Thomas P. DiNapoli
State Comptroller

Winter 2021-22

employer forum

A Semiannual Bulletin for Payroll/Personnel Staff

NYSLRS
1921–2021

A Message from Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli

It was just a few years ago that we first told you about *Retirement Online*, and how it would change the way you work with NYSLRS. Since then, NYSLRS employers have embraced the new system and the improvements that it has brought to reporting the data we use to calculate retirement benefits.

Your employees have also discovered the ease and convenience of using *Retirement Online*. Since introducing the system, NYSLRS members have conducted hundreds of thousands of online transactions, doing everything from changing their address or updating their beneficiaries, to applying for retirement.

Right now, we're working with employers to achieve the full potential of *Retirement Online* by helping them transition to enhanced reporting. Enhanced reporting automates member enrollments, improves the accuracy of your employees' service credit information and reduces the number of inquiries you get from NYSLRS.

More than 650 employers are already using enhanced reporting, and more are making the switch every day. In this edition of *Employer Forum*, learn more about enhanced reporting and hear from an employer who has completed the transition process (page 3). Please remember that all employers will need to change to enhanced reporting, and my staff stands ready to assist you every step of the way.

Thank you for your support of our mission to provide a safe and secure retirement benefit to New York's public employees.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. DiNapoli
State Comptroller

Make the Switch to Enhanced Reporting

NYSLRS is switching all employer reporting to *Retirement Online* enhanced reporting. The enhanced report format maximizes your efficiency and improves the service you provide to your employees. The sooner you change over, the sooner you'll experience the advantages of this new approach to reporting.

The current method of monthly reporting — known as "legacy reporting" — is being phased out after December 31, 2022. Employers should avoid waiting until the last minute to make the transition — getting on board now will allow you to start planning for the change.

To request and schedule your personalized timeline to make the switch, email the *Retirement Online* Gold Certification team.

You'll find more information on the Gold Certification — Enhanced Reporting webpage, including an Enhanced Reporting video that outlines the benefits this new reporting process offers your organization.

About Paying Your Invoice

Deadlines and Interest Charges

Employers are responsible for paying a share of the contributions to cover the cost of benefits for your employees.

Payments are due on February 1, 2022.

Paying late, after February 1, will result in interest being applied to the amount you must pay. For your invoice due February 1, 2022, the daily interest rate for paying your invoice late is 6.8 percent. Here's an example of how much you will owe if you pay your invoice a month late, using an actual sample invoice amount of $4,144,202:

($4,144,202 x .068 ÷ 360 days) x 30 days late = **$23,484 in interest**

To view your invoice, Billing security role holders can sign in to *Retirement Online* and click the "Access Billing Dashboard" button. Visit our Employer Annual Invoice webpage for more information about your invoice and payment options.

If you have questions about your annual invoice or you don't see all of the location codes that you should have access to, use our help desk form (select "Employer Billing" from the dropdown) or call 866-805-0990 (press 1, then 6).

Retirement Online Updates

Here are some of the improvements we've made to *Retirement Online,* based on your feedback.

Improved the Process for Submitting Security and Contact Administrator Forms

We updated forms to indicate when a person is being added, changed or deleted. We also increased the internal processing speed and improved instructions and communications for newly provisioned users.

Expanded Reporting Thresholds

Previously, when an employer reported over or under their expected contribution payment by $.01, the system would trigger a warning or be flagged as an improper withholding. And since some employers are consistently over or under (because of differences in rounding or because they report over multiple pay cycles), we expanded the reporting threshold before a warning is triggered.

Enhancements to the Notifications Page

Based on employer feedback, we learned that a more robust Notifications page was needed. Employers are now able to sort and filter by location code, search by NYSLRS ID, view dates created and closed for notifications and see when notifications have been addressed.

Added New Fields for More Access

The 'Member Contribution Rates' and 'New Hire Summary' pages were both updated to include the following fields: Job Code, Benefit Plan, Annual Wage, Standard Work Day, Pay Frequency and Report Code.
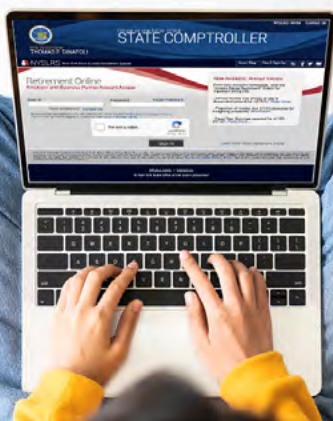
Hiring a Public Retiree? Here's What You Should Know

A public retiree is someone who has retired and is receiving a pension from NYSLRS or another New York public retirement system. If you are considering hiring a public retiree, especially if they were previously employed by you while they were a member, certain rules and laws apply.

When a NYSLRS member retires, they must have a bona fide termination from employment and be removed from payroll before their retirement date. It's possible for an employee's service retirement application to be voided if their employment isn't terminated. For example, if there is a prearranged agreement to hire them back, or if they are kept on the payroll and paid for services past their retirement date, their retirement may not be a termination.

For information about other hiring rules and post-retirement earnings limits, visit our Hiring Public Retirees page.

Retirement Online

Enhanced Reporting: "You'll Wish You Always Had It"

Putnam County is an early adopter of *Retirement Online* enhanced reporting. Kathy Dean, the county's payroll manager, said her last report included at least 900 employees. "I used to wait 15 minutes for one file to upload in legacy," she said. "Enhanced reporting is much faster."

Employers getting started with enhanced reporting take part in our Gold Certification program to help them make the switch. Each one receives customized training and support throughout the process.
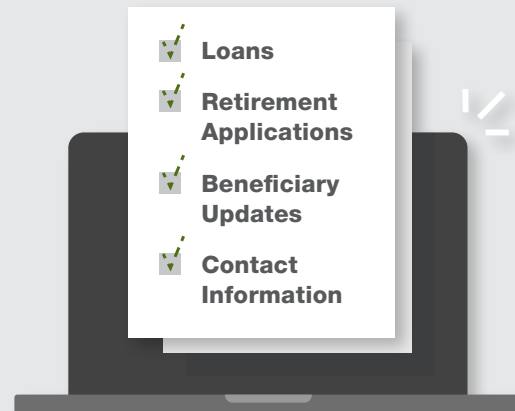
Kathy was eager to jump in and see what enhanced reporting could do. She said that while certain aspects of the training program were challenging — the effort needed to make the switch from legacy reporting to enhanced reporting was well worth it. "Once your file is right, you'll wish you always had it."

She also credits her NYSLRS transition coach Greg as being a great asset throughout Gold Certification. Transition coaches are NYSLRS staff who guide employers during the transition to enhanced reporting. They continue to offer support until employers are ready to report on their own.

"Once you have a basic understanding of enhanced reporting and the benefits it will bring now and in the long term, you'll be happy you started Gold Certification," said Greg.

"It's really not a complicated process," Kathy agreed. "It just becomes second nature."

To join the more than 650 employers who are now using enhanced reporting, email the *Retirement Online* Gold Certification team to get started.

Retirement Online a Hit with Members

More than 400,000 NYSLRS customers have discovered that *Retirement Online* provides a quick and reliable way to conduct transactions with the Retirement System.

In the past, members may have come to you for help with Retirement System business, but now many of them are doing it themselves with *Retirement Online*. Members can update their contact information, view or update their beneficiaries, apply for a loan, request service credit, manage loan and service credit payments, estimate their pension benefits or apply for retirement.

Please direct your employees to the *Retirement Online* webpage where they can learn more about the services available and get help with creating an account.

☑ **Loans**

☑ **Retirement Applications**

☑ **Beneficiary Updates**

☑ **Contact Information**

Calculating Days Worked

The number of days worked that you report for your employees has an impact on their service credit and the calculation of their benefits.

To calculate the number of days worked, determine the number of *hours* worked and then divide those hours by the number of hours in the standard workday (SWD) that has been established by your organization for each position:

Number of hours worked during the report period	÷	Number of hours in the SWD	=	Number of days worked to be reported

Here's an example:

Terry is a part-time clerk. He works four hours a day for 22 days during the report period (which, in this example, is one month), for a total of 88 hours worked. Clerks at his employer have an eight-hour SWD.

88 hours worked	÷	8-hour SWD	=	11.00 days to report

For employees who are paid weekly, the maximum you can report is five days per week, for a total of 20 or 25 days a month, depending on whether there are four or five weeks in that month.

For employees paid biweekly, the maximum you can report is 10 days worked per two-week period, for a total of 20 or 30 days a month, depending on whether there are two or three biweekly payrolls in that month.

For employees paid semimonthly or monthly, the maximum you can report is 21 or 22 days per month, depending on whether there are 30 or 31 days that month.

School districts and BOCES may need to calculate and report days worked differently if, for example, a ten-month employee is paid over 12 months. Visit our website for more information.

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

2021-22

NOVEMBER 2021
Annual invoices for fiscal year 2021-22 issued

DECEMBER 2021
Discounted pre-payment of the annual invoice due December 15

FEBRUARY 2022
Payment of the annual invoice due February 1

MARCH 2022
Tier 6 employee contribution rates provided to employers

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