§ 219-f. Contributions and benefits. 1. The sponsor of a service award program shall contribute to the program a fixed amount of money, as determined by the sponsor, on behalf of each participant who is credited with a year of ambulance service. The minimum contribution shall be one hundred twenty dollars per year of ambulance service. The maximum contribution shall be twelve hundred dollars per year of ambulance service.

2. A service award program may provide for contributions for ambulance service rendered by a participant during one or more of the five calendar years immediately preceding the year in which the program is adopted, but only to the extent authorized pursuant to section two hundred nineteen-d of this article. In order to determine eligibility for such contributions, each ambulance company shall review its prior membership rosters and service records to determine the number of years for which each participant is entitled to a contribution. In making such determination, the point system established pursuant to subdivision three of section two hundred nineteen-e of this article shall be used. The president, secretary and chief or comparable officers of the ambulance company shall submit to the governing board of the sponsor a certified list of participants who are entitled to such contributions and the number of years for which each participant is entitled to a contribution, and such membership and service records as the governing board may require. The list shall be submitted to and approved by the governing board, and posted by the ambulance company, at the same time and in the same manner as provided in subdivisions nine through eleven of section two hundred nineteen-e of this article, and each person named on the list approved by the governing board shall be entitled to the number of contributions indicated thereon. A person whose name does not appear on the list as submitted to or approved by the governing board shall have the administrative and judicial remedies set forth in subdivision eleven of section two hundred nineteen-e of this article.

3. The maximum number of years for which a participant may receive a contribution shall be forty years. The governing board of a political subdivision may extend the maximum number of years of service for which a participant may receive a contribution for up to an additional ten

years, to a maximum of fifty years, and such increases in the number of years may be added in multiple increments or in a single action, pursuant to the adoption of the required resolution or resolutions of the governing board, receiving the affirmative vote of at least sixty percent of the governing board of the political subdivision, and the approval of any mandatory referendum or referenda authorizing the extension of benefits under the program by eligible voters within such political subdivision.

4. A service award shall be the amount resulting from the contributions made by the sponsor on behalf of a participant less necessary administrative costs and shall include interest and/or other earnings resulting from investment of the contributions, determined as of the valuation date or dates provided for in the program. Service awards shall be paid in the form of a lump sum, a life annuity with or without survivor benefits, a period certain annuity, or any other form provided under the program, provided, that all forms of payment shall be actuarially equivalent to each other. The program may limit the forms of payment or impose conditions concerning the availability of a form of payment.

5. Except as otherwise provided in this section, a participant shall be entitled to apply for and receive a service award only when the participant has acquired a nonforfeitable right to a service award and has reached entitlement age.

6. In the event that a participant becomes totally and permanently disabled, as certified by the workers' compensation board or other competent authority approved by the administrator, and the disability prevents the participant from pursuing his or her normal occupation, the participant shall be entitled to apply for and receive a service award, regardless of whether the participant has reached entitlement age or has acquired a nonforfeitable right to a service award.

7. In the event of the death of a participant who has acquired a nonforfeitable right to a service award and who has not previously received all or a portion of a service award, the beneficiaries

designated by the participant or, if no beneficiaries have been so designated, the participant's estate, shall be entitled to apply for and receive the participant's service award, regardless of whether the participant reached entitlement age before death.

8. A service award shall be paid only after an application is made to the program administrator and the administrator approves the application. In the event that a participant dies after receiving a portion of a service award, the remaining portion, if any, shall be paid in accordance with the terms and conditions of the form of payment selected by the participant prior to death.

9. No service award may be assigned or alienated except to provide for the legally obligated support of minor children or a spouse.

10. Payment of a service award shall not impair any rights of volunteer ambulance workers under the volunteer ambulance workers' benefit law or any other law.