



The Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP)

Traditional Option

Thank you for your service to The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod and for helping to spread His word. One of the important benefits you receive as a worker in your ministry is your participation in the Concordia Retirement Plan (CRP), a defined-benefit plan, better known as a **pension**.

What does that mean to you?

- When you retire, the CRP Traditional Option will provide you with a monthly income, as long as you have been enrolled in the plan for at least five years.
- This income benefit will continue for as long as you live and could continue as income for your spouse.
- This retirement benefit is completely funded by your employer.

Because your CRP benefit does not fluctuate with the economy, it is a set amount of income for life, making it a dependable source of fixed retirement income and a valuable benefit.

You are earning a paycheck now for your service, but when you retire, you will need to replace that income. As an important part of your retirement paycheck, the CRP is a reliable benefit. For most members, the CRP exists side-by-side with the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan 403(b), a savings plan to which you may contribute in order to make up a second part of your retirement paycheck. Social Security benefits and other income sources can complete the picture. If your employer offers the Concordia Retirement Savings Plan 403(b), be sure to set money aside today for your future!

How the CRP Works

There are two benefit accrual options under the CRP: the Traditional Option and the Account Option. Throughout your service to the LCMS, you may accumulate benefits in the Traditional Option, the Account Option or both, depending on what your employer offers. If you are unsure which option you qualify for, check with your employer or log on to your Member Portal at ConcordiaPlans.org/MemberPortal. A summary of your CRP benefits can be found on your Personal Statement of Benefits.

The Traditional Option of the CRP is available to certain full-time workers, who are at least 21 years of age, and at participating employers of the LCMS. To be eligible to receive retirement benefits from the Traditional Option, you must have completed five years of plan service. Even if you are not enrolled in the Concordia Health Plan, you may still be eligible to be enrolled in the CRP.

The CRP is designed to support you as you are called to serve in different ministries within the LCMS. If you transfer to another full-time position at another employer offering the CRP, your plan service will continue to accumulate. However, if you are a non-rostered worker who loses eligibility for enrollment prior to being vested, and are not enrolled in the CRP within five years (60 consecutive months), your creditable service will start over when you again become enrolled.

TERMS TO KNOW

Early Retirement occurs when you stop working at a participating LCMS employer at age 55 or later, but before your Normal Retirement Age (see definition below). If vested, you can begin receiving reduced CRP benefits before your Normal Retirement Age.

Full-Time Worker is someone who typically works more than 20 hours per week, who is expected to work for more than five consecutive months, and is 21 years of age or older.

Normal Retirement Age typically follows Social Security normal retirement age.

Plan Service is the number of years and months that you are enrolled in the CRP at a participating employer.

Reported Compensation is the annual compensation amount that is reported to Concordia Plans by your employer(s). Compensation includes salary and certain allowances, but does not include bonuses.

Vested means that you have enough years of plan service to be entitled to a benefit from the CRP. Vesting for the Traditional Option is five years of plan service.

Benefits

The Traditional Option provides a monthly income for your lifetime after five years of plan service. Generally, benefits are available to you when you retire.

Up to three benefits could be payable to you:

- All vested workers enrolled in the Traditional Option are eligible for the Primary Retirement Benefit, which is the core benefit of the Traditional Option. It is based on your reported compensation and years of plan service earned while participating in the Traditional Option.
- If you were enrolled in the Traditional Option before June 30, 2014, you may have additional retirement benefits available to you.
 - > The Supplemental Retirement Account is a benefit which may be paid out as a monthly benefit or as a lump sum.
 - > The Retiree Medical Supplement may be available to you if you 1) were enrolled in the Concordia Health Plan at a participating employer between Jan. 1, 2006 and June 30, 2014, and 2) you retire from a participating employer after age 60 with at least 15 years of plan service. To remain eligible for this benefit, your employer must remain fully participating in all Concordia Plans.

See Your Benefits! See all your CRP benefits by logging in to Retirement Connection through the Member Portal, ConcordiaPlans.org/MemberPortal or directly by visiting RetirementConnection.ehr.com. The first time you visit the site you will need to create an account.

Taxability

CRP benefits are reported as taxable income when you begin receiving them.

If you are a called worker when you retire from the LCMS, some or all of your CRP benefits may be claimed as housing allowance. Consult your tax adviser for more information.

Initiating Benefits

Generally, you are eligible to start receiving your CRP benefits at your Normal Retirement Age, or at age 62 or older if working 20 hours or less per week at an LCMS employer.

However, there are a few exceptions:

- If you leave employment at a participating LCMS employer at age 55 or later, but before your Normal Retirement Age, you may be eligible to receive an early reduced benefit.
- If you leave employment at a participating employer before you reach age 55, but you have at least five years of Plan Service, you are eligible for a Vested Terminated Benefit. This benefit will be payable to you once you reach your Normal Retirement Age or starting at age 55 for reduced payment. You also may be able to take a lump-sum payout of any vested balance in the Supplemental Retirement Account before age 55.
- If you were enrolled in the Traditional Option before June 30, 2014, you may have these additional distribution options available to you:
 - > **Early Non-reduced Benefits** – The Rule of 85: You may be eligible to receive your pension benefit early at an unreduced rate if the sum of your age and Plan Service in the CRP equals at least 85. This is known as the “Rule of 85” and will be applied to Primary Retirement Benefits accrued through June 30, 2014.
 - > **In-Service Benefits:** You may be eligible to begin receiving the portion of your Primary Retirement Benefit that accrued through June 30, 2014, if you are at least age 65 and still working full time at a participating employer.

We recommend you contact our office at least 90 days before you would like to begin your retirement benefits. To initiate your retirement benefits, or for more information, contact Retirement Services at 888-927-7526 or access Retirement Connect through your Member Portal at ConcordiaPlans.org/MemberPortal, or directly at RetirementConnection.ehr.com.

Payment Options

When you retire and are ready for your monthly pension benefit to begin, you can choose the best payment option for you and your family.

The payment options include:

- **Single Life Annuity** – a higher monthly income payable for your lifetime, but with no benefits continuing to your surviving spouse upon your death.
- **Joint and 70% Survivor Annuity** – a monthly income payable for your lifetime, and when you die, 70% of your monthly benefit continues to your eligible surviving spouse.
- **Joint and 100% Survivor Annuity** – a reduced monthly income payable for your lifetime, and when you die, 100% of your monthly benefit continues to your eligible surviving spouse.

- **Ten-Year Certain and Life Annuity** – a monthly income for your lifetime, with broader legacy planning opportunities available.
- **Lump-Sum Payout** – a one-time payment which is only available for the Supplemental Retirement Account and Retiree Medical Supplement. Lump-sum payouts may be rolled into your Concordia Retirement Savings Plan 403(b) account or another qualified retirement account (such as an IRA).

Once you begin receiving your benefits, you cannot change your payment option.

5-Year Service Break Rule

If you are a non-rostered worker and you lose your eligibility for CRP enrollment (for example because of reduced hours or separation from employment) prior to being vested, your accumulated benefits and Plan Service remain in our records for five years (60 consecutive months). If you become eligible and are enrolled in the CRP less than five years after your previous enrollment ended, you will begin accumulating CRP benefits, building from the previous benefits you have earned. If it has been more than five years since your previous enrollment, you will start over earning CRP benefits.

Survivor Benefits

Pre-Retirement Survivor Income – If you are married and an active worker at the time of your death and vested in the Traditional Option, a monthly benefit will be payable to your surviving spouse for his or her lifetime. Your spouse may begin receiving payment as early as the month following your death, or the date you would have reached age 55, whichever is later. If you are not married and die as an active worker vested in the Traditional Option, any benefits you have in the Supplemental Retirement Account and Retiree Medical Supplement can be paid to your designated beneficiary as a lump-sum payment.

Post-Retirement Survivor Income – If you die after starting your monthly benefit from the CRP, a monthly benefit may also be available to your eligible surviving spouse, depending on the payment option you elected at retirement.

We're here to help!

Your retirement benefits are important to your future, and we are here to help answer any questions that you have.

- If you have questions about the member portal or your plan benefits, contact us at 888-927-7526 or info@ConcordiaPlans.org.
- If you need assistance with financial or retirement planning, call our Education Team 888-927-7526, ext. 6865 or email MoneyMatters@ConcordiaPlans.org.

This is a brief summary of the CRP. It does not include every detail. In the event of a conflict between the information in this document and the terms of the plan document, the plan document will govern. If you have benefits under both the Account Option and the Traditional Option of the CRP, please contact Concordia Plans for more information.