

**354B.21 COVERAGE.**

Subdivision 1. **Eligibility.** The following persons are eligible to have coverage by the individual retirement account plan and to be participants in the plan:

(1) employees of the board who are employed as faculty in an employment classification included in the state university instructional unit or the state college instructional unit under section 179A.10, subdivision 2;

(2) the chancellor and employees of the board in eligible unclassified administrative positions;

(3) the employees in eligible unclassified administrative positions in the state universities;

(4) the employees in eligible unclassified administrative positions in the technical colleges; and

(5) the employees in eligible unclassified administrative positions of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education or of the community colleges.

Subd. 2. **Coverage; election.** (a) Eligible persons who were employed by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System on or after June 30, 2009, unless otherwise specified in this section, are authorized to elect prospective Teachers Retirement Association plan coverage rather than coverage by the plan established by this chapter. The election of prospective Teachers Retirement Association plan coverage must be made within one year of commencing eligible Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system employment. If an election is not made within the specified election period due to a termination of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system employment, an election may be made within 90 days of returning to eligible Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system employment. All elections are irrevocable. Before making an election, the eligible person is covered by the plan indicated as default coverage under subdivision 3.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph (c), a purchase of service credit in the Teachers Retirement Association plan for any period or periods of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system employment occurring before the election under paragraph (a) is prohibited.

(c) Notwithstanding paragraphs (a) and (b), a faculty member who is a member of the individual retirement account plan who first achieves tenure or its equivalent at a Minnesota state college or university after June 30, 2009, may elect to transfer retirement coverage under the teachers retirement plan within one year of the faculty member achieving tenure or its equivalent at a Minnesota state college or university. The faculty member electing Teachers Retirement Association coverage under this paragraph must purchase service credit in the Teachers Retirement Association for the entire period of time covered under the individual retirement account plan and the purchase payment amount must be determined under section 356.551. The Teachers Retirement Association may charge a faculty member transferring coverage a reasonable fee to cover the costs associated with computing the actuarial cost of purchasing service credit and making the transfer. A faculty member transferring from the individual retirement account plan to the Teachers Retirement Association may use any balances to the credit of the faculty member in the individual retirement account plan, any balances to the credit of the faculty member in the higher education supplemental retirement plan established under chapter 354C, or any source specified in section 356.441, subdivision 1, to purchase the service credit in the Teachers Retirement Association. If the total amount of payments under this paragraph are less than the

total purchase payment amount under section 356.551, the payment amounts must be refunded to the applicable source. The retirement coverage transfer and service credit purchase authority under this paragraph expires with respect to any Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System faculty initially hired after June 30, 2014.

**Subd. 3. Default coverage.** (a) Prior to making an election under subdivision 2, or if an eligible person fails to elect coverage by the plan under subdivision 2 or if the person fails to make a timely election, the following retirement coverage applies:

(1) for employees of the board who are employed in faculty positions in the technical colleges, in the state universities or in the community colleges, the retirement coverage is by the plan established by this chapter;

(2) for employees of the board who are employed in faculty positions in the technical colleges, the retirement coverage is by the plan established by this chapter unless on June 30, 1997, the employee was a member of the Teachers Retirement Association established under chapter 354 and then the retirement coverage is by the Teachers Retirement Association, or, unless the employee was a member of a first class city teacher retirement fund established under chapter 354A on June 30, 1995, and then the retirement coverage is by the Duluth Teachers Retirement Fund Association if the person was a member of that plan on June 30, 1995, or the Teachers Retirement Association if the person was a member of the former Minneapolis Teachers Retirement Fund Association on June 30, 1995, or the St. Paul Teachers Retirement Fund Association if the person was a member of that plan on June 30, 1995; and

(3) for employees of the board who are employed in eligible unclassified administrative positions, the retirement coverage is by the plan established by this chapter.

(b) If an employee fails to correctly certify prior membership in the Teachers Retirement Association to the Minnesota State colleges and Universities system, the system shall not pay interest on employee contributions, employer contributions, and additional employer contributions to the Teachers Retirement Association under section 354.52, subdivision 4.

**Subd. 3a. Continuation of plan coverage in certain instances.** For a person with retirement coverage by a first class city teacher retirement fund association instead of the individual retirement account plan under subdivision 3, clause (2), coverage by the applicable retirement fund association continues for the duration of the person's employment by the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities unless, within 90 days of a change in employment within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, the person elects the individual retirement account plan for all future employment by the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

**Subd. 3b. Coverage of certain former technical college faculty members.** A person who was employed as a teacher by a technical college before July 1, 1995, and who subsequently is reclassified into a different employment position while continuing to perform the same or essentially the same employment duties and consequently shifts from the technical college instructional collective bargaining unit to another state collective bargaining unit retains coverage by the Teachers Retirement Association or the applicable first class city teachers retirement fund association, whichever applies.

**Subd. 3c. Election of TRA coverage in certain instances.** (a) A person who was employed as a teacher by a technical college before July 1, 1995, and who has retirement coverage for that

technical college teacher employment by a first class city teacher retirement fund association under chapter 354A may elect to have future higher education system teacher employment retirement coverage by the Teachers Retirement Association governed by chapter 354.

(b) The election to transfer prospective retirement coverage under paragraph (a) must be made by the technical college teacher by October 1, 1995, or within 90 days of initially being employed by the higher education system, whichever is later. The election must be made in writing on a form prescribed by the executive director of the Teachers Retirement Association. The election, once filed with the executive director of the Teachers Retirement Association, is irrevocable.

(c) An election to transfer prospective retirement coverage under paragraph (a) does not affect prior allowable service credit under section 354A.011, subdivision 4. The transfer of prospective retirement coverage does not make the person eligible for a refund of member contributions during the course of the person's employment by the higher education system.

**Subd. 4. Coverage in the event of acting, interim, or temporary appointments.** (a) A person previously employed by the board and subsequently appointed by the board to an acting, interim, or temporary faculty or eligible unclassified administrative position by the board retains the retirement coverage that the person had in the prior board position. If the participant's status becomes permanent, the participant has the option to make an election of retirement coverage appropriate to the retirement plan in which the employment position should have retirement coverage consistent with subdivision 2.

(b) A person who is appointed to an acting, interim, or temporary faculty position by the board and who was not employed in a faculty position by the board immediately before that appointment must elect coverage as provided in subdivision 2.

**Subd. 5. Payment for certain prior uncovered service.** (a) A person employed in a faculty position by the board who was initially excluded from participation in the individual retirement account plan coverage, who was not covered by any other Minnesota public pension plan for that service, and who is subsequently eligible to participate in the individual retirement account plan may make member contributions for that period of prior uncovered teaching employment or eligible unclassified administrative employment with the board.

(b) The member contributions for prior uncovered board service are the amount that the person would have paid if the prior service had been covered employment. The payment must be made to the individual retirement account plan administrator and may be made only by payroll deduction. The payment must be made by the later of:

- (1) 45 days of the start of covered employment; or
- (2) the end of the fiscal year in which covered employment began.

(c) The board must contribute an amount to match any contribution made by a plan participant under this subdivision.

(d) Payments of contributions for prior uncovered board service under this subdivision must be invested in the same manner as the regular contributions made by or on behalf of the plan participant.

**Subd. 6. Continuation of coverage.** Once a person is employed in a position that qualifies for participation in the individual retirement account plan and elects to participate in the plan, all

subsequent service by the person as a faculty member employed by the board or other employing unit is covered by the individual retirement account plan.

**History:** *1995 c 141 art 4 s 9; 1995 c 212 art 3 s 59; art 4 s 64; 1997 c 241 art 8 s 5; 2001 c 133 s 3; 2005 c 107 art 2 s 60; 1Sp2005 c 8 art 4 s 7,8; 2007 c 134 art 1 s 9; 2009 c 169 art 6 s 3*