

UPDATE

NOMINATION PROCESS UNDERWAY IN 2023 TRS TRUSTEES ELECTION

The nominations process is underway for the Retiree and At-Large positions in the 2023 TRS Board Election. Know someone who'd make a great trustee? Maybe it's you!

An eligible member for the **At-Large position** is a retiree who is receiving benefits from the system, a higher education employee, or a current employee of a public school district, charter school, or regional education service center. An eligible member for the **Retiree position** is a former member who is retired and currently receiving benefits.

Active members are eligible to nominate candidates for the At-Large position. Retired members are eligible to nominate candidates for the At-Large and Retiree positions. Retirees may only run for either the At-Large or Retiree Positions, but not both positions for this election.

TRS is offering two ways in which a nominee may collect the required 250 signatures of eligible members for nomination:

- A nominee may collect the 250 signatures *electronically* by declaring their interest to be a nominee to the [Secretary to the Board of Trustees](#). Once the member's eligibility is validated, the member's name will be posted on the [nomination site](#) where the nominee may direct eligible members to sign the nominee's electronic petition. For an electronic petition, the nominee does not need to submit anything further to TRS, but must have 250 eligible member signatures by Jan. 25, 2023, to be considered a candidate.
- Nominees may also collect 250 signatures of eligible members with paper petitions, which are also due at TRS no later than Jan. 25, 2023. A member may download the [Retiree Petition \(pdf\)](#) or [At-Large Petition \(pdf\)](#). If a member does not have access to a printer, the member may contact the [Secretary to the Board of Trustees](#) to have a petition mailed to them.

Voting in the election will take place between March and May of 2023. Both terms begin as early as Sept. 1, 2023, and end Aug. 31, 2029.

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION REVIEW AND COLLECTION

As we near the end of the fiscal year, TRS will begin the annual contribution review and collection for fiscal year 2022. The collection process will involve reminders to Reporting Employers (REs) with outstanding balances through the end of the fiscal year. The review and collection efforts apply to all REs.

Please take a moment to log in to the RE Portal and review all your fund type accounts on the RE Ledger, including Penalty Interest (PI), TRS-Care Penalty Interest (CI) and Penalty Fee (PF).

For assistance with reading your ledger balances, please review the [October 2019 Update Newsletter](#) article on Managing Ledger Balances for Reporting Employers. You may also attend the virtual [RE Ledger Training](#) scheduled for Aug. 11, 2022.

If you do not have any outstanding (negative) contribution balances, no action is required at this time. Please continue to review your RE ledger balances after each report completes to ensure no negative balances are created.

If you have negative balances, please be sure to remit the TEXNET deposit or complete [allowable transfers](#) as soon as possible. If the outstanding balance is due to a reporting correction needed, the adjustments must be completed by **Aug. 31, 2022**.

Failure to resolve the balances by the end of the fiscal year will result in additional collection efforts. The Head of Institution for any RE with negative balances after the completion of their August reports (due Sept. 6, 2022) will receive a demand letter.

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DEFINITION OF TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT

Currently, TRS defines temporary employment as “total employment that is expected to last less than four and one-half months in a school year.”

It is important to note the designation of ‘total employment’ means the total amount of time a person is employed with the RE, not just the actual dates they work. Therefore, if there are periods between assignments when the person is not working, but the person is still considered to be an employee of the RE, that time is counted in the total employment. If the person is not considered employed with the RE between assignments, an ED90 termination record must be submitted at the end of the first assignment.

Below are some scenarios for additional clarification:

Scenario	Employment	TRS Eligibility
Defined Ending Date	An employee is first hired on Jan. 13 to work half time or more. At the time they are hired, their assignment will end, and their employment will end on May 1.	Coded as Employment Type of M-Temporary and will not be eligible for TRS membership since the agreement is less than four and one-half months.
Contract Extension	An employee is hired on Jan. 13 to work half time or more. At the time they are hired, their assignment will end, and their employment will end on May 1. However, on March 1, it is determined that their assignment will be extended until June 15. Since their employment agreement changed, the entire employment period will now last longer than four and one-half months.	They would originally be coded with the Employment Type of M-Temporary and will not be eligible for TRS membership. At the point that the contract is extended (March 1) the RE would need to submit an ED45 using the END/ADD functionality to end the temporary employment as of Feb. 29 and add the TRS-eligible position beginning March 1.
Unknown Ending Date	An employee is hired to work on Jan. 13 to work half time or more. At the time they are hired, it is unknown when this person’s assignment will end.	This person must be reported as eligible for TRS membership and coded as Half Time or More. This person may not be coded as Temporary because their employment is for an indefinite period.
Multiple Assignments	An employee is first hired on Jan. 13 to work half time or more. At the time they are hired, their assignment will end on Feb. 25, but they do not terminate their employment at that time. The same employee accepts another assignment working half time or more beginning April 1, which has a defined ending date of Aug. 25.	Initially coded as Temporary and not eligible for TRS membership. Once the employee accepts the second assignment, the person must be reported as eligible for TRS membership as of April 1 and coded Half Time or More. This person may not be coded as Temporary for the second assignment because their total employment exceeds four and one-half months.
Substitute/ Temporary	An employee has been working as a substitute as defined by TRS, from September–March. However, the school now needs the employee to fill in another temporary position from April 1–May 31.	Their substitute position would be coded with the Employment Type of S-Substitute. Once they begin their temporary assignment this will be coded as Employment Type of M-Temporary and will not be eligible for TRS membership, since the agreement is less than four and one-half months and substitute employment does not count toward eligibility.

Please remember that all employees should be evaluated for eligibility not only at the beginning of their employment, but also each time there is a change in their work agreement. Please see the TRS website for the [TRS Membership Eligibility Requirements](#) for further information about what employment is eligible for TRS membership. If you need assistance with evaluating the eligibility for an employee, please reach out to your TRS Coach.

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STANDARD VS. NON-STANDARD WORKWEEK

As employers plan for FY 2023, it is important to collect information for any campus or employee who will work a four-day workweek or any other non-standard schedule. This information is required and should be flagged on the employee's ED40. By doing so, this will ensure a member earns a year of service credit at the same rate as an employee who works a five-day workweek schedule as outlined in the *TRS Benefits Handbook*.

Any eligible employee with a work schedule of less than five days per week must report “**Yes**” for **Non-Standard Work Week** field on the ED40. This indicates an employee is scheduled to complete their full weekly hours in less than five days each week of their contract. For example, an employee who is scheduled to work 40 hours per week by working four, ten-hour days, must be reported as working a Non-Standard Workweek. As would an Adjunct professor who meets TRS eligibility, but classes meet only two days per week.

ANNUAL ED40 SUBMISSIONS

Please be reminded that ED40s are to be submitted as follows:

- (1) in July for employees who have contracts or work agreements that begin in July,
- (2) in August for employees who have contracts or work agreements that begin in August,
- (3) in September for employees who have standard (September through August) contracts or work agreements,
- (4) throughout the year as needed when new employees are added to payroll (an ED20 record should also be sent in the same month), and
- (5) any time a person begins a new position, including summer school.

If a person performs multiple jobs under different position codes, an ED40 should be submitted for each position code. However, if multiple jobs fall within the same position code (01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 09), only one ED40 record may be submitted per position code. In that instance, the ED40 record should include information on the employee's primary position.

Previously, TRS had communicated that ED40s may also be submitted in September for employees whose contract began in July or August. However, **this is no longer permitted**. If the RE does not submit the new contract in the month in which the contract begins, the days and hours an employee worked that are reported on the RP20 will cause errors because a current contract is not on file. If you are receiving errors that there is not a contract on file, please review the [View Employee Information](#) screen to verify whether a contract has been submitted. If no contract is found, please move forward with submitting the ED40 information.

Additionally, please remember that an ED90 must be submitted when a person terminates all employment from an RE. The ED90 should be submitted in the report month in which the person will appear on the Regular Payroll (RP) report for the final time. For example, if an employee terminates as of May 31, 2022, but is receiving pay until August 2022, the ED90 should be submitted with the August reporting files.

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HOW TO COMPLETE THE TRS 28 FORM – *ELECTION TO PARTICIPATE IN OPTIONAL RETIREMENT PROGRAM AND/OR REFUND*

Certain higher education positions are eligible to opt out of TRS membership and elect to participate in the Optional Retirement Program (ORP). Election for ORP requires the employee to complete a TRS 28 form and for the RE business official to authorize the form. The completed TRS 28 form must then be mailed to TRS.

Pages one and two must be completed by the employee and page three is to be completed by an RE contact with signature authority level. Below are the fields on page three of the TRS 28, including instructions on how to complete each field with the correct information:

- **Date First Eligible to Elect ORP**
 - Date the employee first entered the ORP-eligible position
- **ORP Eligibility Notification Date**
 - Date employer notified the employee of their eligibility to elect ORP in lieu of TRS
- **ORP Election Date**
 - The date the employee signed the TRS 28 election form in the presence of a notary. This must be within 90 days of the eligibility date.
- **ORP Effective Date**
 - *Election on Initial ORP-Eligibility Date* – For new employees who sign the TRS 28 ORP election form on or before their initial ORP eligibility date, the participation start date shall be the initial ORP eligibility date (i.e., first day of ORP-eligible employment)
 - *Election after the Initial ORP-Eligibility Date* – The participation start date for ORP-eligible employees who sign the TRS 28 ORP election form after their initial ORP-eligibility date, shall be the first day of the month in which the election was made.
- **Report Month/Year for Final Deposit to TRS**
 - *No Dual Contributions* – Contribution to TRS and to an ORP company within the same calendar month shall not be permitted, as provided in Rule §25.6(a)(4).
 - The Final Report Month to TRS should be based on compensation earned up to the Effective Date of the ORP election.
 - **Example:** Employee entered ORP-eligible position Sept. 1 and made the election Sept. 15. The effective date of ORP is Oct. 1. The compensation earned in September must be reported as eligible with contributions to TRS. The month in which the employee receives this compensation is the Final Report Month to TRS.
 - If the employee elected ORP on or before the first day eligible, this field should be left blank.

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STUDENTS WHO ARE EMPLOYEES AT ISDS AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

TRS follows the minimum age requirements set by the United States Department of Labor, which means that workers under the age of 18 must also be evaluated for membership eligibility.

If a student is employed at a school district or charter school:

- 1) They should be reported on the RP report (time worked and compensation).
- 2) The student must be evaluated for TRS membership.
- 3) An appropriate employment type must be used.

Please review the general requirements for TRS-eligible employment to determine if your student should be in a TRS-eligible position.

https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/re_employment_eligibility.aspx

The following employment types can be used by ISDs and Charter Schools:

- S = Substitute: Only applies to employees filling in for an employee of record who is out on leave.
- P = Less than One-Half Time: Used for employees hired to work less than one-half time of a position's full-time equivalent (FTE).
- F = Half Time or More: Used for employees hired to work one-half time or more of the position's FTE. Employees must be eligible for TRS if using this employment type.
- M = Temporary: Used for employees whose overall employment is expected to last less than four and one-half months in a school year.

The employment type of "Student Employment" only applies to employment with a Texas public college or university where the employment is conditioned upon enrollment as a student.

If you encounter an error trying to report the student/employee, please contact your RE coach.

TRS-ACTIVECARE 2022-23 ANNUAL ENROLLMENT HAS BEGUN

Annual Enrollment is from July 5 – Aug. 18

Annual Enrollment for the 2022-23 plan year begins on July 5 and ends Aug. 18. Each district will designate their enrollment dates in that time frame.

In response to feedback from districts on enrollment date flexibility, there is a supplemental enrollment period from Aug. 19 – Aug. 30.

During this supplemental enrollment period, only administrative staff may make changes or enroll a participant. Please do not share this period with employees.

If you enroll someone during the supplemental enrollment period, coverage will still take effect on Sept. 1. However, there will be a delay in accessing digital health ID cards.

The Benefits Administrators (BA) toolkit for Annual Enrollment is live on [BCBSTX's BA website](#). It includes enrollment and administrative guides, resources to help your employees choose the right plan, and access to support.

If you have questions during enrollment, don't hesitate to reach out to your [District Ambassador \(DA\)](#). They're your district's personalized support!

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TRS-ACTIVECARE 2022-23 ANNUAL ENROLLMENT HAS BEGUN *continued from page 5*

If you missed our BA training at the end of May, you can catch up online with the recording of the [2022-23 BA training](#).

2022-23 Plan Highlights

All 20 [Regional Plan Highlights](#) are on TRS' website. This year, we embedded the What's New & What's Changing document in Plan Highlights.

2022-23 Changes to Note

- PrudentRx is a new drug benefit where participants pay \$0 for specialty drugs. Almost all specialty drugs are on the PrudentRx list, but if they are not, a cost-share will still apply. The program is exclusively for participants in TRS-ActiveCare Primary, Primary+, or ActiveCare 2. They must actively choose to enroll in PrudentRx. It's not a default benefit on those plans.
- We're capping the price of most insulins for participants in TRS-ActiveCare Primary, Primary+, or ActiveCare 2. The price is a \$25 copay for a 31-day supply or \$75 copay for a 61–90-day supply. This affordable access will help keep patients with diabetes on their medications and out of the hospital.
- We're expanding Member Rewards with 119 new procedures, including lab services at LabCorp and Quest.
- TRS-ActiveCare HD participants are now eligible for Member Rewards. However, it will work differently than it does with other plans. They may only apply their Rewards toward vision and dental services.
- NEW pilot for Regions 4, 6, 10 & 11: Airrosti and Hinge Health musculoskeletal programs that are \$0 for participants. They focus on chronic pain relief, pharmaceuticals, imaging, and surgical prevention through a variety of home and physical therapy. This will be available for all plans.

WATCH & LEARN: TRS MEMBER EDUCATION VIDEO SERIES

Learn all about your TRS pension benefits by watching our [Member Education Videos](#)! Help us spread the word about the series by downloading a [poster](#) from our website and displaying it at your school.