

UPDATE

REMINDER TO REVIEW LEDGER BALANCES

TRS is seeing increased cases of Reporting Employers (REs) not clearing monthly contribution balances due to TRS. We highly recommend all REs review ledger balances after bringing their monthly Regular Payroll (RP) and Employment After Retirement (ER) reports to completion to ensure no additional TEXNET submission is needed to clear balances owed, including Pension Penalty Interest (PI), TRS-Care Penalty Interest (CI) and Penalty Fees (PF). Often, there may be manual edits to RP and ER records done in the RE Portal that cause monthly contribution totals to differ from the initial contribution totals outlined in the file extracted from your software.

If you would like to learn more about reviewing the RE Ledger or could use a refresher, TRS will be holding a virtual RE Ledger Training on Dec. 13, 2021. Registration for the training can be completed here: <https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/re-portal-virtual-training.aspx>.

VIEW EMPLOYEE INFORMATION: NEW MEMBER FIELD

REs must review all new employees on the View Employee Information screen in the RE Portal, even if the employee is returning after a previous termination. This is because the employee's information may need to be updated since their previous employment, such as if their TRS membership had been terminated, meaning they would be subject to New Member Contributions. On the following View Employee Information screens, we will review the New Member fields.

New Member Days completed as of 1st of Current Month: The number of days remaining in the 90-day new member period as of the 1st of the month in which the search was completed. In the example, as of June 1st the employee completed 80 of the 90 days, with 10 days remaining.

Employee Information

The information provided is based on the most recent data available, but may be affected by outstanding data. This data is subject to audit, adjustments and correction.

As Of Date	06/04/2020	New Member Contributions Due	Yes
SSN or TRS-Assigned Temp ID	██████████	New Member Days completed as of 1st of Current Month	80
First Name	██████████	In a TRS Eligible Position	Yes
Middle Name	██████████	TRS Eligible Date Range	03/13/2020 - 06/05/2020
Last Name	██████████	Subject to Salary Cap	Yes
Suffix	NONE		
TRS Member	Yes		

View ED Contract Info View RP Payroll Info

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VIEW EMPLOYEE INFORMATION: NEW MEMBER FIELD continued from page 1

The two fields in the upper right of the screen (on the previous page) provide information specifically to New Member contributions. The field highlighted in the screenshot on page one shows how many days of the 90-day New Member period were completed as of the first of the month in which the search was performed. In this example, the “As of Date” of 6/4/2020 located on the top left corner of the screen shows the date the search was performed. The number of New Member days completed of 80 days is as of 6/1/2020, not 6/4/2020. On 6/1/2020, this member had 10 days remaining in their New Member period.

Employee Information			
The information provided is based on the most recent data available, but may be affected by outstanding data. This data is subject to audit, adjustments and correction.			
As Of Date	10/12/2021	New Member Contributions Due	Yes
SSN or TRS-Assigned Temp ID	[REDACTED]	New Member Days completed as of 1st of Current Month	0
First Name	[REDACTED]	In a TRS Eligible Position	No
Middle Name	[REDACTED]	TRS Eligible Date Range	
Last Name	[REDACTED]	Subject to Salary Cap	Yes
Suffix	NONE		
TRS Member	No		

View ED Contract Info View RP Payroll Info

This second scenario provides information on an individual who has been reported to TRS but has not completed any days in a TRS-eligible position that would count towards the New Member period as of 10/1/2021. For this individual, New Member contributions would be due on the compensation issued during the first 90 days of working in a TRS-eligible position.

NEW CAREER VIDEOS AVAILABLE FOR EARLY- AND MID-CAREER MEMBERS

Have you heard about TRS’ new career videos, published as part of our Member Education Video Series? These videos are here to help TRS members determine if they are “retirement ready” by covering topics such as: the benefits of a TRS membership, [estimating future retirement needs and expenses](#), and the importance of personal savings outside of a TRS pension.

Find the new videos here:

[Early-Career Video](#)

[Mid-Career Video](#)

For more information about the Member Education Video Series, visit our [website](#). Please share these videos with others! Together, we can ensure early- and mid-career TRS members are on the right track to preparing for a financially secure retirement.

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RECLASSING SALARIES TO ESSER FUNDS

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding can be used to reclassify salaries for TRS-eligible employees as being paid from federal funds as far back as March 2020. Many REs have requested instructions on how to submit the Regular Payroll (RP) Adjustments involving ESSER funds.

Please consult your Service Center or software provider to assist you with generating these reports and reach out to your coach if you need help once the reports have been submitted. Below are a few tips to help get the RP Adjustments started.

How to Create Reports

- RP Adjustment reports must be created in the most recent month you have completed in the RE Portal (this selection cannot be edited).
- Each employee will require a separate RP25 record for *each* month their salary is being reclassified.
 - For example: If Joe Smith's salary will be reclassified as paid from ESSER funds for each month beginning 3/2020 and ending 8/2021, Joe Smith will have 18 separate RP25 records on the report.
 - Each RP25 record will specify the Adjusted Report Month.

How to Adjust Contributions with the RP25 Record

- Report the total amount of salary reclassified to ESSER under the Eligible Compensation Paid from Federal Funds/Private Grants field on the RP25.
- Report the Federal TRS-Care contribution.
- Report Federal Funds/Private grant contributions (unless the New Member contribution was reported on the original RP20).
- Do not report additional Total Gross or TRS Eligible Compensation (unless needed).
- Do not adjust Public Education Employer Contribution (unless needed).

How to Adjust Statutory Minimum Contributions

Please note: This is **ONLY IF** the member is being reclassified as 100% federally funded.

- Review the following amounts originally reported on the RP20:
 - State Minimum Salary
 - Original Statutory Minimum contribution
- If the **eligible salary** is reclassified to 100% Federal Funding:
 - The RP25 will report a negative in the amount of the **original Statutory Minimum contribution**

If the eligible salary is reclassified to be partially paid from Federal Funds, please review the examples on the [Statutory Minimum/Federal Fund/Public Education Employer Relationship](#) page of our website or reach out to your coach for assistance with the calculation.

How to Submit your TEXNET

When reporting additional contribution on an RP Adjustment report, you will also need to submit a TEXNET for the contributions.

If the RP25 records are included on an RP Adjustment report, the funds must be submitted via TEXNET within one business day of the adjustment report completing. If the RP25 records are included on the regular RP report, the contributions will be due on the same day as that month's RP report.

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DECLARING INTENT AND FORMS FOR JOINING OR LEAVING TRS-ACTIVECARE LIVE IN RE PORTAL

Employers may now record their intent for leaving, joining or staying in TRS-ActiveCare in the [Reporting Entity \(RE\) Portal](#).

- **Participating employers who elect to stay:** *if you decide to stay for the 2022-23 plan year, you are not locked in the plan for five-years.* You can continue to evaluate your health care options. The five-year commitment to remain out of TRS-ActiveCare would only apply *after* you elect to discontinue.
- **Participating employers who elect to leave:** if you decide to leave TRS-ActiveCare for the 2022-23 plan year, you must submit your notice and paperwork by Dec. 31, 2021. Your five-year commitment to stay out of the program will begin on Sept. 1, 2022.
- **Non-participating districts who elect to join:** if you decide to join TRS-ActiveCare for the 2022-23 plan year, you must submit your notice and paperwork by Dec. 31, 2021. Your five-year commitment to stay in the program will begin on Sept. 1, 2022. If you do not join this year, you may join in others. The five-year commitment will still apply, no matter what year you join.

To learn more about joining or leaving TRS-ActiveCare, visit TRS' [SB 1444 guidance webpage](#).

ACTION REQUIRED ONLY IF YOU'RE LEAVING OR JOINING

Recording your intent to leave or join does not complete the process. After you declare your intent, we'll send you the necessary forms you must complete. Once we receive your completed forms, you've completed the process. While we're asking all employers to complete our survey, only employers that decide to join or leave TRS-ActiveCare are required to submit a formal notice to TRS.

To help employers with this decision, TRS has a process for requesting the last 36 months of claims data. Learn about requesting your claims by visiting our [claims data webpage](#).

For more information about the implementation of SB 1444, visit <https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/healthcare-your-way.aspx>.

RECONCILING YOUR MONTHLY BILL

It's critical to reconcile your TRS-ActiveCare bill each month to make sure the enrollment and billing information is correct. This process will help protect your district from unexpected premium charges or credits. It also identifies enrollment discrepancies – and we can work with you to correct them.

How Should You Report Discrepancies?

Report billing discrepancies on the template located in the bswift portal. Your bswift Benefit Administrator Advocate (BAA) will work with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) and tell you what actions to take before the next bill.

Please send billing reconciliations before the third week of the month to be sure the correction is on the next bill. It's important to make sure any updates are correct in your enrollment portal and also on the electronic file.

When Should You Report Discrepancies?

If you find an issue with your bill for an enrollment record, you should report it to your bswift BAA immediately. Your bswift BAA can help find the root cause or provide any additional information you need. TRS allows districts to submit transactions up to 45 days from the effective date of coverage.

If you're reporting anything after the 45-day administrative period, the transaction is not updated unless TRS approves it as an exception. You can find membership processing guidelines on page 40 of the [TRS Administrative Guide](#).

The membership processing windows are located on page 41 of the [TRS Administrative Guide](#).

Did you know you can take advantage of reporting in bswift to audit your records between bills? Review the bswift user guide for reporting options or contact your bswift BAA.

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TRS Exceptions and Tracker

Only TRS can make exceptions to approve requests for updates outside the 45-day membership processing guidelines and elections outside of enrollment windows. TRS only grants exceptions for a “good cause.” Please consider this before submitting information.

The tracker feature in bswift is only used to submit exceptions. Please direct any other requests to your bswift BAA. These are some important reminders about exceptions:

- Use the tracker for exceptions only.
- Provide and attach all necessary documentation when you submit the request.
- Make sure your employee is aware that backdated changes could mean they owe more in premiums.
- Fill out the entire tracker form, including the exception questionnaire.
- At the time of submission, the “Assigned to User” **must** be Request, Exception.

If an employee record exists in bswift, submit exceptions from the employee record. Submit new member records from the BA level.

- Be sure to include your email address to receive notification of ticket statuses.

What about Urgent Access Issues?

Enter transactions into bswift or send transactions on the electronic file to bswift. Bswift will transfer the information to BCBSTX, Caremark and if applicable the HMOs.

We understand that timing could affect TRS participants at times. If you have an urgent need, please contact your bswift BAA for a temporary update. Your bswift BAA will need documentation of the enrollment to make an update. As a reminder, this is a temporary update. The eligibility update needs to be included on the next electronic file to be a permanent update.

Your bswift BAA team is available to assist you. They work closely with bswift and each TPA in an effort to make enrollment and eligibility run smoothly for each entity within TRS. You may contact them at 1-877-767-5254 or email at TRSBInquiries@bswift.com

UPCOMING TRS HOLIDAY CLOSURES

TRS will be closed on the following days:

- Wednesday, Nov. 24, 2021, through Friday, Nov. 26, 2021, in observance of Thanksgiving.
We will resume normal business hours on Monday, Nov. 29, 2021.
- Thursday, Dec. 23, 2021, through Friday, Dec. 24, 2021, in observance of Christmas.
We will resume normal business hours on Monday, Dec. 27, 2021.
- Monday, Jan. 3, 2022 in observance of New Year’s.
We will resume normal business hours on Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022.