Employer Advisory Group Meeting Agenda & Minutes

Date: 12/7/2020
Start Time: 9:30 AM
End Time: 11:00 AM
Location: Microsoft Teams

Type of meeting: Periodic
Meeting called by: Monique French
Minutes by: Monique French
Invitees: Barbie Pearson, Frances Torres, Melody Austin, Katie Tucker, Jennifer Dujka, Molly Grosskopf, Carol Casey, Ashley Conrad, Chris Cutler, Nicholas Gonzalez, Andrea Morales, Jessica Palvino, Sarah Valenti, Meera Krishnan, Kevin Wakley

EAG Members and designated participants:

Rebecca Davis
Vanessa Voelkel
Kathy Rice
Mickey Smith
Cathy Felts
Nancy Wiggins
~~RL Richards~~
Lana Walls
Tonya Davis
Tera Harris
~~Emily Youngblood~~
~~Jeffrey Coats~~
Lori Ganci
~~Lori Robinson~~
~~Nicole Dean~~
~~Becky Bunte~~
Dawn Cummings
~~Tammy Cunningham~~
~~Theresa Zlotopolski~~
~~Jackie Thomas~~
Claudia Alba
Karen McDade
~~Penny Ashley~~
~~Diana Salami~~
~~Kim Ray~~
Lynn Peters
Betty Butler
~~Christine Spencer~~
Betty Williams
~~Katarina Bugariu~~
Neil Wise
Rachel Bahnsen
Andrea Reveles – UT El Paso
Drew Charpentier- UT Medical
Debbie Dowdy

Other Attendees:

Microsoft Teams: 737-220-2496
Conference ID: 115 217 506#

Purpose of Meeting: Respond to questions, address concerns, and share information with members of the EAG. Members of this group represent REs from all over the State and all types of entities. They serve as the collective "voice" of all REs.

Expected Outcome: Questions and concerns expressed by members of the EAG will be addressed. EAG members are expected to share information with other entities in their region and bring questions and concerns from those entities to this group.

Please…

- ✓ *Mute your speaker to avoid sharing background noise*
- ✓ *Do not put this call on hold*

AGENDA

- Introductions and roll call
    - Melody introduced herself and welcomed other members from TRS
    - Melody continued with roll call of the EAG members
- Information from TRS and/or input needed from EAG members

- Penalty Interest & Fee Waiver-
  - On 12/2 TRS waived all unpaid interest and fees for:
    - the Covid waiver period of February 2020 through August 2020.
    - the Penalty Fee assessed in error on September 2020 prior to the penalty fee deadline.
    - Outstanding waiver requests reviewed and approved by management
    - Any FY 2018 interest that was not included in the waiver in July 2019
  - Any remaining amount outstanding must be paid by the REs
  - Demand letters for outstanding contributions are being reviewed and will be sent out this week. This includes the PI, CI & PF due by the RE.
- Validation 803 becoming an error
  - This validation will prevent the Regular Payroll and Employment After Retirement reports from completing if the RE owes any money to TRS. Excludes adjustment report types.
  - Includes Interest (PI & CI) and Fees
  - This will be implemented on the RE portal on December 13, 2020
- Deleted Records Certification
  - This will also be added to the RE Portal on December 13, 2020
  - You will need to select the reason for deleting the record from the report within the portal
  - Prior to submitting the signature, you will also need to complete the verification under My Worklist
  - You are selecting the reason and then verifying the reasons (2 steps).
  - Once deleted from the report, it is gone and will need to be manually re-added or the file re-uploaded to TRS
- Confirmation Message with Save
  - After December 13 you will no longer need to click “ok” on the popup message after you click save and/or return on a record in the portal
- Download All CSV
  - The download all CSV option will return on December 13 as well

- Warrant Hold for Incomplete Reports
  - In an effort to get all REs in compliance with the report and TEXNET due dates set by statute, TRS will be resuming the practive of placing warrant holds on State funding for incomplete reports. This will be for any RP & ER reports not at a complete status by the penalty fee
- Next meetings:
  - The next series of EAG meetings will begin again in February 2021
  - Invitations will be sent once the dates are set

- Questions / topics from EAG members
  - Question from Betty Williams: Can you please address if the TRS28 is going to be available to submit electronically soon?
    - TRS Response: Still accepting these completed forms via email (benefitprocessingsupport@trs.texas.gov) with a copy of the photo ID of employee (if not notarized). TRS is exploring electronic submission as future enhancement.
  - Question from Rebecca Davis: Calculation Examples. Additional calculation examples, including monthly examples, would be helpful.
    - Katie asked questions on where it may be most helpful to see these calculations
    - Rebecca said anywhere would be fine as long as they know where to find them; searching for it
      - Perhaps have standalone statutory minimal examples
      - If one doesn't calculate correctly, sometimes we have to manually calculate to fix it with software company
      - Would be helpful to have examples from TRS to show how it works- reporting by the month vs. the year – want to know how it looks month to month in the portal – when they leave early/have new member
      - In calculation need proper amount otherwise will be error in the portal
      - Need to know what to report with software company when there is a glitch
    - Katie shared that explanation is helpful – quick reference can show all calulations and how the contributions relate to each other
    - Rebecca said they want to see it all; not just how it affects the federal and how it relates to different things. Having something that's modified would be great; since there are so many volatile situations- want to make sure they get it all right with all that's going on
    - Katie said we can consider adding if it's another manual or quick reference as list of quick projects to take on.
    - Katie currently on the TRS webite we have the following resource: https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/re_statutory_minimum_examples.aspx

Annual & First Month Calculation.

- Statutory Minimum with New Member and Federal Gross
- Statutory Minimum with New Member
- Statutory Minimum late hire (<187 days) with only one check in first month; two checks paid for remaining months

Statutory Minimum with New Member and Dock

Annual & Final Month Calculation.

- Statutory Minimum with resignation (100) days
- TRS Response: Example #2 in the Public School Payroll Manual shows this calculation

New Hires – Hours/Days Worked and Compensation Timing.

- We submit documentation and overrides each month for new hires that have payment in the second month. Is there a way to extend the amount of time to report compensation after days/hours worked to 2 months? This may help with the extra duty reporting as well.
  - TRS Response: New hires are allowed to be reported with time only- in the first month of employment. The validation was built with the most common payroll cycle with the month in arrear.
  - Rebecca said it's ongoing; time of month hired can cause differences- this is a new challenge. Someone with scheduled hours and extra duties is causing out-of-sync with pay period. Have a lot more overrides and timing issues this year than in the past.
  - Rebecca is asking for option similar to the delete records for "overrides"; want to be able to check a box to add reason vs having to write list of overrides and reason.
  - Katie said need to be careful what is done b/c of State Auditors- if validation is in place all must be documented well for overriding and bypass of validation. May not be able to bypass the validation but will continue discussion on TRS side. Asked if anyone else on the call is having this issue. No response from the call. Will continue getting research/information with emails going out.

- Defects fixed recently
  - No more updates since last meetings.
- Scheduled fixes
  - Covered at top.

- RE Report Status-

Report Month	# Completed RP Reports	% Complete	# Incomplete RP Reports
September	1336	99.78	3
October	1307	97.54	33
November	167	64.7	473

- Additional Discussion
  - Kathy Rice question about penalties: said as soon as she runs semi-monthly payroll finds out how much is owed and makes deposit early- but then has penalties; not sure why penalties are there. Some items where we are waiting on overrides, will we be penalized for something like that in the future or how do we know we're being penalized now?
    - Katie: two ways interest accrues: Short/Late Text Net Deposit and Prior Month corrections for unreported service. Detailed information about how we asses Penalty Interest can be found on our website here: https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/re_penalty_interests.aspx
    - Kathy said she has two examples- HR checks for TRS eligibility- but with report the system is updated and this person is eligible late so they are penalized on an item that was out of their control at the time. Didn't know that person was eligible.
    - Lynn Peters seconded notion; adjunct faculty causing same issue – didn't show eligilibity and then later showed and interest accrued. Would like to see a change to adjunct eligible requirements. Make all eligible or all not eligle – or move due date back to the 6th of the next month.
    - Katie said that changes to due dates ane eligibility both require a change to Statute through legislation.
    - Katie asked if Kathy and Lynn could send specific examples of interest assessed on prior month adjsutments. Lynn said coaches can share that information with her. Lauren Baker has those emails from her; constant issue with eligibility for their school.
    - Kathy Rice said it's not fair for them to be penalized when it's out of their control- Lynn said they can't just write a check and can't explain where it came from – asked if TRS would address it from their perspective as her Chancellor is still head of TAC – he'd be quite willing to have discussion about this matter.
    - Katie said the information provided today would be valuable; we will look at those examples from coaches and see what can be done internally with the process.
    - Kathy Rice: People that flip from TRS to ORP – timing reports get hung up; have to back up re-enter as RP and get penalized with things that get backed out then put back in.
    - Katie asked how the software provider to handle ED45. It should be sending ED 45 to change from TRS to ORP in the month the election is effective. Kathy- said it's timing issue on when they get TRS28s; out of their control. Katie recommended reviewing their internal process; work with HR to get those forms completed, entered and submitted to TRS in a timely manner.
    - Andrea Reveles says this is timing issue with higher-ed. Katie gave brief explanation of the ORP statute in regards to eligibility, election date and effective date

    - Melody Austin: Feedback given we will definitely have internal discussions regarding eligibility and what system kicks in ORP to see what we can do in the system to address concerns.

- Tonya Davis: Experiencing buyback special service; no notice from employee- needing to reach out to TRS if employee doesn't give notice they want to start payroll deducitons.

    - Katie: We implemented new validation that allows us to make sure we're getting payroll decucionts if member had elected that as part of repayment agreement. There are known issues with that validation, but TRS has programmers looking at it to see what they can do to fix the issue. We're also working with team that handles buyback agreements on plan of action. Depending on the account TRS may have to contact member to determine the next action the RE needs to take. Shouldn't be getting penalty interest if you've been told not to include payment on the RP 20.

- Becky Davis: On Delete Record; does that apply when you submit RP and it rejects?

    - Katie: No a delete reason is not required when deleting the entire RP and ER file; only if individual records are deleted from the file within portal. If deleting the record within the RE poral, you will need to add a deletion reason and verify the reason.