

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

Two Northside 75, Suite 300, Atlanta, GA 30318-7701 (404) 350-6300 (800) 805-4609 www.ers.ga.gov

Enrollment in Retirement Plans

1. Who is eligible for membership (plan specific)?

Employees' Retirement System (ERS) (including GSEPS)

Full-time employees of participating departments and agencies are required to become members of ERS as a condition of employment. (Full-time employment status is defined as thirty-five (35) hours per week for a minimum of nine months a year.) Effective January 1, 2009, new hires to state government are members of the Georgia State Employees' Pension and Savings Plan (GSEPS).

Note regarding working less than 100% time:

To become a member of ERS, an employee must be in a position which is his or her primary occupation and which requires actual performance of duties at least 35 hours per week for at least 9 months per year. After membership is established, if an employee remains in a position which meets these requirements, he or she may continue to participate as a member even if the hours actually worked are less than the fulltime requirement. The employer should report the employee at percentage time, determined by dividing the actual hours worked during a month by the normal fulltime hours for the month. Service is credited at the percentage reported; for example, if reported at 60% time, the employee receives .6 months credit for that month.

The right to remain a member when working part-time is position driven. The employee must remain in a position which meets the minimum hours/months requirement. If a participating member is transferred into a part-time or hourly position, he or she should not be reported to ERS regardless of the actual hours worked.

Public School Employees Retirement System (PSERS)

Public school employees who are not eligible for membership in the Teachers' Retirement System. Membership specifically includes but is not limited to school bus drivers, school lunchroom personnel, school maintenance personnel and school custodial personnel. Exception - substitute employees working less than 60% time are not eligible.

Legislative Retirement System (LRS)

Members of the General Assembly are eligible for membership in the Legislative Retirement System. General Assembly members have the option to participate in LRS. A choice of non-membership prohibits a General Assembly member from future participation in LRS and any other public retirement or pension system while serving in the General Assembly.

Georgia Judicial Retirement System (GJRS)

O.C.G.A. Title 47 Chapter 23 mandates membership in JRS for any individual who becomes a Superior Court Judge, a Judge or Solicitor-General of a State Court, a Juvenile Court Judge or a District Attorney on or after July 1, 1998.

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Georgia Defined Contribution Plan (GDGP)

Temporary, seasonal, and part-time employees of departments, bureaus, institutions, boards, or commissions of the State of Georgia; the State Board of Education; the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. *Excluded* from membership are the following: employees working for an institution who are regularly enrolled and attending classes at that institution who meet IRS student exclusion criteria; employees qualified as bona fide independent contractors; employees who are active or retired from ERS, LRS, JRS, or TRS.

2. Is membership required for all employees as a condition of employment?

Generally, yes. However, there are exceptions. For example, Full-time employees of tax offices, state court employees, members of the General Assembly, and employees age 60 at time of hire for ERS covered employers have an option to decline membership.

3. How do I enroll a new employee into the plan?

New employees are enrolled electronically based on data transmitted in the monthly detail file from all File Transfer Protocol (FTP) employers or on-line via the Employer Reporting Website for manual employers. The following information is required for successful enrollment of each new employee: valid SSN, full legal name, date of birth, gender, valid address, contribution group code, valid plan eligibility date (also required for rehires/transfers and anyone with a plan/contribution group change).

4. Are there restrictions for members returning to work after retirement?

There are plan specific restrictions related to retirees who are less than normal retirement age when they return to service. See normal retirement ages for each plan below.

ERS

- Normal retirement age for non-law enforcement groups is age 60 with 10 years of service or at any age with 30 years of service or more.
- Normal retirement age for law-enforcement groups (e.g. Uniform Division of Public Safety, officers and agents of the GBI, Conservation Rangers, or DOR Alcohol and Tobacco agents) is age 55.
- Rehired annuitants who return to service after reaching normal retirement age or that have a two month break in service after retirement are permitted to work 1,040 hours per calendar year without interruption of benefits.
- Retirement benefits will be suspended for the remainder of the calendar year if a rehired annuitant works over the 1,040 hours.
- Any employer that hires a retired plan member shall notify ERSGA within 30 days of hire and provide the member's name, other demographic information and number of hours the employee is expected to work annually.
- Annuitants cannot return to employment with a covered employer within two consecutive calendar months of their effective date of retirement. Any return to employment with a covered employer, including service as or for an independent contractor, within two consecutive calendar months of the effective date of retirement shall nullify the application for retirement.
- Covered employers now include the Board of Regents. In addition, a local school system is considered an employer if it was the retiree's last employer.
- If the retired plan member works more than 1,040 hours in any calendar year, the employer shall notify ERSGA as soon as such information is available.

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- Any employer that fails to notify ERSGA as noted above shall reimburse the fund for any benefits wrongfully paid.
- Disability retirees who return to service for a covered employer must again become members of ERS.

PSERS

- Normal retirement age is 65 with 10 years of service.
- Any rehired annuitant less than age 65 and returning to work in a covered position will have benefits suspended while reemployed; he or she must again become an active member of the plan.
- Upon subsequent termination, the member must notify the board and will begin receiving benefits based on total accrued service.
- Any rehired annuitant who has reached age 65 must make an election to continue employment as an active member and discontinue pension payments or to discontinue PSERS contributions and continue pension payments.
- Rehired Retirees Age 65 or older and electing to continue active membership will upon subsequent termination begin receiving benefits on total accrued service.
- Disability retirees of PSERS may not go back to work for the school system in the same type position from which they retired.

LRS

- Normal retirement age is 62 with eight years of service.
- Any rehired annuitant less than age 62 that returns to state service in a position other than legislator (including as or for an independent contractor) will have benefits suspended until such service terminates. Upon subsequent termination, benefits resume at rates established prior to returning to service.
- Any rehired annuitant who is age 62 or older that returns to state service in a position other than legislator (including as or for an independent contractor) will have benefits suspended only after the retiree performs more than 1,040 hours service in a calendar year.
- Any rehired annuitant less than age 62 that returns to state service as a legislator will have benefits suspended and shall resume active membership in the plan. Upon subsequent termination, a new benefit will be calculated based on the combined accumulated service.
- Any rehired annuitant who is age 62 or older that returns to state service as a legislator has the option of continuing benefits while serving or of suspending benefits and reestablishing active membership in the plan. Such option must be exercised within 30 days of taking office. If the retiree elects to suspend benefits, upon termination, a new benefit will be calculated based on the combined accumulated service.

GJRS

- Normal retirement age is 60 with 10 years of service.
- Any rehired annuitant less than age 60 that returns to state service in a position other than legislator (including as or for an independent contractor) will have benefits suspended until such service terminates. Upon subsequent termination, benefits resume at rates established prior to returning to service plus any increases granted during the period of reemployment.
- Any rehired annuitant who is age 60 or older that returns to state service in a position other than legislator (including as or for an independent contractor) will have benefits suspended only after the retiree performs more than 1,040 hours service in a calendar year.

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5. Is membership required for employees over the age of 60 at the date of employment?

Yes, membership is required for employees over the age of 60 at the date of employment for all plans except **ERS**. Full-time employees who first become eligible for membership after they turn age 60 may decline membership in **ERS**. This decision must be made within thirty days of hire and is irrevocable.

Contributions

1. What is the current employee contribution rate or amount?

ERSGA statutes require employers to deduct employee contributions through payroll. The contributions are in most cases post-tax unless an employer has taken formal action under IRC 414(h). For prior year rates, contact the ERSGA Employer Reporting Division. See the table below for current rates for the plan you report.

2. What are the current employer contribution rates?

See Table [here](#) for current employer rates. For prior year rates, contact the ERSGA Employer Reporting Division. Note: The Superior Courts and the Department of Revenue are responsible for the employer share of contributions for State Courts and County Tax Offices employees respectively.

3. What Salary should be reported for retirement purposes?

Per the statutes, only regular compensation for normal working time should be reported for retirement purposes. This generally excludes overtime pay, stipends, or special pay supplements. Please contact ERSGA for specific questions on pension eligible compensation.

Reporting

1. I am a new payroll or human resources employee. How do I get training on submitting data to the retirement system?

A new payroll or human resources employee who has never submitted data to the retirement system should contact ERSGA and request to speak to your employer reporting representative. Your representative will guide you through the reporting process.

An additional source of information is the "ERSGA Employer On-line Quick Reference Guide" - an overview of how to submit payroll data to the retirement system. It outlines how to register on the employer reporting website, create and update ACH information, submit monthly summary reports and upload your employer data file. To access this reference guide:

Navigate to: www.ers.ga.gov

- Click Employers tab
- Select Employer Forms
- Select Employer Reporting Quick Reference Guide from drop down list

2. Who is my employer reporting representative?

Each employer is assigned a representative by employer category and/or retirement plan. Click [here](#) for a list of employer assignments and contact numbers, or access the Employer Information section of the ERS website, www.ers.ga.gov.

Your employer reporting representative is also listed as a primary contact on your invoices.

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3. How do I get access to the ERSGA Employer Reporting website?

To access the ERSGA Employer Reporting website you must first register, create a User ID and password. In order to register you must have a completed web contact information form on file at ERSGA. Please contact your representative to request a blank copy. To navigate to the employer reporting registration page:

- Go to www.ers.ga.gov
- Click on *Employers* tab
- Click *Log In*

If you have not yet registered, you may use the *ERSGA Employer On-line Quick Reference Guide* to assist you with registration.

If you are registered, enter your User ID and password to access the ERSGA Employer Reporting website.

4. What is my employer code?

The employer code is a numeric code used to identify an employer. You may find it on previous monthly summary reports and invoices. If none of these documents are available contact your Employer Reporting Representative. Some examples of employer codes are: 75-001, 466, 128-104, or 127-036.

5. What is the due date for submitting reports, payments, and data to the retirement system?

The due date for submitting summarization reports and detail to ERSGA is the 1st of the month.

6. What do I do if the total payroll deduction amount from my records is not equivalent to the calculated contributions due on the online summary report?

If the payroll deduction amount does not match the calculated amount on the summary report, change the total EE or ER contribution amount(s) on the summary report to match your payroll records and save. Note: Do not click the calculate button after saving as this will revert the totals to the previously calculated values.

7. How do I correct prior reports?

The employer reporting process is outlined in the *ERSGA Employer Online Reporting Quick Reference Guide*. To access this reference guide:

- Go to www.ers.ga.gov
- Click *Employers* tab
- Click to access *Employer Forms and Information*
- Select *Employer Reporting Quick Reference Guide* from Forms & Publications list

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8. What is the invoice and why did my agency receive one?

Your agency received an invoice for one or more of the following reasons:

- There was a discrepancy between the prior period adjustment in the detail and the summarization report,
- There was a discrepancy between the EECON in detail and the summarization report
- There was a discrepancy between the ERCON in detail and the summarization report
- There was a discrepancy between pickup in detail and the summarization report
- There was a discrepancy between net payment due and payment allocated, or
- There was a discrepancy between outstanding invoice amount and that shown on the summarization report

Please contact your ERSGA employer reporting representative to review the invoice and underlying transactions with you.

Employer Maintenance

1. How do I update my contact information on the website?

To update your contact information on the web:

- Login to the Employer Reporting website
- Select Profile maintenance
- Select the contact information tab and update your contact information
- Save your changes

Special Reporting Scenarios

1. How do I report a member on leave without pay (including military leave without pay)?

Members on LWOP for the full payroll reporting period should be reported electronically in the monthly employee detail file for File Transfer Protocol (FTP) employers or on-line via the Employer Reporting Website for manual employers.

- FTP employers - would report a detail row with zero salary, percent time employee and employer contributions along with payment reason code 01 for LWOP or 02 for MLWOP.
- Manual employers – from the Maintain Monthly Detail window Salary and Contribution Tab enter zero salary, percent time, employee and employer contributions (if applicable) and save. Proceed to Details Tab to enter payment reason code 01 or 02 and save.

2. How do I report salary and contributions for an active member that dies while in service?

All employers must report deceased members in their monthly employee detail files (via employer reporting website or FTP).

- FTP employers - report a detail row with actual salary, percent time, and employee and employer contributions along with payment reason code 00 for Regular Pay. Include Termination Date (Date of Death) and Termination Reason code 02 for Death.

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- Manual employers – from the Maintain Monthly Detail window:
 - Salary Tab: enter salary and percent time. Click the calculate button and save.
 - Details Tab: enter payment reason code 00 for Regular Pay, use Date of Death for Termination Date and enter Termination Reason code 02 for Death and save

Regardless of the amount of time the member worked during the month of death, their final pay check should reflect prorated salary, contributions and percent time.

3. How do I correctly report a salary increase or decrease in my monthly file?

Salary increases or decreases should be reported electronically in the monthly employee detail file for File Transfer Protocol (FTP) employers or on-line via the Employer Reporting Website for manual employers.

- FTP employers - would report employee detail with increased/decreased salary amount, percent time, applicable employee and employer contributions along with payment reason code 03 (Pay Decrease) or 04 (Pay Increase).
- Manual employers – from the Maintain Monthly Detail window Salary and Contribution Tab enter increased/decreased salary amount, percent time, employee and employer contributions (if applicable) and save. Proceed to Details Tab to enter payment reason code 03 (Pay Decrease) or 04 (Pay Increase) and save.

4. How do I report a member on less than 100% time?

Members working percentage time should be reported electronically in the monthly employee detail file for File Transfer Protocol (FTP) employers or on-line via the Employer Reporting Website for manual employers.

- FTP employers - would report employee pro-rated salary, pro-rated percent time applicable employee and employer contributions due along with payment reason code 00 (Regular Pay). Employers should also include a statement/comment on the Summary Report – Comments Tab advising of the member's pay status change from full to percentage time.
- Manual employers – from the Maintain Monthly Detail window Salary and Contribution Tab enter pro-rated salary, pro-rated percent time applicable employee and employer contributions due and save. Proceed to Details Tab to enter payment reason code 00 (Regular Pay) and save. Employers should also include a statement/comment on the Comments Tab advising of the member's pay status change from full to percentage time

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5. How should I report employees working 10 months but being paid over 12 months?

While the TRS plan provides that contract employees who work 9, 10, or 11 month contract terms be granted a year of service, the ERS plan grants service credit each month based on employment, salary, and contribution records received. Reporting for a full 12 months each fiscal year (July 1-June 30) is required for a year of service credit to be granted. To that end, all employers must report annual salaries and contributions equally over a 12 month period regardless of the number of months for which an employee is actually paid. This means, for example, that an employee that begins work in August of a particular year must be reported for 1/12 of their annual salary for August regardless of when the school year begins or ends.

At termination or retirement, many employers reporting employees in less than 12 month positions issue retro-pay adjustments to make an employee whole when such employee retires before the end of the school year. For example, an employee earning \$50,000 annually is paid \$4,166.67 per month. If the employee resigns at the end of the semester in December, he or she has only received pay for four months (September –December) totaling \$16,667. Since four months represents 40% of a 10 month school year, employers issuing retro pay adjustments would issue a check to such an employee for the difference in the amount of \$3,333 (\$20,000-16,667). This process is correct and should continue to ensure that the employee is paid in full for time worked. However, **no employee or employer contributions** should be paid on such retro pay adjustments.

6. How should a college or university report part-time/temporary/seasonal employees?

Eligible part-time/temporary/seasonal employees of colleges or universities are required to become members of Georgia Defined Contribution Plan (GDGP) as a condition of employment. Employers must assign/setup the employee for the appropriate pension plan in their payroll software system to begin contribution deductions. A membership account will be created for the new employee upon receipt of the first electronically transmitted detail row with required enrollment data. The GDGP Application for Membership should be completed and signed by each employee, certified by the employer and forwarded to the retirement system.

7. How do I correct an employee's record that was submitted under the wrong SSN?

Upon discovery of the SSN reporting error, the employer should immediately contact the Retirement System **before** the correct employee SSN is submitted in the next monthly employee detail file. ERSGA will require a copy of the affected employee's social security card for documentation/validation to correct/change the SSN submitted in error.

8. How do I report an employee previously excluded from the pension plan in error?

Upon discovery of the employee's exclusion from the required pension plan, the employer should immediately contact the retirement system to report the error and setup/assign the employee to the appropriate pension plan in their payroll software system to begin contribution deductions. Electronic retro active adjustment transactions of reportable salary and contributions will need to be transmitted in the next monthly detail file submitted for FTP employers. Manual employers will need to enter retroactive adjustments via the Employer Reporting Web-site. Total retroactive employee and employer contributions due will need to be included in the next Summary Report as a prior period adjustment line item. A completed and certified Application for Membership and election form if applicable will need to be forwarded to the retirement system.