www.mnpera.org
Employer Newsletter of the Public Employees Retirement Association of Minnesota

PERA PHRASE

Over 3,500 Employers
166,000 Active Members

OCTOBER 2017 — Q3

Forecast: Gorgeous fall weekends ahead to hit one of Minnesota's pumpkin patches

Employer webinars continue to be a hit

July was a busy month for the Eligibility and Employer Outreach team, as we prepped and presented two educational webinars. Since the switch from a monthly threshold, to an annual salary threshold, employers have requested more information on this topic over the last two years.

Part one allowed employers to get a closer look at one of our main eligibility requirements— the salary/earnings threshold. We highlighted the reasons this change occurred in the statute, and how employers can make salary projections for their employees before enrolling them into PERA. Additionally, we went over the notice of noncovered employment, which an employer is required by law to give to an employee when they are being excluded due to salary, and touch on provisional enrollments. We rounded off the content portion by showing where to find the threshold monitoring report on ERIS, and what to look for in that report.

In part two's session, we delve deeper and go into detail as we talk about the threshold process. We then visit different scenarios that touch the threshold process, including handling employee terminations and dealing with delayed enrollments. We walk employers through a salary threshold report on ERIS and wrap up our content session with a couple hot topic questions, which include:

- The report asks about prior years, but what about the current year?
- Getting information on refunds
- What happens when an employee is excluded, then their earnings exceed the threshold?

The feedback continues to come in, and we are just as equally excited as our group of PERA employers that have attended these sessions. If you have not had the opportunity to join us during a session, please take a moment to register for our next webinar that will be hosted on Thursday, November 9 at 1 pm.

article continued on page 2

Administer and promote sustainable retirement plans and provide services that our members value.

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

Employer webinars continue to be a hit

continued from page 1

We'll be looking at dedicating our next session to exclusion reporting, and we will touch on what this report consists of, who is getting excluded, where and how to submit this report, and other talking points. We hope you'll join us next month, and hope to see you there!

These sessions have been recorded, along with the question and answer portion that is always available after the content portion of our webinars. These videos are available to watch by visiting the education link in our employer section of mnpera.org, and clicking on Recorded Webinars and Videos.

Next webinar: Exclusion Reporting

The 5 W's of Exclusion Reports— What is it? Whose information? Where and how do I submit this? When is it due, and why??

Session will be hosted on Thursday, November 9 @ 1pm

Registration is now open for this session on our Employer Webinar page.

Credit memos and requests for a refund by check

Credit memos issued to PERA employers by the retirement agency are few and far between. Since the inception of the annual salary threshold report, the number of credit memos issued to PERA employers has slightly increased, due to the report's ability to refund a member's contributions if they do not exceed the required salary threshold in a given year.

After an employer fills out the threshold report on ERIS, the member receives a check sent to their home address on file. PERA then rolls out an email notification, informing the employer that a credit memo is available to use on their next payment and a detailed statement that provides information on the credit issued.

Along with the slight increase in credit memos, came the requests from employers to send a paper check in lieu of a credit. PERA is required under Minnesota law to return overpaid employer retirement contributions in the form of a credit, to be applied toward future employer contribution obligations. Additionally, the IRS regulations that govern tax-qualified retirement plans, like those that PERA administers, state that we cannot reduce the funds of the retirement plan in order to correct past employer contribution overpayments.

We recognize that there is less administrative work for your staff if we issue a check for the overpaid amount, versus using a credit memo. PERA will continue to comply with the regulations that cover the plan's tax-qualified status.

New employee video: The Value of Your Pension

"Do your employees know that they have a pension? Do they understand that they contribute to their pension every paycheck? We have found that many employees do not realize that a pension is an important part of their compensation."

Early in the month of June, a video explaining *The Value of a Pension* plan in the state of MN was sent out to all public employers.

PERA is reaching out to all of our participating employers and associations, and asking to share this video with all of your employees— everyone from new hires to long-term employees.

The video explains how the pension works, where the contributions are invested and shares the good news that employees are saving for retirement.

How can you help?

- Display a Pension poster on your employee bulletin boards
- Post the Pension video on your internal website (intranet/sharepoint/wiki)
- Forward a link to your employees
- Show the video at ALL new employee orientations

Phone tree options have been updated

Who ya gonna call? Well, certainly not the Ghostbusters— PERA is here to help!

If you have called into PERA's Employer Response Line, you may have been helped by a member of our Employer Services Department. In the last month, we have made some changes to our phone tree options.

Contacting our office by telephone remains the same — call our Employer Response Line by dialing either 651-296-3636 or toll-free 1-888-892-7372. Please remember that these numbers are for your use only — refer your employees to our Member Services phone numbers of 651-296-7460 (from the Twin Cities metro area) or 1-800-652-9026 (toll-free).

Option 1 – Member Questions
Member calls are transferred to the Pension/Member Services queue.

Option 2 – Employer Reporting
Contribution reporting posted or unposted, processing adjustments, Credit Memos, Employer Invoices, Member Shortage Letters, PERA Generated SDR's and EFT making or canceling payments.

Option 3 – Eligibility
Employer & member eligibility, salary eligibility, Omitted Deductions, Deduction in Error, Social Security 218 Agreements, and Employer Seminars

Option 4 – ERIS
ERIS registration, access or assistance updating member status information

Option 5 – Exclusion/Status Reports
Exclusion Reports and Status Verification Reports

Option 6 – Enrollment
Enrollment of members, demographic files, and Higher than Normal Salary

If you prefer to contact us using e-mail, please address it to employer.reps@mnpera.org. A link to this and other PERA e-mail addresses are available on the PERA web site under 'Contact Us.'

Board appoints Police & Fire plan trustee

Paul Ford, a sergeant with the St. Paul Police Department, was appointed to fill the remainder of the term of David Metusalem on PERA's Board of Trustees. The action was taken Thursday, August 10, during the meeting of the Board.

Metusalem, a past Board vice president and Police and Fire Plan trustee since 2015, retired from the Ramsey County Sheriff's Office in March. He was required to relinquish his seat on the board since only active Police & Fire Plan members can serve in that position.

Ford has been a police officer for over 20 years and prior to his current position, he also served with the Mankato Police Department. He has worked on pension issues in leadership roles on the Board of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association as well as the St. Paul Police Federation.

The ERIS Corner

PERA's Employer Reporting and Information System (ERIS) allows you to complete many reporting tasks online.

Enrollment process gets a software update on ERIS

ERIS was recently upgraded to alert employers when a new enrollment might be creating a duplicate record. This often occurs when the new information or existing record contains a slight error or transposed number. Making a second record for the same member can cause a great deal of confusion and requires PERA correction with a manual account consolidation.

With this enhanced process, ERIS will display a warning message if it detects the data you are entering is a potential duplicate. You will not be able to continue and must contact a PERA representative to complete the enrollment process.

PERA
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TWIN CITIES MN
PERMIT 171

Ask PERA!

Have a question for PERA?
We'd love to hear from you!

Email
employer.reps@mnpera.org

Employer Line
651-296-3636 (metro area)
1-888-892-7372 (toll-free)

Member Line
651-296-7460 (metro area)
1-800-652-9026 (toll-free)

Website
www.mnpera.org

Our school district employs paraprofessionals who work only 174 student days per school year. Could they be excluded as seasonal employees??

No. A paraprofessional position is not seasonal in nature, as it is not related to a specific season or seasons of the year. The position may require the employee to report to work for only 174 days in a school year, but the period of employment is for the 9 or 10 month school year. Moreover, PERA's exclusion for a seasonal position requires the duration of employment to be limited by the employer to 185 consecutive calendar days or less in each year of employment. This is approximately 6 months, give or take a few days. The duration of the employment starts the first day the employee works and every subsequent calendar day is counted, regardless of whether the employee actually works on that day.

This document is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling PERA or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529.