



Retirement Frequently Asked Questions

What are the steps to begin my retirement process?

- Send a letter(email) of intent to retire to your supervisor and HR Business Partner. Your letter of intent should include your last date of employment.
- Complete the online TCRS application within 90 days of your retirement date to ensure your retirement compensation is in effect upon retirement. (You can opt to draw your retirement now or later.)
- The date of your HCS retirement date is your last day worked. Your TCRS retirement date will be the day after your HCS retirement date.

Examples

- If you are a teacher and choose to work through the end of your contract, your last date of employment would be 5/25/2023 and your TCRS retirement date would be 5/26/2023.
- If you are a 260 day employee and choose to work through the end of your contract, your last date of employment would be 6/30/2023 and your TCRS retirement date would be 7/1/2023.

Who is my contact at HCS for retirement and for benefits?

- For TCRS or HR questions, contact Laurie Silvia

Silvia_L@hcde.org or 498-7067

- For retiree benefits, contact Lori Heffington

Heffington_lori@hcde.org or 498-7086

How do I view my retirement calculations?

- Go to mytcrs.tn.gov and create an account to view your benefits estimate or contact TCRS at 1-800-922-7772 and request a benefit estimate be sent via mail.



What happens to my sick time and vacation time at retirement?

- If you turn in your intent to retire by February 1st and work your full contract year, you will receive \$40.00 per day for your sick days.
- If you retire within the school year or turn in your intent to retire after February 1st, you will receive \$20.00 per day for your sick days.
- You will also receive service credit toward TCRS for the number of sick days that you have remaining at retirement. (20 sick days are equal to 1 month of service credit.)
- You will receive full payment for the vacation days you have accrued.
- If your vacation days and/or sick days add up to more than \$20,000, you must roll the funds into a 403b account. You will need to contact the payroll supervisor, Melissa Holloway.

Can I keep my medical insurance after retirement?

- Yes, you may keep your medical insurance if you are **under 65 years** of age and not Medicare eligible. To be eligible for coverage you must be 55 years of age or have 30 years of HCDE service and meet the retirement requirements.
- Dependents may be eligible for insurance coverage if they were on your plan prior to retirement. Adult dependents are eligible **until age 65** and not Medicare eligible and minor dependents are eligible **until age 26**. Dependents cannot be added at retirement.
- Rates are based on age or years of service and can be found on our website at https://www.hcde.org/staff/benefits/retirement_benefits.
- If you are a school-based employee, your insurance will end on August 31st and your retirement insurance will begin on September 1st. (If you work your entire contract year)
- If you are a 12 month employee, your insurance will end on June 30th and your retirement insurance will begin on July 1st. (if you work your entire contract year)
- If you retire within the school year, your insurance will end on the last day of the month in which you retire and your retirement insurance will begin on the first day of the next month.

Do I need to complete a Spousal Coverage Affidavit if my spouse continues coverage after I retire?



- Yes, you must complete Spousal Coverage Affidavit every year at open enrollment while your spouse is covered.

Can I keep my dental and vision insurance after retirement?

- Dental and vision insurance are available to you and any dependents currently on the plan for **18 months** through COBRA.
- The State of Tennessee offers dental plans to retired state employees after your 18 months of coverage is exhausted. To enroll, call 1-800-253-9981.

When do I have to go to Medicare coverage?

- If you retire prior to turning 65, you will transition to Medicare on the first day of your birthday month in which you turn 65. The same rule applies to a spouse who is covered on your retiree health plan. If the retiree turns 65 before the spouse, the spouse can remain on our retiree health coverage until the spouse turns 65. If a retiree/retiree dependent birthday is on the 1st of a month, you will transition to Medicare the month prior on the 1st of the month.
- If you are 65 or older at retirement, you will be under Medicare coverage.
School-based employees who complete their contract will go to Medicare on September 1st.
12 month employees who complete their contract will go to Medicare on July 1st.
Employees who retire within the year will go to Medicare on the first of the month after the month in which you retire.
- If you need the CMS L564 form to prove you have had continued medical coverage, contact Lori Heffington at heffington_lori@hcde.org
- You will need to sign up for Medicare part B, supplement and a Medicare part D drug plan.

Does Hamilton County offer Medicare part B supplements?

- No, but the State of Tennessee offers a supplement to retired state employees. You can contact benefit administration at 1-800-253-9981.

How do I sign up and pay for my retiree insurance?



- The benefits department will email you a Docusign link to enroll in retiree benefits once notified of your retirement.
- Retirees will receive a quarterly invoice statement in the US mail. We accept check or money order.
- Payments should be made to:
Hamilton County Schools
Attn: Benefits department
3074 Hickory Valley Road, Chattanooga, TN 37421
- If you have online banking, you can set up the payment to automatically draft from your checking account using your employee ID number as your account number. These payments can be made to the same address above.
- Questions about retiree billing, please contact Lori Heffington at heffington_lori@hcde.org

Can I still use the clinic and pharmacy after retirement:

- Yes, if you and your dependents are remaining on the retiree health plan, you will still have full access to the clinics and pharmacies.
- When you turn 65 and go to Medicare, you will no longer have access to the clinics and pharmacies.
- If you are turning 65 but your dependents are remaining on the plan, they will still be able to access the clinics and pharmacies until they age out as well.

Can I keep my life insurance and voluntary policies after retirement:

- Group life insurance ends when you retire unless you port or convert. These policies are based on current age.
- This must be done within 31 days of when your life insurance ends with HCS.
- You will receive information in your retiree benefits packet for any supplemental life insurance policies you currently have with HCS.
 - The last deduction that will be taken for a voluntary policy will be from your payout check.
 - Allstate and Symetra policies including hospital, group term life, accident and critical illness can be taken with you at retirement.
- If you have any voluntary policies with the following companies you will need to contact them directly:
 - Horace Mann
 - TrustMark



Can I work after retirement for Hamilton County Schools?

- In general, an employee who retires from a TCRS-covered employer cannot return to work with any TCRS-covered employer while continuing to receive their monthly retirement benefit.
 - Exceptions are as follows:
 - 120-day Temporary Employment
 - Limited Reemployment of Retired Teachers
 - Return to Work 70% of Retirement Benefit (applicable to bus drivers, teachers, and emergency medical services personnel)

Before accepting a position with a TCRS-covered employer, retirees should contact RetireReadyTN at (800) 922-7772 to determine how their TCRS retirement benefits may be impacted.

Can I be a substitute teacher after retirement?

- Yes, you will need to contact ESS at jobs.willsubplus.com/jobs.
- ESS does not participate in TCRS, so days/hours worked are not limited by HCS or TCRS.
- Contact information for ESS:

Elizabeth Newby: 423-508-4853 or enewby@ess.com

Sara Payne: 423-309-9434 or spayne@ess.com

When will I get my last paycheck and salary payout?

- You should expect your final paycheck two weeks after your last day worked. This will include any biweekly payments from the summer due to expanded pay.
- If you are due a payout for accumulated leave, you should expect it a few weeks after your final paycheck.
- Make sure your address is updated with HR to ensure you will receive your W-2.

