

## RESOLUTION NO. 216

### AMENDING THE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ALBANY COUNTY EMPLOYEES REGARDING HEALTH INSURANCE BENEFITS FOR RETIREES

Introduced: 4/8/24

By Mayo:

WHEREAS, By Resolution No. 136-b for 1999, this Honorable Body adopted employee rules and regulations which are applicable to all non-union employees of Albany County, and

WHEREAS, By Resolution No. 217 for 2019, this Honorable Body amended these rules to reflect that employees hired after the adoption of these rules were eligible for health insurance benefits for retirees after fifteen (15) years of qualifying County service that is continuous and uninterrupted, and

WHEREAS, It is the view of this Honorable Body that fifteen (15) years of service to Albany County is sufficient to vest employees with health insurance benefits in retirement, and that the additional requirement of continuous and uninterrupted service is no longer consistent with the changing labor markets of Albany County, and

WHEREAS, This change in vesting for health insurance will allow Albany County to remain competitive and recruit more seasoned professionals to return to County service, benefiting numerous departments and the individuals they serve, and

WHEREAS, The Albany County Legislature intends this policy be modified to allow for total aggregate years of service rather than continuous and uninterrupted years of service to control eligibility for health insurance benefits and to apply to all current and former employees of Albany County who have not yet retired [from] with the New York State and Local Retirement System (hereinafter NYSLRS), and

WHEREAS, In addition, this Honorable Body finds and determines that prior public service in other municipalities or with the State of New York should also be considered and recognized when calculating eligibility to vest in health insurance benefits in retirement from Albany County, and

WHEREAS, So long as an employee of Albany County has at least twenty years of service with qualifying municipalities or the State of New York (defined as those municipalities participating in the NYSLRS), ten years of which must be in service to Albany County, this Honorable Body determines that shall be sufficient public

service for an employee of Albany County to vest in health insurance benefits in retirement, and

WHEREAS, The County Executive, in support of said amendments, has indicated that such changes will not have a significant impact on the long term fiscal health of Albany County, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the Albany County Legislature that the Albany County Employee Rules and Regulations, adopted pursuant to Resolution No. 136-b for 1999, as amended, are hereby amended as follows:

Article IX, Section A(1)(a)(1)(a) shall be amended as follows:

“(a)The employees with an employment date after the adoption of these rules must have at least:

(1) fifteen (15) years of full time equivalent service with Albany County, or,

(2) twenty (20) years of full time equivalent service with municipalities participating in the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS), provided, however, that at least ten (10) of those years be full time equivalent service with Albany County.

Article IX, Section A(1)(a)(1)(f) shall be amended as follows:

(f)(1) For the purposes of Article IX, Section A(1)(a)(1)(a)(1), an employee who qualifies as a veteran may apply up to three (3) years of their military service to be credited towards reaching the fifteen (15) years of full time equivalent service with Albany County required to be eligible for health insurance benefits in retirement.

(f)(2) For the purposes of Article IX, Section A(1)(a)(1)(a)(2), an employee who qualifies as a veteran may apply up to three (3) years of their military service to be credited towards reaching the twenty (20) years of full time equivalent service with municipalities participating in the NYSLRS to be eligible for health insurance benefits in retirement, provided, however, that such credit shall not be eligible to reduce the actual years of service to Albany County to less than ten (10) years.

Article IX, Section A(1)(a)(2) shall read:

“(a) The service indicated in eligibility criterion one (1), (above), need not be continuous and uninterrupted if reinstatement to County service following a period of separation was within twelve (12) calendar months following the date of separation. In such circumstances, an

employee's benefits date (as defined by these Rules) shall be used to determine length of service achieved by the employee.

(b) For all current employees of Albany County and for all employees hired after March 14, 2025, the service indicated in eligibility criterion one (1), (above), shall be calculated using the aggregate total amount of service time to Albany County and/or municipalities participating in the NYSLRS.

(c) All former employees of Albany County, who have not yet retired with NYSLRS, shall be eligible to return to County Service for the purpose of vesting in health insurance benefits in retirement by calculated the aggregate total amount of service time to Albany County and/or municipalities participating in the NYSLRS consistent with Section A(1)(a)(1)(a). However, all such former employees shall additionally be required to complete three-years of continuous and uninterrupted service to Albany County after returning to county service before vesting for such benefit, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.

Article IX Section B(3) Shall read as follows:

**3. Spousal/Dependent Coverage.** Spouses and eligible dependents of County retirees (employees) remain covered as long as the retiree maintains an active enrollment. At the time of death of a retired, or active, County employee, spouse and dependent coverage may be extended as follows:

Spouses and eligible dependents will be covered for a three (3) month period. At the end of three months spouses and eligible dependents have the option of electing COBRA benefits or as specified in b.

For all full-time employees or retirees with a minimum of either a) fifteen (15) years of full-time equivalent County service, or b) twenty (20) years of full time equivalent service with municipalities participating in the NYSLRS, provided, however, that at least ten (10) of those years be full time equivalent service with Albany County, coverage will be extended with a premium contribution as follows:

<b>Years of Completed Full Time Equivalent County Service</b>	<b>Number of Years Eligible for Continuation of Health Insurance Benefits</b>	<b>Premium Contribution Rate</b>
15 - or more, or <u>20 – or more, at least 10 of which are to Albany County</u>	Continuous	Same Contribution Rate as Employee or Retiree

Coverage for spouses and dependents may not be reinstated after a lapse in coverage with the County Health Insurance Plan.

[Article IX, Section A(1)(a)(2) shall read: “The service indicated in eligibility criterion one (1), (above), need not be continuous and uninterrupted. [if reinstatement to County service following a period of separation was within twelve calendar months following the date of separation. In such circumstances, an employee’s benefits date (as defined by these Rules)] The aggregate total time of service shall be used to determine length of service achieved by the employee.”]

[Article IX, Section A(1)(a)(4)(c) shall replace “twenty” with “fifteen”]

and, be it further

RESOLVED, That such changes to the rule shall be effective immediately for all current employees of Albany County, and, be it further

[RESOLVED, That former employees of Albany County, who have not yet retired with the New York State Retirement System, shall be eligible to return to County service and thereafter apply their previous aggregate time of service when calculating eligibility for health insurance benefits consistent with these Rules, provided, however, that such former employees shall be required to complete three-years of continuous and uninterrupted service before becoming eligible for such benefits and, be it further]

RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the County Legislature is directed to forward certified copies of this resolution to the appropriate County Officials.

*Referred to Personnel and Audit and Finance Committees – 4/8/24*

*Favorable Recommendation Public Safety Committee – 2/27/25*

*Favorable Recommendation Audit and Finance Committee – 2/27/25*