

**ELIGIBLE DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER ACT**  
**Act 46 of 1991**

AN ACT to authorize the payment of public employee retirement system assets to certain individuals; and to prescribe the powers and duties of certain retirement systems, state departments, public officials, and public employees.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

*The People of the State of Michigan enact:*

**38.1701 Short title.**

Sec. 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “eligible domestic relations order act”.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

**38.1702 Definitions.**

Sec. 2. As used in this act:

(a) “Alternate payee” means a spouse of a participant under a judgment of separate maintenance, or a former spouse, child, or dependent of a participant, who is named in an eligible domestic relations order.

(b) “Benefit” means an annuity, a pension, a retirement allowance, or an optional benefit accrued or accruing to a participant under a retirement system or a postretirement subsidy payable to a participant under a retirement system.

(c) “Domestic relations order” means a judgment, decree, or order of a court made pursuant to the domestic relations law of this state and relating to the provision of alimony payments, child support, or marital property rights to a spouse of a participant under a judgment of separate maintenance, or to a former spouse, child, or dependent of a participant.

(d) “Earliest retirement date” means the earliest date on which a participant meets all of the requirements for retirement under a retirement system except for termination of employment.

(e) “Eligible domestic relations order” or “EDRO” means a domestic relations order that is considered an eligible domestic relations order under section 11 or that meets all of the following requirements:

(i) The domestic relations order states the name, last known address, and social security number of the participant.

(ii) The domestic relations order states the name, last known address, and social security number of the alternate payee.

(iii) The domestic relations order states the amount or percentage of the benefit to be paid to an alternate payee, or the manner under which the retirement system is to determine the amount or percentage of the benefit to be paid to an alternate payee.

(iv) The domestic relations order states that it applies to the retirement system and that the retirement system shall make payments to the alternate payee as required under the eligible domestic relations order and this act.

(v) The domestic relations order does not require the retirement system to provide a type or form of benefit not provided by the retirement system or a form of payment not provided by this act.

(vi) The domestic relations order does not require the retirement system to provide an increased benefit determined on the basis of actuarial value.

(vii) The domestic relations order does not require the payment of a benefit to an alternate payee that is required to be paid to another alternate payee under a previously filed eligible domestic relations order.

(viii) The domestic relations order is filed before the participant's retirement allowance effective date.

(f) “Participant” means a member, deferred member, vested former member, deceased former member, or retirant under the retirement system.

(g) “Postretirement subsidy” includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:

(i) A supplemental annuity.

(ii) A supplemental payment to a participant.

(iii) A percentage increase to a benefit payable to a participant.

(iv) Any other payment to a participant or increase to a benefit payable to a participant, excluding health benefits.

(h) “Retirement system” means a public employee retirement system created and established by this state or any political subdivision of this state.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

### **38.1703 Right of alternate payee to share of benefit payable to participant; payment of benefit pursuant to EDRO.**

Sec. 3. Subject to the requirements of this act, an alternate payee is entitled to an actual interest in a share of a benefit that is or will become payable to a participant, if so provided in an EDRO filed with the retirement system. The retirement system shall administer the payment of a benefit pursuant to the EDRO and this section.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

### **38.1704 Payment of benefit to alternate payee under EDRO; effective date; form.**

Sec. 4. Except as otherwise provided in this act, the payment of a benefit to an alternate payee under an EDRO and this act shall begin on the retirement allowance effective date of the participant. The payment of a benefit under an EDRO and this act shall be paid in 1 of the following forms, as applicable:

(a) A single life annuity that is equal to the actuarial equivalent of the alternate payee's share of the benefit payable throughout the life of the alternate payee. If the participant is entitled to the payment of a benefit that is not reduced due to early retirement under the retirement system, the alternate payee's single life annuity shall be calculated using the participant's unreduced benefit. If the participant is only entitled to the payment of a benefit that is reduced due to early retirement under the retirement system, the alternate payee's single life annuity shall be calculated using the participant's reduced benefit.

(b) If a retirement system offers a participant an optional form of payment of a benefit at retirement, a reduced benefit that is equal to the actuarial equivalent of the total benefit being divided under the EDRO payable throughout the lives of the participant and the alternate payee. The reduced benefit shall be payable in the manner provided under the optional form of payment under the retirement system. The EDRO shall specify the percentage or amount of the reduced benefit that is payable under this subdivision to the participant and to the alternate payee while both are alive. If the participant predeceases the alternate payee while a reduced benefit is being paid to the participant and the alternate payee under this subdivision, the survivor portion of the reduced benefit shall be payable to the alternate payee. If the alternate payee predeceases the participant while a reduced benefit is being paid to the participant and the alternate payee under this subdivision, the alternate payee's percentage or amount of the reduced benefit shall revert to and become payable to the participant.

(c) A single life annuity that is equal to the alternate payee's share of the benefit payable throughout the life of the participant.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

### **38.1705 Election by alternate payee to receive interest in benefit after participant's earliest retirement date, but before termination of employment date; recalculation of benefit if participant retires before age 60.**

Sec. 5. (1) An EDRO may provide for the payment of a benefit to an alternate payee beginning on or after the participant's earliest retirement date but before the participant terminates employment as provided in this section. An alternate payee shall begin to receive the payment of a benefit under this section effective the first day of the month immediately following the month in which the alternate payee notifies the retirement system of his or her election to begin to receive payment of his or her interest in the benefit of a participant.

(2) If an alternate payee elects to receive his or her interest in the benefit of a participant after the participant's earliest retirement date but before the participant's termination of employment, the alternate payee is only entitled to the actuarial equivalent of the alternate payee's share of the participant's benefit that would be payable when the participant reaches age 60. If the participant retires before age 60, the retirement system shall recalculate the benefit payable to the alternate payee so that the recalculated benefit payable to the alternate payee plus the benefit previously paid to the alternate payee are the actuarial equivalent of the alternate payee's share of the benefit payable to the participant. If the recalculated benefit is more than the benefit the alternate payee is receiving, the retirement system shall begin paying the recalculated benefit to the alternate payee effective the first day of the month immediately following the month in which the participant retires.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

### **38.1706 Spouse under judgment of separate maintenance or former spouse considered in EDRO as surviving spouse for purpose of receiving retirement benefit; benefit amount.**

Sec. 6. An EDRO may provide that a spouse under a judgment of separate maintenance or a former spouse is considered the spouse of a participant for the purpose of receiving a benefit as a surviving spouse under the retirement system. The benefit payable to a spouse under a judgment of separate maintenance or a former

spouse as a surviving spouse under this section shall be computed as provided in the EDRO and the retirement system. If the amount or percentage of the benefit to be paid to a spouse under a judgment of separate maintenance or a former spouse as the surviving spouse of the participant under this section is less than the entire amount payable under the retirement system, the surviving spouse or other beneficiary of the participant, as determined under the retirement system, is entitled to receive the portion of the benefit not payable to a spouse under a judgment of separate maintenance or a former spouse under this section.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

**38.1707 Death of alternate payee before interest in benefit paid; reversion.**

Sec. 7. If an alternate payee under this act dies before receiving any payment of his or her interest in a benefit pursuant to this act and an EDRO, that interest reverts to the participant.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

**38.1708 Creation, assignment, or recognition of alternate payee's right to interest in benefit share not prohibited assignment under retirement system.**

Sec. 8. The creation, assignment, or recognition of a right of an alternate payee to an actual interest in a share of a benefit that is or will become payable to a participant pursuant to an EDRO under this act is not a prohibited assignment under a retirement system.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

**38.1709 Determination by retirement system whether domestic relations order is EDRO; procedure; notice.**

Sec. 9. Each retirement system shall establish a reasonable procedure to determine if a domestic relations order is an EDRO under this act. The retirement system shall promptly notify the participant and alternate payee named in a domestic relations order that the retirement system has received the domestic relations order. The notice shall include a description of the procedure by which the retirement system determines if the domestic relations order is an EDRO under this act.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

**38.1710 Determination by retirement system whether domestic relations order is EDRO; notice; filing amended domestic relations order with retirement system.**

Sec. 10. The retirement system shall, within a reasonable period of time after receiving a domestic relations order, determine if the domestic relations order is an EDRO under this act. If the retirement system determines that the domestic relations order is an EDRO under this act, the retirement system shall promptly notify the participant and alternate payee named in the EDRO that the domestic relations order is an EDRO. The retirement system shall begin the payment of a benefit under this act pursuant to the EDRO and this act on the first day of the month following the month in which the domestic relations order was determined to be an EDRO or the first day of the month following the month in which a benefit is payable under the EDRO and this act, whichever is later. If the retirement system determines that the domestic relations order is not an EDRO under this act, the retirement system shall promptly notify the participant and alternate payee named in the domestic relations order that the domestic relations order is not an EDRO. The retirement system shall specify in the notice why the retirement system determined that the domestic relations order is not an EDRO under this act. A determination by the retirement system that a domestic relations order is not an EDRO under this act does not prohibit a participant, alternate payee, or court from filing an amended domestic relations order with the retirement system under this act.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.

**38.1711 Status of domestic relations order filed with retirement system before effective date of act.**

Sec. 11. A domestic relations order filed with the retirement system before the effective date of this act is considered an EDRO under this act if the retirement system is making payments under the domestic relations order on the effective date of this act or to the extent a domestic relations order is consistent with the provisions of this act. This section does not prohibit a participant, alternate payee, or court from filing an amended domestic relations order under this act.

**History:** 1991, Act 46, Imd. Eff. June 27, 1991.