

## **IRS 402(f) — Special Tax Notice (VRS Defined Benefit Plans)**

### **Your Rollover Options**

You are receiving this notice because all or a portion of a payment you are receiving from either a Virginia Retirement System (VRS) defined benefit plan or the defined benefit component of the VRS Hybrid Retirement Plan (together, the “Plan”) is eligible to be rolled over to an IRA or an employer plan. This notice is intended to help you decide whether to do such a rollover.

This notice describes the rollover rules that apply to lump sum payments from VRS.

Rules that apply to most payments from a plan are described in the section titled “General Information About Rollovers.” Special rules that only apply in certain circumstances are described in the “Special Rules and Options” section.

If you have additional questions after reading this notice, call VRS toll-free at 1-888-827-3847.

### **General Information About Rollovers**

#### **How can a rollover affect my taxes?**

If you do a rollover, your payment will be taxed later when you take a distribution from the subsequent plan. If you do *not* do a rollover (you have the funds paid to you), you will be taxed on a payment from the Plan. This payment is subject to taxes at the time of distribution.

Federal Income Taxes: VRS is required to withhold 20% of the taxable amount as federal income tax.

State Income Taxes: If you are a Virginia resident, VRS withholds 4% of the taxable amount and forwards it to the Virginia Department of Taxation as state income tax withholding to be credited against your taxes.

Additional Taxes: An additional 10% income tax may apply. If you are under age 59-1/2 and do not do a rollover, you will also have to pay a 10% additional income tax on early distributions (generally, distributions made before age 59-1/2), unless an exception to the 10% additional income tax applies. However, if you do a rollover, you will not have to pay tax until you receive payments later and the 10% additional income tax will not apply if those payments are made after you are age 59-1/2 (or if an exception to the 10% additional income tax applies).

This notice does not describe local income tax rules or the rules for other states.

#### **What types of retirement accounts and plans may accept my rollover?**

You may roll over the payment to either an IRA (an individual retirement account or individual retirement annuity) or an employer plan (a tax-qualified plan, section 403(b) plan, or governmental section 457(b) plan) that will accept the rollover. The rules of the IRA or employer plan that holds the rollover will determine your investment options, fees, and rights to payment from the IRA or employer plan (for example, IRAs are not subject to spousal acknowledgement rules and IRAs may not provide loans). Further, the amount rolled over will become subject to the tax rules that apply to the IRA or employer plan. However, amounts rolled over to a governmental 457(b) plan will continue to be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions (unless an exception to the 10% additional

income tax applies), even though other distributions from that type plan are not subject to the 10% additional income tax.

### **How do I do a rollover?**

There are two ways to do a rollover. You can do either a direct rollover or a 60-day rollover.

If you do a direct rollover, the Plan will make the payment directly to your IRA or an employer plan. You should contact the IRA sponsor or the administrator of the employer plan for information on how to do a direct rollover.

If you do not do a direct rollover, you may still do a rollover by making a deposit into an IRA or eligible employer plan that will accept it. Generally, you will have 60 days after you receive the payment to make the deposit. If you do not do a direct rollover, the Plan is required to withhold 20% of the taxable amount of the payment for federal income taxes. This means that, in order to roll over the entire payment in a 60-day rollover, you must use other funds to make up for the 20% withheld. If you do not roll over the entire amount of the payment, the portion not rolled over will be taxed and will be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions if you are under age 59-1/2 (unless an exception to the 10% additional income tax applies).

### **How much may I roll over?**

If you wish to do a rollover, you may roll over all or part of the amount eligible for rollover. Any payment from the Plan is eligible for rollover, except:

- Certain payments spread over a period of at least 10 years or over your life or life expectancy (or the joint lives or joint life expectancies of you and your beneficiary).
- Required minimum distributions after age 73, or after death.
- Corrective distributions of contributions that exceed tax law limitations.

In general, the lump-sum portion of the partial lump-sum option payment (PLOP) option payable from VRS and a refund of your accumulated contributions and interest are eligible for rollover.

Generally other payments from VRS are not eligible for rollover because they are made over your life expectancy (or the joint life expectancy of you and your contingent annuitant).

Contact VRS if you are unsure which portion of a payment is eligible for rollover.

### **If I don't do a rollover, will I have to pay the 10% additional income tax on early distributions?**

If you are under age 59-1/2, you will have to pay the 10% additional income tax on early distributions for any payment from the Plan (including amounts withheld for income tax) that you do not roll over, unless one of the exceptions listed below applies. This tax applies to the part of the distribution that you must include in income and is in addition to the regular income tax on the payment not rolled over.

The 10% additional income tax does not apply to the following payments from the Plan:

- Payments made after you separate from service if you will be at least age 55 in the year of the separation.

- Payments that start after you separate from service if paid at least annually in equal or close to equal amounts over your life or life expectancy (or the joint lives or joint life expectancies of you and your beneficiary).
- Payments from a governmental plan made after you separate from service if you are a “qualified public safety employee” and you will be at least age 50 in the year of the separation<sup>1</sup>
- Payments made due to disability.
- Payments after your death.
- Corrective distributions of contributions that exceed tax law limitations.
- Payments made directly to the government to satisfy a federal tax levy.
- Payments made under an approved domestic relations order (ADRO).
- Payments up to the amount of your deductible medical expenses (without regard to whether you itemize deductions for the taxable year).
- Certain payments made while you are on active duty if you were a member of a reserve component called to duty after September 11, 2001, for more than 179 days.
- Payments excepted from the additional income tax by federal legislation relating to certain emergencies and disasters.

**If I roll over my payment into an IRA and then take distributions from the IRA, will the 10% additional income tax apply to early distributions from the IRA?**

If you receive a payment from an IRA when you are under age 59-1/2, you will have to pay the 10% additional income tax on early distributions on the part of the distribution that you must include in income, unless an exception to the 10% additional income tax applies. In general, the exceptions to the 10% additional income tax for early distributions from an IRA are the same as the exceptions listed above for early distributions from a plan. However, there are a few differences for payments from an IRA, including:

- The exception for payments made after you separate from service if you will be at least age 55 in the year of the separation (or age 50 for qualified public safety employees<sup>1</sup>) does *not* apply.
- The exception for approved domestic relations orders (ADROs) does *not* apply (although a special rule applies under which, as part of a divorce or separation agreement, a tax-free transfer may be made directly to an IRA of a spouse or former spouse).
- The exception for payments made at least annually in equal or close to equal amounts over a specified period applies without regard to whether you have had a separation from service.

Additional exceptions apply for payments from an IRA, including:

- Payments for qualified higher education expenses.
- Payments up to \$10,000 used in a qualified first-time home purchase.
- Payments for health insurance premiums after you have received unemployment compensation for 12 consecutive weeks (or would have been eligible to receive unemployment compensation but for self-employed status).

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<sup>1</sup> You are a qualified public safety employee if you are a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew.

## Special Rules And Options

### **If your payment includes after-tax contributions**

After-tax contributions included in a payment are not taxed. If you receive a partial payment of your total benefit, an allocable portion of your after-tax contributions is included in the payment—you cannot take a payment of only after-tax contributions. However, if you have pre-1987 after-tax contributions maintained in a separate account, a special rule may apply to determine whether the after-tax contributions are included in the payment. In addition, special rules apply when you do a rollover, as described below.

For Rollovers to an IRA: You may roll over to an IRA a payment that includes after-tax contributions through either a direct rollover or a 60-day rollover. You must keep track of the aggregate amount of the after-tax contributions in all of your IRAs (in order to determine your taxable income for later payments from the IRAs). If you do a direct rollover of only a portion of the amount paid from the Plan and at the same time the rest is paid to you, the portion rolled over consists first of the amount that would be taxable if not rolled over. For example, assume you are receiving a distribution of \$12,000, of which \$2,000 is after-tax contributions. In this case, if you roll over \$10,000 to an IRA that is not a Roth IRA, no amount is taxable because the \$2,000 amount not rolled over is treated as being after-tax contributions. If you do a direct rollover of the entire amount paid from the Plan to two or more destinations at the same time, you can choose which destination receives the after-tax contributions.

Similarly, if you do a 60-day rollover to an IRA of only a portion of your payment, the portion rolled over consists first of the amount that would be taxable if not rolled over. For example, assume you are receiving a distribution of \$12,000, of which \$2,000 is after-tax contributions, and no part of the distribution is directly rolled over. In this case, if you roll over \$10,000 to a non-Roth IRA within 60 days, no amount is taxable because the \$2,000 amount not rolled over is treated as an after-tax contribution.

For Rollovers to a Qualified Employer Plan: You may roll over to an employer plan all of a payment that includes after-tax contributions, but only through a direct rollover (and only if the receiving plan separately accounts for after-tax contributions and is not a governmental section 457(b) plan). You can do a 60-day rollover to an employer plan of part of a payment that includes after-tax contributions, but only up to the amount of the payment that would be taxable if not rolled over.

### **If you miss the 60-day rollover deadline**

Generally, the 60-day rollover deadline cannot be extended. However, the IRS has the limited authority to waive the deadline under certain extraordinary circumstances, such as when external events prevented you from completing the rollover by the 60-day rollover deadline. Under certain circumstances, you may claim eligibility for a waiver of the 60-day rollover deadline by making a written self-certification. Otherwise, to apply for a waiver from the IRS, you must file a private letter ruling request with the IRS. Private letter ruling requests require the payment of a nonrefundable user fee. For more information, see IRS Publication 590, *Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*.

### **If you were born on or before January 1, 1936**

If you were born on or before January 1, 1936, and receive a lump-sum distribution that you do not roll over, special rules for calculating the amount of the tax on the payment might apply to you. For more information, see IRS Publication 575, *Pension and Annuity Income*.

### **If you are an eligible retired public safety officer and your payment is used to pay for health coverage or qualified long-term care insurance**

Because your plan is a governmental plan, if you retired as a public safety officer and your retirement was by reason of disability or was after normal retirement age, you can exclude from your taxable income Plan payments paid directly as premiums to an accident or health plan (or a qualified long-term care insurance contract) that your employer maintains for you, your spouse, or your dependents, up to a maximum of \$3,000 annually. For this purpose, a public safety officer is a law enforcement officer, firefighter, chaplain, or member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew.

### **If you roll over your payment to a Roth IRA**

You can roll over a payment from the Plan to a Roth IRA. A special rule applies under which the amount of the payment rolled over (reduced by any after-tax amounts) will be taxed. In general, the 10% additional income tax on early distributions will not apply. However, if you take the amount rolled over out of the Roth IRA within the 5-year period that begins on January 1 of the year of the rollover, the 10% additional income tax will apply unless an exception is granted.

If you roll over the payment to a Roth IRA, later payments from the Roth IRA that are qualified distributions will not be taxed (including earnings after the rollover). A qualified distribution from a Roth IRA is a payment made after you are age 59-1/2 (or after your death or disability, or as a qualified first-time homebuyer distribution of up to \$10,000) and after you have had a Roth IRA for at least 5 years. To apply the 5-year rule, count from January 1 of the year in which you made your first contribution to a Roth IRA. Payments from the Roth IRA that are not qualified distributions will be taxed to the extent of earnings after the rollover, including the 10% additional income tax on early distributions (unless an exception to the 10% additional income tax applies). You do not have to take required minimum distributions from a Roth IRA during your lifetime. For more information, see IRS Publication 590-A, *Contributions to Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*, and IRS Publication 590-B, *Distributions From Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*.

### **If you are not a Plan member**

Payments after death of the member: If you receive a distribution after the member's death that you do not roll over, the distribution generally will be taxed in the same manner described elsewhere in this notice. However, the 10% additional income tax on early distributions and the special rules for public safety officers do not apply, and the special rule described under the section "If you were born on or before January 1, 1936" applies only if the deceased member was born on or before January 1, 1936.

If you are a surviving spouse: If you receive a payment from the Plan as the surviving spouse of a deceased member, you have the same rollover options that the member would have had, as described elsewhere in this notice. In addition, if you choose to do a rollover to an IRA, you may treat the IRA as your own or as an inherited IRA.

An IRA you treat as your own means that payments made to you before you are age 59-1/2 will be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions (unless an exception to the 10% additional income tax applies) and required minimum distributions from your IRA do not have to start until after you are age 73.

If you treat the IRA as an inherited IRA, payments from the IRA will not be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions. However, if the deceased member had started taking required minimum distributions (RMDs), those distributions must continue to you from the inherited IRA. If the deceased member had not started taking RMDs from the Plan, you will not have to start receiving distributions from the inherited IRA until the year the member would have been age 73.

If you are a surviving beneficiary other than a spouse: If you receive a payment from the Plan because of the member's death and you are a designated beneficiary other than a surviving spouse, the only rollover option you have is a direct rollover to an inherited IRA. Payments from the inherited IRA will not be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions. You will have to receive RMDs from the inherited IRA.

Payments under an approved domestic relations order: If you are the spouse or former spouse of the member who receives a payment from the Plan under an approved domestic relations order (ADRO), you generally have the same options and the same tax treatment that the member would have. For example, you may roll over the payment to your own IRA or an eligible employer plan that will accept it. However, payments under the ADRO will not be subject to the 10% additional income tax on early distributions.

### **If you are a nonresident alien**

If you are a nonresident alien and you do not do a direct rollover to a U.S. IRA or U.S. employer plan, instead of withholding 20%, the Plan is generally required to withhold 30% of the payment for federal income taxes. If the amount withheld exceeds the amount of tax you owe (as may happen if you do a 60-day rollover), you may request an income tax refund by filing IRS Form 1040NR and attaching your IRS Form 1042-S. See IRS Form W-8BEN for claiming that you are entitled to a reduced rate of withholding under an income tax treaty. For more information, see also IRS Publication 519, *U.S. Tax Guide for Aliens*, and IRS Publication 515, *Withholding of Tax on Nonresident Aliens and Foreign Entities*.

### **Other special rules**

If a payment is one in a series of payments for less than 10 years, your choice whether to do a direct rollover will apply to all later payments in the series (unless you make a different choice for later payments).

If your payments for the year are less than \$200, the Plan is not required to allow you to do a direct rollover and is not required to withhold for federal income taxes. However, you may do a 60-day rollover.

Unless you elect otherwise, a mandatory cashout of more than \$1,000 will be directly rolled over to an IRA chosen by VRS. A mandatory cashout is a payment from a plan to a member made before age 62 (or normal retirement age, if later) and without the member's first making a request for the payment.

You may have special rollover rights if you recently served in the U.S. Armed Forces. For more information on special rollover rights related to the U.S. Armed Forces, see IRS Publication 3, *Armed Forces' Tax Guide*. You also may have special rollover rights if you were affected by a federally declared disaster (or similar event), or if you received a distribution on account of a disaster. For more information on special rollover rights related to disaster relief, see the IRS website at [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

### **For More Information**

You may wish to consult with VRS or a professional tax advisor before taking a payment from the Plan. Also, you can find more detailed information on the federal tax treatment of payments from employer plans in: IRS Publication 575, *Pension and Annuity Income*; IRS Publication 590-A, *Contributions to Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)*; and IRS Publication 571, *Tax-Sheltered Annuity Plans (403(b) Plans)*. These publications are available from a local IRS office, online at [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov), or by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM.