

UPDATE

RESPONSE TIMES – GETTING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED

Each Reporting Employer (RE) is assigned an RE Coach to assist with their TRS reporting. The coaches are assigned an average of 89 REs each and assist with a wide variety of tasks, including questions related to TRS laws and rules, technical support for the RE Portal and reporting corrections. The coaches strive to assist employers in a timely manner, and we are able to provide the best support possible by receiving adequate information from REs.

To help get the support you need, there are a few things to keep in mind when requesting assistance from your coach:

- **Request for Support**

- Make sure that your requests for assistance include as much information about the situation as possible. This will limit the amount of additional information the coach will need to request from you before providing an answer.
- Any requests for assistance (questions, overrides etc.) received after **4 p.m.** will be considered received the next business day.
- Correspondence is worked in the order received (this includes emails, phone calls, voicemails, etc.).

- **Response Time**

- RE coaches are expected to respond to correspondence within two business days.
- It is especially important to keep the two business day response time in mind when submitting requests for assistance close to the report due date.
- The volume of inquiries the week of the reports due date increases substantially, which can cause longer response times than in weeks where the reports are not due.

- **Override Requests**

- The two business day response time includes overrides.
- If your report will require an override, please make sure the request is submitted within the expected response time so that your coach has time to review the report errors, the data you provided and submit the override request on behalf of your RE before the due date.

With a continued partnership between our REs and the coaches, we are confident that you will receive the support needed in a timely manner. This will also help REs complete reports by the report due date.

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IMPORTANCE OF NON-STANDARD WORK WEEK FLAG

TRS is aware that some employees may not work the standard work week of Monday-Friday. This means it would take those employees longer to earn a year of service due to working fewer days per week ([Benefits Handbook, page 17](#)). For these employees, it is important to correct the non-standard work week flag on the ED40. This flag is used to notify TRS when an employee is regularly scheduled to work in a TRS-eligible position less than five days per week.

When employees work fewer than five days per week, the non-standard work week flag needs to be selected as “yes” so that the year of service is appropriately calculated. These employees would earn a year of service by working at least four and one-half months provided that, the four and one-half month period includes four full calendar months in which the member renders service and is paid or the member uses paid leave, for at least eight days and an additional five days of service rendered and for which the member is paid or paid leave used in another calendar month or months, but not to include the four full calendar months.

EXAMPLE: An employee is hired for a contract from 8/16/2021 – 5/31/2022 to work four ten-hour days (Monday–Thursday)

August 2021							
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						

The days worked in August would not count towards the year of service for the FY2022

September 2021							
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 works a total of 18 calendar days in the month of September 2021

October 2021							
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 works a total of 16 calendar days in the month of October 2021

November 2021							
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 works a total of 18 calendar days in the month of November 2021

December 2021							
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 works a total of 19 calendar days in the month of December 2021

January 2022							
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 works a total of 16 calendar days in the month of January 2022

In this example, the employee would earn their year of service in January, since they worked four full calendar months for at least eight days each (September–December 2021) and at least five additional days in another calendar month (January 2022).

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Legislation Affecting TRS-ActiveCare

During the 87th Regular Legislative Session (2021), the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1444, which was designed to give TRS-ActiveCare employers more flexibility while protecting the stability of the plan (see Insurance Code, Sections 1579.1045 and 1579.155).

This new legislation means:

- An employer that participates in TRS-ActiveCare cannot offer any alternative group health coverage.
- An employer that participates in TRS-ActiveCare may choose to leave TRS-ActiveCare by notifying TRS they intend to leave the plan by Dec. 31 of the year before the plan year begins.
- After giving proper notice, an employer that chooses to leave TRS-ActiveCare would leave on the first day of the plan year following the notice date (typically Sept. 1).
- A participating employer that leaves TRS-ActiveCare may only re-join TRS-ActiveCare after a period of five plan years.
- An employer not in TRS-ActiveCare today may choose to join TRS-ActiveCare by notifying TRS no later than Dec. 31 of the year before the plan year they intend to join, and they must stay in TRS-ActiveCare for at least five plan years.

Prior to enactment of SB 1444, state law did not provide that employers could opt out after joining TRS-ActiveCare and required school districts and certain risk pools with 500 or fewer employees to participate in TRS-ActiveCare — this is no longer required.

Highlights

- Employers that are currently in TRS-ActiveCare do not need to notify TRS unless they plan to leave TRS-ActiveCare.
- Employers that currently participate in TRS-ActiveCare are not required to remain in TRS-ActiveCare for five years.
- The new law means that an employer that participates in TRS-ActiveCare can routinely evaluate their options.
- Employers in TRS-ActiveCare that decide to remain in the plan next year can still decide to leave in future years.

Commitment Period: Under the new state law, employers that are not currently participating in TRS-ActiveCare and elect to join must remain in TRS-ActiveCare for at least five years. This provision protects the stability of TRS-ActiveCare.

Exclusion Period: As a result of SB 1444, employers that leave TRS-ActiveCare must remain out of TRS-ActiveCare for at least a five-year period before they can rejoin TRS-ActiveCare. This provision also protects the stability of TRS-ActiveCare.

TRS will provide additional guidance soon, including information about the process to provide notice to TRS to leave or join TRS-ActiveCare. Visit the TRS-ActiveCare for Employers page on www.trs.texas.gov to keep up to date.

Annual Enrollment Starts on July 12

Starting on July 12, district employees can enroll in 2021-22 TRS-ActiveCare plans. TRS' timeline is from July 12–Aug. 23, but districts also have some flexibility in creating their own timelines.

Benefits Administrators (BAs) can find all the resources needed for a successful Annual Enrollment on [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas' BA website](#). Resources like:

- [2021-22 TRS-ActiveCare Plan Highlights](#)
- [What's New and What's Changing](#)
- [TRS-ActiveCare Administrative Guide](#)

If BAs were unable to attend the training webinars in June, they can watch a recording [here](#).

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COMPLETING TRS FORM 582 FOR CAREER OR TECHNOLOGY TEACHER SERVICE CREDIT

A certified career or technology education teacher may be eligible to purchase service credit for up to two years of work experience. To be eligible to purchase this credit, the teacher must be entitled to salary-step credit for that work experience under [Section 21.403\(b\)](#) of the Texas Education Code, and the member must have at least five years of TRS membership service credit for actual service with a TRS-covered employer.

On the *Certification of Work Experience by Career or Technology Teacher* form (TRS 582), the employer provides the dates of work experience that entitles the certified career or technology teacher to salary step credit. These dates would be for work done by the member outside of public education.

The employer who paid the salary step to the certified career or technology teacher will complete form 582 and return the completed form to the member for them to submit to TRS. The form must be signed by an RE contact with signature authority in the RE Portal.

REPORT COMPENSATION DURING THE MONTH IT IS PAID

There are many variations of payroll cycles across REs (biweekly, monthly, etc). While the most common payroll cycle runs monthly in arrears for duties performed in the prior month, REs must report compensation in the month it is paid. The compensation reported monthly is based on what the employee received in pay between the first and last day of the calendar month. This is regardless if the compensation was accrued pay for the duties performed in a prior month or if it was paid during the same month which it was earned. This applies to all employees on both the Regular Payroll (RP) report and Employment after Retirement (ER) report.

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 RP report for the final time. For example, if an employee terminates as of 5/31/2021, but is receiving pay until August 2021, the ED90 should be submitted with the August reporting files.

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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.