

PSERS Employer Bulletin

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Public School Employees Retirement System

5 N 5th Street
Harrisburg PA 17101

Toll-Free

866.353.1844

Local

717.787.1755

FAX

717.783.8760

Email

ContactESC@pa.gov

School Crossing Guards

While conducting a random audit of members' job titles, PSERS is still finding employers who are enrolling School Crossing Guards. The employers where this occurred were contacted by PSERS. An amendment made in the year 2000 to the (Pennsylvania) Township and Borough Codes expressly excludes school crossing guards as school employees and prohibits them from membership in PSERS.

If you have an employee who performs multiple job functions, one being a school crossing guard, it is important to report the eligible school service and exclude the school crossing guard service. If you have questions about an employee's enrollment qualifications, please contact your ESC representative.

Purchase of Service and Internships

Retirement credit for work performed as a student is generally not eligible for purchase (including internships), because such service is often tied to conditions that make the service not part of a true employer/employee relationship. Such conditions include, but are not limited to, service performed:

- As part of a financial aid package (e.g. work study, etc.).
- In exchange for a tuition or housing waiver.
- As part of the student's curriculum.
- In exchange for academic credit.
- As a Graduate or Resident Assistant.

For example, an individual who is a student teacher at a public school cannot purchase that service because the student teaching time is part of the curriculum. Academic credit is given upon completion of the student teaching. Other positions that may be considered as internships would be school psychologist or special education internships. The member has the responsibility to provide proof that these conditions did not exist. Such proof may come from the employer, or may be supplied by the member from their collection of employment history documents, but the final burden ultimately rests with the member.

Employer Service Center Staff

Jayne Buchwach
Regional Field Administrator
jbuchwach@pa.gov

Region 1 - Rose Diehl
rosdiehl@pa.gov
*Beaver, Butler, Cameron,
Centre, Clarion, Clearfield,
Clinton, Crawford, Elk, Erie,
Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence,
McKean, Mercer, Potter,
Venango, and Warren
Counties*

Region 2 - Matt Hartman
mahartman@pa.gov
*Bradford, Carbon, Columbia,
Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne,
Lycoming, Monroe, Montour,
Northampton, Northumberland,
Pike, Snyder, Sullivan,
Susquehanna, Tioga, Union,
Wayne, and Wyoming
Counties*

Region 3 - Jonathan Malnick
jmalnick@pa.gov
*Allegheny, Armstrong, Fayette,
Greene, Indiana, Washington,
and Westmoreland Counties*

Region 4 - Carolina Baez
cbaez@pa.gov
*Adams, Bedford, Blair,
Cambria Cumberland,
Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton,
Huntington, Juniata, Mifflin,
Perry, Somerset, and York
Counties*

Region 5 - Michael Chappuis
michappuis@pa.gov
*Berks, Bucks, Lancaster,
Lebanon, Montgomery,
and Schuylkill Counties*

Region 6 - Ellen Harrington
eharrinto@pa.gov
*Chester, Delaware, and
Philadelphia Counties*

Slide Presentation Training Available for New Payment Process on PSERS Employer Web

Effective April 1, 2014, PSERS, along with PNC Bank, implemented an enhanced PNC Cash Concentration (Cash Con) system. The enhanced Cash Con allows employers to make payments to PSERS and have those payments applied to specific charges within their PSERS Accounts. PSERS alerted all employers of this upcoming change in the *Employer Bulletin* Volume 4 – 2013 and Volume 1 – 2014. An email was also sent to the business managers of each school.

There are currently two slide presentations available on the Employer Web that will be necessary for you to review in order to initiate successful payments to PSERS. **The presentations are found on the PSERS website under Employers, Employer News.** Be sure to turn on your speakers before starting the audio presentations.

Those employers who currently use the PNC Cash Con website to make payments should view the PNC Cash Con Web Payment Process presentation. Those employers who currently use the PNC Touch Tone method should view both the PNC Cash Con Web Payment Process and the PNC Cash Con Phone Payment Process presentations as the Web presentation has information you will need to incorporate into the new Phone Payment training.

All employers should be aware of the following information beginning April 1, 2014:

1. A new Company ID # **64168** will need to be used.
2. You will need to reset your password at your first log-on to the PNC Cash Con website.
3. The initial default password is **psers072#**.
4. Each employer will have only one User ID and password to be shared by all in your office who make payments.
5. Passwords now expire every **90 days**.
6. Payments can be made to specific transactions based on the Transaction Number, Transaction Type (Work Report, Work Adj, etc.); or you can continue to have your payments applied to the oldest charges in your account.

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Slide Presentation Training... (continued from page 2)

7. Payments for Employer Lump-Sum Purchase of Service (POS) will continue to be made as is currently done by check.

Employers who currently must use the Touch Tone method to make payments should be aware of some changes beginning April 1, 2014:

1. You will use a new Company ID# of **64168** as part of the payment / log-on process.
2. You will need to give your bank a new Company ID, or Sender ID, (different than the Company ID listed above). This new ID is 9331739115. This ID is used if you have a debit block or filter on your bank account as security for payments to be debited against your account.
3. You will need to reset your password with your first call to the PNC Voice Center.
4. Because this is an updated system, you will have new Unit IDs (or Location IDs) and these are as follows:
 - Employee Contribution Payments – PSERS9999EE
 - Employer Contribution Payments – PSERS9999ER
 - Member POS Payments – PSERS9999POS
 - The new Location IDs contain your four-digit employer code (represented as 9999 in the previously listed examples). You will need to use leading zeroes if your employer number contains only two or three digits.
5. The initial default password is **psers072#**.
6. The new Voice Center option is available only to those employers currently using the existing PNC Touch Tone method.
7. A separate phone call will be required for payments for each of these funds: Member Contributions, Employer Contributions, and Member POS.

Prior to initiating payments for either system, it is suggested that you view, and have available, your monthly *Employer Statement of Account*. This document contains the information you will need to complete the payment transactions.

Completing Purchase of Service Applications

As a reminder, please complete all employer fields on any given purchase of service application, especially the service and salary fields on the part-time and full-time applications. The only exception to this rule is if the information was previously included on your Work Reports in the WNC (Wages No Contributions) field. If you submit a blank application to PSERS for a member, the application will be returned to the member. Attaching W-2's or 1099's forms to the applications is permitted; however, if the service and salary fields are not completed on the application, the application will be returned to the member.

PSERS Website

www.psers.state.pa.us

The goal of our web-based reporting features, news, Bulletin, Employerpedia, employer forms, and Employer Service Center staff, is to provide you with the information and support you need right at your fingertips. From the PSERS homepage, click on **Employers** to access all online resources.

Foundations for Your Future Announcements

PSERS has begun to roll out the process where employers are assisting with the announcement of *Foundations for Your Future* (FFYF) meetings. PSERS is thankful to all employers for your assistance in alerting your employees when an FFYF meeting is to be held in your area. Notifying your employees of upcoming FFYF programs in your area will allow PSERS the opportunity to answer those retirement-related questions that otherwise may have been addressed to you.

PSERS will contact you in advance when an FFYF meeting will be held in your area. PSERS will provide you with all the information you will need to inform your employees of the upcoming meeting, including language to use in your communication. This information will be provided in a template that has been formatted for easy distribution as an email, a paystub notice or a flyer for distribution.

FFYF programs are designed to give public school employees an overview of their retirement benefits and provide all active members with general information about PSERS' benefits and services. Attending an FFYF program will help members be better prepared for their retirement.

Retirement Season Reminder

We are quickly approaching retirement season. The vast majority of PSERS retirements occur at or near the end of the school year. To achieve our mission of paying accurate and timely benefits, PSERS relies heavily on timely and accurate information reported from all employers.

Without your assistance, your employees face delays in receiving their retirement benefit, resulting in undue and unnecessary financial hardship. Here's how you can help:

- **Termination Record** – A finalized retirement benefit cannot be paid to a member without a termination record being submitted to PSERS. If PSERS receives a retirement or refund application from a member and there is no termination contract on record, PSERS will immediately send a letter to the employer requesting that a termination contract be submitted. A letter will continue to be automatically generated each month until PSERS receives a termination record. The start date of the termination contract is the last day of paid service or the last day of an unpaid leave.
- **Balance of Contract** – If additional salary and/or service will be reported after the month of termination, set the **BOC/SVC** (Balance of Contract/Service) flags to "Yes". Enter the month and year this will be reported. The BOC/SVC End Date cannot be more than three months from the Work Status Start Date.
- **Final Reporting** – Be sure to include final salary and service with your final work report. The final work report is the last Work Report that the member will be on. Without this information, we cannot process the benefit promptly.
- **Timely Information** – PSERS relies on timely submission of your final reports so that retirees can be paid as soon as possible. PSERS staff may contact you to clarify information. Timely and correct information in the member's account is absolutely key to the payment of timely and accurate benefits. When member benefits are delayed, it causes an increase in phone call status inquiries and overall frustration for you and for PSERS staff. Your timely response makes both PSERS and your jobs easier.

We count on you to make the retirement process for school employees a success. Some day that retiring member will be you!