



Reciprocity Basics

What is reciprocity?

Reciprocity is moving from one employer covered by a public retirement system in California to another, and linking both systems to protect your benefits.

What form do I need to fill out to establish reciprocity?

To establish reciprocity, you must fill out the previous employment & reciprocity section on the Member Certification form. The form can also be found here: [Membership Certification Form](#)

How can I confirm if I successfully established reciprocity?

If you successfully establish reciprocity, you should get a confirmation letter from the other reciprocal system. If you do not receive a letter, please reach out to SJCEA at contactus@sjcera.org and we can confirm for you.

Reciprocal Systems

What systems qualify for reciprocity?

- CalPERS and CalPERS covered agencies.
- 19 other California Counties operating under the County Employee's Retirement Law of 1937 (1937 Act). The following Counties are 37 acts:
 - Alameda
 - Contra Costa
 - Fresno
 - Imperial
 - Kern
 - Los Angeles
 - Marin
 - Mendocino
 - Merced
 - Orange
 - Sacramento
 - San Bernardino
 - San Diego
 - San Joaquin
 - San Mateo
 - Santa Barbara
 - Sonoma
 - Stanislaus
 - Tulare
 - Ventura
- CalSTRS and CalSTRS covered agencies.
- Legislators' Retirement System (LRS)
- Judges' Retirement System I and II (JRS)

What systems do not qualify for reciprocity?

- UC systems
- Federal Government

Eligibility

What are the eligibility requirements for reciprocity?

- Enroll into a new system within 6 months of your previous employment.
- Keep contributions on deposit (DO NOT WITHDRAW).
- No overlapping of service (running out time/using vacation).

If reciprocity was not set up within 6 months am I no longer eligible?

You can establish reciprocity at any time. The 6 months only refers to the time between employment. In order to be eligible for reciprocity, you would have to go from one employment to another within 6 months time and without any overlapping services.

Advantages

What are the advantages to establishing reciprocity?

- Highest Final Average Compensation
 - Under reciprocity we will use your highest final average compensation even if that compensation was earned in the other system.
- Vesting and Retirement Eligibility
 - Service credit earned in linked reciprocal systems may be used to help you meet each system's vesting and retirement eligibility requirements. For SJCERA that is 5 years of service credit. So, let's say you have 2 years of service credit with CalPERs, and you earned another 3 years of service credit at SJCERA. Under reciprocity, you meet the vested eligibility for retirement benefits.
- Tier Level and Member Contribution Rate
 - Reciprocity may affect Tier level and contribution rate. For example, if you are eligible for reciprocity and that reciprocal service began before January 1, 2013, SJCERA will place you in Tier 1 which assigned contribution rates are based on age of entry into service. If this happens, your contribution rate will be based on your age at entry into your earliest, linked reciprocal system, which could result in a lower or higher member contribution rate.