SUNY The State University of New York

OPTIONAL RETIREMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

SUNY offers these annuity options at a lower cost than what you would typically find on your own in the general marketplace. This helps you keep more of your savings and makes it easier to use your account for reliable payments in your retirement years.

SUNY Optional Retirement Program (ORP)

Thank you for taking a look at the SUNY ORP. This guide will help you understand what the ORP is and how it works.

The ORP is one of the primary retirement programs at SUNY. If you have elected to participate in the ORP, this means both you and your employer put money into your account while you're working. That money is invested to help support you when you retire.

The ORP is a retirement system offered by NYS. It's not a pension plan, but it offers annuity options that can provide you with a steady, lifetime income in retirement. This is the same way a pension pays monthly income.

The key difference is that your ORP income benefit comes from the money you and SUNY contribute, plus the total accumulated earnings from all the years of your investments.

NYS requires ORP assets to be invested in an annuity product—this means your contributions are placed in investment options that can be converted into guaranteed lifetime income when you stop working. See page 12 for additional details.

Important information

This document only serves as a general guide to the SUNY ORP and may not provide full pertinent details for all circumstances each individual member may have. Please consult with your human resources benefit office when additional information beyond the scope of this general plan overview may be warranted. References on SUNY employment include State Operated and Community Colleges.

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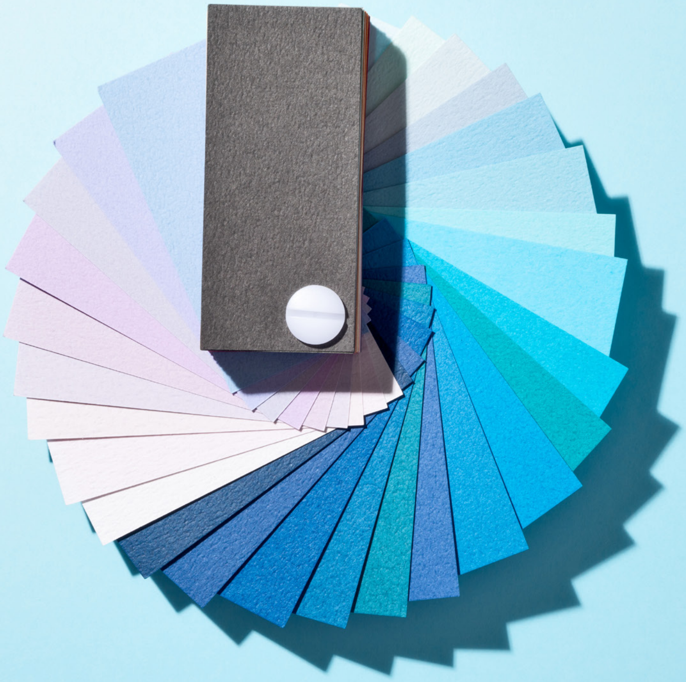


HOW DOES IT WORK?

You pick a provider to invest and grow your money:

- TIAA
- Voya
- Fidelity*
- Corebridge

The money in your account is yours. You can take it with you if you leave SUNY. Some restrictions may apply based on the specific investments you choose. Be sure to check with your investment provider before requesting a distribution.

There's no set age to retire, but if you take money out before age 59½, you may be subject to a 10% income tax penalty, unless you separate from service at age 55 or older.

*Fidelity does not provide its own annuity products. Instead, Fidelity partners with MassMutual, who supplies the annuity contract that participants can use if they choose Fidelity for their ORP account. This is why you may receive paperwork or statements that list MassMutual even though your account is with Fidelity.

WHO CAN JOIN THE ORP?

You can join if you are:

- A full-time unclassified SUNY State campus (UUP/MC13) employee
- A full-time unclassified SUNY Community College employee
- A part-time State campus term appointment of Community College part-time permanent unclassified SUNY employee
- Someone working on a part-time basis at both SUNY and the Research Foundation at the same time
- A doctor with their own practice and other geographic full-time title

WHO CAN NOT JOIN THE ORP?

You can not join if you are:

- A part-time temporary SUNY or Community College employee
- Someone retired with benefits from a NYS public pension plan or benefits eligible from other NYS retirement systems
- Someone already in NYS Employees Retirement System/NYS Teachers Retirement System (unless newly eligible for the ORP)
- An independent contractor

An “unclassified employee” is someone who works in a professional, faculty, or administrative role at SUNY. They include jobs like professors, instructors, librarians, coaches, and many professional staff members. Employees in these roles are eligible to participate in the ORP.

A “geographic full-time” employee is a medical center faculty member who may not be paid as a full-time State employee, but who works full-time at the medical center or its affiliated hospitals. All of their teaching and clinical work is done there, so they are treated as full-time for retirement plan purposes.

30

day window to make your choice

CHOOSING TO JOIN
(making your election)

You have a 30-day window to make your choice. If you miss it, you may be forced into a retirement system that you did not choose, or you may be left out of all retirement programs.

When you decide to join the SUNY ORP, that decision is permanent for as long as you work for SUNY. This means you can't switch to a different SUNY retirement program. The only time you could choose a different retirement program in the future is if your job changes to a position in which you are newly eligible for another retirement option under State eligibility rules.

To help you make your choice, SUNY provides a step-by-step video that walks you through the differences among the retirement programs.

Watch a video comparing the NYS Retirement systems here:

THE 366-DAY RULE

You must complete 366 days of NYS employment before becoming a full participant. Your money won't be invested during this time; your contributions are deposited and held in an inactive account that earns 4% simple interest.

Once you meet the 366 days of employment service requirement, your contributions and the related contributions from SUNY will be deposited to the investment provider you select in the Retirement At Work system.

Exceptions to the 366-day rule

1. You have prior NY public service.

If you worked for another NY public employer before joining SUNY, that time would count toward the 366-day waiting period for the ORP. This could help you finish the waiting period sooner or skip it completely. To receive this credit, you'll need to provide proof of your prior NY public service. SUNY will review your information and adjust your waiting period, accounting for your past NY public service.

2. You have a prior employer vested retirement account with a SUNY ORP investment provider.

If you already have a retirement account that includes vested employer assets from a previous employer with one of SUNY's approved providers (TIAA, Voya, Fidelity, and Corebridge), you may also be able to skip the 366-day waiting period.

You just need to provide some prior employer account information when making your election with SUNY, so they can confirm it qualifies.

3. You have prior SUNY service.

If you previously joined the ORP during an earlier period of SUNY employment, your original plan entry date stays the same. When you return to SUNY, you rejoin the program as an existing ORP member, and in some cases, you may be eligible for additional employer contributions. Please check with your human resources office for information on how this applies to your situation.

If you made a different retirement program election during past SUNY employment, that choice may affect which retirement programs you're eligible for when you return. Please check with your human resources office for information.

EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTIONS

Your employer contributes to your retirement account based on your Tier.

Tier and date you joined the plan	Your employer's contribution
TIER 1 Before July 1, 1973	**12%** on first $16,500, then **15%**
TIER 2 July 1, 1973 – July 26, 1976	**Same as Tier 1**
TIER 3 July 27, 1976 – August 31, 1983	**Same as Tier 1**
TIER 4 September 1, 1983 – July 16, 1992	**Same as Tier 1**
TIER 5 July 17, 1992 – March 31, 2012	**11%** for first 7 years of active membership, then **13%**
TIER 6* April 1, 2012, and after	**8%** for first 7 years of active membership, then **10%**

***Great News!** Effective October 1, 2026, Employer Contribution Rates for Tier 6 increase to 9% for first 7 years of membership and 11% thereafter.

HOW DOES MONEY GO INTO YOUR ACCOUNT?

If you're in tier 6, you must make employee contributions, and the contribution rate is based on your income. Don't worry, these contributions are handled for you and are automatically deducted from your paycheck.

Your contribution rate is shown in the table below, and you can't contribute more to this plan than the percentage that applies to your SUNY income.

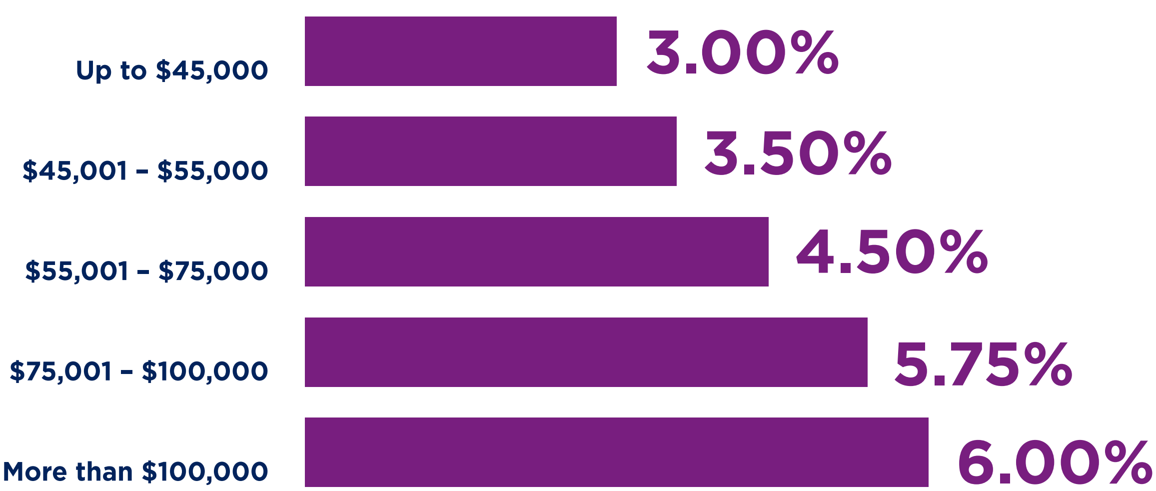
If you want to save more, you can open an account through SUNY's Voluntary Savings Plan (VSP), which allows additional "elective" contributions, in the amount you choose, as permitted by IRS annual contribution limits.

Additional information on your Voluntary Retirement Savings Plan options here

EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS

Tier 1–5: No employee contributions required.

Tier 6: Mandatory contributions based on income: (Plan Entry date on or after April 1, 2012)



For your first three full calendar years in the ORP, your employee contribution rate is based on an estimated amount of what your first year of income will be. After those first three years, your contribution rate is based on your actual income from two years earlier.

***Great News!** Effective October 1, 2026, new Employee Contribution Rates apply for Tier 6 members.
Additional detail available at: **https://www.suny.edu/retirement/orp/**

HOW CAN I INVEST MY MONEY?

Choose the company you want to work with (TIAA, Voya, Fidelity, or Corebridge) and select from the available funds on their website.

Investment choices include:

1. **Equity funds (stocks)** for growth potential
2. **Bond funds** for stability and income
3. **Fixed accounts** for guaranteed interest and lifetime income
4. **Target date funds** that automatically adjust the amount of risk in your investments as you progress in your career all the way to your targeted retirement date

If you don't select a provider, you'll be defaulted to TIAA. Your money will then be invested in STARS—SUNY's award-winning custom target date fund series.

For those who prefer a more personalized approach, you can choose to use a managed account service (available for an additional fee) through any of the approved providers (TIAA, Voya, Fidelity, or Corebridge). That means you're empowering a financial advisor to make decisions on your behalf. This option is designed for participants who don't wish to build their own portfolio, rely solely on a target date fund, or have complex finances.

You can change your provider or investment choices at any time, subject to administrative rules. We recommend you call each provider to see which might be the best fit for you.

TIAA

Phone: **1-866-662-7945**

Website: **tiaa.org/suny**

VOYA FINANCIAL

Phone: **1-800-584-6001**

Website: **https://suny.beready2retire.com/**

Fidelity

Phone: **1-844-367-7869**

Website: **https://nb.fidelity.com/public/nb/suny/home**

corebridge financial

Phone: **1-603-594-8340**

Website: **https://www.corebridgefinancial.com/rs/suny**

WHEN CAN I TAKE MONEY OUT?

- When you leave SUNY (if under age 59½, you may be subject to a 10% early distribution penalty—this penalty is waived for separation from service after age 55)
- When you separate from service
- If you become disabled
- If you pass away (your beneficiary will take over the account)
- If you have a Domestic Relations Order
- If you enter a phased retirement agreement (if permitted by the agreement) with your campus
- If you're retired and return to work on a part-time basis (for certain rare circumstances)

Should you need access to your ORP money, you may also take a loan (refer to section on loans).

HOW CAN I TAKE MONEY OUT?

- Lump sum
- Periodic payments
- Rollover (if eligible)
- Annuitization (convert your account into monthly checks for life)

Information on Lifetime Income

ROLLOVER AND TRANSFERS

You can not transfer money into this plan from other retirement plans (like a 401(k), 403(b), or IRA). If you would like to consolidate your money while at SUNY, you can roll over your money from any of your other retirement plans into our Voluntary 403(b) plan.

However, you can move your existing ORP account balance between any of the plan's active approved providers (TIAA, Voya, Fidelity, and Corebridge).

You also have the option to change where your future contributions go without moving your current account balance. Because some contracts and investment types may have restrictions, you should always check with your current provider before making any transfers or changes.

You can move your existing ORP account balance between any of the plan's active approved providers (TIAA, Voya, Fidelity, and Corebridge).

LOANS

You may take one loan (subject to IRS rules).

Note: Loans must be repaid. If you don't repay your loan, it will be taxable and may be subject to additional penalties. The money you receive from your account through a loan will no longer be actively working toward making more money for your account.

Before taking any action, we suggest you have a conversation with one of the investment professionals. Remember, you can meet with them at no additional cost.

Maximum loan

$50,000

or

50%

of your vested balance

REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTIONS (RMDs)

You must take RMDs after reaching the IRS age requirement unless you're still working at SUNY.

Age	
70½	**For a participant who was born before July 1, 1949**
72	**For a participant who was born on or after July 1, 1949, but before January 1, 1951**
73	**For a participant who was born on or after January 1, 1951, but before January 1, 1960**
74	**For a participant who was born on or after January 1, 1960**

MILITARY SERVICE

If you take qualified military leave under the federal law Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), please note the following:

- You're allowed to make up any employee contributions that you missed while you were on military leave, as long as you make them within the required time period after you return.
- SUNY will also make up its share of employer contributions for employees who are in tiers earlier than Tier 6, and for the Tier 6 employees who choose to make up their missed employee contributions.
- To be eligible for these contributions, you must notify SUNY before your military leave begins.

If you have questions about how military service affects your participation in the ORP, your human resources benefits office can help.

OTHER NYS RETIREMENT SYSTEM FACTORS TO CONSIDER

1. When you choose a retirement plan with SUNY (such as the ORP), your decision is permanent for any future jobs you hold at SUNY State campuses or Community Colleges.
2. The only time this might change is if you later become eligible for a different New York State retirement system while still working at SUNY.
3. If you leave SUNY and take a job with another New York State public employer, the time you spent saving in the ORP can't be counted toward a New York State pension. Pension plans and the ORP work differently, so your ORP years don't add to pension benefits.
4. If you have a benefit from another New York State retirement system from earlier employment and you plan to start receiving payments from that benefit, you must contact your HR department before the payments begin so they can update your ORP status.
5. Money you receive from any New York State retirement system is exempt from New York State income tax. If you live outside New York State, talk to a tax professional about how your benefits may be taxed where you live.
6. For any prior membership with NYS, please check with your human resources office for information.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Here are links to tools and guides that can help you understand your benefits and manage your account:

SUNY Optional Retirement Program

Website: https://www.suny.edu/retirement/orp/

Retirement at Work Resources

Phone: **1-603-594-8340**

Enrollment Guide: https://www.tiaa.org/public/pdf/SUNY_MVC_ORP_Enrollment_Guide.pdf

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