

## **SPECIAL TAX NOTICE REGARDING REFUNDS OF RETIREMENT CONTRIBUTIONS**

This notice contains important information that you will need before you determine whether to take a distribution of the retirement contributions (plus interest) that you made to the Fresno County Employees' Retirement Association ("FCERA"). As required by the Internal Revenue Service, this notice explains how you can continue to defer federal income tax on your retirement contributions to FCERA and contains important information you will need before you decide whether and how to receive your contributions to FCERA.

This notice is provided to you by FCERA because you may receive a distribution of your contributions to FCERA and all or part of the payment that you will soon receive from FCERA may be eligible for rollover by you or your Plan Administrator to a traditional IRA or an eligible employer plan. A rollover is a payment by you or the Plan Administrator of all or part of your contributions to another plan or IRA that allows you to continue to postpone taxation of the contributions until they are paid to you. Your payment cannot be rolled over to a Roth IRA, a SIMPLE IRA, or a Coverdell Education Savings Account (formerly known as an education IRA). An "eligible employer plan" includes a plan qualified under section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, including a 401(k) plan, profit-sharing plan, defined benefit plan (such as FCERA), stock bonus plan, and money purchase plan; a section 403(a) annuity plan; a section 403(b) tax-sheltered annuity; and an eligible section 457(b) plan maintained by a governmental employer (governmental 457 plan).

An eligible employer plan is not legally required to accept a rollover. Before you decide to roll over your contributions to another employer plan, you should find out whether the plan accepts rollovers and, if so, the types of distributions it accepts as a rollover. You should also find out about any documents that are required to be completed before the receiving plan will accept a rollover. Even if a plan accepts rollovers, it might not accept rollovers of certain types of distributions, such as after-tax amounts. If this is the case, and your distribution includes after-tax amounts, you may wish instead to roll your distribution over to a traditional IRA or split your rollover amount between the employer plan in which you will participate and a traditional IRA. If an employer plan accepts your rollover, the plan may restrict subsequent distributions of the rollover amount or may require your spouse's consent for any subsequent distribution. A subsequent distribution from the plan that accepts your rollover may also be subject to different tax treatment than distributions from FCERA. Check with the administrator of the plan that is to receive your rollover prior to making the rollover.

If you have additional questions after reading this notice, you can contact the Retirement office at (559) 488-3486.

### **SUMMARY**

There are two ways you may be able to receive a payment of your contributions to FCERA that are eligible for rollover:

- (1) Certain payments can be made directly<sup>1</sup> to a traditional IRA that you establish or to an eligible employer plan that will accept it and hold it for your benefit ("DIRECT ROLLOVER"); or
- (2) The payment can be PAID TO YOU.

If you choose a DIRECT ROLLOVER:

- Your payment will not be taxed in the current year and no income tax will be withheld.
- You choose whether your payment will be made directly to your traditional IRA or to an eligible employer plan that accepts your rollover. Your payment cannot be rolled over to a Roth IRA, a SIMPLE IRA, or a Coverdell Education Savings Account because these are not traditional IRAs.
- The taxable portion of your payment will be taxed later when you take it out of the traditional IRA or the eligible employer plan. Depending on the type of plan, the later distribution may be subject to different tax treatment than it would be if you received a taxable distribution from FCERA.

If you choose to have a payment from FCERA that is eligible for rollover PAID TO YOU:

- You will receive only 80% of the taxable amount of the payment, because the Plan Administrator is required to withhold 20% of that amount and send it to the IRS as income tax withholding to be credited against your taxes.<sup>2</sup>
- The taxable amount of your payment will be taxed in the current year unless you roll it over. Under limited circumstances, you may be able to use special tax rules that could reduce the tax you owe. However, if you receive the payment before age 59 1/2, you may have to pay an additional 10% tax.
- You can roll over all or part of the payment by paying it to your traditional IRA or to an eligible employer plan that accepts your rollover within 60 days after you receive the payment. The amount rolled over will not be taxed until you take it out of the traditional IRA or the eligible employer plan.
- If you want to roll over 100% of the payment to a traditional IRA or an eligible employer plan, you must find other money to replace the 20% of the taxable portion that was withheld. If you roll over only the 80% that you received, you will be taxed on the 20% that was withheld and that is not rolled over.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the payment may be in the form of a check made payable to the IRA or employer plan for your benefit. This check may be given to you to be delivered to the administrator of the IRA or employer plan. Payment in this form is still considered payment directly to the IRA or employer plan and qualifies as a DIRECT ROLLOVER.

<sup>2</sup> State taxes may also be withheld on this amount. Please contact the Retirement office for more information.

*Your Right to Waive the 30-Day Notice Period.* Generally, neither a direct rollover nor a payment can be made from FCERA until at least 30 days after your receipt of this notice. Thus, after receiving this notice, you have at least 30 days to consider whether to receive a distribution of your contributions and whether to have your distribution directly rolled over. If you do not wish to wait until this 30-day notice period ends before your election is processed, you may waive the notice period by making an affirmative election indicating whether or not you wish to make a direct rollover. Your withdrawal will then be processed in accordance with your election as soon as practical after it is received by the Plan Administrator.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

### **I. PAYMENTS THAT CAN AND CANNOT BE ROLLED OVER**

A refund of your retirement contributions from FCERA may be an “eligible rollover distribution.” This means that it can be rolled over to a traditional IRA or to an eligible employer plan that accepts rollovers. Payments from FCERA cannot be rolled over to a Roth IRA, a SIMPLE IRA, or a Coverdell Education Savings Account. The Retirement office should be able to tell you what portion of your payment is an eligible rollover distribution.

*After-tax Contributions.* If you made after-tax contributions to FCERA, these contributions may be rolled into either a traditional IRA or to certain employer plans that accept rollovers of after-tax contributions. After-tax contributions are generally contributions you made from your own pay that were already taxed). All contributions made to FCERA before July 1, 1985 were after-tax contributions (but interest accrued on these amounts is not after-tax because you have not paid tax on it yet). The following rules apply:

- a) Rollover into a Traditional IRA. You can roll over your after-tax contributions to a traditional IRA either directly or indirectly. The Retirement office may be able to tell you how much of your payment is the taxable portion and how much is the after-tax portion but ultimate responsibility for his determination lies with you. Please consult your tax advisor for assistance.

If you roll over after-tax contributions to a traditional IRA, it is your responsibility to keep track of, and report to the Service on the applicable forms, the amount of these after-tax contributions. This will enable the nontaxable amount of any future distributions from the traditional IRA to be determined.

Once you roll over your after-tax contributions to a traditional IRA, those amounts CANNOT later be rolled over to an employer plan.

- b) Rollover into an Employer Plan. You can roll over after-tax contributions from FCERA to another such plan using a direct rollover if the other plan provides separate accounting for amounts rolled over, including separate accounting for the after-tax employee contributions and earnings on those contributions. You CANNOT roll over after-tax contributions to a governmental 457 plan. If you want to roll over your after-tax contributions to an employer plan that accepts

these rollovers, you cannot have the after-tax contributions paid to you first. You must instruct the Plan Administrator of FCERA to make a direct rollover on your behalf. Also, you cannot first roll over after-tax contributions to a traditional IRA and then roll over that amount into an employer plan.

The following types of payments *cannot* be rolled over:

*Payments Spread over Long Periods.* You cannot roll over a payment if it is part of a series of equal (or almost equal) payments that are made at least once a year and that will last for:

- your lifetime (or a period measured by your life expectancy), or
- your lifetime and your beneficiary's lifetime (or a period measured by your joint life expectancies), or
- a period of 10 years or more.

*Required Minimum Payments.* Beginning when you reach age 70 1/2 or retire, whichever is later, a certain portion of your payment cannot be rolled over because it is a “required minimum payment” that must be paid to you.

The Retirement office should be able to tell you if your payment includes amounts which cannot be rolled over.

## **II. DIRECT ROLLOVER**

A DIRECT ROLLOVER is a direct payment<sup>3</sup> of the amount of your FCERA contributions to a traditional IRA or an eligible employer plan that will accept it. You can choose a DIRECT ROLLOVER of all or any portion of your payment that is an eligible rollover distribution, as described in Part I above. You are not taxed on any taxable portion of your payment for which you choose a DIRECT ROLLOVER until you later take it out of the traditional IRA or eligible employer plan. In addition, no income tax withholding is required for any taxable portion of your FCERA distribution for which you choose a DIRECT ROLLOVER.

*DIRECT ROLLOVER to a Traditional IRA.* You can open a traditional IRA to receive the direct rollover. If you choose to have your payment made directly to a traditional IRA, contact an IRA sponsor (usually a financial institution) to find out how to have your payment made in a direct rollover to a traditional IRA at that institution. If you are unsure of how to invest your money, you can temporarily establish a traditional IRA to receive the payment. However, in choosing a traditional IRA, you may wish to make sure that the traditional IRA you choose will allow you to move all or a part of your payment to another traditional IRA at a later date, without penalties or other limitations. See IRS Publication 590, Individual Retirement Arrangements, for more information on traditional IRAs (including limits on how often you can roll over between IRAs).

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 1.

*DIRECT ROLLOVER to an Eligible Employer Plan.* If you are employed by a new employer that has an eligible employer plan, and you want a direct rollover to that plan, ask the plan administrator of that plan whether it will accept your rollover. An eligible employer plan is not legally required to accept a rollover. Even if your new employer's plan does not accept a rollover, you can choose a DIRECT ROLLOVER to a traditional IRA. If the employer plan accepts your rollover, the plan may provide restrictions on the circumstances under which you may later receive a distribution of the rollover amount or may require spousal consent to any subsequent distribution. Check with the plan administrator of that plan before making your decision.

*Change in Tax Treatment Resulting from a DIRECT ROLLOVER.* The tax treatment of any payment from the eligible employer plan or traditional IRA receiving your DIRECT ROLLOVER might be different than if you received your benefit in a taxable distribution directly from FCERA. For example, if you were born before January 1, 1936, you might be entitled to ten-year averaging or capital gain treatment, as explained below. However, if you have your benefit rolled over to a section 403(b) tax-sheltered annuity, a governmental 457 plan, or a traditional IRA in a DIRECT ROLLOVER, your benefit will no longer be eligible for that special treatment. See the sections below entitled "Additional 10% Tax if You Are under Age 59 1/2" and "Special Tax Treatment if You Were Born before January 1, 1936."

### **III. PAYMENT PAID TO YOU**

If your payment can be rolled over (see Part I above) and the payment is made to you in cash, it is subject to 20% federal income tax withholding on the taxable portion (state tax withholding may also apply). The payment is taxed in the year you receive it unless, within 60 days, you roll it over to a traditional IRA or an eligible employer plan that accepts rollovers. If you do not roll it over, special tax rules may apply.

#### *Income Tax Withholding:*

*Mandatory Withholding.* If any portion of your payment can be rolled over under Part I above and you do not elect to make a DIRECT ROLLOVER, FCERA is required by law to withhold 20% of the taxable amount. This amount is sent to the IRS as federal income tax withholding. For example, if you can roll over a taxable payment of \$10,000, only \$8,000 will be paid to you because FCERA must withhold \$2,000 as income tax. However, when you prepare your income tax return for the year, unless you make a rollover within 60 days (see "Sixty-Day Rollover Option" below), you must report the full \$10,000 as a taxable payment from FCERA. You must report the \$2,000 as tax withheld, and it will be credited against any income tax you owe for the year. There will be no income tax withholding if your payments for the year are less than \$200.

*Voluntary Withholding.* If any portion of your payment is taxable but cannot be rolled over under Part I above, the mandatory withholding rules described above do not apply. In this case, you may elect not to have withholding apply to that portion. If you do nothing, 10% will be taken out of this portion of your payment for federal income tax withholding (and an additional amount may be withheld for state income tax withholding). To elect out of withholding, ask the Retirement Office for the election form and related information.

*Sixty-Day Rollover Option.* If you receive a payment that can be rolled over under Part I above, you can still decide to roll over all or part of it to a traditional IRA or to an eligible employer plan that accepts rollovers. If you decide to roll over, you must contribute the amount of the payment you received to a traditional IRA or eligible employer plan within 60 days after you receive the payment. The portion of your payment that is rolled over will not be taxed until you take it out of the traditional IRA or the eligible employer plan.

You can roll over up to 100% of your payment that can be rolled over under Part I above, including an amount equal to the 20% of the taxable portion that was withheld. If you choose to roll over 100%, you must find other money within the 60-day period to contribute to the traditional IRA or the eligible employer plan, to replace the 20% that was withheld. On the other hand, if you roll over only the 80% of the taxable portion that you received, you will be taxed on the 20% that was withheld.

*Example:* The taxable portion of your payment that can be rolled over under Part I above is \$10,000, and you choose to have it paid to you. You will receive \$8,000, and \$2,000 will be sent to the IRS as income tax withholding. Within 60 days after receiving the \$8,000, you may roll over the entire \$10,000 to a traditional IRA or an eligible employer plan. To do this, you roll over the \$8,000 you received from FCERA, and you will have to find \$2,000 from other sources (your savings, a loan, etc.). In this case, the entire \$10,000 is not taxed until you take it out of the traditional IRA or an eligible employer plan. If you roll over the entire \$10,000, when you file your income tax return you may get a refund of part or all of the \$2,000 withheld.

If, on the other hand, you roll over only \$8,000, the \$2,000 you did not roll over is taxed in the year it was withheld (and may be subject to the additional 10% tax described below). When you file your income tax return, you may get a refund of part of the \$2,000 withheld. (However, any refund is likely to be larger if you roll over the entire \$10,000.)

*Additional Tax If You Are under Age 59 1/2.* If you receive a payment before you reach age 59 1/2 and you do not roll it over, then, in addition to the regular income tax, you may have to pay an extra federal tax equal to 10% of the taxable portion of the payment and an additional California tax equal to 2 1/2% of the taxable portion of the payment. The additional tax generally does not apply to (1) payments that are paid after you separate from service with your employer during or after the year you reach age 55, (2) payments that are paid because you retire due to disability, (3) payments that are paid as equal (or almost equal) payments over your life or life expectancy (or your and your beneficiary's lives or life expectancies), (4) payments that are paid directly to the government to satisfy a federal tax levy, (6) payments that are paid to an alternate payee under a qualified domestic relations order, or (7) payments that do not exceed the amount of your deductible medical expenses. See IRS Form 5329 for more information on the additional 10% federal tax.

#### **IV. SURVIVING SPOUSES, ALTERNATE PAYEES, AND OTHER BENEFICIARIES**

In general, the rules summarized above that apply to payments to employees also apply to payments to surviving spouses of employees and to spouses or former spouses who

are “alternate payees.” You are an alternate payee if your interest in FCERA results from a “qualified domestic relations order,” which is an order issued by a court, usually in connection with a divorce or legal separation.

If you are a surviving spouse or an alternate payee who was a spouse, you may choose to have a payment that can be rolled over, as described in Part I above, paid in a DIRECT ROLLOVER to a traditional IRA or to an eligible employer plan or paid to you. If you have the payment paid to you, you can keep it or roll it over yourself to a traditional IRA or to an eligible employer plan. Thus, you have the same choices as the employee.

If you are a beneficiary other than a surviving spouse or if you are an alternate payee who was not the spouse of the participant, you cannot choose a direct rollover, and you cannot roll over the payment yourself.

If you are a surviving spouse, an alternate payee, or another beneficiary, your payment is generally not subject to the additional 10% tax described in Part III above, even if you are younger than age 59 1/2.

If you are a surviving spouse, an alternate payee, or another beneficiary, you may be able to use the special tax treatment for lump sum distributions as described in Part III above. If you receive a payment because of the employee's death, you may be able to treat the payment as a lump sum distribution if the employee met the appropriate age requirements, whether or not the employee had 5 years of participation in FCERA.

## **HOW TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

This notice summarizes only the federal (not state or local) tax rules that might apply to your payment. The rules described above are complex and contain many conditions and exceptions that are not included in this notice. Therefore, you may want to consult with the Retirement office or a professional tax advisor before you take a payment of your contributions to FCERA. Also, you can find more specific information on the tax treatment of payments from qualified employer plans in IRS Publication 575, Pension and Annuity Income, and IRS Publication 590, Individual Retirement Arrangements. These publications are available from your local IRS office, on the IRS's Internet Web Site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), or by calling 1-800-TAX-FORMS.