

- How to ensure correct and timely benefits during the pandemic
- Reminder: IAP Target Date Fund Member Choice available until September 30
- Employer Incentive Fund (EIF) update
- Tier One/Tier Two union reps can get credit for union leave
- EDX tip of the month: How to do a status check

How to ensure correct and timely benefits during the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted many normal routines and ways of life. PERS' role as the administrator of your employees' retirement system has not changed. Our staff continue to coordinate necessary agency priorities, with a focus on ensuring income continuity to our retired members.



However, **we need your help**, especially around the necessary information flow that keeps the processing of new benefits moving forward.

If you do not submit member data in a timely manner, or respond to PERS emails or Work Items in EDX, we cannot pay benefits, including to retiring members.

While PERS is statutorily required to pay a member's first pension benefit — even if it is an estimated amount — within 92 days of their effective retirement date, we strive to give public employees income continuity. Members expect to receive their pension benefit in a timely manner, and many Oregonians rely on PERS income, especially during these challenging times.

In addition, when we do not receive crucial information from employers to process member benefits in an accurate and timely manner, correcting estimated benefits later can cause further delay or underpayment or overpayment of benefits.

We understand the difficulty of accessing information while most staff are working remotely. Thank you for all you can do to keep up your obligation of PERS reporting, as we administer the retirement system on your behalf.

We are here to help, but we need your partnership. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your [Employer Service Center representative](#).

Sincerely,

Employer & Data Services

Stay up to date!

COVID-19

- [PERS updates on novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Frequently asked questions about paid leave during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Loss of work during the COVID-19 pandemic \(FAQs for members\)](#)

Senate Bill 1049

- [Information for PERS employers](#)
- [Information for members](#)
- [SB 1049 GovDelivery emails signup](#)

Employer rate relief programs

- [Employer rate relief programs webpage](#)

Other topics

- [Choose what GovDelivery emails you'd like to receive](#)

Please share this information with your staff.

Reminder: IAP Target-Date Fund Member Choice available until September 30

Now, until September 30, 2020, nonretired members can elect to invest their Individual Account Program (IAP) balance in an IAP Target-Date Fund (TDF) that better reflects their retirement savings goals or their personal risk tolerance.

Full information can be found on PERS' [IAP Target-Date Funds webpage](#), which includes step-by-step instructions on how to make the election.

Member Choice is optional, and members do not have to take any action. If a member does nothing, they will continue to be invested in their current TDF.

Questions? Want to inform your staff of the full details? Read or share a [GovDelivery notice](#) PERS sent on September 1.

Employer Incentive Fund (EIF) update

While Governor Kate Brown has not signed a bill codifying legislative changes to EIF as of the publication of this newsletter, we want to keep employers informed. PERS will update information on our website and take action once the EIF changes are signed into law.

The Second Legislative Special Session of 2020 began and ended on August 10, 2020. During the session, the Legislature withdrew all current and future funding sources for both the Employer Incentive Fund (EIF) and the School District Unfunded Liability Fund (SDULF), effectively suspending both programs indefinitely.

There is a small amount of money left in the EIF that was previously distributed to PERS. PERS Actuarial Services will distribute those funds to employers based on the order in which we originally approved their applications.

Actuarial Services is individually contacting employers who will receive a match. All remaining originally approved employers will be moved to the waitlist in the order of when we approved their application.

Despite the reduction in total matching funds, the EIF matched \$64.75 million for 90 employers. In all, the EIF program brought in a total of \$342.8 million in additional assets to the PERS Trust.

Learn more

- [Side accounts webpage](#)
- [EIF webpage](#)

Tier One/Tier Two union reps can get credit for union leave

Under [House Bill 2016](#) (2019), Tier One and Tier Two employees who are designated representatives of their labor organizations can now earn retirement credit for time when they take a leave to conduct union business, called "release time."

Continued

PERS EMPLOYER NEWSLETTER September 2020

To ensure the employee receives retirement credit for their approved period of release time, after the period of release time occurs, the employee and employer need to submit a [Release Time form](#) to PERS and include a copy of the release time agreement.

While House Bill 2016 only impacts Tier One/Tier Two members (those hired before August 29, 2003), OPSRP members (those hired after August 28, 2003) are allowed “reasonable time” to conduct labor organization business during work hours, and public employers can choose to provide PERS retirement credit for that time.

Learn more

- For a full explanation of the new process, read [Employer Announcement #100](#) on the PERS Employer website.
- Access a PDF of the [Release Time form](#).

EDX tip of the month: How to do a status check

The Status Check Member Search screen allows you to view an employee’s contribution status. This information helps you determine if PERS is expecting contributions for the employee or if you should contact PERS to discuss the employee’s contribution status.

1. To access the screen, click on the Status Check link. (See [Figure 1](#) below.)
2. On the next screen, enter the member’s name or Social Security number (SSN). (See [Figure 2](#) below.)
3. On the Status Check Member Search screen, check the Plan and Contribution Status columns to know if PERS is expecting contributions for that employee. (See [Figure 3](#) for examples of results.)

Figure 1



Figure 2

Status Check Member Search

The screenshot shows the 'Search for a Member' form. It includes a search bar with the text 'Search for a member to display their member contribution status.' Below the search bar, there are two input fields: 'Enter Last Name:' and 'or SSN No:'. A 'Search' button is located to the right of the input fields.

Figure 3

Plan	Contribution Status
PERS	Please contact PERS.
PERSTier 2	Expecting contributions.
PERSTier 2	Not expecting contributions; must serve new waiting period.
PERSTier 2	Not expecting contributions; must serve new waiting period.
OPSRPDB	Expecting contributions.
OPSRPDB	Not expecting contributions; currently serving waiting time.

Tip: When doing a status check to find out if a new hire is a PERS retiree, you may find that the status check result is inconclusive. For a definitive answer, contact your Employer Service Center representative.

Need help? Contact your [Employer Service Center representative](#).