

Combined Service Annuity (CSA): Combining TRA Service with Service from Another MN Public Pension Fund

Hi, my name is Lynn Paatalo, and I'm a retirement counselor here at TRA.

Today we are going to talk about Combined Service Annuity. A combined service annuity is when you are combining TRA service with service from any other Minnesota state public pension fund.

If you have at least six months of service in one or more of Minnesota's state public pension funds, we can use that service combined with TRA, in order to make you eligible for benefits.

Well, let's talk about how a combined service annuity or CSA will benefit you. If you are looking at trying to become vested, and what that means is that you are taking the service credit from TRA and any other state pension fund, combining them so that you are eligible to receive a monthly benefit. That is one way it can benefit you.

The other thing is if you have that personal benchmark of trying to reach 30 years of service, then we will take the service with TRA, plus any other state pension fund. You'll want to remember that we commonly have members who have provided service in more than two or three state pension funds, so you may find that you have service not only with TRA, with PERA, or with MSRS or maybe you taught in Minneapolis, or in St. Paul or Duluth at some point.

So, you may find that you have more service credit than you believe you have with just using the TRA service.

And, when you are looking at, especially trying to reach that critical Rule of 90 date, then we will take all of that service credit, combine it, so that we can get you to that Rule of 90 date, or possibly to that 30 years of service.

Now, the important thing about this is that if you are active with TRA, and you have a high-5 salary; again that is using the highest consecutive five years.

As an example, if you have a high-5 of \$65,000 a year, we will calculate our benefit based on that \$65,000. If you have service in the other pension funds, again, it has to be six months, then their payments will be based on the six months of service; however, they will use the high-5 that we provide to them. So, they will calculate that pension payment based on that \$65,000 a year.

Now, the way that you get that information, is that you contact TRA, our Member Service Center, ask them to provide you with benefits...benefit estimates.

We will send out requests to the other funds that you have service in, to provide an estimate to you, ok, so you have an idea what type of benefit that you are looking at.

Now, you want to remember, at the time you are ready to apply for retirement, that means that you are filling out a retirement application for TRA and for every other state fund that you are involved in that has at least six months of service.

At the time that we pay you, that means that you have separate payments. So, separate applications, separate payments.

Now, we have also provided a slide for you so that, again, you can see what Minnesota state pension funds are included in this combined service annuity. That would be Teachers Retirement Association, Minnesota State Retirement System, Public Employees Retirement Association, St. Paul Teachers Retirement Fund, and also the Duluth Teachers Retirement Fund.

Now, you can contact our Member Service Center by calling us locally at 651-296-2409, or toll-free at 1-800-657-3669. You can also reach us via email by going to our website at minnesotatra.org. And, as always, you can follow us on Facebook.