

IMPORTANT RFCUNY PENSION INFORMATION

What are pension and retirement savings plans?

Research Foundation of CUNY (RFCUNY) provides mandatory Defined Contribution and voluntary 403(b) Tax Deferred Annuity pension retirement savings plans, offered through TIAA. These plans allow employees to make contributions on a pre-tax basis into pension accounts. Accordingly, funds are allocated to stocks, bonds, and target date funds based on the employee's selection from the array of investments available under the plans.

What retirement plans am I eligible for?

Group Retirement Annuity Plan (GRA)

- With exception of non-resident aliens and student employees, all Full-Time employees who are appointed for at least 35 hours per week and Part-Time A employees who are appointed for more than 19 but fewer than 35 hours per week are required to participate in the RFCUNY's Group Retirement Annuity plan also known as the Defined Contribution (DC) retirement plan.

Group Supplemental Retirement Annuity Plan (GSRA)

- All employees of RFCUNY who receive compensation reportable on an IRS Form W-2 are eligible to participate in the voluntary TIAA 403(b) Tax Deferred Annuity Plan (TDA) commonly referred to as the Group Supplemental Retirement Annuity (GSRA), as long as the employee contributes a minimum of \$200 per year. Exceptions are limited to student employees who are not eligible to participate in the Plan and non-resident aliens who receive no U.S.-based income from RFCUNY.

What pension Tier am I?

- The GRA plan contributions are determined by pension tier. The employees new hire/ rehire date determines the tier.
- Employees hired or rehired after a break in service on or after January 1, 2009 are in Tier IV.

How do I enroll and receive contributions to my pension plan?

Group Retirement Annuity Plan GRA

- There is a one-year waiting period to become eligible for employer contributions. For the purpose of determining an employee's Tier level, a "break in service" is defined as a lapse in employment in excess of 4 months or 120 days.
- After the one-year waiting period, you will automatically be enrolled in the GRA plan. No action is necessary on your end to enroll in this plan.
- The RF will begin to contribute 8% of the employee's bi-weekly earnings, this continues for the next six years as long as the employee remains in an eligible status and 10% thereafter. Please note that these contributions do not come out of the employee's paycheck, they are made by RFCUNY.
- The RF contributions for each year are deposited as a lump sum before the vesting date. Thereafter the contributions will be deposited on a bi-weekly basis.

Group Supplemental Retirement Annuity (GSRA)

- The 2024 IRS maximum contribution is \$23,000 or \$30,500 if you are age 50 or older. To enroll in this plan, you must sign and complete the attached Salary Reduction Agreement (SRA) form and return to RFCUNY.

What does vested mean?

Vesting in a retirement plan means ownership. An employee who is 100% vested in his/ her account balance owns 100% of it. Once the account is vested, the employer cannot forfeit or take back the funds.

Group Retirement Annuity Plan (GRA)

- Employees become vested upon completion of two years of eligible service following the one-year waiting period. While there are no employee contributions under Tier IV, vested participants will have nonelective employer contributions remitted to the Plan each payroll cycle.
- GRA vested funds cannot be withdrawn or accessed while the employee is still active. Upon separation of employment, vested funds are fully accessible to the employee.

Group Supplemental Retirement Annuity Plan (GSRA)

- Employees are fully vested upon enrollment in the GSRA plan.
- GSRA funds may be accessed for loan or hardshipⁱⁱ withdrawals while actively employed.

How does TIAA designate investments?

- The default investment option for RFCUNY pensions plans is T. Rowe Price Target Date Fund.
- To review investment options available under the RFCUNY plans and to select your own allocations use the TIAA website or download the app on your computer, smartphone, or tablet.
- To create your User ID, select allocation of funds, and designate beneficiary(ies), click the link below and follow the instructions:
 - <https://www.tiaa.org/public/tcm/rfcuny>
 - Click *Ready to Enroll*
 - Select Research Foundation of CUNY Tax Deferred Annuity Plan
 - Click Next and Select Begin Enrollment

If you are already registered with TIAA online access, please use your User ID and password to log in. If you are a new user, please click Register with TIAA. If the access code is not already populated, please enter the access code **RFCUNY002** to continue.

If you are having trouble creating your log in, please try using a different web browser.

What happens when my employment ends?

- Upon separation of employment, vested funds may be rolled over to another retirement plan or withdrawn. Early withdrawals, for those under age 59 ½, are subject to IRS early withdrawal penalties in addition to applicable taxes. Vested accounts with balances greater than \$5,000 may remain in RFCUNY's plan until the required minimum distribution (RMD) age 73 effective 2023.
- Vested accounts with balances less than \$5,000 will be subject to forced balance distribution and moved to an account with Millennium Bank Trust following the separation of RFCUNY employment.
- Non-vested GRA funds cannot be accessed upon separation of RFCUNY employment. These accounts will remain in TIAA for five (5) years after the date of separation. If the inactive employee is rehired in a benefit eligible RFCUNY position, he or she will be given the opportunity to complete the vesting requirement. If the inactive employee does not return to a RFCUNY position within the five (5) year period, the employer contributed funds will be forfeited in accordance with the plan rules.

Who do I contact?

- For any questions about the pension plans, enrollment, or to submit your completed SRA form please contact HR Pension Administrator Julian Osorio at Julian.Osorio@rfcuny.org.
- To schedule a consultation with TIAA, click the link below:
 - <https://www.tiaa.org/public/tcm/rfcuny>
 - Scroll down to *Professional Advice*
 - Click on *Schedule now*.
- To reach TIAA by phone call 1-800-842-2252.

ⁱ The student status exclusion applies to specific job titles where active student enrollment is required for the position. Contact HR to confirm eligibility.

ⁱⁱ In-service distributions are not permitted except when you reach age 59½ or in the event of hardship. Hardship withdrawals may be available for the GSRA funds if the employee has heavy and immediate financial need related to medical expenses, purchase or repair of principal residence, facing foreclosure or eviction, funeral or burial costs. Proof of hardship is required for approval. Contact TIAA to apply.