially Determined Rate.</p> <p>Your employer also contributes a mandatory 1 percent of your creditable compensation each month to the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan under the defined contribution component as well as matching contributions if you make additional voluntary contributions through the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan.</p>
<b>Form 1099-R</b>	After you retire, you will receive a 1099-R form from VRS each January for the previous year's benefit payments and tax withholdings. You will file this form with your income tax returns.
<b>Full-Time Employment</b>	Full-time employment is typically 40 hours a week. Thirty-two hours a week is considered the minimum number for full-time employment. Employers, not VRS, classify positions as full time or part time and define the hours applicable to each classification.
<b>Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan</b>	The Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan is a defined contribution plan provided through the defined contribution component. Member and employer mandatory contributions and employer matching contributions are deposited to this plan.
<b>Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan</b>	The Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan is a tax-deferred savings plan provided through the defined contribution component. Member voluntary contributions are deposited to this plan.
<b>Imputed Income</b>	Imputed income is the cost of life insurance in excess of \$50,000, as determined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). It is subject to FICA (Medicare and Social Security) taxes and income taxes, and is reflected in your W-2 you receive from your

	<p>employer. If you are covered under the VRS Group Life Insurance Program when you retire, VRS will deduct FICA taxes and report taxable or imputed income for as long as your group life insurance exceeds \$50,000.</p>
<b>Irrevocable Assignment</b>	<p>Irrevocable assignment means assigning your ownership rights in your life insurance coverage to another person or an entity such as an eligible trust or charity. You cannot change this assignment once it is made.</p>
<b>Mandatory Retirement Distribution</b>	<p>If you defer retirement under the defined benefit component and do not apply for retirement by April 1 following the calendar year in which you turn age 70½, VRS will be required by law to begin paying you a monthly retirement benefit. If you do not submit a retirement application, you will receive the Basic Benefit. See Benefit Payout Options.</p> <p>If you are not vested, you will receive a refund of your defined benefit member contribution account balance, excluding any member contributions made by your employer to your account after July 1, 2010 and the interest on these contributions.</p>
<b>Market Capitalization (Market Cap)</b>	<p>The market value of a company's outstanding securities. Market capitalization can be determined by multiplying the number of outstanding shares of a company's stock by the stock's current market price per share.</p>
<b>Member Contributions</b>	<p>You contribute a mandatory 4 percent of your creditable compensation each month to your member contribution account under the defined benefit component and a mandatory 1 percent of your creditable compensation each month to the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan under the defined contribution component.</p> <p>Your employer contributes a mandatory 1 percent of your creditable compensation as well as any matching contributions on voluntary contributions to your hybrid 401(a) plan. You can make voluntary contributions of up to 4 percent of your creditable compensation through the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan.</p> <p>Your contributions are made on a pre-tax salary reduction basis. You pay taxes only when you receive the money from your accounts as part of your retirement benefit, a refund or a distribution.</p>
<b>Membership Date</b>	<p>The effective date of membership in VRS is the first of the month.</p>
<b>Net Investment Earnings</b>	<p>Net investment earnings represent gains and losses on contributions in your accounts under the defined contribution component.</p>
<b>Non-Covered Employment</b>	<p>Non-covered employment is a part-time position with a VRS-participating employer. Non-covered positions do not provide eligibility for benefits. Part-time positions typically require less than 80 percent of the hours of comparable full-time permanent positions. Some full-time positions may be considered non-covered if they are temporary and require less than 80 percent of the hours per year that would be considered full-time and permanent for that position. Note that some part-time permanent salaried state positions are covered under VRS.</p>
<b>Normal Cost (Approximate)</b>	<p>Approximate normal cost is the average cost of one year of VRS creditable service. If you purchase prior service within one year of becoming eligible, you will pay an approximate normal cost rate as a percentage of your creditable compensation or average final compensation at the time of purchase.</p>

<b>Order of Precedence</b>	If there is no valid beneficiary designation on file or your beneficiary is deceased at the time of your death, VRS is required by law to pay benefits according to an order of precedence.
<b>Part-Time Employment</b>	Part-time employment is typically less than 80 percent of full-time employment. Employers, not VRS, classify positions as full-time or part-time and define the hours applicable to each classification.
<b>Partial Lump-Sum Option Payment (PLOP)</b>	The Partial Lump-Sum Option Payment (PLOP) is one of the benefit payout options available at retirement under the defined benefit component. You may elect a PLOP if you work at least one year beyond the date you first become eligible for an unreduced retirement benefit. You can choose an amount equal to one, two or three times your annual retirement benefit amount, depending on how long you work beyond your unreduced retirement eligibility date. This option is paid from your defined benefit member contribution account and reduces your monthly benefit.
<b>Plan Provisions</b>	Plan provisions are the requirements that govern the plans or programs under which you are covered based on your current position of employment.
<b>Portability</b>	<p>Portability means transferring the value of your retirement assets from your previous employer to a new employer in order to consolidate your retirement assets.</p> <p>For the defined benefit plans, VRS has portability agreements with the City of Charlottesville, City of Danville, City of Newport News, City of Norfolk, City of Richmond, City of Roanoke and County of Fairfax.</p> <p>You can transfer 100 percent of your account balance in the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan to another employer's plan. Contributions and net investment earnings on contributions in the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan also are portable; the employer contributions and net investment earnings are subject to a vesting schedule. See Vesting-Defined Contribution Component.</p>
<b>Power of Attorney</b>	Under a power of attorney, you can name an individual as your agent to take actions on your behalf and in accordance with your wishes if you no longer can take care of your own affairs. To name an agent for VRS matters, submit a VRS Durable Power of Attorney (VRS-901).
<b>Prior Service Credit</b>	Eligible prior service includes federal and other public service, active duty military service, certain types of leave and VRS refunded service. If you have prior service, you may be eligible to purchase this service as credit in your plan. Prior service credit counts toward vesting in the defined benefit and defined contribution components, eligibility for retirement and eligibility for the health insurance credit, if offered by your employer.
<b>Refund</b>	<p>A refund is a lump-sum payment of your member contribution account balance under the defined benefit component. Taking a refund cancels your membership and eligibility for any future benefits.</p> <p>If you leave covered employment, you can request a refund of defined benefit</p>

	member contribution account. If you become vested in the defined benefit component of your plan when you have at least five years (60 months) of creditable service. Vesting under this component means you are eligible to qualify for retirement, if you meet the age and service requirements for your plan, or to receive a full refund of your member contribution account balance, if you leave employment before retirement and request a refund.
<b>Required Minimum Distribution</b>	A required minimum distribution will begin if you have not arranged to receive distributions from the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan, the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan or the Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan (if you participate in this plan) by age 70½ or when you leave a position with an employer providing the plan, whichever is later.
<b>Retiree</b>	You are a retiree if you are no longer employed in a covered position and are receiving a VRS monthly retirement benefit through the defined benefit component.
<b>Retirement Benefit – Reduced</b>	You are eligible for a reduced benefit under the defined benefit component beginning at age 60 with at least five years of creditable service.
<b>Retirement Benefit – Unreduced</b>	You are eligible for an unreduced benefit under the defined benefit component when you reach your normal Social Security retirement age and have at least five years of creditable service or when your age and service credit equal at least 90 (Rule of 90). <i>Example:</i> Age 60 with 30 years of creditable service.
<b>Retirement Date</b>	The effective date of retirement is the first of the month.
<b>Retirement Multiplier</b>	<p>The retirement multiplier under the defined benefit component of the Hybrid Retirement Plan is 1.0 percent. A retirement multiplier is a factor that determines how much of your average final compensation will be used to calculate your retirement benefit under the defined benefit component.</p> <p>If your membership date is before January 1, 2014 and you elected to transfer to the Hybrid Retirement Plan from the VRS Plan 1 or VRS Plan 2, service you earned, purchased or were granted before January 1, 2014 will be calculated using different retirement multipliers. Visit <a href="http://www.varetire.org">www.varetire.org</a> for more information about retirement multipliers for different VRS plans.</p>
<b>Rollover</b>	A rollover is a transfer from one qualified plan to another qualified plan that allows you to consolidate your retirement assets.
<b>Survivor Option</b>	The Survivor Option is one of the benefit payout options available at retirement under the defined benefit component. Under the Survivor Option, you elect to continue a monthly benefit to a survivor upon your death. This option reduces your monthly benefit. You can name any living person as your survivor; you also can name more than one survivor.
<b>Vesting – Defined Benefit Component</b>	You become vested in the defined benefit component when you have at least five years (60 months) of creditable service. Vesting is the minimum length of service needed to qualify for a retirement benefit, if you meet the age and service requirements for your plan. If you leave employment, you can request a refund of

	your defined benefit member contributions and interest; you must be vested to receive any member contributions made by your employer after July 1, 2010 and the interest on these contributions, unless you are involuntarily separated for causes other than job performance or misconduct.
<b>Vesting – Defined Contribution Component</b>	You become fully vested in the employer contributions and net investment earnings on employer contributions in the Hybrid 401(a) Cash Match Plan when you have four years of creditable service; Vesting in the Hybrid 457 Deferred Compensation Plan is immediate. Upon retiring or leaving employment, you can withdraw 100 percent of your hybrid 457 plan account balance.

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