

## Office of Personnel Management

## § 846.101

60 days will be granted, as provided by § 845.406(a).

(4) If OPM is not notified that a complaint has been filed or that the claim has been referred to the creditor agency within the applicable 180-day period, OPM will pay the balance of the refund to the debtor.

(d) *OPM processing against annuities.* If the debtor has filed an annuity claim, OPM will not take action against the annuity. OPM will continue to pay the annuity unless and until there is a final judgment for the United States or submission of a complete debt claim.

(e) *OPM collection and payment of the debt.* (1) If the United States obtains a judgment against the debtor for the amount of the debt or the creditor agency submits a complete debt claim, OPM will collect and pay the debt to the creditor agency as provided in §§ 845.406 and 845.407.

(2) If the suit or the administrative proceeding results in a judgment for the debtor without establishing a debt to the United States, OPM will pay the balance of the refund to the debtor upon receipt of a certified copy of the judgment or administrative decision.

## PART 846—FEDERAL EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM—ELECTIONS OF COVERAGE

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### Subpart A—General Provisions

#### § 846.101 Purpose.

This part identifies the employees who may transfer to the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), gives the conditions under which they

may transfer, and sets forth the method of computing the annuities of employees who transfer to FERS.

**§ 846.102 Definitions.**

In this part—

*CSRS* means subchapter III of chapter 83 of title 5, United States Code.

*CSRS/SS service* means service subject to both CSRS deductions (or deductions under another retirement system for Federal employees if such service is creditable under CSRS) and social security deductions as a result of the Social Security Amendments of 1983. For this purpose, the service of an individual is considered CSRS/SS service if the service would have been covered under CSRS except for an election under section 208(a)(1)(A) of the Federal Employees Retirement Contribution Temporary Adjustment Act of 1983 to have no CSRS coverage.

*Employee* means an employee as defined by § 842.102 of this chapter.

*Employing office* means the office of an agency to which jurisdiction and responsibility for retirement matters for an employee have been delegated.

*FERS* means the Federal Employees Retirement System as described in chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code.

*Former spouse* means a former spouse as defined in § 838.103 or § 838.1003 of this chapter.

*Member* means a Member of Congress as defined in section 2106 of title 5, United States Code.

*OPM* means the Office of Personnel Management.

*Qualifying court order* means a court order acceptable for processing as defined in § 838.103 of this chapter or a qualifying court order as defined in § 838.1003 of this chapter.

*Social security* means coverage under the Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance programs of the Social Security Act.

[52 FR 19235, May 21, 1987, as amended at 57 FR 33599, July 29, 1992]

**Subpart B—Elections**

**§ 846.201 Elections to become subject to FERS.**

(a) *Employees and Members subject to CSRS on June 30, 1987.* An individual

who, on June 30, 1987, is employed in the Federal service or is a Member and who is covered by CSRS may elect to become subject to FERS. An election under this paragraph may not be made before July 1, 1987, or after December 31, 1987.

(b)(1) *Separated employees who are re-employed.* A former employee who, after June 30, 1987, becomes reemployed and subject to CSRS may elect, during the 6-month period beginning on the date he or she becomes subject to CSRS, to become subject to FERS, except that an employee serving under an interim appointment under the authority of § 772.102 of this chapter is not eligible to elect to become subject to FERS.

(2) *Separated employees who are employed with the District of Columbia Financial Management and Assistance Authority (Authority).* A former employee who becomes employed with the Authority and subject to CSRS may elect, during the 6-month period beginning on the date he or she becomes subject to CSRS, to become subject to FERS, except that an employee serving under an interim appointment under the authority of § 772.102 of this chapter is not eligible to elect to become subject to FERS.

(c) *Employees and Members not subject to CSRS.* (1) An employee or Member who is excluded from FERS coverage on January 1, 1987, by § 842.104 (d) or (f) of this chapter and who, on December 31, 1986, is not subject to CSRS may elect to become subject to FERS. An election under this paragraph (c)(1) may not be made before July 1, 1987, or after December 31, 1987.

(2) An employee who, on June 30, 1987, is not covered by CSRS, but later becomes so covered, may elect to become subject to FERS. An election under this paragraph (c)(2) must be made during the 6-month period beginning on the date he or she becomes subject to CSRS.

(3) An employee who would be subject to CSRS except for the exclusions in § 831.201 of this chapter, but is not excluded from FERS by 5 U.S.C. 8401 nor by § 842.105 of this chapter, is deemed eligible to make an election of FERS coverage under this section. An election under this paragraph (c)(3) must be made during the period beginning

July 1, 1987, and ending December 31, 1987, or, if later, during the 6-month period beginning on the date the employment described in this paragraph (c)(3) begins.

(d) *Exceptions.* (1) An individual who is an employee of the government of the District of Columbia may not elect to become subject to FERS except an individual so employed who is covered by CSRS and eligible for FERS coverage by operation of section 11246 of Pub. L. 105-33, 111 Stat. 251, or section 7(e) of Pub. L. 105-274, 112 Stat. 2419.

(2) A Member who has irrevocably elected, by written notice to the official by whom the Member is paid, not to participate in FERS may not elect to become subject to FERS during the same continuous period of service.

(3) An employee or reemployed annuitant whose appointment is excluded from FERS coverage by law or regulation may not become subject to FERS by reason of an election under this section except as specified in paragraph (c) of this section or as otherwise provided by law.

(4) An election under this section may not be made by an individual who is ineligible for social security coverage.

(e) *Effective date.* An election made under this section is effective with the first pay period beginning after the date the election is properly filed with the employing office.

(f) *Irrevocability.* An election made under this section is irrevocable.

[52 FR 19235, May 21, 1987, as amended at 57 FR 3714, Jan. 31, 1992; 61 FR 58459, Nov. 15, 1996; 62 FR 50997, Sept. 30, 1997; 64 FR 15289, Mar. 31, 1999]

**§ 846.202 Condition for making an election.**

(a) An election under § 846.102 of this part may not become effective unless the election is made with the written consent of any former spouse(s) entitled to benefits under subpart F of part 831 of this chapter or part 838 of this chapter. As provided in section 301(d)(2)(A) of the FERS Act of 1986, this section applies only if OPM has been duly notified concerning any qualifying court order and has received the documentation required in § 838.211, § 838.721, or § 838.1005 of this chapter.

This section does not apply with respect to a former spouse who has ceased to be so entitled because of remarrying before age 55.

(b) OPM may waive the requirement of paragraph (a) of this section upon a showing that the former spouse's whereabouts cannot be determined. A request for waiver on this basis must be accompanied by—

(1) A judicial or administrative determination that the former spouse's whereabouts cannot be determined; or

(2)(i) Affidavits by the employee or Member and two other persons, at least one of whom is not related to the employee or Member, attesting to the inability to locate the former spouse and stating the efforts made to locate the spouse; and

(ii) Documentary corroboration such as newspaper reports about the former spouse's disappearance.

(c) OPM may waive the requirement of paragraph (a) of this section based on exceptional circumstances if the employee or Member presents a judicial determination regarding the former spouse that would warrant waiver of the consent requirement based on exceptional circumstances.

(d)(1) OPM shall, upon application of an individual, grant an extension for such individual to make an election under § 846.201 of this part, if the individual—

(i) Files an application for the extension with OPM before the end of the period during which the individual would otherwise be eligible to make the election; and

(ii) Demonstrates to OPM's satisfaction that the extension is needed to secure the modification of a decree of divorce or annulment (or court ordered or court-approved property settlement incident to any such decree) on file at OPM in order to satisfy the consent requirement under paragraph (a) of this section.

(2) The application for extension is deemed to be filed with OPM on the date it is received in the employing office.

(3) An extension granted under this paragraph expires 6 months after the date it was granted. OPM may grant one further extension upon application

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by the individual seeking to make an election of FERS coverage.

(e) An electing individual who has a former spouse who may be entitled to benefits as described in paragraph (a) of this section must submit with the election either—

(1) The consent of the former spouse in a form prescribed by OPM,

(2) A request for an extension as described in paragraph (f) of this section,

(3) A request for a waiver of the consent requirement and the documentation to support the request as described in paragraph (d) or (e) of this section, or

(4) A request for a determination as to whether a qualifying court order as described in paragraph (a) of this section is on file with OPM.

(f) The request for waiver or extension described in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section must be in a form prescribed by OPM. The employing office must forward the request to OPM promptly.

(g) If OPM does not have a copy of a qualifying court order in its possession, OPM's notice to the agency that it has no qualifying court order is deemed to complete the individual's election of FERS, which becomes effective with the first pay period after the employing office receives OPM's notification.

(h) If OPM has a copy of a qualifying court order, OPM will notify both the individual and the employing agency of its determination regarding a request for extension.

(i) If OPM has a copy of a qualifying court order in its possession and grants a waiver of the requirement of paragraph (a) of this section, OPM will notify both the individual and the employing office of its decision. OPM's notice to the employing office is deemed to complete the individual's election, which becomes effective with the first pay period after the employing office receives OPM's notice that the waiver is granted.

[52 FR 19235, May 21, 1987, as amended at 57 FR 33599, July 29, 1992]

### § 846.203 Agency responsibilities.

(a) Employing offices must distribute the election forms provided by OPM to each eligible individual, including all individuals in a nonduty status.

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(b) An employing office must obtain documentation of the individual's receipt of the election form specified in paragraph (a) of this section and retain the documentation permanently in the individual's official personnel folder (or the equivalent). Acceptable documentation includes—

(1) A statement of receipt signed by the individual, or

(2) A signed postal return receipt showing that the election form was received at the individual's address.

### § 846.204 Belated elections and correction of administrative errors.

(a) *Belated elections.* On determination by an employing office that the FERS transfer handbook issued by OPM was not available to an individual in a timely manner or an individual was unable, for cause beyond his or her control, to elect FERS coverage within the prescribed time limit, the employing office may, within 6 months after the expiration of the individual's opportunity to elect FERS coverage under § 846.201, accept the individual's election of FERS coverage.

(b)(1) *Correction of administrative errors related to election.* During the 6-month period after the expiration of an individual's opportunity to elect FERS coverage under § 846.201, the employing office may make prospective corrections of administrative errors regarding an individual's opportunity to elect FERS coverage, including failure to provide the election form specified in § 846.203(a) to an individual.

(2)(i) *Erroneous FERS coverage for a period of less than 3 years of service.* For an employee, separated employee, or retiree whose employing agency erroneously determined that the individual was covered by FERS during the period under § 846.201 when the individual was eligible to elect FERS, and the employing agency should have placed the individual in CSRS, CSRS Offset, or Social Security-Only, under conditions that would have included an opportunity to elect FERS coverage, and the employee, separated employee, or retiree remained in FERS for less than 3 years of service, the employee, separated employee, or retiree is deemed to have elected FERS coverage and the individual will remain covered by FERS,

unless the individual declines under paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section to be covered by FERS.

(ii)(A) The employing agency must provide written notice to each individual who is deemed to have elected FERS under paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section that the individual may, within 60 days after receiving the notice, decline to be deemed to have transferred to FERS.

(B) If the individual dies during the election period established by paragraphs (b)(2)(ii) (A) and (C) of this section, the right of election under paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section may be exercised by any person who would be entitled to receive a current spouse survivor annuity or a former spouse survivor annuity under CSRS (or CSRS Offset), if any, if the error had not occurred (the election by any one such current or former spouse not to have the election of FERS coverage deemed is controlling); otherwise, by the individual or individuals entitled to receive the lump-sum credit under CSRS (or CSRS Offset) if the error had not occurred (the election by any individual entitled to a share of the lump-sum credit not to have the election of FERS coverage deemed is controlling). The time limit for making an election under this paragraph is 60 days after the date of the agency's notice to the individual (survivor) of the election right.

(C) The agency may waive the 60-day time limit under paragraphs (b)(2)(ii) (A) and (B) of this section if the individual (if living, otherwise the appropriate survivor) exercised due diligence in making the election but was prevented by circumstances beyond his or her control from making the election within the time limit. An agency decision not to waive the time limit under this paragraph must include notice to the individual of the individual's right to request OPM to reconsider the denial of the waiver of the time limit. OPM's reconsideration decision on denial of a waiver of the time limit will notify the individual of the right to appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board under chapter II of this title.

(iii) The employing agency must document the individual's records to re-

flect his or her decision concerning retirement coverage.

(c) *OPM's reconsideration.* An agency decision concerning an individual's opportunity to elect FERS coverage or the effective date of an election of FERS coverage is subject to reconsideration by OPM under § 846.205.

(d) *Correction of other administrative errors.* Failure to begin employee deductions and Government contributions on the effective date of coverage must be corrected in accordance with § 841.505 of this chapter.

(e) *Errors lasting for at least 3 years of service.* For an employee, separated employee, or retiree whose employing agency erroneously determined that the individual was covered by FERS during the period under § 846.201 of this chapter when the individual was eligible to elect FERS and the individual remained in FERS for at least 3 years of service, the error is corrected in accordance with part 839 of this chapter.

[52 FR 19235, May 21, 1987, as amended at 58 FR 47822, Sept. 13, 1993; 66 FR 15618, Mar. 19, 2001]

#### § 846.205 Reconsideration and appeal rights.

(a) *Who may file.* An individual may request OPM to reconsider a decision of an employing office affecting his or her election of coverage under FERS. A request for reconsideration of a decision by OPM regarding extension of the time limit or a waiver under § 846.202 or refunds under § 846.401 must be made in accordance with § 841.305 of this chapter.

(b) *Reconsideration.* A request for reconsideration of an agency decision must be filed within the time limit given in paragraph (c) of this section. A request for reconsideration must be made in writing and must include the claimant's name, address, date of birth, and the reason for the request.

(c) *Time limit.* A request for reconsideration of an agency decision must be filed within 30 calendar days from the date of the agency's decision stating the right to reconsideration. OPM may extend the time limit on filing when a person shows that he or she was not notified of the time limit and was not otherwise aware of it, or that he or she

was prevented by circumstances beyond his or her control from making the request within the time limit.

(d) *OPM's decision.* After reconsideration, OPM issues its final decision in writing, setting forth its findings and conclusions.

(e) *Appeals to MSPB.* A person whose rights or interests under this part are affected by OPM's decision under paragraph (d) of this section may request the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) to review such decision in accord with procedures prescribed by MSPB.

### Subpart C—Effect of an Election To Become Subject to FERS

#### § 846.301 General rules.

(a) An individual who becomes covered by FERS as a result of an election under § 846.201 is subject to the provisions of chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code and parts 841 through 845 of this chapter, except as provided in this part.

(b) Civilian service performed before the effective date of the election under § 846.201 is not creditable under FERS except as provided in this part.

#### § 846.302 Crediting civilian service.

(a) Civilian service performed before the effective date of FERS coverage which is CSRS/SS service is creditable under FERS if—

(1) For service performed before January 1, 1987, 1.3 percent of basic pay was withheld as CSRS deductions (or if not withheld or if withheld and later refunded, 1.3 percent of basic pay for the period is deposited with interest computed under § 831.105(e) of this chapter); and

(2) For service performed after December 31, 1986, and before the effective date of the election, the employee contributes an amount equal to the percentage of basic pay for such service required to be withheld under part 841, subpart E of this chapter, whether by withholdings from pay or by later deposit (if not withheld or withheld and later refunded) with interest computed under § 831.105(e) of this chapter.

(b) Civilian service performed before the effective date of the FERS coverage which is not CSRS/SS service is

creditable under FERS (subject to the deposit requirements of part 842, subpart C of this chapter) if—

(1) The service would be creditable under CSRS except for § 846.306 (determined without regard to whether the service was performed before, on, or after January 1, 1989, and without regard to the provisions of part 842, subpart C of this chapter requiring that deposit be made for nondeduction or refunded service to be credited); and

(2) The service, in the aggregate, is equal to less than 5 years.

(c) Civilian service performed before the effective date of FERS coverage which is not CSRS/SS service is creditable under FERS only for the purposes specified in paragraph (d) of this section if—

(1) The service would be creditable under CSRS except for § 846.306 (determined without regard to whether the service was performed before, on, or after January 1, 1989, and without regard to the provisions of part 842, subpart C of this chapter, requiring that deposit be made for nondeduction or refunded service to be credited); and

(2) The service, in the aggregate, is equal to 5 years or more.

(d) The service described in paragraph (c) of this section is creditable under FERS for the following purposes:

(1) The 5 years of civilian service required to be eligible for a basic annuity under FERS as set forth in § 842.203 of this chapter.

(2) The minimum period of service for entitlement to—

(i) An immediate voluntary annuity under FERS as set forth in § 842.204 of this chapter;

(ii) An early retirement under FERS as set forth in § 842.205 of this chapter;

(iii) An involuntary retirement under FERS as set forth in § 842.206 of this chapter;

(iv) A Member retirement under FERS as set forth in § 842.209 of this chapter;

(v) A military reserve technician retirement under FERS as set forth in § 842.210 of this chapter;

(vi) A Senior Executive Service, Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, or Senior Cryptological Executive Service retirement under FERS as set forth under § 842.211 of this chapter;

(vii) A deferred annuity under FERS as set forth in §842.212 of this chapter;

(viii) A survivor annuity under FERS based on the death in service of an employee with at least 10 years of service as set forth in §843.310 of this chapter, but only if the survivor is entitled to the basic employee death benefit described in §843.309 of this chapter;

(ix) A disability retirement under FERS as set forth in subchapter V of chapter 84 of title 5 United States Code;

(x) A firefighter or law enforcement annuity under FERS as set forth in §842.208 of this chapter, but only to the extent that the service was as a law enforcement officer or firefighter as described in §842.809(b) of this chapter;

(xi) An air traffic controller annuity under FERS as set forth in §842.207 of this chapter, but only to the extent that the service was as an air traffic controller as described in §842.809(a) of this chapter;

(3) The computation of benefits under §846.304(b); and

(4) The computation of average salary under §846.304(d).

#### § 846.303 Crediting military service.

(a) Military service performed before the effective date of the election under §846.201 creditable as provided under FERS, except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section.

(b) Military service described in paragraph (a) of this section which would be creditable under CSRS except for the provisions of §846.306 and performed by an individual who is subject to an annuity computation under §846.304(b) is creditable for—

(1) The minimum period for entitlement to an annuity under FERS based on—

(i) The immediate voluntary retirement provisions under §842.204 of this chapter;

(ii) The early retirement provisions under §842.205 of this chapter;

(iii) The involuntary retirement provisions under §842.206 of this chapter;

(iv) The Member retirement provisions under §842.209 of this chapter;

(v) The military reserve technician retirement provisions under §842.210 of this chapter;

(vi) The Senior Executive Service, Defense Intelligence Senior Executive Service, or the Senior Cryptological Executive Service retirement provisions under §842.211 of this chapter; or

(vii) The deferred retirement provisions under §842.212 of this chapter.

(2) Computation of benefits under §846.304(b).

(c) If the effective date of the election of FERS by an individual who is subject to annuity computation under §846.304(b) occurs when the individual is in non-pay status and is performing active military service, benefits for the military service performed before the effective date of the election are computed under CSRS, and benefits for the military service performed after the effective date are computed under FERS. The period of military service is considered to be two separate full periods of service, one ending the day before the effective date of FERS and one beginning on the effective date of FERS. The deposit for the period of service before the effective date of FERS coverage is computed under CSRS provisions set forth in part 831, subpart U of this chapter. The deposit for the period of service beginning on the effective date of FERS coverage is computed under FERS provisions set forth in part 842, subpart C of this chapter.

#### § 846.304 Computing FERS annuities for persons with CSRS service.

(a)(1) The basic annuity of an employee who elected FERS coverage is an amount equal to the sum of the accrued benefits under CSRS as determined under paragraph (b) of this section and the accrued benefits under FERS as determined under paragraph (c) of this section.

(2) The computation method described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section is used in computing basic annuities under part 842, subpart D of this chapter, survivor annuities under part 843, subpart C of this chapter, and the basic annuities for disability retirement under subchapter V of chapter 84 of title 5 United States Code.

(3) An annuity computed under this paragraph is deemed to be the individual's annuity under FERS.

(b)(1) Except as provided in paragraphs (b)(2) and (b)(3) of this section

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and § 846.305, accrued benefits for civilian service as described in § 846.302(c), and military service as described in § 846.303(b) are computed under CSRS provisions.

(2) Reductions to provide survivor benefits required under part 831, subpart F of this chapter, and the 50-percent minimum annuity for air traffic controllers described in 5 U.S.C. 8339(e) do not apply to accrued benefits under this paragraph.

(3) Sick leave creditable under § 831.302 of this chapter is equal to the number of days of unused sick leave to an individual's credit as of the day of retirement, death, or as of the effective date of the election of FERS coverage, whichever is the lesser amount of sick leave, for an individual who—

(i) Retires under §§ 842.204, 842.205, 842.206, 842.207, 842.208, 842.209, 842.210, or 842.211 of this chapter;

(ii) Dies leaving a survivor eligible for a monthly FERS survivor annuity under § 843.310 or § 843.311 of this chapter; or

(iii) After retiring for disability, becomes entitled to an annuity computation under part 842, subpart D of this chapter.

(c) Accrued benefits are computed under FERS for the following service:

(1) Creditable civilian service performed on or after the effective date of the election of FERS coverage;

(2) Creditable civilian service other than as described in § 846.302(c); and

(3) Creditable military service other than that described in § 846.303 (b) and (c).

(d)(1) Except as specified in § 846.305, the average pay for computations under paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section is the largest annual rate resulting from averaging the individual's rates of basic pay in effect over any 3 consecutive years of creditable service or, in the case of an annuity based on service of less than 3 years, over the total period of creditable service, with each rate weighted by the period it was in effect.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (d)(1) of this section, service is considered creditable if it is creditable under either CSRS or FERS.

(e)(1) The cost-of-living adjustments for the annuities of individuals elect-

ing FERS coverage are made as follows:

(i) The portion of the annuity computed under paragraph (b) of this section is adjusted as provided under CSRS.

(ii) The portion of the annuity computed under paragraph (c) of this section is adjusted as provided under FERS.

(2) An annuity initially payable to an annuitant's survivor (other than a child under part 843, subpart D of this chapter) is increased by the total percent by which the annuitant's annuity was increased under this paragraph. Thereafter, the survivor annuity is adjusted for cost-of-living increases under 5 U.S.C. 8462.

(f) In computing an annuity under paragraph (a) of this section for an employee retiring under § 842.204(a)(1) or § 842.212(b) of this chapter, any reduction for age required by § 842.404 of this chapter applies to the sum computed under paragraph (a) of this section. No reduction under CSRS is applicable.

(g) In computing an annuity under paragraph (a) of this section for an employee retiring early under § 842.205 of this chapter or involuntarily under § 842.206 of this chapter, the reduction for age required by 5 U.S.C. 8339(h) applies to the portion of the annuity computed under CSRS provisions.

(h) In computing an annuity under paragraph (a) for an employee retiring as a firefighter or law enforcement officer under § 842.208 of this chapter or as an air traffic controller under § 842.207 of this chapter, there is no applicable reduction for age.

(i) An annuity supplement under part 842, subpart E of this chapter, is computed using the same civilian service used for the computation under paragraph (c) of this section.

(j) An alternative form of annuity for a basic annuity computed under paragraph (a) of this section is computed as follows:

(1) The alternative benefit for the portion of the annuity computed under paragraph (b) of this section is computed under CSRS as provided in part 831, subpart V of this chapter, except that a refund of CSRS contributions based on a refund application filed

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after the individual elects FERS coverage may not be deemed to be redeposited under § 831.2206 of this chapter if the individual is entitled to a deferred annuity under § 842.212 of this chapter.

(2) The alternative benefit for the portion of the annuity computed under paragraph (c) of this section is computed under FERS as provided in part 842, subpart G of this chapter.

### § 846.305 General inapplicability of CSRS provisions.

(a) Except as provided by this part, CSRS provisions are not applicable with respect to an individual who elects FERS coverage.

(b) An employee (or an employee's survivor for the purposes of a survivor annuity) may make a deposit under CSRS for any civilian service under § 846.302(c) of this part or military service under § 846.303.

(c) Nothing in paragraph (a) of this section precludes the payment of any lump-sum credit (as defined in 5 U.S.C. 8331(8)) in accordance with part 831, subpart T of this chapter.

[52 FR 19235, May 21, 1987. Redesignated at 58 FR 48273, Sept. 15, 1993]

## Subpart D—Refunds of CSRS Contributions

### § 846.401 Refunds of excess contributions.

(a) An individual who elects FERS coverage is entitled to a refund of CSRS contributions made prior to the effective date of the election for service that is subject to FERS computation under § 846.304(c) (if not already refunded) which exceed the contributions required under FERS, as provided by this section.

(b) The refund is equal to—

(1) For service described in § 846.302(a) and performed on or after January 1, 1984, and before January 1, 1987, the amount by which the amount contributed exceeds 1.3 percent of basic pay;

(2) For service described in § 846.302(a) and performed on or after January 1, 1987, the amount by which the amount contributed exceeds the amount required under § 841.503 of this chapter; and

(3) For service described in § 846.302(b), the amount by which the

amount contributed exceeds 1.3 percent of basic pay.

(c) A refund made under this section is payable with interest computed as prescribed under § 831.105 (d) and (e) of this chapter. Interest is payable regardless of the length of the period of service for which refund is being made or the total amount of service the employee has.

(d) A refund described in this section is payable upon the receipt of an application by OPM or its designee.

### § 846.402 Refunds of all CSRS contributions.

(a) An individual who elects to transfer to FERS is entitled to a refund of all CSRS contributions in accordance with the provisions of part 831, subpart T of this chapter.

(b) An application for refund of FERS retirement contributions under § 843.202 of this chapter is deemed to also be an application for refund of CSRS retirement contributions under part 831, subpart T of this chapter.

## Subpart E—Cancellation of Designations of Beneficiary

### § 846.501 Cancellation upon transfer to FERS.

A designation of beneficiary made under § 831.2005 of this chapter is cancelled on the effective date of an election of FERS coverage. Designations of beneficiary under FERS must be made in accordance with § 843.205 of this chapter and apply to an employee's contributions under both CSRS and FERS.

## Subpart F [Reserved]

## Subpart G—1998 Open Enrollment Elections

SOURCE: 63 FR 33233, June 18, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

### § 846.701 Purpose and scope.

This subpart contains OPM's regulations applicable to elections of FERS coverage during the 1998 open enrollment period, including—

## § 846.702

(a) The requirements that an individual must satisfy to be eligible to make an election; and

(b) The procedures that—

(1) Employees must follow to make an election;

(2) Agencies must follow in advising employees about making an election and in processing employees' elections; and

(3) OPM will follow in cases subject to the former spouse consent requirement.

### § 846.702 Definitions.

In this subpart—

*Election* means an election of FERS coverage during the 1998 open enrollment period.

*Former spouse consent requirement* means the condition that must be satisfied under section 301(d) of the FERS Act for an employee with a former spouse to be eligible to elect FERS coverage.

*Qualifying court order* means a *court order acceptable for processing* as defined in § 838.103 of this chapter or a *qualifying court order* as defined in § 838.1003 of this chapter subject to the following conditions:

(1) If OPM has not received (as explained in § 838.131 of this chapter) a copy of the court order and identifying information required under § 838.221(b)(3), § 838.421(b)(3), § 838.721(b)(1)(iii), or § 838.1005(b)(3) of this chapter prior to the date on which the employing office receives the election to be covered by FERS, the court order is not a *qualifying court order*.

(2) If the former spouse loses entitlement to all CSRS benefits under the court order, the court order ceases to be a *qualifying court order*.

*Social security coverage* means coverage under the Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program under the Social Security Act.

*1998 open enrollment period* means July 1, 1998, through December 31, 1998.

### § 846.703 Effective date of FERS coverage.

An election under this subpart is effective on the later of—

(a) The first day of the pay period beginning after the date the election and any required supporting documenta-

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tion is received by the employing office; or

(b) The first day of the pay period beginning after July 1, 1998.

### § 846.704 Irrevocability of an election of FERS coverage.

(a) An election to be covered by FERS becomes irrevocable on the date it becomes effective.

(b) If, during the 1998 open enrollment period, an employee files an election on an SF 3109 to remain covered by CSRS, the employee may revoke such an election by filing another election during the 1998 open enrollment period.

## WHO MAY ELECT

### § 846.711 Eligibility to elect FERS coverage during the 1998 open enrollment period.

An employee who is not covered by FERS, and who was an employee on January 1, 1998, and who is not otherwise ineligible for FERS coverage (under subpart A of part 842 of this chapter or § 846.722) may elect FERS coverage during the 1998 open enrollment period.

### § 846.712 Statutory exclusions.

(a) *DC government employees.* An individual employed by the government of the District of Columbia is not eligible to make an election, except—

(1) Non-judicial employees of the District of Columbia Courts, District of Columbia Department of Corrections Trustee or the District of Columbia Pretrial Services, Defense Services, Parole, Adult Probation and Offender Supervision Trustee under the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997, title XI of Public Law 105–33, 111 Stat. 251, who meet the conditions of § 831.201(g)(2), (3), and (4) of this chapter; and

(2) Employees of the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority under the District of Columbia Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Act of 1995, Public Law 104–8, 109 Stat. 97, as amended, who elected CSRS under § 831.201(g)(5) of this chapter.

(b) *Members of Congress.* A Member (as defined in section 2106 of title 5, United States Code) is not eligible to make an election.

(c) *Persons without social security eligibility.* An individual is not eligible to make an election if that individual is not eligible for social security coverage.

**§ 846.713 Former spouse consent requirement.**

An election of FERS coverage cannot become effective unless the election is made with the written consent of any former spouse(s) entitled to benefits under part 838 of this chapter.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

**§ 846.721 Electing FERS coverage.**

(a) To elect FERS coverage, an employee must submit a completed FERS Election of Coverage form (SF 3109) and any additional documentation that may be required under § 846.722 (relating to the former spouse consent requirement) to the employing office no later than the close of business on December 31, 1998.

(b) Any writing signed by the employee and filed with the employing office may be treated as an election for the purpose of establishing the date of the election of FERS coverage if the employee intends that document to be an election, but the employee (or, if the employee dies after filing the election but before completing the SF 3109, the survivor) must submit a completed SF 3109 to confirm any such election.

**§ 846.722 Former spouse's consent to an election of FERS coverage.**

(a) Employee actions. (1) If the employee is subject to a qualifying court order, the employee must submit to the employing office a completed—

(i) SF 3110, Former Spouse's Consent to FERS Election, to document the former spouse's consent to the FERS coverage; or

(ii) SF 3111, Request for Waiver, Extension, or Search, to request a waiver of the former spouse consent requirement or to request an extension of the time limit for obtaining a former spouse's consent or amendment of the court order.

(2) If the employee states on the SF 3109, the FERS Election of Coverage form, that he or she does not know whether he or she is subject to a qualifying court order, the employee must submit to the employing office a completed SF 3111, Request for Waiver, Extension, or Search, to request OPM to determine whether it has a qualifying court order relating to the employee.

(b) *OPM actions*—(1) *Waiver of former spouse consent requirement*—(i) *Grounds for waiver.* OPM's authority to approve a waiver of the former spouse consent requirement is limited to cases in which the former spouse's whereabouts cannot be determined or exceptional circumstances make requiring the former spouse's consent inappropriate.

(ii) *Whereabouts cannot be determined.* OPM will waive the former spouse consent requirement upon a showing that the former spouse's whereabouts cannot be determined. A request for waiver on this basis must be accompanied by—

(A) A judicial or administrative determination that the former spouse's whereabouts cannot be determined; or

(B)(1) Affidavits by the employee and two other persons, at least one of whom is not related to the employee, attesting to the inability to locate the former spouse and stating the efforts made to locate the spouse; and

(2) Documentary corroboration such as newspaper reports about the former spouse's disappearance.

(iii) *Exceptional circumstances.* OPM will waive the former spouse consent requirement based on exceptional circumstances if the employee presents a judicial determination finding that—

(A) The case before the court involves a Federal employee who is in the process of electing FERS coverage and the former spouse of that employee;

(B) The former spouse has been given notice and an opportunity to be heard concerning this proceeding;

(C) The court has considered sections 301 and 302 of the FERS Act, Pub. L. 99-335, 100 Stat. 517, and this section as they relate to waiver of the former spouse consent requirement for an employee with a former spouse to elect FERS coverage; and

(D) The court finds that exceptional circumstances exist justifying waiver of the former spouse's consent.

(iv) *Approval of a waiver.* If OPM grants a waiver of the requirement of paragraph (a) of this section, OPM will notify both the individual and the employing office of its decision. OPM's notice to the employing office is deemed to complete the individual's election, which becomes effective with the first pay period after the employing office receives OPM's notice that the waiver is granted.

(2) *Extension of the time limit to obtain a former spouse's consent—(i) First request.* If an employee who is ineligible to elect FERS coverage solely because of a qualifying court order files, prior to January 1, 1999, a completed SF 3111, Request for Waiver, Extension or Search, requesting an extension of the time limit to seek an amendment of a qualifying court order, OPM is deemed to have approved the extension through June 30, 1999.

(ii) *Second request.* OPM will grant one extension of the time limit to seek an amendment of a qualifying court order to an individual who has been granted an extension under paragraph (b)(2)(i) of this section if the individual—

(A) Files an application for the extension (SF 3109) with the employing office before July 1, 1999;

(B) Has initiated legal proceedings to secure the modification of the qualifying court order on file at OPM to satisfy the former spouse consent requirement;

(C) Demonstrates to OPM's satisfaction that the individual has exercised due diligence in seeking to obtain the modification; and

(D) If seeking an extension beyond December 31, 1999, demonstrates to OPM's satisfaction that a longer extension is necessary.

(iii) *Expiration date of a second extension.* An approved extension under paragraph (b)(2)(ii) of this section expires on December 31, 1999, unless OPM's decision letter states a later expiration date.

(3) *Search for a qualifying court order.* (i) When an employing office notifies OPM that it has received an employee's request for a determination of whether

OPM has a qualifying court order on file, OPM will determine whether it has such an order.

(ii) If OPM does not have a copy of a qualifying court order in its possession, OPM's notice to the employing office that it has no qualifying court order completes the employee's election of FERS coverage and the election becomes effective at the beginning of the first pay period after the employing office receives OPM's notification.

(iii) If OPM has a copy of a qualifying court order, OPM will notify both the individual and the employing office that it has a qualifying court order and that an extension until June 30, 1999, has been granted.

#### § 846.723 Agency responsibilities.

(a) The employing office must determine whether the employee is eligible to elect FERS coverage.

(b)(1) As close as practicable to the beginning of the open enrollment period, the employing office must provide each employee eligible to elect FERS coverage with notice of that employee's right to make an election.

(2) The employing office must provide each employee eligible to elect FERS coverage with a copy of or ready access to the FERS Transfer Handbook.

(c) An election received by an employing office before July 1, 1998, is deemed to have been received by the employing office on July 1, 1998.

(d) An agency decision that an employee is not eligible to elect FERS coverage or refusing to accept a belated election under § 846.724 must be in writing, must fully set forth the findings and conclusions of the agency, and must notify the employee of the right to appeal the decision under this section to the Merit Systems Protection Board, including all information required under the Board's regulations. See 5 CFR 1201.21.

#### § 846.724 Belated elections and correction of administrative errors.

(a) *Belated elections.* The employing office may accept a belated election of FERS coverage if it determines that—

(1) The employing office did not provide adequate notice to the employee in a timely manner;

(2) The agency did not provide access to the FERS Transfer Handbook to the employee in a timely manner; or

(3) The employee was unable, for cause beyond his or her control, to elect FERS coverage within the prescribed time limit.

(b) *Correction of administrative errors.* Failure to begin employee deductions and Government contributions on the effective date of coverage must be corrected in accordance with §841.505 of this chapter.

**§ 846.725 Appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board.**

(a) A person whose rights or interests under this part are affected by an agency decision that an employee is not eligible to elect FERS coverage or an agency refusal to accept a belated election under §846.724, or an OPM decision denying an extension or waiver under §846.722, may request the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) to review such decision in accord with procedures prescribed by MSPB. MSPB regulations relating to appeals are contained in chapter II of this title.

(b) Paragraph (a) of this section is the exclusive remedy for review of agency decisions concerning eligibility to make an election under this subpart. An agency decision must not allow review under any employee grievance procedures, including those established by chapter 71 of title 5, United States Code, and 5 CFR part 771.

**§ 846.726 Delegation of authority to act as OPM's agent for receipt of employee communications relating to elections.**

The employing office is delegated authority to act as OPM's agent for the receipt of any documents that employees are required by this subpart to file with OPM. Such documents are deemed received by OPM on the date that the employing office receives them.

**PART 847—ELECTIONS OF RETIREMENT COVERAGE BY CURRENT AND FORMER EMPLOYEES OF NONAPPROPRIATED FUND INSTRUMENTALITIES**

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