

Omitting Social Security Numbers from Domestic Relations Orders

TRS law requires that domestic relations orders clearly specify the complete Social Security numbers of the parties, or if the court finds that omission of the numbers in the order is necessary to reduce the risk of identity theft, the court may *expressly* authorize the parties to use an alternative method acceptable to TRS to verify their Social Security numbers. See Texas Government Code, § 804.003(f)(1)(B) and 34 Tex. Admin. Code, § 47.10(14).

In order to protect the parties from identity theft, the TRS model QDRO required for new orders entered by a court of competent jurisdiction on or after January 1, 2015 contains provisions *expressly* authorizing the parties to use an alternate method to verify their Social Security numbers. Orders entered prior to January 1, 2015 must clearly specify the complete Social Security numbers of the parties or the court must have *expressly* authorized the parties to use an alternative method acceptable to TRS to verify their Social Security numbers, as stated above.

Alternate methods acceptable to TRS to verify a party's Social Security number include:

- Completion of the Verification of Social Security Number for Qualification of a Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) form (TRS 629); or
- A letter from the attorney of record confirming the party's or parties' Social Security number(s); or
- A sworn statement signed before a notary public confirming the party's Social Security number, if the party is not represented by counsel.

Please note that the form TRS 629 must be signed before a notary and each party may complete and sign a separate form; or either party or both parties may complete and sign a form confirming both the Participant's and Alternate Payee's Social Security numbers. The form is available on the TRS website.

TRS recommends that the alternate method of verifying the parties' Social Security numbers be submitted at the same time the domestic relations order is submitted to TRS. This will enable TRS to more efficiently review and determine whether the domestic relations order is a qualified order.