Federal Employee Retirement Provisions

Accessible Version

Enhanced retirement benefits under the Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS) enable federal law enforcement officers (LEO) and US Capitol Police (USCP) officers to retire after fewer years of service compared to standard federal employees and their LEO retirement annuities accrue at a faster rate than standard federal employee retirement benefits. LEOs and USCP officers are generally eligible to retire at age 50 if they have a minimum of 20 years of service, and may retire at an earlier age if they have at least 25 years of service.

Table 5a: Comparison of FERS Provisions for Different Types of Federal Employees

Retirement benefits under FERS: Standard federal employees	Retirement benefits under FERS: Federal law enforcement officers	Retirement benefits under FERS: US Capitol Police officers
FERS formula The standard federal employees' multiplier for FERS is 1 percent for those who retire before age 62, or age 62 or older but with at least 5, but less than 20 years of service; and 1.1 percent for those who retire at age 62 or older with at least 20 years of service.	**FERS formula for enhanced benefits** The law enforcement officer (LEO) multiplier for FERS is 1.7 percent for the first 20 years and 1 percent for additional years. (An officer must complete 20 years in LEO service to receive the higher multiplier.)	**FERS formula for enhanced benefits.** The US Capitol Police (USCP) officers' multiplier is LEO-equivalent.[a]
COLA Cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for standard federal employees each year during retirement, generally beginning at age 62.	**COLA** COLA each year during retirement.	**COLA** LEO-equivalent.
Additional pay for overtime Overtime pay cannot be included in an employee's highest 3 years of basic pay used to calculate an employee's retirement benefits.	**Additional pay for overtime** Some LEOs are allowed to earn premium pay for certain types of overtime that is paid as a recurring fixed amount and may be included in their highest 3 years of basic pay used to calculate retirement benefits.	**Additional pay for overtime** Unlike for some LEOs, the types of overtime pay that USCP officers can earn cannot be included in the officer's highest 3 years of earnings used to calculate an officer's retirement benefits.
FERS annuity supplement Standard employees are eligible to receive a FERS retiree annuity supplement if they have at least 1 calendar year of FERS service and they retire either at or after their minimum retirement age with at least 30 years of service, or at age 60 with at least 20 years of service. The retiree annuity supplement is payable until age 62, or when they would be eligible for Social Security. The supplement amount is calculated based on an estimate of the employee's full Social Security benefit and years of service under FERS.	**FERS annuity supplement** LEOs are eligible to receive a FERS retiree annuity supplement if they have at least 1 calendar year of FERS service and retire under one of the special provisions for enhanced retirement benefits. The retiree annuity supplement is payable until age 62, or when they would be eligible for Social Security. The supplement amount is calculated based on an estimate of the employee's full Social Security benefit and years of service under FERS.	**FERS annuity supplement** LEO-equivalent.

Table 5b: Comparison of FERS Provisions for Different Types of Federal Employees

Mandatory retirement age under FERS: Standard federal employees	Mandatory retirement age under FERS: Federal law enforcement oficers	Mandatory retirement age under FERS: US Capitol Police officers
Mandatory retirement age	**Mandatory retirement age**	**Mandatory retirement age**
No mandatory retirement age for standard federal employees.	LEOs generally must separate from service (retire or continue to work in a non-LEO capacity) when they reach age 57 if they have completed at least 20 years of service. If they have not completed 20 years of service, they may keep working beyond age 57 until they have completed their 20 years.	LEO-equivalent.
Exemption process	**Exemption process**	**Exemption process**
NA	If the agency head determines that the public interest so requires, the agency head may exempt an individual employee from mandatory retirement up to age 60. If the president determines that the public interest so requires, the president, by executive order, may exempt an employee, from mandatory separation, including past age 60.	If the Capitol Police Board determines that the public interest so requires, the Board may exempt an individual employee from mandatory retirement up to age 60. The president may not exempt a USCP officer from mandatory separation.

Source: GAO analysis of agency documents on the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) . I GAO-20-137R

[a]USCP officers were given LEO-equivalent retirement benefits under FERS by the Capitol Police Retirement Act in 1990. See Pub. L. No. 101-428, 104 Stat. 928.