



IMRF Service Credit

“Service credit” is your total time under IMRF. You earn one month of IMRF service credit for each month you

- work in a position that qualifies for IMRF participation and
- make an IMRF member contribution (4.50% of salary for regular IMRF members, 7.50% of salary for Sheriff’s Law Enforcement Personnel, 7.50% of salary for Elected County Officials Plan).

Other types of IMRF service credit (but not all types) are explained below.

Service is credited monthly. For details on the information presented here, contact IMRF at 1-800-ASK-IMRF (1-800-275-4673), Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Benefit Protection Leave service

If your employer wishes to provide you with IMRF service credit and IMRF disability and death benefit protection while you are not working (taking a leave of absence), your employer’s governing body would grant and file with IMRF an IMRF Benefit Protection Leave.

The total service you can establish under the IMRF Benefit Protection Leave is limited to a maximum of 12 months during your lifetime, e.g. you may be granted a one-time leave of 12 months or several leaves totaling no more than 12 months. To establish the service, you must pay the member contributions that would be due on your unpaid earnings.

Concurrent service

Under the SAME plan

One type of concurrent service occurs when you reported under the **same plan by more than one employer for the same month**. Under this type of concurrent service, your wages for the month are combined, and, by law, you are credited with one month of service.

Although you receive only one month of service credit, your salaries are combined for that month. Therefore, if the concurrent service occurs during your “final rate of earnings” (FRE) period, it can increase the amount of your pension. FRE is one factor used to calculate the amount of an IMRF pension. The FRE is the average monthly earnings over the highest consecutive 48 months of earnings within the last 10 years of IMRF service.

Concurrent service

Under DIFFERENT plans

If you work for two or more IMRF employers but you participate under two or more IMRF plans, each concurrent month will be treated as one month of service in two plans, e.g., one month Regular and one month SLEP. When your pension is calculated, the calculations will apply the Regular formula to those months with Regular wages and the SLEP formula to those months with SLEP wages. Your salaries from the positions are not combined.

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For example, you work for a park district where you participate in Regular IMRF, and you also work for the county where you participate in SLEP. For the month of June:

- Your park district employer reports you as Regular IMRF.
- Your county employer reports you as SLEP.

The concurrent month of June is treated as one month of service in the two plans. When your pension is calculated, the calculation will apply the:

- Regular formula to those months in which you have Regular wages
- SLEP formula to those months in which you have SLEP wages

Disability service

For each month you receive an IMRF disability benefit payment, you earn one month of IMRF service credit. This service credit is granted without any cost to you.

Irregularly paid service

If you perform services for your IMRF employer every month but you are not paid every month, you can receive irregularly paid service credit.

Members who receive irregularly paid service credit are paid bi-monthly (every other month), quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. These members receive service credit for the unpaid months, provided they are paid at least once during the year.

One example of members who receive irregularly paid service credit are elected officials who are in office and work each month during the year, but are not paid each month. These elected officials receive service credit for the months they are not paid. (This assumes the elected office qualifies for IMRF coverage and the necessary enrollment documents have been filed with IMRF.)

Military leave service

You may qualify for military leave service credit under the Illinois Pension Code or under a federal law.

UNDER THE FEDERAL LAW

If you left your IMRF participating employment because you were drafted, enlisted for regular military service, or performed active duty in a reserve or national guard unit of the United States Armed Forces, you may receive military leave service credit if you:

- 1) Return to IMRF participation with the same employer within the number of days required under this law following your discharge (The number of days required depends upon your circumstances.)
- 2) Submit the appropriate documents to IMRF.
- 3) Pay the appropriate member contributions plus interest.

UNDER THE ILLINOIS PENSION CODE:

You left your IMRF position to serve in the Armed Forces:

You will be eligible to purchase your military service if:

- 1) The employer you left when you entered the military submits a resolution to IMRF authorizing IMRF to grant service credit for military leave.
- 2) You returned to IMRF participation within 90 days of your discharge. (You don't have to return to the same employer or to the same position.)
- 3) You submit the appropriate documents to IMRF.

You do not make any member contributions toward the military leave service credit. Also, such military service cannot be used toward a military pension.

The military service occurred before you began participation in IMRF

or

You did not return to IMRF participation within 90 days of discharge

or

The service is not covered by state or federal law, such as inactive

or military reserves

You will be eligible to purchase that service if:

- 1) Your current IMRF employer adopts a resolution making its IMRF members eligible to purchase military service credit prior to IMRF participation. Employer adoption of the resolution is optional.
- 2) You were participating in IMRF on the date your employer adopts the authorizing resolution.

You would pay member contributions, "normal" employer contributions, plus interest. ("Normal" employer contributions do not represent the entire employer cost.) Such military service can be used toward a military pension.

IMRF has developed a booklet detailing eligibility requirements and costs to purchase military service. Please contact IMRF for more information.

Omitted service

Occasionally, an employer incorrectly omits a member from IMRF coverage. In some cases, the employee is not enrolled in IMRF or the employer does not report a member's wages to IMRF for a certain month(s).

If you were not enrolled in IMRF and you should have been, or if your employer did not report your wages to IMRF, you can receive omitted service credit. To do so, your employer would have to correct the error by submitting the appropriate form. Also, to receive omitted service you must be participating in IMRF or in another public pension system covered under the Illinois Reciprocal Act.

Out-of-state service

If you have service credit with a public pension system in another state, you may be able to transfer that service to IMRF.

First, you must have worked for your IMRF employer for at least two years. Second, your IMRF employer must agree to grant the service. Out-of-state service credit is authorized at the employer's discretion on a case-by-case basis. You may

receive a maximum of 120 months of out-of-state credit. Also, once you transfer the service, you give up your right to a pension from the out-of state system.

Prior service

If you were already working for your employer when it joined IMRF, you received prior service credit. The prior service you received was equal to the years and months you worked for that employer (assuming your position qualified for IMRF participation).

Under current law, you can receive five years of your prior service credit or 20% of your total prior service, whichever is less, at no cost. You can purchase any remaining prior service by paying the member contributions based on your current salary, plus interest.

If you previously worked for an employer and you return to work for the same employer after it has joined IMRF, you may receive prior service credit after two years of service with that employer.

Reinstated service

If you stop working for your IMRF employer and take a refund of your contributions, you may redeposit those withdrawn contributions and reinstate your years of service credit.

To pay back the refund...

- If you participate in the Regular or Elected County Official plans: you would have to participate for two years in IMRF or another Illinois public pension system covered under the Illinois Reciprocal Act.
- If you participate in the Sheriff's Law Enforcement Personnel Plan (SLEP): you would have to return to participation as a SLEP member. You could repay the refund after participating for at least 1,000 hours in IMRF.

You can redeposit the withdrawn contributions, plus interest, either in a lump sum or installments.

Retroactive service

Some IMRF members can purchase service credit for time they worked in an IMRF-covered position before the member was enrolled in IMRF. The most common examples are elected officials who held an office that qualified for IMRF but chose not to participate and city hospital employees who worked in an IMRF-covered position before they were enrolled in IMRF. They may purchase up to 50 months (over their lifetime) of retroactive service credit.

Elected officials may be eligible to purchase more than 50 months of retroactive service credit if their governing body adopted the appropriate resolution.

Seasonal service

If your job requires you to work at least six consecutive months during the year, you may receive service credit for the off-season months (the months you don't work).

If you are a seasonal employee of a school district, a special education cooperative, a park district, or a forest preserve district, you automatically receive 12 months of service credit if you are employed for the entire year.

If you are a seasonal employee for any other IMRF employer, you can receive 12 months of service credit if you are employed the entire year and your job is identified as seasonal when you enrolled in IMRF.