

Some Teachers May Be Eligible for Additional Service Credit

The Wisconsin Supreme Court recently issued a court decision on the Solie and Baxter v. Employee Trust Funds Board case. The court ruled that these teachers are eligible to have previously forfeited years of creditable service restored to their WRS accounts without cost to them. As a result of this decision certain teachers and former teachers are also eligible for this service credit.

Below are some basic eligibility screening criteria for the additional service credit. **If you do not meet all of these initial screening criteria you will not be eligible for service credits under the court's recent decision.** However, if you do meet all of these initial requirements please contact the Department at the number below, as you may qualify for the additional service credits. We will review your account to determine if you meet the final eligibility criteria and inform you in writing of whether you qualify.

Initial Screening Criteria:

1. You first began teaching covered under State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) or the Milwaukee Teachers Retirement Fund (MTRF) before September 11, 1965.
2. You terminated teaching employment and withdrew your member contributions before May 11, 1973.
3. After withdrawing your contributions you subsequently returned to covered teaching under the **same** teacher retirement system (STRS or MTRF), terminated teaching employment, and **again** withdrew your member contributions before May 11, 1973.
4. You returned to teaching again, and taught in a position covered either under the same retirement system (STRS or MTRF) after May 10, 1973, **or** taught under the Wisconsin Retirement System after December 31, 1981. However, after that return to teaching you never took a separation benefit that closed your teacher retirement account.

If you contact the Department and we determine that you meet all of the final eligibility criteria, how the additional service will affect your WRS account depends on your current status. If you have not purchased your forfeited service, the additional years of service will be added to your account. If you have already retired, your annuity will be recalculated to determine whether the additional service credit will increase your annuity, and adjusted retroactively for any increase that the additional service would provide. If you have already purchased your forfeited service, you will receive a refund for the amount you paid for the years of service to which you are entitled under the court's ruling.

If you believe that you meet all of the above criteria please contact the Department to request that your account be reviewed for service credit eligibility under the Sole-Baxter court decision. You may write to the Department or call us toll-free at 877-533-5020 or at 608-266-3285 (local Madison).