



## ***How to minimize reporting coach response times***

Please know that our goal is to respond to all calls or emails from Reporting Entities (REs) within two business days, but due to heavy workloads, this may not always be possible. We want to ensure that all of our RE partners receive the assistance they need in a timely manner. Please use the following tips to help streamline response times:

- Include your four-digit TRS number, report type and month that you are seeking assistance with in the subject line of your email or in your voice message.
- Include all questions in one email or voice message rather than sending multiple emails or leaving multiple voice messages.
- Be as detailed and precise as possible in your email or voice message regarding the issue you are having.
- If you have errors that you need a coach to assist with, email a screenshot of the entire record including the error.
- If you do not receive a response within two business days, forward your original email or message to [reporting@trs.texas.gov](mailto:reporting@trs.texas.gov)
- If you receive an “out of office” message from your coach, follow the instructions in that message; the message will provide an alternate email to send your request to.

Taking these steps will help minimize the back-and-forth communication that often happens when your coach tries to determine the precise nature of your request. In turn, your coach is committed to assisting you in resolving your reporting issues in a timely and complete manner.

## ***Additional clarification on 20-day substitute rule for retirees***

TRS has received additional questions related to retirees working as substitutes. A retiree cannot be hired as an employee to fill a vacant position and be reported as a substitute for the first 20 days; however, a retiree can be hired as a substitute and paid the substitute daily rate of pay to fill a vacant position for up to 20 days. If the retiree continues to work in the vacant position past the 20-day mark, then the retiree will need to be reported and will no longer be considered a substitute under TRS laws and rules.

Here are some examples:

**Example 1:** A school district creates a new para-professional position. A retiree is asked to fill that vacant position as a substitute. In this case, the retiree would be considered a substitute for the first 20 days as long as the retiree is hired as a substitute and paid the substitute daily rate of pay. If the retiree continues to work past the 20 days, then the retiree would no longer be considered a substitute. In addition, if the retiree was permanently hired into this position, the employer cannot report the retiree as a substitute for the first 20 days.

**Example 2:** A school district has an alternative school that is used on an as-needed basis. A student is sent to the alternative school and the district assigns a TRS retiree to teach/service the student as a substitute. Since the position is filled on an as-needed basis, this is considered a vacant position and a retiree would be reported as a substitute for the first 20 days, as long as the retiree is hired as a substitute and paid the substitute daily

rate of pay. If the retiree was permanently hired into this position, the employer cannot report the retiree as a substitute for the first 20 days.

**Example 3:** A school district had a teacher who resigned midyear. The position is vacant and the district asked a retiree to fill the vacancy as a substitute beginning Jan. 5. After 15 days of serving as a substitute, the district hires the retiree full time beginning Feb. 1. For the 15 days in January, the retiree is reported as a substitute to TRS; however, beginning in February, the retiree can no longer be reported as a substitute because the retiree has now been hired as full time.

### ***TRS to extend Health & Insurance Benefits Department hours***

TRS Health & Insurance Benefits Department will offer new, extended customer service hours to better serve our members and retirees. Beginning June 1, 2018, the Health & Insurance Benefits Department will be open Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. – 6 p.m. CST.

### ***TRS-ActiveCare Annual Enrollment coming soon***

The 2018-19 TRS-ActiveCare plan options are [now available](#). Check out this [short video](#) on the changes and how participants can choose a plan.

The main benefit changes:

- A separate copay for freestanding emergency room (ER) visits
- Adjustments to specialist copays
- Increases in deductibles and maximum out-of-pocket amounts

TRS has a fiduciary responsibility to administer TRS-ActiveCare and ensure sufficient funding for the coming years. TRS staff compares recent health care claims with incoming state and local funds to determine if we need to recommend plan changes to the TRS Board of Trustees. At its April 19-20 meeting, the board adopted a 5.7 percent average increase in premiums and closed TRS-ActiveCare 2 to new participants.

TRS-ActiveCare participants have from July 1, 2018 to Aug. 24, 2018 to choose a plan, or remain in a current plan. This is a participant's annual opportunity to make changes to health benefits without experiencing a special enrollment event. Participants should be sure to take the time to consider all the options.