

Calculating Your Benefits

Spouse/Domestic Partner & Parent Benefits

Benefits for spouses, domestic partners, and parents are calculated according to the teacher's highest annual salary.

<u>Highest Annual Salary</u>	<u>Monthly Benefit*</u>
\$17,000 or less	\$750
\$17,001-\$25,000	\$875
\$25,001-\$33,000	\$1,000
\$33,001-\$40,000	\$1,125
\$40,001 or more	\$1,250

* Benefit amounts effective July 2004. A yearly cost-of-living-adjustment for spousal benefits shall be based on the annual social security adjustment.

Family & Children Benefits

Survivor benefits for children and families are equal to the spousal benefit multiplied by a percentage that adjusts the benefit to the recipients.

<u>Recipients</u>	<u>Multiplier</u>
Parent & 1 Child	150%
Parent & 2 or more children	175%
One Child Alone	75%
Two Children Alone	150%
Three or more Children Alone	175%

As an example we will use a deceased teacher whose highest annual salary was \$45,000. He was survived by his wife and one child.

Step 1: Calculate the spousal benefit. Because his highest annual salary was \$45,000 his spouse, at age 60, is entitled to a payment of \$1,250 per month—as shown in the spousal benefit chart.

Step 2: Find the correct multiplier. The teacher was survived by his wife and one child, qualifying them for the family benefit. The family benefit multiplier for a parent and 1 child is 150%.

Step 3: Calculate the benefit. $\$1,250 \times 150 = \$1,875$. The parent and child would receive a total of \$1,875/month. Once the child is 18 years old, or 23 if a fulltime student, the family benefit ends. When the spouse reaches age 60, she may then collect the spousal benefit of \$1,250 if she has not remarried.

Employees' Retirement System of Rhode Island
50 Service Avenue
Warwick, RI 02886

Teachers Survivors' Benefits Plan

A Guide to
Understanding and
Collecting Your Benefits

Questions and Answers

What is the Teachers Survivors' Benefits Plan?

The Teachers Survivors' Benefits Plan was created in response to teacher requests for a plan to leave benefits to their survivors. Teachers in participating school districts contribute to the fund, in lieu of Social Security, to provide benefits for their survivors in the event of their death.

Which School Districts Participate in the Teachers Survivors' Benefits Plan?

Barrington	Johnston
Bristol/Warren Regional	Lincoln
Burrillville	Little Compton
Central Falls Collaborative	Middletown
Coventry	Newport
Cranston	North Smithfield
Cumberland	Portsmouth
East Greenwich	Scituate
East Providence	Smithfield
Foster-Glocester	Tiverton
Glocester	Westerly

Please Note: Some school districts once may have had survivor benefits, but now participate in Social Security. These districts may have grandfathered some members into the Teachers Survivors' Benefit Plan after they switched to Social Security. Your school district can tell you to which program you belong.

How Much Do I Contribute to the Plan?

As of this printing, you and your employer each contribute \$96 per year to the plan. The amount you contribute may change, subject to actuarial evaluation of the plan every 2 years.

Questions and Answers

How Do I Qualify to Leave Benefits for Survivors?

First, you must have taught in a school district that participated in the Teachers Survivors' Benefit Plan. Second, you must have been making contributions to the plan for at least six calendar months prior to death or retirement.

Who May Be Eligible to Collect Survivor Benefits?

There are three categories of people who may be eligible to collect under the Teachers Survivors' Benefits Fund: 1) a surviving spouse or domestic partner who is at least 60 years of age; 2) children—under age 18—of a deceased teacher; and, 3) a dependent mother or father of the deceased teacher.

May a Spouse or Domestic Partner Ever Lose a Benefit?

Yes. If a spouse or domestic partner remarries or enters into a domestic partnership, the benefit is negated.

What Types of Benefits Exist?

- A survivor qualifies at age 60 for **spousal** benefits if he or she was married to the teacher at least one year prior to the teacher's death, has no surviving children under age 18, and was living with the deceased at the time of death—or was receiving support from the teacher by court order.
- Survivor benefits for **families** are payable to the spouse of a deceased teacher if the spouse is caring for children of the deceased who are under the age of 18, or are fulltime students under the age of 23. The spouse must have been living with the deceased or receiving regular support by court order at the time of death. When the youngest child is over the maximum age, the spouse would then receive spousal benefits at age 60.

Questions and Answers

- A teacher's **children** are entitled to receive survivor benefits if they were dependents of the teacher, unmarried and under the age of 18—or 23 if a fulltime student. Disabled children, regardless of age, may collect survivor benefits if disabled before age 18.
- If the teacher did not leave a surviving spouse or child, the **parents** of the teacher may be eligible to collect survivor benefits. To collect, a parent must be at least 60 years of age, a dependent of the deceased, and not entitled to Social Security benefits from his or her own earnings that would be equal to or greater than the survivor benefit.

Finally, at the time of your retirement from teaching as an ERSRI member, you may elect to do either:

- 1) *maintain your Teacher Survivors' coverage during your retirement by leaving your contributions in the system; or,*
- 2) *have a 1-time option to receive a refund of your past contributions with interest.*

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