

Federal and Public Sector Retirement

Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA)

Federal agencies that are undergoing substantial organizational changes such as reorganization, reduction in force, reshaping or downsizing are sometimes given the option to offer federal employees voluntary early retirement based on the Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA). The purpose of VERA is to help agencies complete the necessary organizational change with minimal disruption to the work force and make it possible for federal employees to receive an immediate annuity payment years before they would be eligible. The voluntary early retirement provisions are the same under the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS).

In order to be eligible to retire under VERA, a federal employee must generally meet the following requirements:

1. Meet the VERA minimum age and service requirements set by statutes in the U.S. Code for CSRS and FERS employees (i.e., the employee has completed at least 20 years of creditable service and is at least 50 years of age or has completed at least 25 years of credible service regardless of age;
2. Have been continuously employed by the agency for at least 31 days before the date that the agency initially requested the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) approval of VERA;
3. Hold a position that is not a time-limited appointment;
4. Have not received a final removal decision based upon misconduct or unacceptable performance;
5. Hold a position covered by the agency's VERA; and
6. Retire under the VERA option during the agency's VERA window.

It is very important for federal employees considering a VERA offer to seek the advice of an attorney regarding their retirement issues prior to initiating the VERA process. Berry & Berry, PLLC represents and advises federal employees nationwide and abroad before their individual federal agencies, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) in regard to early retirement issues arising under VERA. Please [contact our firm](#) to schedule a consultation with one of our attorneys to discuss your individual issue.