

## **GMEBS RETIREMENT PROGRAM FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Application for Participation**

This one page form includes four sections for the participant to complete (sections 1-4) and one section for the Pension Committee Secretary to complete at the bottom of the form (section 5). In most cases, a full-time employee becomes eligible to participate in the retirement plan after he or she completes one year of continuous employment. The effective date of participation is the first day of the month following the employee's first year employment anniversary. In the case of an employee who is employed on the first day of a month, the participation date is the first day of that month, one year later. If a former employee is re-hired, the waiting period may not always apply. Please refer to the Master Plan document for specific information should this situation arise. Elected officials, if included in your plan, are generally eligible to participate on the first day of the month after they enter office, without having to wait one year. An Application for Participation should be completed and submitted to GMEBS when an employee or official becomes eligible to participate in the plan.

It is important that Application for Participation forms be completed and submitted to GMEBS in a timely manner. It is also helpful, but not mandatory, if a copy of the participant's birth certificate or other acceptable items for proof of birth date is submitted along with the Application.

### **Pre-retirement Beneficiary Designation Form**

This form permits the designation of both a primary and secondary beneficiary and it should be completed by all participants who are eligible to receive an in-service, pre-retirement death benefit. This one page form includes four sections for the participant to complete and one section for the Pension Committee Secretary to complete at the bottom of the form. The member employer specifies the eligibility requirements for this benefit in the Adoption Agreement. Therefore, please check your Adoption Agreement for your plan's specific eligibility requirements (see Adoption Agreement section entitled "Pre-retirement Death Benefits, In-Service Death Benefit").

If a participant wishes to change their beneficiary designation (primary or secondary), the participant should complete, sign, and submit a new beneficiary designation form.

If your plan includes a pre-retirement death benefit for terminated vested participants, then the primary and secondary beneficiary designated to receive in-service death benefits will automatically be considered the participant's primary and secondary beneficiary for the purposes of paying the terminated vested death benefit, unless the participant changes their designation by submitting a new form prior to death.

When a beneficiary is named, it is helpful but not mandatory if a copy of the beneficiary's proof of birth date is submitted to GMEBS as well. Proof of birth becomes mandatory prior to commencement of any benefit payments. Attached is a "Requirements for Evidence of Birth Date" which provides a list of documents that are acceptable for proof of birth date. Please refer to this list when submitting date of birth verification.

### **Salary Sheet**

**Terminated vested participant** - The member employer specifies the eligibility requirements for vesting in the Adoption Agreement. Therefore, please check your Adoption Agreement for your plan's specific vesting requirement. If an employee terminates and has met the vesting requirements of the retirement plan but is not yet eligible to apply for the benefit, the one page salary sheet should be completed and submitted to GMEBS. The salary sheet provides GMEBS with the necessary information to calculate the participant's vested benefit, which most importantly includes termination date and salary history. The employee and the employer will be notified by letter of the amount of the vested benefit when the calculation is completed. If salary information is not submitted after a vested employee terminates employment, this information will be required before the next annual valuation of the employer's retirement plan can be performed. If a participant terminates who has not been employed long enough to become vested, a salary sheet is still required and the termination of non-vested employees can be reported in conjunction with the census updates submitted to GMEBS in preparation for the annual actuarial valuation of the plan.

**Pre-retirement death benefit** - The salary sheet should also be completed and submitted with the death certificate and other necessary information, if a pre-retirement death benefit is to be paid. An explanation of the pre-retirement death benefit is included in the latter part of this document.

### **Leave of Absence Report**

This form should be completed by the Pension Committee Secretary and submitted to GMEBS when an employer authorized leave of absence has expired so that GMEBS can record whether service is to be credited for the leave period. Documenting the leave of absence protects the benefits earned before the leave commenced and during the leave, if this time is creditable. The form requires the employer to specify what type of leave has occurred. If the leave of absence is required by law to be counted as credited service then such credit will be counted as prescribed by law. The employer may designate on the Leave of Absence form whether the leave of absence (if not required by law) is creditable for participation, vesting and or computing benefits for those employees who return to work after the leave is exhausted. Generally, if an employee does not return to work after a leave has expired, employers will limit credited service to the service accrued prior to the commencement of the leave. Please refer to the Master Plan document for a more complete explanation of leaves of absence.

### **Application for Retirement**

The Application for Retirement consists of five (5) separate forms that are outlined below. Please submit all four forms to GMEBS when a participant is applying for retirement benefits. All four forms are required in order for GMEBS to process an application for retirement. Direct deposit of retirement benefits is available upon request and completion of additional forms.

**Participant Acknowledgement of Benefit Payment Options** - The top portion of the form should be completed and the retiring employee should read, sign and date the form. The purpose of this form is to provide the retiring employee with a detailed description of the benefit payment options that are available under the Plan. We suggest that the Pension Committee Secretary review these options with the employee as needed to ensure that the employee has a thorough knowledge of each option before they commit their retirement election on the Retirement Application. Additional information on these same options can be found in the Master Plan Document.

**Application for Retirement** - The Application for Retirement is a two page form that includes six sections. This is the form that confirms the employee's benefit payment option, employment dates and earnings history. An overview of each section is explained below. The first three sections should be completed by the employee, sections four and five are completed by the employer, and the retiring employee should sign and date the acknowledgement in section six.

1. Section one - This section requests general information such as the employee's name, address, and the employer's name, as well as information regarding whether the employee has ever worked for another employer with a GMEBS retirement plan and if so, where and when.
2. Section two - This is the section where the retiring employee indicates which type of retirement they are applying for. It is important that the employee initial the benefit

payment option they are electing. The benefit payment options reflected in this section are the same as the options detailed in the *Employee Acknowledgement Of Benefit Payment Options* form that is explained above.

3. Section three - This is the section where the retiring employee designates their post-retirement beneficiary if they have elected Option B or C as a benefit payment option.
4. Section four - To be completed by employer. This section confirms the employee's name, social security number and employment history, as well as the effective retirement date.
5. Section five - To be completed by the employer. This section confirms the employee's salary history that is to be used in the calculation of the retirement benefit. There are two yes/no questions and a table where the earnings history should be inserted. All plans include either five or three year final average earnings that is specified by the employer in the Adoption Agreement. Please note that if applying for disability benefits, include the monthly earnings as requested in the section below the final average earnings table, and remit a copy of the Social Security Disability Award if required by your plan as specified in the Adoption Agreement.
6. Section six - The first part of this section should to be read, signed and dated by the employee to acknowledge and confirm all of the information reflected in the four forms required to apply for retirement benefits. The bottom portion of this section is to be signed and dated by the Pension Committee Secretary to show that the retirement application has been reviewed for completeness and accuracy.

**Participant Confirmation** - This form should be read, signed and dated by the retiring employee. The purpose of this form is for the retiring employee to acknowledge that he or she understands certain conditions related to the application and commencement of benefits. The bottom portion of this section is to be signed and dated by the Pension Committee Secretary to show that the retirement application has been reviewed for completeness and accuracy.

Affidavit Verifying Lawful Presence in the United States – An application for payment of retirement benefits will not be complete until the retiring employee requesting benefits submits to GMEBS a properly completed affidavit confirming the employee's United States citizenship or otherwise lawful presence in the United States. In order to confirm eligibility for benefits, GMEBS will verify any alien registration number and other identifying number, if provided, through the federal Systematic Alien Verification of Entitlement (SAVE) program or a successor program designated by the United States Department of Homeland Security. Until this verification is made, a properly completed affidavit may be presumed to be proof of lawful presence for the purpose of receiving GMEBS benefits. Depending on the outcome of this verification process, eligibility for retirement benefits could be denied and benefits could be terminated.

## **Benefits to a Beneficiary** **(Survivor Benefits)**

**Prior To Retirement** - Notification of the death of an active or terminated vested participant who is eligible for a death benefit may be submitted to GMEBS in writing or by telephone. However, before benefits to the designated beneficiary can commence, GMEBS must receive a copy of the participant's death certificate. Since the death will have occurred before the participant retired, GMEBS will also need salary information on the deceased. The salary information should be supplied to us by completing the GMEBS salary sheet that is described above. Also required before benefits can commence is a copy of the survivor's proof of birth date (if not already on file with GMEBS), social security number and current address. Direct deposit of benefit payment is available if requested. The formwork associated with direct deposit is provided when requested.

**After Retirement** - When a retiree dies, GMEBS should be notified as soon as possible so that the benefit payment to the retiree can cease. Notification should be in the form of a letter or by telephone from the Pension Committee Secretary with a copy of the retiree's death certificate forwarded to GMEBS. Depending upon which option the retiree chose at the time of his or her retirement, there may or may not be any benefits payable to a survivor. The notification procedure is the same as for the application for survivor's benefits prior to retirement, except that proof of birth and salary sheet are not necessary since salary information had previously been submitted to GMEBS at the time of the participant's retirement and most, if not all, of the necessary survivor information will be on file with GMEBS. Additionally, if a survivor who is receiving benefits dies, GMEBS should be notified so that benefit payments can cease.

### **Other GMEBS Forms**

(These forms are applicable to plans that include these provisions)

#### **Application For Return of Contributions**

This form only applies to plans that require employee contributions. A participant under a contributory plan who terminates employment but has not met the plan's vesting provisions must apply for a return of his personal contributions made to the plan. This form, along with a tax withholding form must be submitted to GMEBS in order for the participant to receive a refund of his contributions and interest.

#### **Additional Credited Service Form (unused sick leave)**

This form only applies to plans that allow retirement credit for unused sick leave, a benefit that is specified by the employer in the Adoption Agreement. Typically, 20 days of unused sick leave equal one month of service credit. Please refer to the Adoption Agreement to confirm whether this provision applies to your Plan.

