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TEACHER RETIREMENT SYSTEM of TEXAS

UPDATE

CORRECTING DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

If you receive an error in the Reporting Entity (RE) Portal that one of the demographic fields you are reporting does not match what is in the TRS system, you should verify the information with the employee's social security card (for first, middle, and last names) and driver's license or other government-issued identification (for date of birth or gender). If the information is different from TRS' records, you will need to submit an ED25 to update this information.

If this is a new employee and the error is occurring on the ED20 record, you will need to delete the ED20 and submit an ED25 in its place. Complete all the 'Original' fields on the ED25 with the information TRS currently has. Then, complete only the 'New' field(s) you are updating.

There may be times when you then receive an error that states, "This change is not allowed, please contact your coach for assistance." In these cases, it is likely that the coach needs documentation of the change through a copy of the social security card and/or ID. Please reach out to your coach and he or she will let you know what information is needed to complete the report.

In cases of gender transition, TRS will require a copy of the court document authorizing the gender change along with the new social security card and ID of the member.

If you do not receive any errors on the ED25, you do not need to send any documentation to your coach.

PENALTY INTEREST CONSIDERATIONS

In April 2018, TRS provided information and instructions for REs to request a waiver of penalty interest (PI) if the PI was due to a system defect. We have collected these requests from REs and are in the process of reviewing them. In the meantime, if you have requested a waiver, please do not make a TEXNET payment toward any outstanding PI balance owed.

You may still send a written request to have PI waived to REOutreach@trs.texas.gov. Please include a detailed explanation of the reason you are requesting a waiver.

REPORTING A DECEASED MEMBER

When a member passes away while still employed at an RE, it is necessary to continue to report any wages earned prior to death. Any contributions are also still due under that member's actual name on the Regular Payroll (RP) report.

Do not change the member's name in TRS to 'The Estate of…' or any variation of this. The pay was earned by the member while still living, not by their estate, and must be reported to TRS as such.

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UPDATE ON SUGGESTIONS FROM SPRING 2018 TRAININGS

In spring of 2018, TRS representatives conducted training on the RE Portal at all 20 Education Service Centers. During those trainings, we asked attendees for feedback and suggestions on improving the RE Portal.

TRS has spent the past year reviewing, analyzing and prioritizing the suggestions we received.

Below are the top six items that came from the review:

1. REs need to be able to view previously reported/posted data on employees, especially ED40/45 information, but may also need the ability to view RP and Employment after Retirement (ER) information.
2. Report Month Tabs should show more than two months of reporting periods. Several REs suggested showing the last six to 12 reporting months.
3. The RE Portal should prepopulate original data fields or provide existing data, specifically when submitting ED25/45, RP25 and ER27 records.
4. REs should receive more information pertaining to the 90-day New Member period, including a notification for when the 90 day period is satisfied or a notice on how many days are left during the new member period.
5. REs need to be able to download all records for each report type or for each report month in the RP Portal. The download should include separate adjustment reports or additional Employee Demographic reports in one CSV download.
6. REs should be able to view the concurrent employment indicator on the View Employee Information (VEI) screen.

There are some suggestions that we are not able to accommodate due to legislative restrictions or security risks. A few examples are:

1. Changing the reporting due dates – this rule is part of state statutes and would require a legislative change. Keep in mind that by law, TRS cannot lobby or advocate for changes in the statute. Although TRS does not have the authority to change the report and TEXNET deposit due dates, REs currently have a two month grace period to complete their reports before penalty fees are assessed.
2. Have REs report money when it was earned, rather than when it was paid – this could result in inconsistencies in the information being reported because every RE has different pay periods. It also could cause issues with members earning service credit on an equitable basis.

A couple of requests that we have already been able to implement are:

1. Unmasking some identifying information on .csv files – security concerns prevent us from unmasking the entire social security number, but we have unmasked the last four digits of the SSN on the .csv files.
2. Adding a retiree's actual retirement date to the VEI – due to reporting requirements, this was implemented in spring of 2018.

Before we can work on improvements to the system, we must first resolve true defects that impact reporting and TRS processing. While at this time we do not have a date of when defects will be resolved and improvements implemented, please know that we are committed to making the changes as soon as possible.

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TRS-ACTIVECARE ANNUAL ENROLLMENT FOR PLAN YEAR 2019-20 IS JULY 1 – AUG. 23, 2019

Annual Enrollment for TRS-ActiveCare participants will begin on July 1, 2019 and end on Aug. 23, 2019. This is the annual opportunity for your employees to make changes to their health benefits without experiencing a special enrollment event, which may drive an increase in health plan questions. As in the past, TRS and Aetna are currently traveling throughout Texas to hold benefits administrator (BA) training. During the training, BAs will get a refresher on the bswift enrollment system and hear from Aetna and CVS Caremark on medical and prescription benefits. If you have not already registered and are interested in attending a training, click here or call the BA Advocate Team at **1-877-767-5254** to register and find a location nearest you.

Over the next few months, Aetna will send out information to BAs to help you prepare for a successful Annual Enrollment period. Please remind your employees about this enrollment opportunity before they leave for summer break to allow them sufficient time to make a decision about their health care options. Please also encourage them to sign up for *The Pulse* for TRS-ActiveCare, our digital newsletter with information about wellness and getting the most value out of TRS-ActiveCare benefits. It's easy to sign up. Just go to the www.trs.texas.gov, click on "Subscribe" at the top of the page, and follow the step-by-step instructions.