



California Public Employees' Retirement System  
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## Payroll

# Circular Letter

January 3, 2022  
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Distribution: IV, V, VI, X, XII, XVI

**To: All CalPERS Employers**  
**Subject: 2022 Compensation Limits for Classic and PEPRAs Members**

### Purpose

The purpose of this Circular Letter is to inform you of the 2022 compensation limits for classic and Public Employees' Pension Reform Act (PEPRA) members and provide guidelines for how to report payroll when Internal Revenue Code (IRC) or PEPRA limits have been reached in a calendar year. IRC section 401(a)(17) provides an annual compensation limit considered under a qualified retirement plan for some classic members. Government (Gov.) Code section 7522.10 of the PEPRA law provides the authority for the earnings limit for all PEPRA members.

You should notify all classic or PEPRA members who are subject to the compensation limit requirements.

### Compensation Limits

#### Classic Members

The compensation limit for classic members for the 2022 calendar year is \$305,000. Employees with membership dates prior to July 1, 1996, are not impacted by these limits.

The compensation limits for classic members during calendar years 2018 through 2021 are:

2021	2020	2019	2018
\$290,000	\$285,000	\$280,000	\$275,000

## PEPRA Members

The compensation limit for PEPRA members for the 2022 calendar year is:

Year	Social Security Participants	Non-Social Security Participants
2022	\$134,974	\$161,969

The compensation limits for PEPRA members during calendar years 2018 through 2021 are:

Year	Social Security Participants	Non-Social Security Participants
2021	\$128,059	\$153,671
2020	\$126,291	\$151,549
2019	\$124,180	\$149,016
2018	\$121,388	\$145,666

## Reporting Guidelines

Compensation limits for both classic and PEPRA members do not limit the salary an employer can pay; they limit the amount of compensation that can be considered under the defined benefit plan.

For classic members, report compensation earnable to the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). For PEPRA members, report pensionable compensation to CalPERS. For classic and PEPRA members, contributions should not be made on compensation that exceeds the limit for each calendar year. All contributions should be reported as earned and not when paid<sup>1</sup>. In addition, exclude items such as overtime, automobile allowances, and lump-sum payouts for all compensation reported.

You are responsible for monitoring when an employee meets or exceeds the limit. Once an employee reaches the compensation limit, you must continue reporting compensation as earned; however, employer and employee contributions should not be reported for the remaining calendar year. myCalPERS will track classic and PEPRA member earnings over multiple CalPERS contracting agencies. Therefore, if a member is hired in the middle of the year from another CalPERS agency, myCalPERS will notify the current employer when the member reaches or exceeds the compensation limit. Monitoring and contribution reporting begin on January 1 of the calendar year. The end date of the payroll earned period determines which calendar year the period falls.

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Government Code section 20630, when compensation is reported to the board, the employer shall identify the pay period in which the compensation was earned regardless of when reported or paid.

Federal law does not permit CalPERS to refund over-reported contributions to an active CalPERS member. You must report these adjustments and refund the money to the employee once the adjustments have posted.

## **Impact on Final Compensation**

For classic members, final compensation is the highest average annual compensation earnable for a 12- or 36-consecutive month employment period, depending on your contract.

Classic members' retirement allowances are subject to final compensation limits under IRC section 401(a)(17). The calculation of each 12-month period will be subject to the annual compensation limit in effect for the calendar year in which the 12-month period begins. If final compensation exceeds 12 months, each 12-month period is calculated based on the applicable annual compensation limit for that 12-month period.

For PEPRA members, final compensation is the average annual pensionable compensation for a 36-consecutive month employment period.

PEPRA members' retirement allowances are subject to pensionable compensation limits under Gov. Code section 7522.10. The pensionable compensation limit — used to calculate final compensation — is calculated based on the limit in effect for each calendar year and the number of days per year included in the final compensation period.

## **Online Training**

The myCalPERS Payroll: Reporting Earnings Over the Compensation Limit online class is available for employers. This class provides instruction on how to report payroll information when the compensation limit has been reached. To enroll in the class, log in to your [myCalPERS](#) account and select the **Education** tab.

If you have any questions, call our CalPERS Customer Contact Center at **888 CalPERS** (or **888-225-7377**).

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