

To: All interested Interpreters

Re: Exploring a way to buy back service credit

History:

Two years ago, the Union filed a formal declaration with LACERA for a small group of employee interpreters interested in buying back *service credit* from the time they first started working as interpreters; this would 1) allow us to increase our final retirement compensation and 2) increase our health care benefit upon retirement (the county would pay 4% for every year. 25 years of service pays your full health benefit).

LACERA denied the petition and the Union attorney urged us to look for someone else to represent us right away saying that **the Writ of Mandate must be filed within 1 year from May 25th, 2010, though it may be only six months. LACERA's attorney said that we are not allowed to appeal their decision because among other reasons, it is a matter of statute governed by CERL, the County Employee Retirement Law.**

This is a message directed primarily to interpreters who are presently in LACERA contributory plan D. Those who participate in Plan D are the members who potentially may be able to buy back *retirement service credit*. Also, there may be interpreters in the non-contributory plan E who might eventually want to switch to plan D in order to buy back service credit, should interpreter employees be allowed to do so in the future.

Retirement service credit is not the same as ARC years. Both plan D and plan E members are presently allowed to buy up to five ARC years, which will only increase one's final monetary retirement compensation, it does not count toward credit for health care nor for accumulated years toward reaching retirement or investiture. In fact, ARC years are very expensive to purchase. (At the present time, I personally would have to pay approximately \$11,000 to \$15,000 for each ARC year, \$71,000 to \$75,000 for the total five purchasable years, it depends on your age).

On the other hand, *retirement service credit* would be based on one's salary and age at the time one started to accrue such credit, thus affecting one's current rate of retirement contributions as well. For those who bought back the years of 2003 through 2005, approximately \$6000 to \$7000 per year was the purchase price. The further back one buys, the less one pays. Ideally one would be able to buy back as many years as one could prove were actually worked. Additionally, the funds in our Horizons accounts may be used for this purpose.

There is a group of union employee interpreters who have been vigorously looking for an attorney to file the Writ of Mandate; ideally, on a contingency basis, and now have some interviews pending. We invite all interpreters interested in this issue to contact Melissa MacCracken at: melissamac411@msn.com We need to know how many interpreters are members of LACERA, which plan they are in, and if they would be interested in participating in this buy back. Thank you for your attention to this correspondence.

Best regards,

Melissa MacCracken