

## Topic Legend



Reporting and Training for REs



Health Benefits



Information Security



General Communications



## Upcoming TRS System Closures, Including RE Portal



TRS is currently working to complete the final phase of the TRS Enterprise Application Modernization (TEAM) Program – a multi-year effort to update the systems, processes and technologies we use to administer our pension and insurance programs.

**As part of TRS' ongoing technology upgrade, TRS systems, including the Reporting Employer (RE) Portal, will be temporarily unavailable from Wed., Feb. 25, at 6 p.m. CT through Sunday, March 1.**

While RE Coaches will remain available by email to help with general questions, they will not have access to member information or RE reports during this time.

We anticipate regular system access and normal business operations resuming on Monday, March 2.

During this final phase of the upgrade, we're migrating data to newer platforms, giving TRS greater flexibility to serve you better while reducing risks tied to older technology. You may not see big visual changes, but behind the scenes, the systems that handle monthly annuity payments and member accounts will be safer, faster and more reliable.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we complete these upgrades to improve our systems and services.



## Reporting Intersession Contracts For Year-Round Schools



If an RE is a year-round school that has employees working an intersession, this will need to be reported separately from their regular school year employment.

TRS established position code 09 for REs to use for employees working in summer school when their regular school year position is subject to Statutory Minimum Contributions. Position code 09 enables REs to report the summer school work and pay as “wholly separate” and not subject to Statutory Minimum.

This position code 09 was originally intended to be used only during summer months. However, it has come to TRS’ attention that year-round schools with intersessions also need a method to report the intersession work as wholly separate from the regular school year contract. Thus, position code 09 should be used for these intersession contracts as well. Use of position code 09 for contracts outside of summer school should be limited to year-round schools only and will require an override by the reporting coach.



## Smart Devices, Smarter Scams



Did you ever see the 1999 movie *Smart House*, where an AI-powered home starts doing things the family never requested? Today, cybercriminals can cause similar chaos through prompt injection attacks, which hide malicious commands inside website text, documents, file names, and even calendar invites. When a smart device summarizes or reads these items, it may unknowingly execute those hidden instructions—sometimes triggered by something as simple as a user saying “thank you.” TRS warns members that fraudsters increasingly use AI-generated content to mimic legitimate TRS communications, including messages about retirement sessions or account updates. TRS will never ask for passwords, banking changes, or confidential information by email or social media, and will only communicate from official TRS phone numbers or email addresses.

Cybersecurity teams are improving defenses, but you can also reduce risk by limiting who can send calendar invitations to you, avoiding suspicious links or attachments, and restricting your devices’ permissions to only what’s necessary. Always use organization-approved AI tools and follow established policies. And if you ever receive a message that references TRS and does not seem right, stop the interaction immediately and visit [www.trs.texas.gov](http://www.trs.texas.gov) or contact TRS Member Services directly to confirm its legitimacy.

# Calculating Years Of Service



TRS service credit is earned per TRS school year. Only one year of service may be earned from Sept. 1 through Aug. 31 (the TRS school year). These dates may not be the same as the instructional, contract or work agreement year.

Service credit is established in two ways:

- Through eligible employment in Texas public education
- By purchasing service credit when eligible

**Standard Work Week:** Those in a TRS-eligible position, who are regularly scheduled to work five days per week, can earn a year of service credit by working for at least 90 days during the TRS school year or getting paid leave for at least 90 days during the TRS school year.

In the chart below, the employee would earn their year of service in January, since they worked at least 90 days.

Example: An employee is hired for a contract from Aug. 19, 2024 - May 31, 2025 to work five eight-hour days. (Monday - Friday)

August 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

The days worked in August would not count toward the year of service for 2024-2025.

September 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Employee worked a total of 22 calendar days in September 2024.

October 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Employee worked a total of 23 calendar days in October 2024.

November 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Employee worked a total of 21 calendar days in November 2024.

December 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Employee worked a total of 22 calendar days in December 2024.

January 2025						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28		30			

Employee worked a total of 23 calendar days in January 2025.

# Calculating Years Of Service... continued



**Nonstandard Work Week:** Employees in TRS eligible positions who fulfill their required work schedule in fewer days than the standard Monday-Friday arrangement are considered to be working a Non-Standard Workweek. For these employees, the method of calculating a Year of Service Credit differs from the standard 90-day calculation used for traditional workweeks. Employees working a Nonstandard Work Week may earn a year of service by:

- work or get paid leave for at least eight days each month for four months and
- work or get paid leave for at least five days for one month that cannot be included in the previous four months

In the chart below, the employee would earn their year of service in January since they worked four months with at least eight days each (September–December 2024) and at least five days in another month (January 2025).

Example: An employee is hired for a contract from Aug. 19, 2024 - May 31, 2025 to work four ten-hour days. (Monday - Thursday)

August 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

The days worked in August would not count towards the year of service for 2024-2025.

September 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Employee worked a total of 18 calendar days in September 2024.

October 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Employee worked a total of 19 calendar days in October 2024.

November 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Employee worked a total of 16 calendar days in November 2024.

December 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Employee worked a total of 18 calendar days in December 2024.

January 2024						
Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28		30	31		

Employee worked a total of 18 calendar days in January 2025.

## Calculating Years Of Service... continued



**December Retirees:** Members may not receive a year of service credit before Dec. 31 except in the final year of retirement. If a member completes the full fall semester with no unpaid leave, a year of service credit may be approved. This means that a member that works or receives paid leave for each day of the full fall semester may earn a year of service credit. Even if that semester is less than 90 days.

*The final determination on whether a TRS member receives a year of service in their final year before retirement is made during the retirement process by TRS.*



## Reporting Reminder - Clock Hour Conversions For Higher Education



For TRS reporting purposes, in person instructional time must be converted to clock hours and counted as a minimum of two clock hours for each hour of instruction in the classroom or lab. This applies to **all** instructors for higher education whose employment is measured in semester or course hours or credits, instructional units, or any other unit representing class, including adjunct faculty. The conversion reflects instructional time as well as preparation, grading and other time typically associated with one hour of instruction. If the RE has established a greater amount of preparation time for each hour in the classroom or lab, the RE's standard will be used to determine the number of clock hours scheduled for work.

Employment as an instructor of an online class taken by students for college credit that is measured or expressed in terms of the number of courses; semester or course hours/credits; instructional units; or other units of time representing class or instructional time must be counted as a minimum of two clock hours for each course hour or semester hour.

**Please note:** *Instructors of continuing education classes would be excluded from using the conversion and must be reported with actual time worked or scheduled hours.*

Example 1	Instructional Time	Number of Classes	Conversion Rate*	Total Hours
<b>Class Type:</b> In-Person  <b>Instructional Time:</b> 3 hours (1.5 hours, 2 days per week)  <b>Number of classes:</b> 3	3 X	3 X	2 =	18 hours
Example 2	Credit Hours	Number of Classes	Conversion Rate*	Total Hours
<b>Class Type:</b> Online  <b>Course Credit Hours:</b> 3  <b>Number of classes:</b> 5	3 X	5 X	2 =	30 hours

*\*The examples provided use the minimum conversion rate of two. If a higher conversion rate has been established by the RE, please use the higher conversion rate.*

# Adjunct Faculty Eligibility



Adjunct faculty play a vital role in supporting Higher Education Reporting Employers (REs), but understanding their TRS eligibility can be complex. This article provides an overview of how TRS defines adjunct instructors and the TRS membership eligibility requirements to help REs report accurately.

## TRS Adjunct Definition

TRS defines adjunct instructors as employees hired to work on a semester-by-semester basis; compensated on a per class basis; and duties include instruction of students.

## Eligibility with TRS:

Employment as an adjunct instructor is TRS membership eligible if the number of clock hours worked is 20 hours or more per week and the employment is expected to last more than one semester or does continue for more than one semester.

TRS requires REs to report eligible and ineligible employee contracts based on the dates the employee will perform the work, not the payment dates. For adjunct instructors, contract dates normally align when classes are in session and based on the schools semester dates since adjuncts are hired to work on a semester-by-semester basis.

Accurate TRS eligibility reporting is important because errors can affect multiple REs under concurrent employment eligibility rules. When eligibility isn't reviewed, outdated information can lead to a chain of reporting errors. Once these errors are found, all REs involved may need to submit corrections and refund or collect contributions, which can be difficult if the employee has terminated or closed their TRS account. To help prevent issues, REs are advised to review employment information with employees who may work for multiple REs, since the employee is often the best source of current information. The [View Employee Information User Guide](#) is another resource available for REs.

Fall Semester	Spring Semester	TRS-Eligibility Determination
<b>Less than one-half time (less than 20 hours per week)</b>	One-half time or more (20 or more hours per week)	Employment becomes TRS-eligible in the spring semester because employment is now 20 or more hours per week and has continued for more than one semester.
<b>One-half time or more</b>	Less than one-half time	Employment is TRS eligible in the fall because the employment is originally expected to continue for more than one semester at 20 or more hours per week. Employment is not TRS eligible in the spring because the hours fall below halftime. If employment resumes half time or more in the summer semester, it will be TRS eligible again.
<b>One-half time or more</b>	Expected to return (course load can be unknown)	TRS-eligible employment begins with the fall semester because the employment is 20 or more hours per week and is expected to continue for more than one semester.
<b>One-half time or more</b>	Not expected to return	This is a type of temporary employment and is not TRS eligible.
<b>One-half time or more, but classes do not make (classes are cancelled due to low enrollment)</b>		In any semester, if the classes dropped change the employee's TRS eligibility, and the employee has already been reported to TRS, then corrections to the report must be made.

# Introducing *The Benefits Briefing*: A New Way For TRS-ActiveCare Benefits Administrators To Stay Connected



If you support employees enrolled in **TRS-ActiveCare**, there's a new resource coming your way—one designed specifically for the work you do every day. This information applies **only** to Benefits Administrators whose employers participate in TRS-ActiveCare.

## What is *The Benefits Briefing*?

*The Benefits Briefing* is a new **30-minute virtual meeting series** created exclusively for TRS-ActiveCare Benefits Administrators. It's built to give you direct access to **TRS Health**, so you can stay informed, get clarity and feel confident supporting your employees.

Each session will offer:

- **Timely updates** on TRS-ActiveCare plans and processes
- **Important benefits information**
- **Live Q&A** time with TRS Health representatives
- **A quick, focused format** that respects your schedule

## Why It Matters for TRS-ActiveCare Employers

As a Benefits Administrator, you're often the first stop when employees have questions about their health coverage. Staying ahead of updates and having a direct line to TRS Health helps you support your team with accuracy and confidence.

## Watch For Your Invitation

If your employer participates in TRS-ActiveCare, you'll receive an **invitation and sign-up link** to join the first session. Keep an eye on your inbox -- this is your chance to stay connected, stay informed and stay ahead.

## Navigating Life Events With Ease



We all experience life and job changes that can be both exciting and challenging. These events often require updates to your account information and other essential actions. Keeping your information current ensures you receive timely support and services tailored to your needs. Visit our dedicated webpage for "[Life and Job Changes](#)" - it's a comprehensive guide to assist in navigating these events.

TRS members will find the "Terminating Employment" section of our Life and Job Changes webpage holds valuable answers to common questions like:

- If I'm not eligible for TRS benefits, will TRS refund my account?
- If I terminate employment and retire, am I eligible for TRS-Care?
- What is the retirement application time frame once I terminate employment?

Explore the [Life and Job Changes](#) webpage today! Whether starting a new job, transitioning or planning for retirement, these events have a significant impact. We're here to help you make the most of your benefits – in all ways possible – with each step forward.



## RFP Outcome For TRS-ActiveCare



At the February TRS Board of Trustees meeting, trustees selected Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas to be a medical plan administrator for TRS-ActiveCare, pending a negotiated contract. At least every six years, TRS goes out for competitive bid — a key strategy that helps keep costs lower than comparable plans and ensures we continue offering strong, affordable coverage. Over the past year, we conducted an evaluation to secure the best value for employers and members:

- Assessing provider discounts, network size, and operational and communications support
- Leveraging the size of the TRS-ActiveCare health plan—more than 400,000 members—and bidding TRS-Care Standard at the same time to increase competition
- Enabling bids on smaller network areas in higher-cost regions to better align spending with actual costs and support long-term savings

This approach is one of the reasons that TRS-ActiveCare premiums have grown at only half the rate of other large, self-insured plans. If you'd like to read more about TRS-ActiveCare's financials, visit TRS' newly published [2025 TRS Health Report](#).

### What's Next for Benefits Administrators in TRS-ActiveCare?

#### **1** *The Benefits Briefing – Feb. 24 at 3:00 p.m.*

This session is designed specifically for Benefits Administrators. You'll receive updates, clarity on what the procurement outcome means for your employees, and guidance to help you prepare for Annual Enrollment.

[Register here.](#)



#### **2** *Benefits Administrators Training*

As in previous years, technical and benefits training will be conducted in the spring. Keep opening our emails for upcoming dates.



#### **3** *Benefits and Regional Premiums for the 2026–27 Plan Year*

These are scheduled to be announced at the April 30 – May 1 board meeting.

Thank you for your partnership and for the critical role you play in supporting Texas educators and staff. We're committed to helping you deliver high-quality, cost-effective coverage to your employees!



**Videos:** *Reporting Overview*



Many people find that a video explanation is the best way to learn! Take advantage of more than a dozen informative videos in the [TRS Employers Video Library](#) to understand TRS processes and reports for reporting employers.



Click [Here](#) to Rate This Issue of the *Update*

**Pension Education Resources**



Members can learn all about TRS pension benefits by watching our [Pension Education Resources](#).



Retirement Forms Video



Early Career Members: Manage Your Pension Benefits with MyTRS



Mid-Career Members: Plan Your Future with MyTRS

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