

INFORMATION BULLETIN

RETIREE RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

July 2019

Overview

To help alleviate the classroom teacher shortage problem in Illinois, a law that allows retired TRS members to teach for a full school year in districts declared to be subject shortage areas has been extended until 2021. Under the law, which was set to expire in 2019, retired teachers who go back to these designated districts are not subject to “return-to-work” restrictions imposed on other retirees. The regional superintendent must designate the employment to be in a subject shortage area in order for a retiree to be able to return to work without limitation.

Eligibility

A retiree receiving an annuity may teach in a subject shortage area without compromising his or her retirement status if:

- The employment does not begin within the school year service was terminated.
- The retiree has not received the TRS early retirement incentive.
- The member retired before age 60 and with less than 34 years of service and the eligible employment does not begin within the year following the effective date of the retirement annuity.
- The member retired at age 60 or above or with 34 or more years of service and the eligible employment does not begin within the 90 days following the effective date of the retirement annuity.

Employment rights

Once hired, the retiree will be included in a collective bargaining unit and will comply with the laws governing the employment, regulation, licensure, treatment and conduct of teachers.

The retiree will participate in the group health benefits offered by the school district without limitations based on pre-existing conditions. While teaching in a subject shortage area, the retiree must remain on the employer’s health insurance. It is not permissible for the retiree to switch back to the Teachers’ Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP) while teaching in a subject shortage area.

After the retiree stops teaching in a shortage area, he/she should notify us that he/she has terminated employment and will be returning to health insurance coverage under the Teachers’ Retirement Insurance Program (TRIP).

If the school district does not offer health insurance, the retiree will remain in the TRIP program.

No service credit

No employer or employee contributions can be made to TRS and no additional service credit can be earned when a retiree is hired to work in a subject shortage area. Employment will not affect the retiree’s final average salary or the annuity amount.

Post-retirement limitations

The retiree who returns to work in a subject shortage area is not required to comply with the 120-days/600-hours post-retirement employment limitations. The retiree will receive a pension although he/she is employed by a school dis-

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trict beyond the post-retirement employment limitations.

Regional Office of Education and school district certification procedure

1. The Regional Office of Education fills out a certification stating that the school district has a shortage area and the district met the public act requirements.
2. After meeting the requirements of the public act, we will provide the district with the Return to Teaching in Subject Shortage Area Employee Notification form to complete. When the district completes this form to certify the intent to

hire a retiree under the program, it will require the retiree's Social Security number, hire date, health insurance status, and the subject the retiree will teach.

3. We will notify the retiree and school district that we received the certification form and acknowledge the hiring of the retiree under the program.

Questions

If you have questions, please contact the Member Services Department by calling 877-927-5877 or via email at members@trsill.org.

