



# Membership Status: I'm Vested. . .Now What?

**Audience:** Norfolk Employees' Retirement System (NERS) Members

**Description:** Identifies benefits members may qualify for as a vested member and explains why being vested is a milestone on the path to retirement.

**DISCLAIMER:** This pamphlet summarizes parts of Chapter 37 of the Code of the City of Norfolk. The summaries are intended to provide simplified and meaningful information that is relevant to the member. Any information that is inconsistent with, or contradicts, Chapter 37 must be disregarded.



The NERS "Know 2 Ask" series provides basic information needed to empower you to ask important retirement-related questions. Knowing who and what to ask is key.

## **Overview**

The Norfolk Employees' Retirement System (NERS) is a City-sponsored defined benefit plan that provides a lifetime monthly retirement benefit based on salary information, creditable service years and a retirement multiplier. Vesting in the NERS is an important accomplishment on the path to retirement.

### **What is a vested member?**

A vested NERS member has completed five (5) years of creditable service with the City of Norfolk in a NERS-covered position. The number of years employed by the City may differ from the number of NERS creditable service years due to breaks in service or type(s) of employment. Not all City positions qualified for NERS membership. The NERS closed to new membership effective January 1, 2022.

### **What is an active or “in-service” NERS member?**

NERS members that are currently employed by the City in a NERS covered position are considered to be active or “in-service” members. Generally, members contribute five percent of their earnable compensation to the NERS and earn creditable service during their employment. Active NERS members on an extended leave of absence, thirty (30) days or more, do not contribute to the NERS and will not earn creditable service during the leave without pay period.

#### **Active vested NERS members may be eligible for the following:**

- Ordinary death benefit (in-service death)
- Purchase of prior active duty military service
- Restoration of previous NERS creditable service
- Port (or transfer) service from qualifying retirement plan(s) to the NERS

## **How can I increase my NERS creditable years of service?**

An active full-time employee that is vested in the NERS has options to increase their creditable years of service to meet retirement eligibility requirements or increase their retirement benefit.

### **Active and vested NERS members may:**

- Purchase up to four (4) years prior active duty military service
- Restore previously refunded NERS creditable service
- Port (or transfer) service from eligible retirement plan(s)

### **For more information please review:**

- *Know 2 Ask A Guide to Portable Service from Eligible Retirement Plans*
- *Know 2 Ask A Guide to Purchasing Prior Military Service & Restoring Prior Creditable Service*

## **What future NERS retirement benefits are available to vested NERS members?**

Vested NERS members may qualify for a service retirement or a disability retirement once they meet certain eligibility requirements. Active NERS members who pass away while in service may also be eligible for a death benefit. Review the *Know 2 Ask Applying for Retirement: A Guide to NERS Retirements* for more information.

## **What happens if I pass away while I am still an active NERS member?**

If a vested NERS member passes away while actively employed, the member's designated beneficiary may be entitled to receive a benefit. Benefits may vary dependent upon the cause of death. This NERS benefit is in addition to the City provided basic life insurance benefit for employees.

## Key Takeaways

- Once you have earned five (5) years of creditable service in the NERS you are vested and may be entitled to a future retirement benefit.
- An active full-time employee that is vested in the NERS has options to increase their creditable years of service to meet retirement eligibility requirements or increase their retirement benefit.
- Active NERS members who pass away while in service may also be eligible for a death benefit.
- Vested members must submit a Vested Service Retirement application to the Finance Retirement Office upon attaining retirement eligibility.
- Retirement eligibility requirements and benefit calculations may vary dependent upon NERS membership criteria as identified in City Code Chapter 37.

## **Finance Retirement Office**

### Key Areas:

- Retirement Benefits
- Purchase of Service
- Porting Service
- Restoration of Prior Service

### Phone:

**(757) 664-4738**

### Email:

**retirement@norfolk.gov**

### Website:

**[www.norfolk.gov/retirement](http://www.norfolk.gov/retirement)**

### Mailing Address:

**City of Norfolk Retirement  
810 Union Street, Suite 309  
Norfolk, VA 23510**