



Optional Service Purchase Fact Sheet

When hired, you become a member of SERS and mandatory contributions are automatically credited to your account. As a SERS contributing member, you may elect to purchase optional service credit.

NOTE: All optional credit must be purchased prior to retirement.

There are several different types of Optional Service:

- Qualifying Periods
(Tier 1 Members only)
- Short Periods
- Leaves of Absence
- Repayment of a Refund
- Military Service

*Required information for each type of Optional Service Purchase:

Qualifying Period SERS will provide cost estimate for all Qualifying Periods to which the member is eligible to purchase.

Short Period SERS will provide cost estimate for all short periods to which the member is eligible to purchase.

Repayment of Refund the date parameters (approximate) and agency name where the refunded service was earned will need to be entered in the request screen view.

Military Service the date parameters will need to be entered in the request screen view AND the associated DD-214 will need to be provided to the SERS fax number (217) 558-8518 if it has not been previously provided.

Leave of Absence the date parameters and agency name where the Leave of Absence took place will need to be entered in the request screen view.

Legislative Staff Internship Program (ILSIP) the date parameters will need to be entered in the request screen view.

Government Public Service Internship Program (GPSI) the date parameters will need to be entered in the request screen view.

To purchase optional service credit, members will need to access their Member Services account. For more information on accessing Member Services, see the "Accessing the Member Services Website" Fact Sheet.

Steps to create a Service Purchase Request are listed below:

1. Login to Member Services
2. Once in the Member Services website, click "Service Purchases" from the menu.
3. The Service Purchases section has 3 links available, their title and purpose is as follows:
 - a. "Request the Cost of Optional Service Purchases for which I May Qualify" Creates Service Purchase Requests
 - b. "My Service Purchase Offers with Payment Options" Reviews the cost of the Service Purchase Estimates that have been approved for payment
 - c. "View My Service Purchase Payments and Balances" Views Service Purchase balances that are currently being paid

Select "Request the Cost of Optional Service Purchases for which I May Qualify" from the list of options.

4. Click "Add New Estimate Request". If other purchase requests have been previously requested, they would also be listed on the screen along with the status of that request.
5. The system shows the earliest date the member is eligible for retirement. It does not commit the member to a specific retirement date. Click "Create Request".
6. The request just created will populate under "Service Purchase Estimate Requests". Click "Add Optional Service" to add requests.
7. A pop-up window will appear. Select the type of optional service to purchase.*
8. Once all the Service Purchase types have been requested for this purchase, click the "Submit Request" button.
9. When the Service Purchase is ready, you will receive a notification in both your inbox within Member Services and an email at the email address registered to your Member Services account.

Notes

- Check both your email and Member Services account regularly. The Service Purchase offer expires over time and if expired, you will need to submit a new Service Purchase Request in order to purchase the Optional Service.
- For Qualifying and Short Periods, only one request is needed even if there are multiple of one or both that can be purchased.
- A Repayment of Refund MUST be paid in FULL before the associated Qualifying Period can be paid.

Steps to purchase the Optional Service (after requesting it):

1. Login to Member Services
2. Once in the Member Services website, click "Service Purchases" from the menu.
3. Select "My Service Purchase Offers with Payment Options" from the list of options.
4. Select the Service Purchase Offer you wish to purchase
5. Select your payment method. There are several payment options available.
6. Click "Review and Confirm Service Purchase Election"
7. Check the checkboxes to confirm that you are ready to make the purchase.
8. Click "Submit"

Steps to check the status of your Optional Service Purchase:

1. Login to Member Services
2. Once in the Member Services website, click "Service Purchases" from the menu.
3. Select "View My Service Purchase Payments and Balances"
4. Review the status of your Optional Service Purchase

Steps to review the service credits (once posted) to your Member Services Account

1. Login to Member Services
2. Select "Account" from the menu
3. Click "Earnings and Service Credit by Calendar Year"
4. The chart will show payroll postings coming into your account with the Service Purchase transactions showing in the yellow highlighted line.