# EMPLOYER SELF-SERVICE (ESS) PORTAL MANUAL FOR TRS EMPLOYERS

Retirement Systems of Alabama | P.O. Box 302150 Montgomery, AL 36130-2150

# Employer Self-Service (ESS) Portal Manual for TRS Employers

**The RSA Employer Services Division is pleased to provide employers with this ESS Portal Manual.**

The purpose of this manual is to serve as a guide to assist ESS Users with navigation through the ESS Portal and the processes for reporting in the ESS Portal. We hope this manual will significantly help ESS Users with their reporting responsibilities in the ESS Portal as the employer of a retirement plan administered by the Teachers' Retirement System.

This manual will be updated periodically to reflect any changes in ESS Portal procedures. We encourage users to contact our office for any questions related to the ESS Portal or for assistance.

## Employer Services Contact Information

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Monday – Friday

*The information provided in this manual is meant to be a resource to assist ESS Users with ESS Portal reporting processes. This manual will not address every scenario that users may have. For assistance, or ESS Portal related questions, please contact an Employer Services Representative.*

# Act 2025-367

A new Alabama law (Act 2025-367) was passed to protect the retirement contributions of public employees in the RSA. The law ensures that RSA participating employers cannot take member contributions and use them for other purposes.

Starting October 1, 2025, it will be a Class C felony to misuse retirement contributions. This includes taking funds meant for RSA and spending them elsewhere or intentionally failing to send them to the retirement system. The penalty can be up to 10 years in prison and a $15,000 fine.

Before this law, there was no specific criminal penalty for diverting retirement funds. There have been instances when a local government that participates in RSA had kept member contributions and continually refused to submit them. There was no penalty or recourse when this happened. This new law closes that gap and helps protect the integrity of the RSA. It sends a strong message: member retirement contributions must be used only for retirement – not for anything else.

This change strengthens trust in the system and helps ensure that RSA remains secure and financially sound for all its members.

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# ESS Portal Administrator

For an employer to have access to the ESS Portal, they must first designate someone to be an ESS Portal Administrator. The ESS Portal Administrator is a person who is assigned by an authorized official of the employer to conduct business with the RSA. They will have full access to the ESS Portal. When possible, this person should not be the same individual who performs payroll or HR duties for the employer.

## Responsibilities of an ESS Portal Administrator

The ESS Portal Administrator will be responsible for determining what other employees need to be set up as contact persons in the ESS Portal and what access these employees will need, as well as ensure the employer reporting is accurate and timely. The Administrator will be responsible for setting up and maintaining accounts for the other ESS Portal users. This includes resetting passwords, PINs, and inactivating user accounts. They will also be responsible for entering the employer addresses and bank account information in the ESS Portal. This is done from the Administrator tab in the ESS Portal, and only the ESS Portal Administrator(s) will have access to this tab. If the primary Administrator needs to be updated, an authorized official will need to notify Employer Services of this change.

## Designating an ESS Portal Administrator

To establish an ESS Portal Administrator, an authorized official of the employer must complete an ESS Portal Administrator User Registration form (this can be found here: https://www.rsa-al.gov/employers/services/) and email it to essadminreg@rsa-al.gov. An employer can have multiple Administrators, however, the Administrator set up by Employer Services will be the primary Administrator.

Once Employer Services has set up the Administrator in the ESS Portal the Administrator will receive three separate emails. One email contains their ESS Portal Administrator ID, which will be permanent, one email contains a temporary password, and one email contains a temporary personal identification number (PIN). The temporary password and PIN will expire after 72 hours of the email being sent so it is imperative that the Administrator creates their own permanent password and PIN within the 72 hours. If the 72 hours expires before the Administrator has created a permanent password and PIN, the Administrator will need to notify Employer Services who will validate and reset the account.

*Please see page 10 for instructions on How to Log into the ESS Portal.*

# Changing an ESS Portal Administrator

To change the primary ESS Portal Administrator the employer will need to complete and submit two ESS Portal Administrator User Registration forms (this can be found here: https://www.rsa-al.gov/employers/services/). The first form should be marked "Remove User" to remove the previous Administrator and the second form should be marked "Add User" to name a new primary Administrator.

Once Employer Services has set up the new primary Administrator in the ESS Portal, the Administrator will receive their Administrator ID, and then receive two additional emails. One email contains a temporary password and one email contains a temporary personal identification number (PIN). The temporary password and PIN will expire after 72 hours of the email being sent so it is imperative that the Administrator creates their own permanent password and PIN within the 72 hours. If the 72 hours expires before the Administrator has created a permanent password and PIN, the Administrator will need to notify Employer Services who will validate and reset the account.

*Please see page 10 for instructions on How to Log into the ESS Portal.*

# How to Log into the ESS Portal

- The ESS Portal Administrator and users who have been given access to the ESS Portal by their Administrator, will need to follow the instructions listed to log into the ESS Portal. Here is a link to the ESS Portal: https://ess.rsa-al.gov. This link is also available on the Employer page of the RSA website at www.rsa-al.gov, under Employer Services.
- New users will enter the User ID that was assigned to them and the temporary password they received. They will then be required to check the box indicating they agree with the terms and conditions. The user will be directed to change their password, their 4-digit PIN, and select and answer two security questions. Lastly, new users will need to edit their contact information to set up their Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). Please see additional information regarding the MFA below.
- Current users will enter their ESS Portal login credentials to gain access to the ESS Portal. After logging in they will be prompted to authenticate their account using the Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). Please see additional information regarding the MFA below.

## Multi-Factor Authentication

The Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) is the online security feature for ESS Users to access the ESS Portal. When new users log in to the ESS Portal, they will be prompted to edit their contact information. Next, they will select a Contact Type option to have the MFA code sent to them. Then, they will select Send Authentication Code. Once the user receives their code, they will enter it and select Validate Authentication Code. A pop-up message will display letting the user know it has been validated.

When logging in to the ESS Portal after setting up the MFA, users will enter their ESS Portal login credentials, then select the delivery method to receive the MFA code.

*Note: The MFA generator will not recognize a dial-by-directory or extension, therefore, we strongly recommend providing a direct number to ensure that the user receives their MFA code to successfully gain access to the ESS Portal.*

# Overview of the ESS Portal Tabs

# Report Tab

## Submit Report

The **Submit Report** screen is where users will upload Enrollment and Contribution files. Users also have the capability of making manual changes to enrollments by selecting Enter Online under Enrollments. They can also manually enter retirement contribution submissions by selecting Enter Online under Retirement Contributions. Users can view, void, or suspend submissions that are in progress as needed.

## View History

The **View History** screen allows users to view current and previous Enrollment and Contribution submissions. This screen defaults to show the last three (3) months of submissions. In the upper left-hand corner of the screen users can select to view all prior submissions. To view previously submitted Enrollment or Contribution submissions, select the Submission ID number in blue. ESS Users can view, suspend, or void submissions that are in progress prior to remitting payment.

- Users can Void an Enrollment or Contribution submission from this screen.
    - For example: if users have a lot of errors that need to be corrected in their payroll system prior to submitting payment, the report can be voided.
- Users can also Suspend a Contribution submission from this screen.
    - For example: if a change is needed on an employee's enrollment, the Contribution submission can be suspended rather than voided. Once the necessary changes have been made to the employee's enrollment, the user can navigate back to the Report tab > View History > Unsuspend the submission.
- Once the submission is Unsuspended, the system will go through the validation process again to identify any errors due to enrollment changes. The user will then be able to proceed with any additional corrections prior to submitting payment.

## View Reporting Packets

The **View Reporting Packets** screen displays reports that are system generated after each contribution submission has posted. These reports cover various topics, such as Leave Without Pay, Non-Participating Part-Time Status, Post-Retirement Employment, and Overtime Limit. These reports are to be used as tools to track various information.

## Download PIDs

The **Download PIDs** screen allows users to download all PIDs for their agency's active employees.

## Invoices

The **Invoices** screen is where RSA sends invoices for various reasons, including, but not limited to, Employer Penalty, Service Purchases, Manual Corrections, and PEEHIP invoices. These invoices can be credit or debit invoices. PEEHIP invoices are to be submitted under the invoice screen. Other invoices can be applied to the contribution submission on the Summary screen.

- Users can view paid and unpaid invoices in the ESS Portal.
    - To view unpaid invoices, go to Report > Invoices. This screen will automatically show any unpaid invoices the employer may have. Users are also able to pay invoices from this screen.
    - To view any paid invoices, go to Report > Invoices > Show Paid Invoices.
- Users can pay debit invoices, such as Employer Penalty or PEEHIP invoices.
    - To do this, select the check box next to the invoice(s) to be paid.
    - Select Pay Invoice.
    - Select Action > Edit to enter the total amount due, select Action > Apply.
    - Select Continue to Step 2, where the user will review the invoices being paid and the amount. Enter the PIN > Submit.

## Payroll Schedules

The **Payroll Schedule** screen allows users to set up their payroll schedule(s) based on their payroll frequency(ies). This is to notify the RSA when wages are earned and paid by the employer. More information on Payroll Schedules can be found on pages 24 – 25.

## Error Correction

The **Error Correction** screen is where uncorrected enrollment errors are displayed when a user submits and publishes an enrollment file with errors that have not yet been cleared.

- If a user receives an error message on the contribution report stating this enrollment is in Error Correction, navigate to Services > Error Correction and edit the enrollment as needed.

## Contract Schedules

The **Contract Schedule** screen allows users to set up their contract schedule(s) based on their employees' contracts. This is to notify RSA when the employees' contracts begin and end. More information on Contract Schedules can be found on pages 26 – 29.

# Services Tab

## Death Notice

The **Death Notice** screen allows users to submit a Death Notice to the Retirement Systems electronically for active and retired employees who have worked for their agency. Submitting a Death Notice is a two-part process for active employees.

- Select Services > Death Notice.
- Enter a valid SSN, PID, or Last Name to retrieve the employee's information.
- Complete the death notice information and select Submit.
- Terminate the active employee's enrollment with the date of death and the enrollment end reason of Death.

Note: The Application for Survivor Benefit is available on the Death Notice screen, if needed.

For retired employees, the user will only need to fill out the death notice information.

## Employer Certification

The **Employer Certification** screen allows users to certify Employee Retirement Requests. Users can also view any previous retirement requests. More information on Employer Certification can be found on pages 72 – 75.

## Employee Information

The **Employee Information** screen allows users to view unaudited service credit awarded to an employee based on each plan year.

- This screen does not show any previous service credit from any other retirement systems (ERS or JRF), or any service that may have been purchased, refunded, or adjusted by RSA.
- The information provided will show whether the employee has enrolled with RSA-1. If enrolled with RSA-1, additional information is provided, such as the suspension end date (if the account has been suspended), the employee's RSA-1 year-to-date contributions, and the RSA-1 Contribution Limit for the calendar year.
- This screen also shows the Pensionable Wages and Employee Contributions for the logged in employer.

## Search Demographics

The **Search Demographics** screen allows users to make demographic changes to their active employees, as well as create and update enrollments for new and current employees. Users can also view the employees who are currently and/or previously employed by the logged in employer.

## Employer Information

The **Employer Information** screen displays the employer's Current Rates, Historical Rates, Plan Provisions, IRS Contribution Limits, Retiree Earnings Limits, and Actuarial Information.

- To view Historical Rates, select Employer Information > Current Rates and select Display Historical Rates.
    - Employer Contribution Rate changes take effect in the first pay period in which the pay period ends on or after October 1st.
- To view Plan Provisions, select the Plan Provision Information.
- The IRS Earnings Limits will show for the current and prior plan years.
- The Retiree Earning Limits will show for the current and prior calendar years.
- To generate Actuarial Documents, navigate to the Actuarial Information section at the bottom of the screen and select the appropriate document.

## Reports

The **Reports** screen displays various reports available to the users, which provide detailed information regarding the agency. Information on the different reports can be found on pages 76 – 79.

## Message Center

The **Message Center** allows the RSA to send communications through the ESS Portal, so users can keep their RSA communications in one place. When RSA sends a communication, users will be notified by email of a new message in their Message Center.

- Users can view deleted messages by selecting View Deleted Messages in the bottom left-hand corner.
- Users can submit a question to the RSA by selecting Submit a Question in the bottom left-hand corner.

## Question Center

The **Question Center** allows users to view Frequently Asked Questions. Users can also submit a question through the Question Center to Employer Services. Employer Services monitors this daily and responds to the questions in the order in which they are received.

- To submit a question, enter the question in the box at the bottom of the screen titled "Question not answered? Submit it below", then select Submit.
- An Employer Services Representative may be reached by phone at 334.517.7005, option 2 or by email at Employer.Services@rsa-al.gov.

# Account Tab

## Change Password

ESS Users are required to change their password every 90 days. The ESS Portal will notify the user 14 days in advance of their password expiring and prompt them to update their password. It is important that users update their password when prompted to avoid being locked out of the ESS Portal.

- To change a password, select the Account tab > Change Password. Enter the Current Password > New Password > Retype New Password > ESS PIN > Update.

## Change PIN

The PIN is the user's electronic signature in the ESS Portal. No one else should know or have access to another user's PIN. This PIN is used when paying Employer Contributions and downloading employer reports. ESS Users are not required to update their four-digit PIN after it has initially been set up. However, if users would like to update their PIN, they can do so as needed.

- To change the PIN, select the Account tab > Change PIN. Enter the Current PIN > New PIN > Retype New PIN > Update.

## Change Security Questions

ESS Users are not required to update their security questions after they have initially been set up. However, if users do not remember the answers to their security questions, they can update these at any time. The answers to the security questions are case sensitive.

- To change the Security Questions, select the Account tab > Change Security Questions. Select a Security Question > Enter the Answer > Retype the Answer > ESS PIN > Update.
- Repeat the steps above for security question number 2.

*Note: The RSA does not retain any log in credentials except for the User ID.*

## Edit Contact Information

If users need to edit their contact information for the MFA, they can do so once they log in by going to Account > Edit Contact Information.

# Admin Tab

The **Admin** tab only appears on the ESS Portal menu bar for employees who have been assigned the role of ESS Administrator. Under the Admin Tab the Administrator(s) will be able to maintain the employer's demographics and bank information, as well as establish and maintain contact persons and ESS users.

## Payment Account

ESS Administrator(s) can add, delete, or edit the employer's bank account(s) information. Multiple bank accounts can be set up. (Debit blocks need to be removed from these accounts.)

If the employer has changed financial institutions, remember to provide the financial institution(s) with the below ACH Company IDs:

- For Retirement: F636045055
- For RSA-1: H636045055
- PEEHIP: G63045055

How to Add a Payment Account:

- Under the Admin tab, select Payment Account.
- Select Add a Payment Account.
- Select the receipt type as EFT, then enter a nickname, the ABA routing number, the account number and re-enter the account number.
- Select Continue.
- The user will enter their ESS PIN and select Submit.

How to Edit a Payment Account:

- Under the Admin tab, select Payment Account.
- Select Edit next to the payment account that needs to be edited.
- Select Edit.
- Update the Payment Account name.
- The user will enter their ESS PIN and select Update.

How to Delete a Payment Account:

- Under the Admin tab, select Payment Account.
- Select Edit next to the account that is no longer needed.
- Select Delete.
- The user will enter their ESS PIN and select Delete.

## Office Location

Administrators should maintain the office location addresses. Multiple office locations can be added if the employer has ESS users in different departments or buildings, or if the employer uses a third-party preparer to submit contributions.

How to Add an Office Location:

- Under the Admin tab, select Manage Office Locations.
- Select Add Office Location.
- Enter the effective date, select the status, select the location type, enter the description and the address information.
- Select Submit.

How to Update an Office Location:

- Under the Admin tab, select Manage Office Locations.
- Select Edit next to the Office Location that needs to be updated.
- Make changes as necessary and select Update.

# Manage Contact Persons

Administrators will update and add contact persons as needed. The Contact Persons information informs the RSA who the appropriate contact person is for each type, and it will eliminate the need for agencies to notify different divisions of RSA when they have contact changes. When setting up additional contact persons, a contact type must be assigned to them. An employee must first be set up as a contact person before becoming an ESS User.

How to Create ESS Contact Persons:

To **add** an ESS Contact Person the ESS Portal Administrator will select the Admin tab > Manage Contact Persons > Add a Contact Person. Note: If the contact person being entered needs to have access to the ESS Portal, the ESS Portal Administrator will also need to add them under Manage Users.

The following information is required to create a Contact Person:

- First Name
- Last Name
- Job Title
- Office Location
- Email Address
- Work Phone Number

***An employee should be set as Primary if they are the "primary contact" for the agency for that specific job duty. There can only be one primary contact for each Contact Type.***

How to Edit ESS Contact Persons:

- To **edit** a Contact Person, an ESS Administrator will select the Admin tab > Manage Contact Persons > Edit > Edit.
- To **edit** a Contact Person's Contact Type who is not a "primary contact", select the Admin tab > Manage Contact Persons > Edit > Edit and update the information and Contact Type(s) as needed.
- To **edit** a Contact Person's Contact Type who is a "primary contact", the ESS Administrator will first need to designate or add another employee and set them as "primary contact".

How to Delete ESS Contact Persons:

- To **delete** a Contact Person that is not an ESS User, the ESS Administrator will select the Admin tab > Manage Contact Persons > Edit > Delete.
- To **delete** a Contact Person who is an ESS User, the ESS Administrator will select the Admin tab > Manage Users > Edit > and uncheck Active on their ESS User account. Then select the Admin tab > Manage Contact Persons > Edit > Delete.
- To **delete** a Contact Person who is an ESS User and is a "primary contact", the ESS Administrator will first need to designate or add another employee as "primary contact" for that Contact Type before inactivating the employee. Select the Admin tab > Manage Users > Edit > Edit > and uncheck Active. Then select the Admin tab > Manage Contact Persons > Edit > Delete.

| ESS Contact Types | |
|---|---|
| **Agency Head** | Receives ad-hoc correspondence from RSA. |
| **Disability Contact** | Receives ad-hoc correspondence from RSA. |
| **Enrollment Coordinator** | Receives ad-hoc correspondence from RSA. |
| **Human Resources Director** | Receives ad-hoc correspondence from RSA. |
| **IT** | Receives ad-hoc correspondence from RSA. |
| **Office Coordinator** | Receives ad-hoc correspondence from RSA. |
| **PEEHIP Clerk** | Receives ad-hoc correspondence from RSA. |
| **Reporting Official** | Receives all system generated communications related to the submission of enrollment and contribution reports. This includes balance, post, and Employer Reporting Packets. |
| **Retirement Certification** | ESS Users must be assigned this contact type to receive emails regarding Retirement Certifications. The user must have the role of ESS Administrator or ESS Staff to access the Employer Certification screen in the ESS Portal. |
| **RSA-1** | Receives ad-hoc correspondence from RSA. |
| **Service Purchases** | ESS Users must be assigned this contact type to receive emails regarding Service Purchases. The user must have the role of ESS Administrator or ESS Staff to access the Employer Certification screen in the ESS Portal. |
| **Withdrawal Certification** | ESS Users must be assigned this contact type to receive emails regarding Withdrawal Certifications. The user must have the role of ESS Administrator or ESS Staff to access the Employer Certification screen in the ESS Portal. |

# Manage Users

Administrators can set up other employees as ESS Users. When setting up additional ESS Users a role(s) must be assigned to them based on what Portal access they will need.

How to Create ESS Portal Users and Assign Roles:

- The individual must be set up as a contact person before they can be added as an ESS User.
- Under the Admin tab select Manage Users.
- Select Add User.
- Select the Contact Person that was just entered and assign a User ID unique to them.
- Select the appropriate role(s) for this individual from the following options: ESS Administrator, ESS File Validation, ESS Employer Reporting, ESS Staff, and PEEHIP.
- Select Submit and the information will be saved.
- The system will automatically send three emails to this user, which will include their ESS User ID, temporary password, and temporary PIN. These emails will expire after 72 hours. Therefore, it is imperative for the ESS user to establish their permanent password and permanent PIN within 72 hours of receiving these emails.
    - If the 72 hours expires before the ESS user has created a permanent password and PIN, the ESS Portal Administrator will need to validate and reset these records in ESS for the individual.
- Multi-Factor Authentication.
    - If any assistance is needed in editing the contact information for MFA, please refer to page 17.

| ESS User Roles | |
|---|---|
| **ESS Administrator** | Access to all screens including Employer Certification, updating bank account information, add other users, and reset passwords. The primary Administrator can add other Administrators. |
| **ESS File Validation** | Can set up payroll schedules, upload/submit enrollment and contribution files, view and resolve errors. |
| **ESS Employer Reporting** | Access to everything listed under ESS File Validation and can submit contribution and invoice payments. |
| **ESS Staff** | Access to the Services tab, including Employer Certification and some functionality under the Report tab. |
| **PEEHIP** | This user role is specific to only Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) employers. |

# Payroll Schedules

Payroll Schedules must be set up prior to the beginning of each plan year, for each type of payroll frequency. These should be generated prior to March 1st of each year. **Note: TRS cannot process retirement applications or member withdrawals until an ESS User has entered this information for the next plan year (July 1st – June 30th).**

- A payroll schedule is a schedule created based on an employer's pay frequency and is used to identify when employees are paid and inform the RSA of when contributions are to be expected.
- Payroll frequency is how often the employees receive compensation. Separate payroll schedules should be added for each payroll frequency the agency has.
- A supplemental payroll does not need to be created in the portal but should be reported with the next scheduled contribution submission.
- **Employer Contribution Rate** changes take effect in the first pay period in which the pay period ends on or after October 1st.

How to Create Payroll Schedules:

- Under the Report Tab select Payroll Schedule.
- In the open boxes below, select the following:
    - Plan Year.
    - Payroll Frequency.
    - The initial pay date will be the first pay date of the new scholastic year.
    - Days in Arrears are the number of days between when the pay period ends and the pay date.
    - Select Generate.
        - Note: When generating the payroll schedule(s), users may see a few dates highlighted in yellow. This is to let them know that the date either fell on the weekend or holiday and the system moved the pay date to the previous business day.
- Some agencies may require a custom payroll schedule.
- Users can make any changes needed to payroll schedules if no wages or contributions have been posted for the date in question. However, changes cannot be made when an enrollment or contribution file is in progress.
- Be sure to review each payroll and make any edits that are needed.

How to Edit Payroll Schedules:

- Steps to edit the criteria used to generate the payroll schedule, like the initial pay date or the number of days in arrears:
    - Select Action > Edit.
    - Make any necessary edits and select Generate to create the new payroll schedule based on the criteria that was changed.

- Steps to edit the payroll information after the schedule is created:
    - Open the payroll schedule by selecting the plus sign.
    - Select Action > Edit next to the pay period needing updates. Users can also skip a pay period if needed.
    - After changes are made, select Action > Save. Users also have options to Delete a pay period or Cancel making any changes.

# Contract Schedules

- Before setting up the contract schedules, users should know the different types of payroll contracts in their system and the beginning and ending dates for those contracts. (e.g., 182 days, 366 shifts, 2080 hours, etc.)
- Select Report.
- Select Contract Schedule.
    - Note that there are four grids:

1

Employer Contracts

| | Plan Year * | Contract Description * | Begin Date * | End Date * |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action | 2025 - 2026 | 9 Month Non-Certified (aides, 183 cnp worker) | 08/04/2025 | 05/23/2026 |
| Action | 2025 - 2026 | 9 Month Certified, CNP Managers 184, 185 days | 08/01/2025 | 05/23/2026 |
| Action | 2025 - 2026 | 9 month Non Certified(cnp 180, 182 workers) | 08/01/2025 | 05/22/2026 |
| Action | 2025 - 2026 | 9 Month Non-Certified (nurses, pre k aides) | 07/26/2025 | 05/23/2026 |
| Action | 2025 - 2026 | 9.5 Month Contract | 07/18/2025 | 05/30/2026 |
| Action | 2025 - 2026 | 10 Month Contract | 07/17/2025 | 06/05/2026 |
| Action | 2025 - 2026 | 12 Month Contract | 07/01/2025 | 06/30/2026 |
| Action | 2024 - 2025 | 9 Month Non-Certified (aides, 183 cnp worker) | 08/01/2024 | 05/23/2025 |
| Action | 2024 - 2025 | 9 month Non Certified (cnp 180, 182 workers) | 08/01/2024 | 05/22/2025 |
| Action | 2024 - 2025 | 9 Month Certified, CNP Managers 184, 185 days | 07/31/2024 | 05/23/2025 |
| Action | | | | |

1 2 3

2

Employer Contract and Payroll Schedule

| | Payroll Schedule * | First Pay Period End Date * |
|---|---|---|
| Action | Monthly, Initial Pay Date 07/31/2025, 0 days in arrears. | 08/31/2025 |
| Action | | |

1

3

Employer Contract Units

| | Type of Units Worked * | Units Contracted * |
|---|---|---|
| Action | Days | 187 |
| Action | Hours | 1,496 |
| Action | | |

1

4

Full Time Units per Pay Period

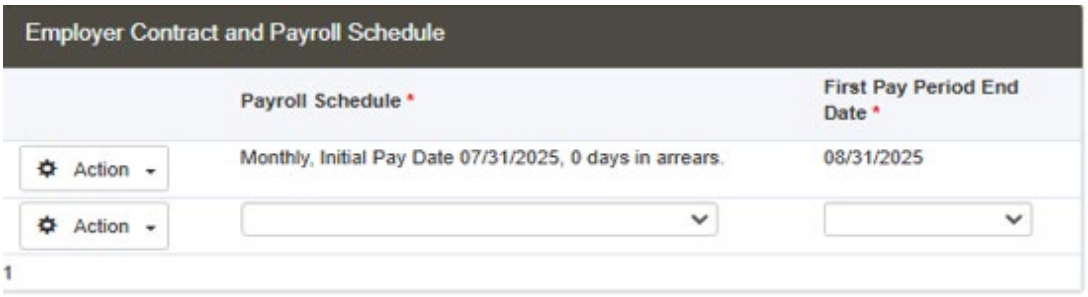
| Plan Year | Contract Description | Payroll Schedule | Contract Length |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2025 - 2026 | 9 Month Certified, CNP Managers 184, 185 days | Monthly, Initial Pay Date 07/31/2025, 0 days in arrears | 187 Days |
| 2025 - 2026 | 9 Month Certified, CNP Managers 184, 185 days | Monthly, Initial Pay Date 07/31/2025, 0 days in arrears | 1,496 Hours |

Contract Schedule - First Grid:

- In the first grid, set up the plan year, individual contract descriptions, and provide the contract dates.
    - Select the Plan Year.
    - Name each contract something such as “9-Month Employees”.
- Set up a 9-Month contract and indicate the dates the work will be performed for that contract.
    - Note: There should not be any overlapping dates for the contracts.
    - Do not set up a contract schedule for summer school. Summer school wages would be marked as summer wages on the contribution file.
- Set up separate contracts that have different beginning and ending dates.
    - Example: If the agency has multiple contracts under “9-Month Employees” with different beginning and ending dates and contract units, separate contract schedules must be created.
- If your agency has employees with the same number of contract units but have different beginning and ending dates, the broadest date range will need to be entered for the Contract Schedule from beginning to end.
    - Example: Two groups of employees who are contracted to work 182 days but have different beginning and ending dates. The date range will need to begin with the first date these employees are expected to start and end with the second date these employees are expected to end.
- These dates cannot be changed once contributions have been posted to that particular contract schedule.
- Select Save on the Action Button to the left of the plan year.

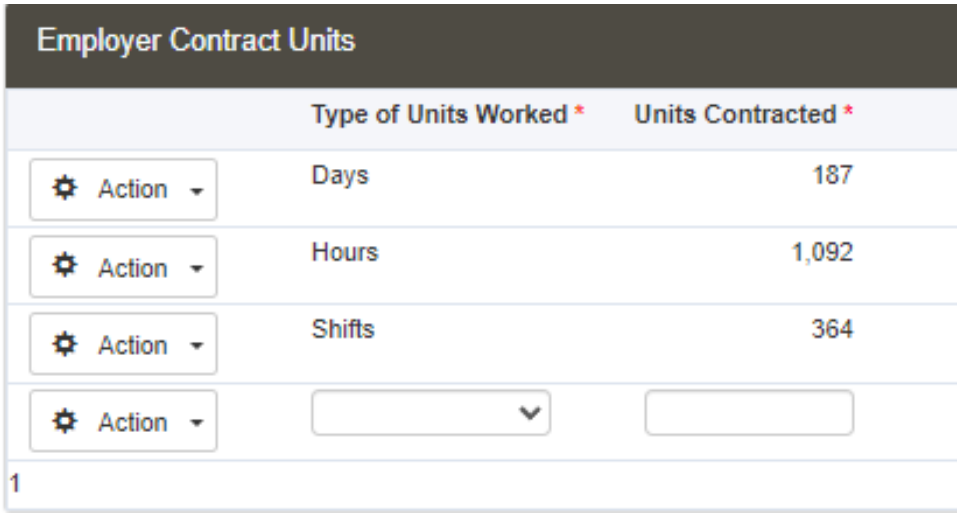
Contract Schedule - Second Grid:

- The second grid will connect the contract schedule to the payroll schedule.
  A Drop-down box is provided.
  - If the agency has only one payroll schedule, only one drop-down option will be displayed.
  - Example: The first pay period end date is 8/31/2025 because the Contract Schedule begins on 7/31/2025.
  - Select Save on the Action button.



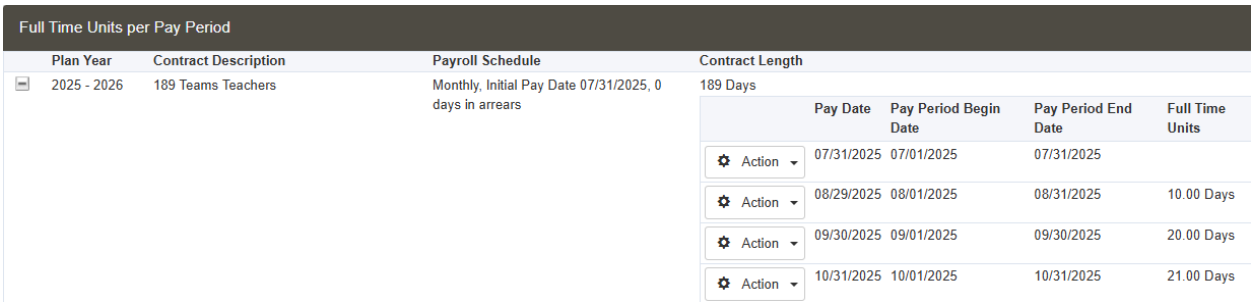

Contract Schedule - Third Grid:

- The third grid contains the agency's contract types for that particular contract schedule.
  - Units contracted should be full-time.
  - Example: An agency may have employees on this 9-Month contract type who would be considered full-time if they work 182 days or 364 shifts.



Contract Schedule - Fourth Grid:

- If the agency's software provides the number of Full-Time units worked per month on the contribution file, users will not need to use the 4th grid. If it does not provide that information, enter it here. We are unaware of any TRS agencies that need to utilize the 4th grid. Please contact Employer Services if you think it may apply to the agency.
- Example: The employees began work on August 15, so they would have no Full-Time units for July.



# Enrollments

An enrollment informs the Retirement Systems that an employee is working for a specific agency, their position status, their contribution group, and how much they are expected to work. Enrollments in the ESS Portal have taken the place of the Form 100 that was previously used.

# Mandatory Participation

Participation in the Teachers' Retirement System is mandatory per the *Code of Alabama, 1975* Section 16-25-3 as a condition of employment with a TRS participating employer. If someone is hired as a Temporary employee or an employee who works less than half-time, and they do not have an existing TRS account, the law prohibits that person from participating in the TRS. Once an employee begins participation in the TRS, he or she is required to continue contributing on future employment even if the employment is of Temporary, Seasonal/Irregular, or Part-Time status.

Employees who meet the above eligibility requirements must participate in the TRS. This means they will begin participating immediately, even if they are under a probationary period with the agency.

If a member terminates their participation with the TRS, any future employment would be the same as "starting over." In other words, if someone withdraws their account or it closes after 5 years of inactivity, that person would not be required to submit contributions on future employment that is less than half time or that is Temporary.

[TRS and PEEHIP are two separate entities which have different eligibility requirements established by law. Laws governing TRS can be found under Title 16 Chapter 25 and laws governing PEEHIP are available under Title 16 Chapter 25A of the *Code of Alabama, 1975*.]

***Enrollments, especially new hires, need to be entered in a timely manner as employees have 30 days from their date of hire to enroll in coverage(s) through MOS (Member Online Services) so they are eligible for PEEHIP. The employer can provide the employee with their PID so the employee doesn't have to wait for the welcome packet by mail to get the PID to enroll in PEEHIP. After enrollment, an employee can request their PID through the RSA website (MOS).***

# Temporary TRS Employees

A temporary employee is someone who is employed for a specific time period, not exceeding one year. If that employee is working at least half time, they must begin participation in the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) at the beginning of the second year of employment.

# Employees That Need to be Enrolled in the ESS Portal

All employees, including non-participating contract employees, need to be enrolled and reported, except for substitutes and board members, unless they are retirees.

When a new participating employee is enrolled in the ESS Portal the employee will receive a Welcome Packet containing a beneficiary form from the Teachers' Retirement System.

The employing agency can provide and notarize the beneficiary form if they wish to do so. The agency can also provide the employee's PID so the employee can enroll in PEEHIP through MOS.

# Tier Status

Tier status can be determined by entering an employee's PID or SSN and selecting Search on the Search Demographics screen. Once the employee is located, select Maintain > Enrollments. The employee's tier status will now be displayed on the right-hand side of the screen.

## Tier 1 Employees

Any member of the Retirement Systems who had service for which they received credit in the Employees' Retirement System or in the Teachers' Retirement System prior to January 1, 2013.

## Tier 2 Employees

Any member of the Retirement Systems who first began eligible employment with an Employees' Retirement System or a Teachers' Retirement System participating employer on or after January 1, 2013, and who had no eligible service in the Employees' Retirement System or the Teachers' Retirement System prior to January 1, 2013.

## Tier 99 Employees

If a member should have their tier listed as Tier 99, this means the employee has not established eligibility to contribute to the RSA. If the employee establishes eligibility, their Tier Status will change to Tier 2.

# FLC Employees

FLC stands for Firefighter, Law Enforcement, or Correctional Officer.

<u>Those working in an FLC position must meet the criteria below:</u>

- Certified.
- Working in a position that **requires certification**.
    - These certifications must be obtained and registered within the State of Alabama.
- Working **full-time** with at least one TRS participating employer in an FLC Position.

Employees who do not meet all three of the above requirements must contribute as a regular employee.

**Working in a part-time FLC capacity:** Employees who are certified, working less than full-time, in a FLC capacity and have a full-time FLC job with another TRS participating employer must contribute at the FLC rate. These employees should be enrolled as either Firefighter or Law Enforcement.

**Working part-time in a non-FLC capacity:** Employees who are certified and working full-time in an FLC capacity with another TRS participating employer and are working with your agency in a non-FLC capacity, must contribute at the FLC rate under the contribution group FLC Dual.

# Postretirement Employment

Retirees who are receiving retirement benefits from the TRS and are employed with an agency that participates in the TRS or ERS, are subject to limitations on the compensation they can receive without an adverse impact on their retirement benefits.

A retiree of the TRS who is restored to active service with a TRS or ERS member agency may continue to receive a full retirement benefit provided that the retired member meets both of the following conditions:

- Retiree must not be employed in a permanent, full-time capacity.
- Retiree's compensation cannot exceed the annual earnings limitation, which is based on a calendar year.
    - Compensation is defined as, but not limited to, wages, salary, consulting fees, or contract payments or expenses, other than reimbursement for expenses which are normally reimbursable employee expenses.

(The limit may increase during subsequent calendar years depending on increases in the Consumer Price Index.)

***NOTE: FAILURE TO ADHERE TO BOTH OF THE ABOVE RESTRICTIONS WILL RESULT IN THE SUSPENSION OF RETIREMENT BENEFITS.***

If a TRS retiree plans to return to work on a part-time basis with a TRS participating employer, they must wait at least 30 days before returning to work.

Retirees are to be enrolled with non-participating contribution groups and reported with pensionable payment reasons (Regular Pay, Lump Sum/Longevity) so they show on the Postretirement Employment Report.

***If the agency has retirees who are paid through accounts payable, retirees who have not been reported, or retirees who were not reported correctly, the agency will still need to complete the Postretirement Employment Employing Agency Initial Notice and Annual Certification forms.***

Please refer to pages 46 – 48 on how to create enrollments for employees working postretirement.

# File Vs Manual Submission

Enrollments can be submitted by uploading an enrollment file or by manually entering an employee's information into the ESS Portal.

## File Submission

- An agency must be file certified before uploading enrollment files into the ESS Portal. To learn more about enrollment file uploads, please contact the Employer Services Division.
- An Enrollment file can be generated from the agency's software system and uploaded into the ESS Portal notifying the RSA of new hires or changes to existing employees.
    - To upload an Enrollment File, select Report > Submit Report. Select Upload File under the Enrollment section.
- Once users submit their initial full enrollment file, they will only need to submit an enrollment file when there are any changes or new employees to enroll. This is called a partial enrollment submission.
- After the business and load validations run and the file is accepted, select Continue.
- Select the employer's name in blue text, from there users will be able to work and clear any remaining errors they may have.

<u>Examples of when to make an enrollment change via file submission:</u>

- Hiring a new employee.
- Existing employee has a change to their contribution group or position status.
- Existing employee goes on or returns from Unpaid Leave.
- Updating an Employee's Scheduled Work Units.
- Terminating an employee.

# Manual Submission

ESS Users who submit their enrollments manually will enter each enrollment via Search Demographics for a new employee or edit an existing employee.

Examples of when to make enrollment changes via manual entry:

- Hiring a new employee.
- Existing employee has a change to their contribution group or position status.
- Existing employee goes on or returns from Unpaid Leave.
- Updating an Employee's Scheduled Work Units.
- Terminating an employee.

How to add a New Employee (No Prior RSA Participation):

- If the new employee has never contributed to the RSA previously, this employee will automatically be a Tier 2 employee.
- First the user will need to select Add New Employee on the Search Demographics screen.
- Follow the steps to enter the demographic information, select Save Changes > Go To Enrollments.
- Select Add New Enrollment. The enrollment information screen will appear. The user will enter the enrollment information needed to create the new enrollment.
    - Note: If the employee works less than half time with no prior RSA participation they will need to be enrolled as Non-Participating.
    - Note: If the employee works at least half time in a permanent position, they will need to be enrolled as Contributing.

How to add a New Employee (Prior RSA Participation):

- If the new employee has prior RSA participation, they will contribute at their established tier rate.
- The user will search the new employee's SSN or PID in Search Demographics. Next to the employee's name, select Maintain > Enrollments.
- This brings up the enrollment screen where their enrollment history can be viewed. Select Add New Enrollment.
- The enrollment information screen will appear. The user will enter the enrollment information needed to create the new enrollment, select Save Changes.

How to update a Contribution Group or Position Status:

- If an employee has a change in their Contribution Group or Position Status, a new enrollment is required for the employee.
    - ***When adding a new enrollment for a current employee the new enrollment must be created first, then end the previous enrollment by adding an End Date and an Enrollment End Reason.***
- Create the new enrollment prior to terminating the previous enrollment.
- Select Add New Enrollment to enter the information for the new enrollment with the Enrollment Begin Date as the first day under the new Contribution Group or Position Status.
- End the previous enrollment with the last day the employee worked under this contribution group or position status, with the Enrollment End Reason of Change in Contribution Group or Change in Position Status.

Examples:

- If a Non-Participating Teacher changes to a Contributing Teacher, this would be a change in Contribution Group.
- If a Regular Teacher changes to a Seasonal/Irregular Teacher, this would be a change in Position Status.

How to correct an enrollment with the wrong Position Status or Contribution Group (No contributions linked to the enrollment):

- This can be done via an enrollment file or manual entry.
- The user will search the employee's SSN or PID in Search Demographics. Select Maintain > Enrollments next to the employee's name.
- Create the new enrollment prior to ending the old/incorrect enrollment by selecting Add New Enrollment. Enter the information for the new enrollment and select Save Changes > Exit.
- Select Edit by the incorrect enrollment and enter an End Date that matches the Enrollment Begin Date. Enter an End Reason of Hired in Error > Save Changes > Exit.

How to correct an enrollment with the wrong Position Status or Contribution Group (With contributions linked to the enrollment):

- This can be done via an enrollment file or manual entry.
- The user will search the employee's SSN or PID in Search Demographics. Select Maintain > Enrollments next to the employee's name.

- Create the new enrollment prior to ending the old/incorrect enrollment by selecting Add New Enrollment. Enter the information for the new enrollment. Select Save Changes > Exit.
- Select Edit next to the incorrect enrollment. End the enrollment with the Enrollment End Date as the previous pay period end date, with the Enrollment End Reason of Change in Contribution Group or Change in Position Status. Select Save Changes > Exit.

## Information that is needed for an Enrollment

- **Retirement Plan** tells the RSA which plan an employee will be a part of. This will also help determine the Tier Status of an employee.

Below are the options for Retirement Plans:

- TRS Tier 1 Regular
- TRS Tier 1 FLC
- TRS Tier 2 Regular
- TRS Tier 2 FLC
- TRS NONP Regular
- TRS NONP FLC

- **Contribution Group** tells the RSA what kind of job this person will be doing for an agency. Please use the table below to help determine what Contribution Group should be used when enrolling an employee.

| Contribution Group Codes | |
|---|---|
| **Alphanumeric Code** | **PEEHIP Employment Designation** |
| **010 – Other-Professional/Admin** | Professional/Admin |
| **011 – Teacher** | Professional/Admin |
| **012 – Principal** | Professional/Admin |
| **013 – Superintendent** | Professional/Admin |
| **014 – Administrative** | Professional/Admin |
| **015 – Clerical** | Support |
| **016 – Lunchroom** | Support |
| **017 – Maintenance** | Support |
| **018 – Bus Driver** | Bus Driver |
| **019 – Mechanic** | Support |
| **020 – Other-Support Worker** | Support |
| **021 – Firefighter** | Professional/Admin |
| **022 – Law Enforcement Officer** | Professional/Admin |
| **023 – Nurse** | Professional/Admin |
| **024 – Physician's Assistant** | Professional/Admin |
| **025 – Physician** | Professional/Admin |
| **029 – Retiree – School Resource Officer*** | N/A |
| **034 – Retiree – University Law Enforcement*** | N/A |
| **099 – FLC Dual** | Professional/Admin |

**These positions under Act 2025-409, are retroactive to 1/1/2023 and are set to expire on 12/31/2030.*

## PEEHIP Employment Designation

## Professional/Administrative Employee vs Support Worker Employee

| | Entitlement if Enrolled in Hospital Medical or HMO Plan | Entitlement if Enrolled in Optional Coverage Plans |
|---|---|---|
| **Professional/Administrative Employee Works** | | |
| Less than ¼ time | 0 | 0 |
| At least ¼ time but < ½ time | ¼ insurance coverage | 1 Plan |
| At least ½ time but < ¾ time | ½ insurance coverage | 2 Plans |
| At least ¾ time but < Full-time | ¾ insurance coverage | 3 Plans |
| Full-time | Full coverage | 4 Plans |
| | (Each additional Optional Plan can be purchased for $38/month or $50/month for the family dental plan.) | |
| **Support Worker Works** | | |
| 0 to 4.9 hours/week | 0 | 0 |
| 5.0 to 9.9 hours/week | ¼ insurance coverage | 1 Plan |
| 10.0 to 14.9 hours/week | ½ insurance coverage | 2 Plans |
| 15.0 to 19.9 hours/week | ¾ insurance coverage | 3 Plans |
| 20 or more hours/week | Full coverage | 4 Plans |
| | (Each additional Optional Plan can be purchased for $38/month or $50/month for the family dental plan.) | |

- **Position Status** tells the RSA in what capacity an employee will be working for an agency. Please use the table below to help determine what Position Status should be used when enrolling an employee.

| Position Status Codes and Descriptions | |
|---|---|
| **Alphanumeric Code** | **Description** |
| **01 – Regular**** | Should be used for employees who have a regular work schedule. Can be used for both full-time and part-time employees. |
| **03 – Seasonal/Irregular** | Should be used for employees who do not have a regular work schedule. This should be used for retirees who have returned to work part-time. |
| **04 – Temporary** | Should be used for employees who are hired with a pre-determined termination date that is less than one year from their start date. |
| **05 – Adjunct** | Should be used for employees who are paid per course by universities and community colleges only. |
| **08 – Ineligible to Contribute**** | Should be used for employees that are hired in a position that is never eligible for participation regardless of any previous eligibility or full-time/part-time status. |
| **09 – Ineligible to Contribute to TRS and Ineligible for PEEHIP**** | Same as position status 08 but should be used by agencies that offer PEEHIP when the employee is ineligible for both TRS participation and PEEHIP benefits. |

**** Impacts PEEHIP eligibility**

- **Scheduled Units to Work and Full-Time Units**
    - **Scheduled Units to Work per Week** represents the number of units the employee is scheduled to work per week.
    - **Scheduled Full-Time Units per Week** represents the number of units an employee would have to work per week to be considered a full-time employee regardless of whether that employee works full-time or not.

- **Scheduled Type of Units Worked** represents the type of units worked for the employee in this position (Days, Shifts, Hours, or Courses).
    - Participating employers must report TRS positions labeled as Adjunct in Courses.
        - Courses are specifically for universities and community colleges who pay adjuncts per course.
    - Participating employers must report TRS positions labeled as Bus Driver in Shifts.
    - PEEHIP participating employers must report TRS positions labeled as Support Worker in Hours.

- **Payroll Frequency** identifies the frequency by which an employee receives compensation for wages earned (Monthly, Semi-Monthly, Bi-Weekly, Weekly).

- **Units Annually Contracted to Work** represents the number of units the employee is contracted to work per year.
    - The number of days, shifts, hours, or courses the employee has been hired to work.
    - This number is based on a full-time contract for that position even if the employee is part-time.

- **Number of Months Paid** represents the number of months the employee is to be paid per year (9, 10, 11, or 12).

- **Enrollment Begin Date** represents the date an employee began working for an agency or began working under a new contribution group or position status.

- **Enrollment End Date** represents the date an employee terminated employment with an agency or stopped working under a specific contribution group or position status.
    - Enrollment end dates can be future dated and ended prior to an employee receiving their final paycheck. The ESS Portal will accept contributions on a TRS employee 90 days after the enrollment has been ended.
    - Users can terminate enrollments greater than 11 months in the past, as long as no contributions have been posted since the date the employee terminated employment.

- **Enrollment End Reason** represents the reason an employee's enrollment is terminated. Refer to the definitions below to help determine what enrollment end reason should be used when terminating an enrollment.

| Enrollment End Reasons and Descriptions | |
|---|---|
| **Alphanumeric Code** | **Description** |
| **00 – Change in Contribution Group** | Is used when an employee changes Contribution Groups, such as going from a Support Worker to a Teacher. |
| **01 – Retirement** | Is used when an employee is retiring. |
| **02 – Death** | Is used when an active employee passes away. |
| **03 – Change in Position Status** | Is used when an employee changes Position Status, such as going from Seasonal/Irregular to Regular. |
| **04 – Transfer** | Is primarily used for PEEHIP; if an employee works in a PEEHIP participating system and they move to another PEEHIP participating system, this would be considered a transfer. |
| **05 – Hired in Error** | Is used when an enrollment was created in error. To use Hired in Error the Enrollment End Date must match the Enrollment Begin Date. If the enrollment has an End Reason of Hired in Error, the system will not map any wages/contributions to that enrollment. |
| **06 – Voluntary Termination** | Is used when an employee leaves employment of his or her own volition. |
| **07 – Involuntary Termination** | Is used when an employee is dismissed from the agency. This would include any employee whose contract ended or expired and was not renewed – if the employee was willing and able to return to work. |
| **08 – Gross Misconduct** | Is used when an agency determines an offense by an employee is deemed "gross misconduct". |
| **Merged Employer** | Is only used by the RSA when a current agency merges with another existing agency. |
| **Split Employer** | Is only used by the RSA when an agency splits into multiple agencies. |
| **Withdrawn Employer** | Is only used by the RSA when an agency withdraws participation from the RSA. |

# LOA Status History

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is when an employee goes on unpaid leave (excluding Admin leave) that lasts longer than a pay period. This includes but is not limited to, Unpaid Maternity Leave and Unpaid Medical Leave.

In this section, a new line should be created each time an employee goes on or comes off LOA. This allows the employer and RSA to maintain a history of an employee's LOA.

- To place an employee on LOA, navigate to the Services tab > Search Demographics. Select the employee's name > Maintain > Enrollments.
- In the section titled LOA Status History enter the effective date, LOA Status, and select Save > Save.
    - The effective date is the date the employee went on LOA and/or when the employee came off LOA. This informs the RSA when wages and contributions should/should not be expected for an employee.
    - Once the employee returns to work or changes LOA status, create a new line with the new effective date and status.

| LOA Status Codes | |
|---|---|
| **Alphanumeric Code** | **Description** |
| **00 – Not on Unpaid Leave** | Is used when an employee returns from an unpaid leave of absence and includes employees covered under SB199. (K-12 only) |
| **01 – Unpaid FMLA** | Is used for employees who are approved for Unpaid FMLA. This LOA status should be updated to Unpaid Medical, Unpaid Workman's Comp, or Other Unpaid Leave when FMLA expires, if the employee is still on unpaid leave. |
| **02 – Unpaid Maternity Leave** | Is used for employees who are approved for Unpaid Maternity Leave. |
| **03 – Unpaid Medical Leave** | Is used for employees who are approved for Unpaid Medical Leave. |
| **04 – Unpaid Military Leave** | Is used for employees who are approved for Unpaid Military Leave or who are receiving pay that includes any unpaid days. |
| **05 – Unpaid Workman's Comp** | Is used for employees who are approved for Unpaid Workman's Comp. |
| **06 – Other Unpaid Leave** | Is used for employees who are approved for Other Unpaid Leave. |
| **07 – Unpaid Maternity FMLA** | Is used for employees who are approved for Unpaid FMLA Maternity. This LOA Status should be updated to Unpaid Maternity when the FMLA expires, if the employee is still on unpaid leave. |
| **08 – Administrative Leave** | Is used for employees who are placed on paid or unpaid Administrative Leave. |

# Enrollment Work Units History

The Enrollment Work Units History keeps a record of when an employee has a permanent change in their work schedule. This history shows how many units (days, hours, courses, or shifts) an employee is expected to work and the full-time units (days, hours, courses, or shifts) an employee is expected to work per week to be considered full-time.

- A new enrollment is **NOT** necessary to update an employee's work schedule.
- Use Search Demographics > Maintain > Enrollments to find the employee's work units history.

For file submitters:

- This information can be updated in the agency's software system and will be updated in ESS when an enrollment file is published.

For manual entry:

- Navigate to the Services tab > Search Demographics. Locate the employee's name, select Maintain > Enrollments.
    - Fill in the empty boxes below the current scheduled units effective date.
    - Enter the date their new work schedule became effective with their units to work per week, full-time units per week, etc.
    - Units Annually Contracted to Work are always based on a full-time contract.
- Select Save > Save.

# What is Considered Full-Time

- Each agency determines how many hours an employee must work to be considered full-time for each job position.
- This is based on the job position, not the individual employee.
- Two people who are in the same position cannot work a different number of hours and both be considered full-time.
- For example: If custodians work 8 hours per day but a few custodians work 6 hours per day, the ones who work 6 hours cannot be considered full-time for that job type.

# Retirees Who Return to Work Full-Time

If the TRS retiree works in a full-time position for a period of two consecutive years as Non-Participating, the retiree may petition the TRS Board of Control to permit the resumption of participation in the TRS. Upon approval, the member would pay the contributions of the two-year period of non-contributing service and begin contributing on future compensation.

If an ERS retiree returns to work for a TRS participating employer in a full-time capacity, they must begin contributing to TRS immediately.

# How to Create New Enrollments for Retirees Who Return to Work

If an incorrect active enrollment currently exists, users will need to create a new enrollment effective immediately. End the incorrect enrollment using the Enrollment End Reason of "Change in Position Status".

<u>If a TRS retiree begins working **full-time** with a TRS employer:</u>

- Contribution Group: Must be Non-Participating (due to the two-year waiting period for reinstatement).
- Position Status: **Regular.**
- Scheduled Units to Work should reflect full-time requirements for that position.
- **<u>RSA ACTION</u>: TRS retirement benefits will be suspended as of the Enrollment Begin Date***.* Users will not submit retirement contributions for two years; however, earnings are still required to be reported in ESS.

<u>If an ERS or TRS retiree begins working **temporarily full-time**:</u>

- Contribution Group: Must be Non-Participating.
- Position Status: **Temporary**.
- Scheduled Units to Work should reflect full-time requirements for that position.
- **<u>RSA ACTION</u>: Retirement benefits will not be suspended as of the Enrollment Begin Date.** An Enrollment End Date MUST be entered at the time of enrollment creation and must be less than one year. This is a one-time-only occurrence and cannot be utilized again later with the same employer or another employer.

If this is a **Post-DROP** member:

- Contribution Group: Must be Participating.
- Position Status: **Regular.**
- Scheduled Units to Work should reflect full-time requirements for that position.
- **RSA ACTION: Retirement benefits will be suspended as of the Enrollment Begin Date.** Retirement contributions are required to be submitted IMMEDIATELY. There is no two-year waiting period for Post-DROP members.

If an **ERS retiree** begins working **full-time** with a TRS employer:

- Contribution Group: Must be Participating.
- Position Status: **Regular.**
- Scheduled Units to Work should reflect full-time requirements for that position.
- **RSA ACTION: ERS retirement benefits will be suspended as of the Enrollment Begin Date.** TRS retirement contributions are required to be submitted IMMEDIATELY**.** There is no two-year waiting period for members who retire in ERS and return to full-time work in TRS. This information also applies to TRS members who return to full-time work with ERS.

If a TRS or ERS retiree begins working **part-time** with a TRS employer:

- Contribution Group: Must be Non-Participating.
- Position Status: **** See below ****
- Scheduled Units to Work must be less than the Scheduled Full-Time Units Per Week.
    - For example: If a full-time clerical position requires 40 hours per week and a retiree returns to work at 20 hours per week, the units scheduled will be 20 while the full-time units will be 40.
- **RSA ACTION: Retirement benefits will continue unless the Post-Retirement Restrictions are not met.** Users will not submit retirement contributions; however, earnings are still required to be reported in ESS. This information also applies to **Post-DROP and ERS Retirees.**

******In determining the correct Position Status, users will need to consider the retiree's current PEEHIP eligibility as well as the agency's eligibility for PEEHIP Insurance******
Position Status of Regular will allow for active PEEHIP eligibility. (ERS Retirees)
Position Status of Seasonal/Irregular will not allow for active PEEHIP eligibility.

Note: All earnings paid to a retiree must be reported in ESS using the payment reason of Regular or Lump-Sum. This includes wages paid by a third-party employer. For instance, Kelly Services and Soliant would be considered third-party employers.

***If the agency has retirees who are paid through accounts payable, retirees who have not been reported, or retirees who were not reported correctly, the agency will still need to complete the Postretirement Employment Employing Agency Initial Notice and Annual Certification forms.***

## TRS Substitutes

TRS substitutes of any type are only reported **if** they are a retiree so that Post-Retirement earnings can be tracked by the RSA.

## Demographic Changes

How to Update an Address in the ESS Portal:

- This information can be updated by an enrollment file or manual entry.
- Navigate to Services, then select Search Demographics.
- Search for the employee by entering their SSN, PID, or search through the list of active employees.
- Locate the employee's name > select Maintain > Demographics.
- Under Address Information, select Display Future Addresses > Add New.
- This populates the Add Address box where users will add the new address information and enter the Effective Date as today's date or a future date, select Save Changes.
    - If an address is entered that RSA has marked invalid (mail has been returned from that address), users will receive an error message and the address will not be updated. Validate the address with the employee, and if correct, the employee will need to submit an updated change of address form to the RSA.

How to Update a Name in the ESS Portal:

- This information can be updated by an enrollment file or manual entry.
- Navigate to Services, select Search Demographics.
- Search for the employee by entering their SSN, PID, or search through the list of active employees.
- Locate the employee's name, select Maintain > Demographics.
- Under the Personal Information section, users will see the employee's name. This is where they will be able to update the employee's last name, select Save Changes.

Note: Only employees who have a name change due to marriage or divorce can be changed in the ESS Portal. Please contact Employer Services if there is another reason for a name change or if this is for a full name change.

For changes to an employee's Date of Birth, Gender, or Social Security Number, please contact the Employer Services Division as proper documentation will be required to make these changes.

## Severity of Errors on Enrollments

- An **Error** notification will require the agency to fix the problem in the file and re-upload or edit this record via manual entry within the ESS Portal.
- A **Warning** notification will require the agency to review the entry, then override the warning within the ESS Portal if the information displayed is correct.
- An **Informational** notification requires no action from the agency to continue to load the file in the ESS Portal. However, the user should review the information to determine if any changes are necessary.

# Most Common Enrollment Errors and How to Correct Them

**ER0211:** "Employee has already established eligibility to participate with the RSA: contributions must be deducted."

This error message occurs when a user attempts to enroll a new employee as Non-Participating when they previously established eligibility to contribute.

To correct this:

A contributing enrollment must be created in order to be able to report contributions.

**ER0212:** "Employee is participating in another System. Please either update the employee as Non-Participating or contact the RSA to confirm the end date with the other employer."

This error message occurs when a user attempts to enroll a new employee that recently worked under a different Retirement System and the previous employer has not terminated their enrollment yet.

To correct this:

- If the employee has terminated with their previous employer under another retirement system, send Employer Services an email requesting confirmation on the enrollment end date.
- If the employee is still employed under another retirement system other than TRS, they will need to be enrolled as a Non-Participating employee with the agency.

**ER0244:** "The employee has an Enrollment End Reason which requires a new enrollment. Please verify the Enrollment End Reason; if it is valid, please create a new enrollment for the employee."

This warning message occurs when a user attempts to terminate an enrollment with the Enrollment End Reason of Change in Contribution Group or Change in Position Status.

If the Enrollment End Reason is correct, the user may proceed with overriding the warning message, save the changes and create the new enrollment.

If the Enrollment End Reason is incorrect, the user will need to update or remove the Enrollment End Reason.

**ER0267:** "The Enrollment Begin Date cannot be more than 11 months in the past or more than 12 months in the future. If the date is in the past, it cannot overlap with a period of time when the employee was Retired, T-Sectioned, or received a refund for previous contributions."

This error message occurs under the two following scenarios:

- When a new employee was not enrolled within 11 months of their start date.
- If the Enrollment Begin Date provided on the enrollment is incorrect. The user will need to send a statement on letterhead defining the enrollment details and email this information to Employer Services.

**ER0312:** "The RSA has processed a retirement or refund application for this employee, so this Enrollment End Date cannot be changed. Please contact the RSA if the member is canceling their termination."

This error message only occurs when a user uploads an enrollment file and the record in error does not have the Enrollment End Date or Enrollment End Reason listed on the file.

To correct this:

Manually enter the Enrollment End Date and the Enrollment End Reason that was entered previously, or delete the enrollment record from the enrollment file, as we already have the Enrollment End Date or Enrollment End Reason on file.

# Retirement Contributions

Retirement Contributions must equal the wages multiplied by the applicable contribution rate based on the contribution group reported. Retirement Contributions should not be deducted if the employee is in a non-participating contribution group. However, non-participating employees will still have their wages and work information reported.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 16-25-21(g), *Code of Alabama 1975*, as a TRS employer, the organization is required to submit its employer retirement contributions together with member contributions to the TRS on the first day of the month following the month in which the related member salary was paid (the due date).

Retirement Contributions not submitted within 30 days of the due date are considered to be delinquent and shall accrue interest on a per annum basis at the actuarial assumed investment rate.

For example: A member's retirement contributions deducted from their paychecks in July along with the employer retirement contributions for July are due August 1. If the TRS does not receive the required retirement contributions by August 31, interest at a per annum rate will be levied upon the delinquent balance after the monies are received following August 31.

# Act 2025-367

A new Alabama law (Act 2025-367) was passed to protect the retirement contributions of public employees in the RSA. The law ensures that RSA participating employers cannot take member contributions and use them for other purposes.

Starting October 1, 2025, it will be a Class C felony to misuse retirement contributions. This includes taking funds meant for RSA and spending them elsewhere or intentionally failing to send them to the retirement system. The penalty can be up to 10 years in prison and a $15,000 fine.

Before this law, there was no specific criminal penalty for diverting retirement funds. There have been instances when a local government that participates in RSA had kept member contributions and continually refused to submit them. There was no penalty or recourse when this happened. This new law closes that gap and helps protect the integrity of the RSA. It sends a strong message: member retirement contributions must be used only for retirement – not for anything else.

This change strengthens trust in the system and helps ensure that RSA remains secure and financially sound for all its members.

# File Vs Manual Submission

Retirement Contributions can be submitted by uploading a contribution file or by manually entering employees' wages and work information.

## File Submission

- An agency must be file certified before uploading retirement contribution files into the ESS Portal. If an agency wants to learn more about retirement contribution file uploads, please contact the Employer Services Division.
- A retirement contribution file can be generated from the agency's software system and uploaded into the ESS Portal notifying the RSA of the employees' wages and retirement contributions for that pay period.
    - To upload a retirement contribution file, select Report > Submit Report.
    - Select Upload File under the Contributions section.
- After the business and load validations run and the file is accepted, select Continue.
- Select the employer's name in blue text; from there users will be able to work and clear any remaining errors they may have.

# Manual Submission

ESS Users who submit their retirement contributions manually will navigate to the Report tab > Submit Report. Then, users will select Enter Online under Retirement Contributions.

Examples of what can be done through a manual retirement contribution submission:

- Reporting employees' wages and contributions by pay period.
- Prior pay period adjustments (Retro pay or correction).
- Adding missing employees.

How to Submit Retirement Contributions Manually:

- Navigate to the Report tab > Submit Report > Enter Online under Retirement Contributions.
- Select the Employer the submission is for.
- Select the Reporting Frequency.
- Select the Pay Period.
- Select the Pay Date.
- Once the screen refreshes, select the previous pay period to copy the Regular Payment Lines.
- After the business validations run, select Continue.
- Select the employer's name in blue text; from there users will be able to work and clear any remaining errors they may have.

Global Changes:

- Wages Multiplier**:** This multiplier will be used to increase the wages of all employees from the prior retirement contribution submission by a set percentage.
    - For example: A 2 percent raise awarded to all employees would be entered as 1.02)
- Rate of Pay Multiplier: This multiplier will be used to increase the Rate of Pay for all employees from the prior retirement contribution submission by a set percentage.
    - For example: A 2 percent raise awarded to all employees would be entered as 1.02)

Note: When submitting retirement contributions manually, users can copy over the Regular Pay payment reasons. All other payment reasons (i.e. Overtime, Lump Sum/Longevity, etc.) will need to be entered for each employee as needed.

## Information that is needed on a Contribution Record

- **Payment Reasons:** Use the table below to determine which Payment Reason should be used when reporting wages and retirement contributions.

| Payment Reasons and Descriptions | |
|---|---|
| **Alphanumeric Code** | **Description** |
| **00 – Regular Pay** | Only the employee's base salary should be included in Regular Pay. This includes sick or vacation leave used in place of working. |
| **01 – Lump Sum/Longevity and Other Pensionable** | Includes pensionable bonuses and other one-time payments, as well as pensionable longevity pay for an employee. For TRS employees, this would include pay for coaching, labs, or any time worked outside a normal contract, but does not include National Board Certification wages.<br><br>Also includes time spent in adjunct, overload or interim term positions, as well as additional time spent working (for example, in after school care, or coaching) outside of the normal position that the enrollment is tied to. |
| **02 – Overtime** | Includes wages for time worked over and above the normal full-time work schedule in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). It would not include overtime wages which have exceeded the pensionable overtime limit.<br><br>The pensionable overtime limit is applied on a fiscal year basis. |
| **03 – Contract Payoff** | Is to be used when an employee receives a contract payoff. |
| **04 – National Board Certification** | Wages only apply to employees reported under TRS and should only be used to report wages paid in relation to National Board Certification. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **97 – Non-Pensionable Overtime** | Once an employee exceeds the pensionable overtime limit, those earnings in excess should be reported as Non-Pensionable Overtime.<br><br>The pensionable overtime limit is applied on a fiscal year basis. |
| **98 – Non-Pensionable Lump Sum/Longevity** | Includes non-pensionable lump sum comp time payouts, bonuses, or other one-time payments. |
| **99 – Other Non-Pensionable** | Once an employee exceeds the earnable compensation limit, those earnings in excess of the earnable compensation limit should be reported as Non-Pensionable Overtime (recommended) or Other Non-Pensionable Wages because they are no longer pensionable. |

- **Actual Units Worked** represents how much the employee actually worked in the pay period being reported.
    - How many hours, days, shifts, or courses a particular employee worked in the pay period being reported. (Including sick and vacation leave being used in the place of working hours.)
    - The ratio between the Actual Units Worked and Full-Time Units is what calculates the service credit an employee earns. It is imperative that the Actual Units Worked and the Full-Time Units are reported correctly for the employee to earn the appropriate amount of service credit.
- **Type of Units Worked** represents the type of units worked for the employee in this position (Days, Shifts, Hours, or Courses).
    - Participating employers must report TRS positions labeled as Adjunct in Courses.
        - Courses are specifically for universities and community colleges who pay adjuncts per course.
    - Participating employers must report TRS positions labeled as Bus Driver in Shifts.
    - PEEHIP participating employers must report TRS positions labeled as Support Worker in Hours.

- **Full-Time Units** represents the number of hours, days, or shifts an employee is required to work to be considered full-time in the pay period being reported. (The amount of possible working days excluding holidays in a pay period)
    - The ratio between the Actual Units Worked and Full-Time Units is what calculates the service credit an employee earns. It is imperative that the Actual Units Worked and the Full-Time Units are reported correctly for the employee to earn the appropriate amount of service credit.

- **Excess of IRS** represents the portion of wages that is in excess of the IRS limit.
    - The portion of the wages that exceed the IRS limit in a certain month must be calculated by adding up all the wages reported on a plan year basis and compared against the IRS limit for that plan year.

- **Employee Contributions** represents the portion of the employee contribution based on the employee's wages for the pay period.
    - Contributions must equal the wages multiplied by the applicable contribution rate based on the employee's tier status and contribution group.

- **Employer Contributions** are calculated by the ESS Portal based on the wages reported for that particular employee.

- **Rate of Pay** represents the employee's current pay rate.
    - Report only an employee's base rate of pay.
    - Do NOT include any additional pay such as overtime, lump sums, overload, coaching supplements, National Board Certification wages, etc. in this field.
    - The Rate of Pay should always be reported as the full-time equivalent, even if the employee is working less than full-time.
        - For example: assume an employee works 20 hours per week and earns $20,000 in base earnings per year. If a full-time equivalent would work 40 hours per week, the Rate of Pay amount should be $40,000.)

- **Type of Rate of Pay** identifies the employee's Rate of Pay as Hourly, Monthly, or Yearly.
    - The Type of Rate of Pay should be reported as Yearly (03) for contributing TRS employees.

# Summer Hires

- Regular contract wages and summer position wages should never be rolled up. Doing so may cause issues with the Salary Credit calculation.
- Summer position wages must always be reported separately from regular contract wages, and the Summer Position Indicator must be "Yes" for ESS to understand that the wages are tied to work being performed during the summer (i.e., outside the regular contract).
- Type of Units Worked cannot be mixed.
    - For example: If an employee's Type of Units Worked for their regular job is paid in days, then their summer job(s) needs to be paid in days also.
- If an employee's summer position requires a new enrollment, there is no need to add a new contract schedule; pick one of the existing 9-month contracts that pertains to that job position.

A new enrollment is not required for summer hires for the following scenarios:

- Employee working 9 months and paid over 9 months with no summer position.
- Employee working 9 months and paid over 10, 11, or 12 months with no summer position.
- Employee working 9 months and paid over 9 months, but has a summer position with the same employer, contribution group, and position status.
- Employee working 9 months and paid over 10, 11, or 12 months, but has a summer position with the same employer, contribution group, and position status.

A new enrollment is required for summer hires for the following scenarios:

- Employee working 9 months and paid over 9 months and has a summer position with either a different employer, contribution group, or position status.
- Employee working 9 months and paid over 10, 11, or 12 months and has a summer position with either a different employer, contribution group, or position status.

How to report contributions for summer hires:

- Working 9 months and paid over 10, 11, or 12 months with no summer position:
    - The employer should continue to report the wages as they have been.
- Working 9 months and paid over 9 months with a summer position (no new enrollment):
    - No wages reported for the regular contract, but summer wages should be reported as Regular Pay with the Summer Position Indicator set to “Yes”.
- Working 9 months and paid over 10, 11, or 12 months with a summer position (no new enrollment):
    - The employer should continue to report the regular contract wages as they have been but should also report a second Regular Pay Line with the Summer Position Indicator as “Yes”.
- Working 9 months and paid over 9 months with summer position (new enrollment):
    - No wages reported for regular contract, but the employer should report summer wages as regular pay with Summer Position Indicator as “Yes”.
- Working 9 months and paid over 10, 11, or 12 months with summer position (new enrollment):
    - The employer should continue to report the regular contract wages as they have been but also report summer wages as regular pay with a Summer Position Indicator of “Yes”.

# Prior Pay Period Adjustments

Prior Pay Period Adjustments are made in the portal when necessary to correct what was previously reported or left off of a prior pay period's submission.

Users can only process prior pay period adjustments when a contribution submission is actively in progress. It is best practice to process these adjustments as soon as possible.

## How to Enter a Prior Pay Period Adjustment

What to do when an employee has been left off a prior pay period:

- With an active contribution submission, select Add Contribution.
- Enter either the SSN, PID, or Last Name for the employee that needs to be corrected.
- Select the Plan Year and Payroll Period in which the contributions were earned, select Search.
- Select Add a New Record with the Information I Entered, select Continue.
- This will bring up a blank contribution record to add the pay information that is being reported, select Submit.

What to do when wages were reported in error:

- With an active contribution submission in progress, select Add Contribution.
- Enter either the SSN, PID, or Last Name for the employee that needs to be corrected.
- Select the Plan Year and Payroll Period the adjustment occurs on, select Search.
- Select the radio button next to the payment record that needs to be adjusted, select Continue.
    - If there are multiple records that need to be corrected, users will follow this process for each payment record.
- This will bring up the payment record screen. Correct the contribution information to what should have been reported, select Submit.

Option for File Submitters:

- If File Submitters would like to process a Prior Pay Period Adjustment in their contribution file, the file will need to have a separate record for each pay period and payment reason they are trying to correct.
    - The file needs to contain the **DIFFERENCE** (variance) in what they are trying to adjust.
    - Example: If the user submitted wages of $500 and they should have submitted $400 in wages, the file needs to contain the difference which is -$100.
    - The screen will display the new net amount of $400.

For information on how to do a prior pay period adjustment for RSA-1 contributions, please refer to page 8 in the ESS Portal Manual for RSA-1.

# Overtime Limits

For Tier 1 employees, the pensionable overtime limit is 120% of their base pay. For Tier 2 employees, the pensionable overtime limit is 125% of their base pay. Once an employee reaches their pensionable overtime limit, the overtime wages in excess must be reported as Non-Pensionable Overtime. If there are wages and contributions submitted over the pensionable Overtime Limit, users may need to do Prior Pay Period Adjustments to remove these wages and retirement contributions or update the payment reason. **The only salary that counts toward the overtime limit is the salary that is paid at the rate of time and a half in compliance with FLSA.**

Examples:

- A Tier 1 employee earns $50,000/year. Their limit on pensionable overtime wages is $10,000.
- A Tier 2 employee earns $50,000/year. Their limit on pensionable overtime wages is $12,500.

# Reporting an Overtime/Comp Time Payout

- If employers are able to verify the scholastic year in which the overtime/comp time pay was earned, TRS will accept this as a pensionable overtime payment, and it will be attributed to the appropriate year's salary calculation at retirement.
- If employers are unable to verify the scholastic year in which the overtime/comp time pay was earned, then TRS has no choice other than to consider this as a non-pensionable payout, which does not need to be submitted.
    - A refund will be issued if contributions on these unverified overtime pay/comp time pay are submitted.

# Missing Employees

To view the **Missing Employee(s)**, under the section titled View Contribution Container Details, users will see a table that shows various information regarding the retirement contribution submission. There is a section in this table titled Number of Missing Employees. Underneath this section there will be a number in the form of a hyperlink. Once the user selects the hyperlink, it will download a PDF document showing the employee(s) who are missing.

Reasons an employee might be missing:

- The employee is a new employee and did not copy over from the previous submission.
- LOA Status has not been updated.
- The employee's enrollment has not been terminated.
    - Note: a file does not have to be voided to enter a termination date.
- The data on the enrollment record does not match the data on the retirement contribution submission so the system is unable to map to the matching enrollment.
    - Users may see ER0086 as a result of this.
    - For example: The employee is enrolled as a teacher but is listed on the retirement contribution submission as a professional administrator.

# How to Correct a Missing Employee

If the missing employee is a new hire:

- In the retirement contribution submission, select Add Contribution.
- Enter the missing employee's SSN, PID, or Last Name.
- Select the current Plan Year and Payroll Period, select Search.
- Select Add a New Record with the Information I Entered, select Continue.
- This will bring up a blank retirement contribution record to add the pay information for the missing employee, select Submit.

If the missing employee's LOA Status has not been updated:

- Navigate to the Services tab > Search Demographics.
- Locate the employee's name or search with the SSN or PID, select Maintain > Enrollments.
- The employee's enrollment information will display. Navigate to the LOA Status History section. In the blank boxes towards the bottom of the LOA section, enter the date the employee went on unpaid leave and the LOA Status. Select Save > Save.
- Go back to the retirement contribution submission, the employee will no longer be listed as missing.

If the missing employee's enrollment has not been terminated:

- Navigate to the Services tab > Search Demographics.
- Locate the employee's name or search with the SSN or PID, select Maintain > Enrollments.
- The employee's enrollment information will display. Select Edit next to the employee's enrollment with the agency, enter the Enrollment End Date and Enrollment End Reason, select Save Changes.
- Go back to the retirement contribution submission, the employee will no longer be listed as missing.

If ER0086 populates due to a mismatch between enrollment and retirement contribution data:

- Example: If the employee is truly a Contributing Teacher, but they are on the retirement contribution file as a Support Worker, follow the below steps to correct:
    - Select Edit next to the employee's retirement contribution record.
    - Select the drop-down menu for the section titled Contribution Group, select Contributing Teacher > Save Changes.

- Example: If the employee works under a Seasonal/Irregular position status, but they are on the retirement contribution file with a Regular position status, follow the below steps to correct:
    - Select Edit next to the employee's retirement contribution record.
    - Select the drop-down menu for the section titled Position Status > select Seasonal/Irregular > Save Changes.

- Example: If the employee should be a Teacher, but they were enrolled as a Support Worker, follow the below steps to correct:
    - Suspend the retirement contribution submission.
    - Navigate to the Services tab > Search Demographics.
    - Locate the employee's name or search with the SSN or PID, select Maintain > Enrollments.
    - The employee's enrollment history will display.
    - Select Add New Enrollment. Enter the information for the Teacher enrollment and select Save Changes > Exit.
        - If retirement contributions are not linked to the previous enrollment: Select Edit next to the employee's previous enrollment with the agency. The Enrollment Begin and End dates need to match with the Enrollment End Reason of Hired in Error, select Save Changes.
        - If retirement contributions are linked to the previous enrollment: Select Edit next to the previous enrollment. Terminate the enrollment with the Enrollment End Date being the end date for the previous pay period with the Enrollment End Reason of Change in Contribution Group, select Save Changes.
    - Go back to the retirement contribution submission in progress by navigating to Report > View History > select Unsuspend Report and select the Submission Number.

- Example: If the employee should be enrolled with a Seasonal/Irregular position status, but they are enrolled with a Regular position status, follow the below steps to correct:
    - Suspend the retirement contribution submission.

- Navigate to the Services tab > Search Demographics.
- Locate the employee's name or search with the SSN or PID, select Maintain > Enrollments.
- The employee's enrollment information will display.
- The user will select Add New Enrollment. Enter the information for the employee's enrollment with a Seasonal/Irregular position status, select Save Changes > Exit.
- The employee's enrollment information will display.
    - If retirement contributions are not linked to the previous enrollment: Select Edit next to the employee's previous enrollment with the agency, the Enrollment Begin and End dates need to match with the Enrollment End Reason of Hired in Error, select Save Changes.
    - If retirement contributions are linked to the previous enrollment: Select Edit next to the previous enrollment. Terminate the enrollment with the Enrollment End Date being the end date for the previous pay period with the Enrollment End Reason of Change in Position Status, select Save Changes.
- Go back to the retirement contribution submission in progress by navigating to Report > View History > select Unsuspend Report and select the Submission Number.

## How to Apply an Invoice to a Retirement Contribution Submission

Once the user has completed making all corrections, select Submit Details.

- Under the Invoices section, select the box(es) to the left of each invoice to apply them to the retirement contribution submission.
    - Credit invoices will deduct the invoice amount from the total amount of Employee/Employer contributions owed.
    - Debit invoices will increase the total amount of Employee/Employer contributions owed.

# Payment Screen

The Payment screen is the last screen users will see prior to submitting payment for retirement contributions. On this screen, users will enter the total amount of Employee/Employer retirement contributions owed.

- Enter the total amount owed under the Remit Your Employee/Employer Retirement Contributions and Invoice Payments.
- The user will enter their ESS PIN > Submit Your Payment.
    - There will be a pop up stating, “Once you click OK, the submission will be finalized and no more edits can be made. Would you like to continue?” If the submission is ready to be finalized, select OK. If the submission is not ready to be finalized, select Cancel to go back and make any necessary corrections.

# Results Screen

Once the user has finalized their retirement contribution submission, they will be taken to the Results screen. This screen will show users a table with a breakdown of retirement contributions similar to the Summary screen on the retirement contribution submission. Users are able to print this screen as is, or they can select **Remittance Advice** in the bottom right-hand corner of the table. Doing this will download the Remittance Advice in a PDF format.

# Payment Variance

- The ESS Portal will accept a payment less than $5.00 of the RSA-calculated contribution amount without generating an invoice for the remaining amount.
- There are two thresholds for the payment; the lesser of:
    - Within $500 of the total TRS payment

      OR
    - Within 1% of the total TRS payment

## Severity of Errors on Retirement Contributions

- An **Error** notification will require the agency to fix the problem in the file and re-upload or edit this record via manual entry within the ESS Portal.
- A **Warning** notification will require the agency to review the entry, then override the warning within the ESS Portal if the information displayed is correct.
- An **Informational** notification requires no action from the agency to continue to load the file in the ESS Portal. However, the user should review the information to determine if any changes are necessary.

## Most Common Retirement Contribution Errors and How to Correct Them

**ER0039:** "Actual Units Worked is not valid."

This error message occurs when the Actual Units Worked is blank or not valid based on the pay period and/or contract schedule dates.

To correct this:

- The Actual Units Worked needs to equal the number of days, hours, shifts, or courses that an employee worked based on the pay period dates being reported and when their contracts began in relation to the pay period.

This error can also occur if the actual units worked provided for an employee are past their termination or contract end date.

To correct this:

- The Actual Units Worked would need to be changed to zero.

**ER0086:** "The employee was reported with contributions but either does not have an enrollment or the Pay Period End Date is earlier than the Enrollment Begin Date."

This error message typically occurs on contribution files when an enrollment has not been created for this employee or the enrollment information does not match what was previously reported.

To correct this:

- The user will need to either create an enrollment for this employee or validate the enrollment information is correct. Refer to pages 66 – 67 for more information on ER0086.

**ER0265:** "The Type of Units Worked does not match the Type of Units Worked on the employee's enrollment record."

This error message occurs when the Type of Units Worked is blank or incorrect.

To correct this:

- The user must change the Type of Units Worked to reflect the Type of Units Worked on the employee's enrollment.

**ER0320:** "The Actual Units Worked are more (or less) than expected based on the Scheduled Units Worked per Week."

This warning message occurs when the Actual Units Worked is more or less than what is expected of the employee to work per their Enrollment.

To correct this:

- If the information reported is correct, the user can select Override Warnings and Save Changes. If not, the user will need to correct the Actual Units Worked to what the employee worked in the given pay period.

**ER0125:** “Wages for the Regular Payment Reason differ by more than the allowable tolerance (+/-) from the compensation in the prior reporting period.”

This error message occurs when the Regular Payment Reason wages reported in the prior reporting period differ by plus or minus 25%.

<u>To correct this:</u>

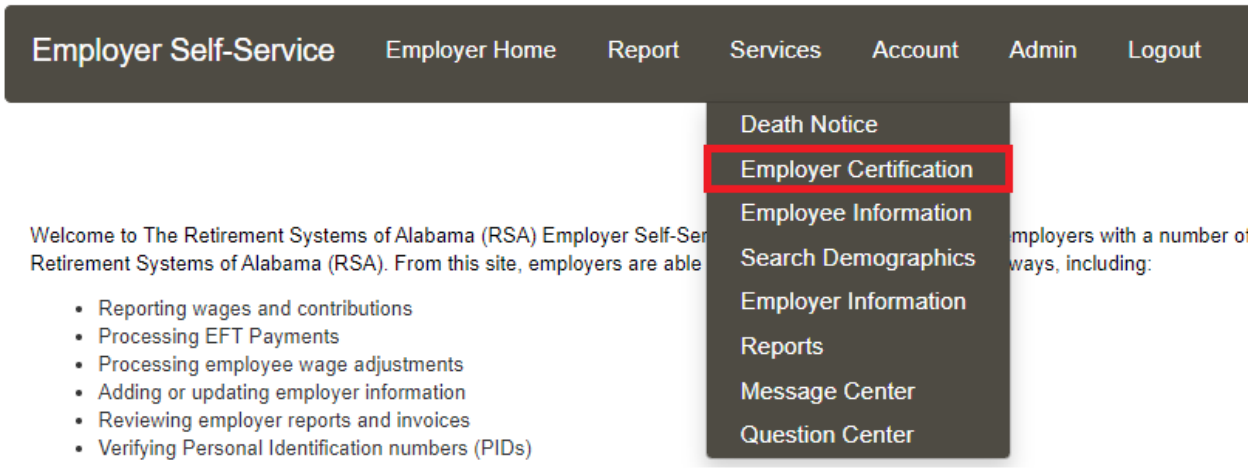
- The user must ensure they are only reporting the employee’s base wages on the Regular Payment line and no other wages are being “rolled up” into their Regular pay. If wages are being “rolled up,” a separate payment line will be needed to separate other payment reasons from their base wages. If the employee has a reduction in their Regular pay, adjust their Actual Units Worked as needed and override the warning.

# Employer Certification

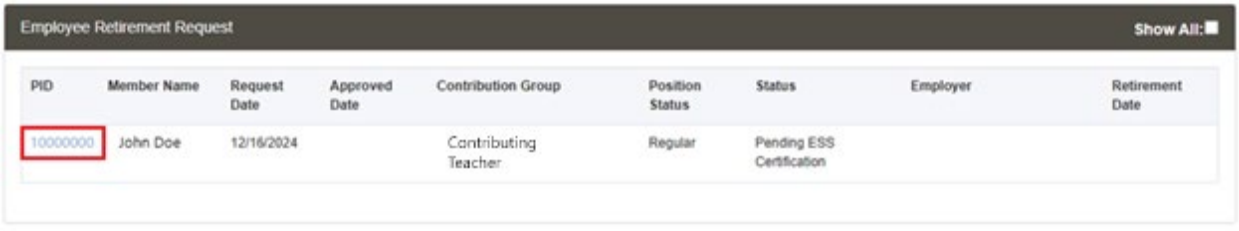
- Users must certify pensionable wages and work units within the ESS Portal prior to the employee's retirement.
- It is imperative that the Employer Certifications are accurate. Any deviations from the projected salary/wages on the certification can result in changes in service, average final salary, and may reduce the employee's benefits or change their eligibility to retire.

## Accessing an Employer Certification in ESS

- The agency will be notified via email when an *Application for Retirement* needs an Employer Certification. Users can also view the message in the ESS Portal Message Center.
- For ESS Users to receive communications regarding Employer Certifications in the ESS Portal, they must have the role of either "Administrator" or "Staff" and the contact type of "Retirement Certification."
- To access certification requests, select Services > Employer Certification.

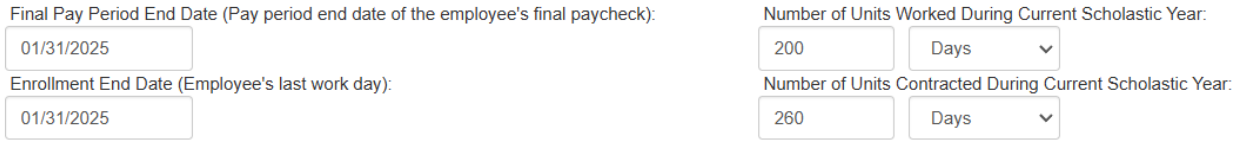



- The Employer Certification screen will then display. If the status of the request is Pending ESS Certification, action must be taken to complete the certification.
- To begin certifying, select the PID hyperlink to open the Retirement Certification screen.



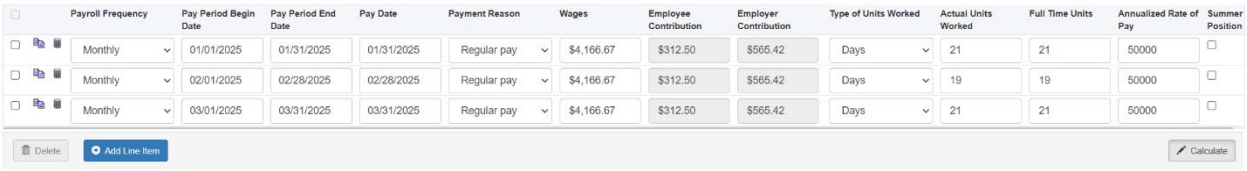
## Last Date of Paid Employment and the Termination Date

- The 'Last Date of Paid Employment' is the last day for which the employee is paid. This day is <u>not</u> the date they receive their final paycheck.
- The 'Termination Date' is the employee's last day of employment, paid or unpaid. The termination date is always prior to the effective date of retirement. The effective date of retirement is the 1st day of the month in which the employee is to retire.
- On the certification screen, these two dates are populated with the last day of the month prior to the listed retirement date. Verify the dates are accurate and make changes if necessary.
- The Number of Units Worked and Contracted should match the certified salary so be sure to account for any unpaid days in this section.

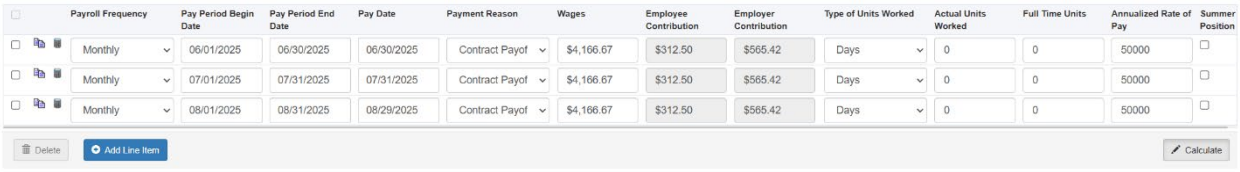



## Breakdown of Final Wages

- The certification screen will populate all pay periods from the initial request date through the retirement date.
- Proceed with entering the <u>projected</u> base wages, the Type of Units Worked, the <u>projected</u> Actual Units Worked, and the Full-Time Units for each pay period listed.
- Once one contribution row is completed, users can copy the information entered for Wages, Units Worked, and Full-Time Units by clicking this button on the associated row. Users can then paste this information to another contribution row if the information is the same for that particular pay period by selecting this button .



- **Contract Payoffs** are common for employees whose pay is spread over 12 months. That pay should be included in the certification so TRS will calculate the correct service and salary credit. A Contract Payoff should reflect zero Units Worked, otherwise the employee will receive service credit when they are not working (such as summer months for a 9-month employee.)



| | Payroll Frequency | Pay Period Begin Date | Pay Period End Date | Pay Date | Payment Reason | Wages | Employee Contribution | Employer Contribution | Type of Units Worked | Actual Units Worked | Full Time Units | Annualized Rate of Pay | Summer Position |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Monthly | 06/01/2025 | 06/30/2025 | 06/30/2025 | Contract Payof | $4,166.67 | $312.50 | $565.42 | Days | 0 | 0 | 50000 | |
| | Monthly | 07/01/2025 | 07/31/2025 | 07/31/2025 | Contract Payof | $4,166.67 | $312.50 | $565.42 | Days | 0 | 0 | 50000 | |
| | Monthly | 08/01/2025 | 08/31/2025 | 08/29/2025 | Contract Payof | $4,166.67 | $312.50 | $565.42 | Days | 0 | 0 | 50000 | |

Delete | Add Line Item | Calculate

- Users can delete a row that is not needed by checking the box for that row and then selecting **Delete** in the bottom left-hand corner.
- Users can also add a row if needed by selecting **Add Line Item** in the bottom left-hand corner.
- When the employee's last day of employment falls in the middle of a pay period, ensure the Wages and Actual Units Worked are prorated accordingly for the partial pay period prior to their last day.
- Once the requested payroll periods have been accurately projected, select **Calculate** for the ESS Portal to calculate the employee contributions.
- Select **Save** in the bottom right-hand corner afterward to see if any errors occur or if the salary breakdown was accepted successfully.

## Final Sick Leave Certification

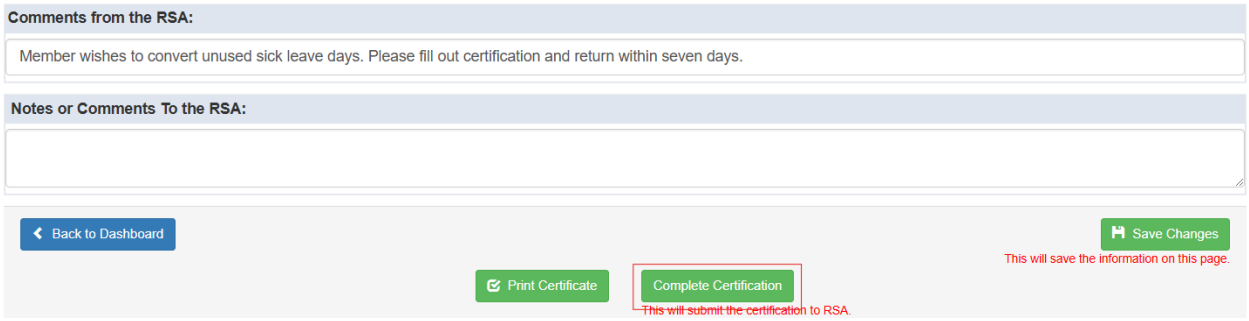
- The Final Sick Leave Certification box will only be displayed if the agency has adopted the Unused Sick Leave Conversion Provision and the member elects to convert unused sick days toward retirement service credit.
- Enter the projected unused sick leave the employee will have at the time of retirement in days, not hours.
- Additionally, many TRS agencies contact TRS after a retirement has been certified to report that an employee's sick leave balance has changed. The preferred procedure is for the agency to send an email to TRS.Info@rsa-al.gov indicating the member's name, PID, and final sick leave balance. Providing certification through ESS tends to result in fewer errors.

**Final Sick Leave Certification:**

Unused Sick Leave Days at Retirement : 0

## Comments Section & Completing the Certification

- Review comments from the RSA staff regarding the employee's retirement application, conversion of sick days, etc.
- There is a section, Notes or Comments To the RSA. This text box is used to explain any unusual circumstances or provide further details for a retirement counselor to review. To finalize the employer certification, select **Complete Certification**.




- To print a copy of what has been certified, select **Print Certificate**.
- Any errors or changes that occur once the certification has been completed must be reported to TRS in writing. This can be emailed to Employer Services at employer.services@rsa-al.gov.

## Benefit Recalculation After Retirement

- When the retirement contributions submitted for a member do not match the employer certification, TRS recalculates the benefits. Any members who were overpaid must reimburse TRS for any ineligible benefits.
- When an employer becomes aware of a change to the certified information, they should notify TRS in writing (This includes sick leave changes or unpaid days of work.)

# Reports

The ESS Portal provides various reports available to the users, which contain detailed information regarding the agency. To generate a report, the user will go to the Services tab > Reports. They will then select the report name from the drop-down menu. Below are some of the most common reports used by users.

| Report Name | Description |
|---|---|
| **Agency Retirement Eligibility** | Displays retirement eligibility information for employees. |
| **Annual Checklist Report for TRS** | Generates a list of employees contributing under the previous plan year for a TRS employer.<br>Note: Data displayed in the report is in real time. Any adjustments/changes made after the original report was run are reflected in this report. |
| **Contribution Adjustment** | Provides the users with a list of employees for whom an adjustment (positive or negative) was made between two dates.<br>Note: Data displayed in the report is in real time. Any adjustments/changes made after the original report was run are reflected in this report. |
| **Current Contribution Submission** | Provides a list of employees in a selected contribution submission, along with the original wages from the file and the difference in the current/posted amounts if changes were made for Wages, and employee contribution amounts (EECON), so changes can be identified.<br><br>If users need to see beyond 24 months, they will need to check the box for "Include Archived Data?"<br>Note: Data displayed in the report is displayed in real-time. Any adjustments/changes made after the original report was run are reflected in this report. |
| **Current Enrollment Detail** | Displays details of the enrollments for all current employees (with non-ended enrollments) for the selected employer, including contribution groups, Position Status, Scheduled Units, Full-Time Units, Units Annually Contracted, Demographic and Address information, and Tier status. |
| **Current Enrollment Summary** | Displays a summary of the enrollments for all current employees (having non-ended enrollments) for the selected employer. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Demographic Errors** | Lists all demographic errors for the selected period of an employer, such as address, name, etc. |
| **Earnable Compensation Limit** | Displays employees that are near, have met, or exceeded the IRS Wage Limit per the selected Plan Year. |
| **Employer Invoice Report** | This report allows users to view the list of credit and debit invoices available for the selected employer. |
| **Employer Remittance** | This report is commonly requested by auditors to get an overall view of your agency's RSA contribution reporting. When generating this report, a date range must be entered. This report will include information on contributions/wages reported and any invoices generated or applied during the period entered, separated by contribution submission(s). |
| **Enrollment Submission Summary Report** | Provides a breakdown of the number of new enrollments created by the Publish process, the number of existing enrollments updated by the Publish process, and enrollment records pending the Publish process due to the number of errors. |
| **Error Summary** | This report shows a summary of errors within a specific report period. |
| **Exception Report for TRS** | Lists all TRS employees who have not received full-service credit for the plan year. |
| **Hired in Error Enrollments** | List of member enrollments marked Hired in Error or invalid members with outstanding balance. |
| **Invalid Address** | This report lists all Invalid addresses for all active employees with an agency. This includes the PID, name, effective date of the address and the address deemed inactive. |
| **Leave Without Pay** | Displays all employees for the selected employer who were on an approved unpaid leave of absence for at least one day between the selected begin and end dates. |
| **Member Enrollment** | Displays member enrollment information by Retirement system and Employer. |
| **Missing Employees from Contribution** | This report displays contributing regular employees who are expected to be reported by an employer for a particular payroll frequency and pay period, but who are not included in that submission. |
| **Missing Employees from Posted Contribution** | This report displays missing contributions for regular employees whose enrollment was created for a period for which a contribution report has already been posted and the member contributions are missing. |
| **Non-Participating Part-Time Status** | Displays all employees reported in a non-participating group reported under one employer, as well as all non-participating employees reported by more than one employer. |
| **Outstanding Edit Errors** | Provides the user with the list of outstanding Edit errors by employer code and submission ID. |

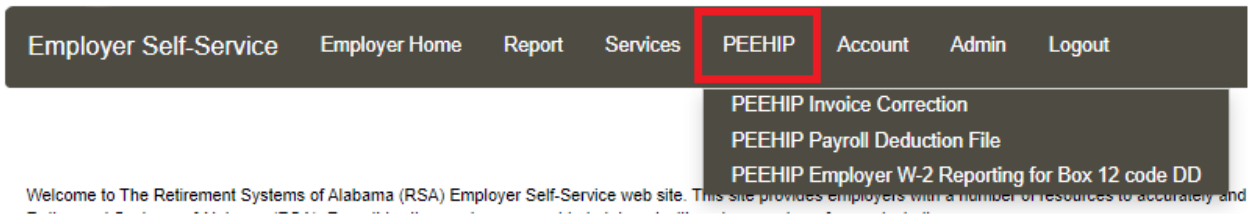
| | |
|---|---|
| **Outstanding Load Errors** | Provides the user with records that triggered a Load validation. |
| **Overtime Limit** | Provides a summary of employee wages for the purposes of tracking the pensionable overtime limit for employees of a specified employer. |
| **PEEHIP Employer Invoice Comparison** | PEEHIP Report |
| **PEEHIP Monthly Coverage** | PEEHIP Report |
| **PEEHIP Monthly Invoice – Miscellaneous** | PEEHIP Report |
| **PEEHIP Monthly Invoice – Miscellaneous Refunds** | PEEHIP Report |
| **PEEHIP Monthly Invoice – Regular** | PEEHIP Report |
| **Post-Retirement Employment** | Lists all working retirees for an employer and the wage limitation that applies to the retirees. This report will also indicate if a post-retiree is working for more than one agency.<br><br>If the agency employs retirees who are not listed on this report, they should be enrolled and have their wages reported going forward. If the agency has employees paid through a 3rd party employer/contractor, paid through accounts payable or employees whose wages have not been reported, employers must complete the Postretirement Employment Employing Agency Annual Certification form and return it to TRS. |
| **Retirees by Employer** | Lists all retirees by employer. |
| **Retirement Requests** | This report is to show all Retirement requests that are either in progress/pending or approved. |
| **Temporary Employment** | Provides a list of Temporary employees who are being enrolled in multiple temporary enrollments (e.g., to avoid the 1-year Temporary employment limit). |
| **TRS – Annual Statement Listing** | This report provides employers with an overview of their employees' Member Account Balances and Beneficiary Data as of the end of the previous fiscal year. If this information is incorrect, then they would need to notify RSA as soon as possible to get this information updated. |
| **Wages and Contributions** | Displays wages and contributions broken down by Contributed Wages (pensionable), Non-Contributed Wages (non-pensionable), Employee and Employer Contributions, RSA Calculated Contributions (based on tier group), and the Difference in Contributions.<br><br>This can be used to assist in identifying differences in contribution amounts during reconciling. This report can also be compared against the Payroll Deduction Report generated from NexGen. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | This is the only report available in ESS that contains an employee's full Social Security Number.<br><br>Note: Data displayed in the report is displayed in real-time. Any adjustments/changes made after the original report was run are reflected in this report. |

# PEEHIP

List of PEEHIP documents/reports and the location:

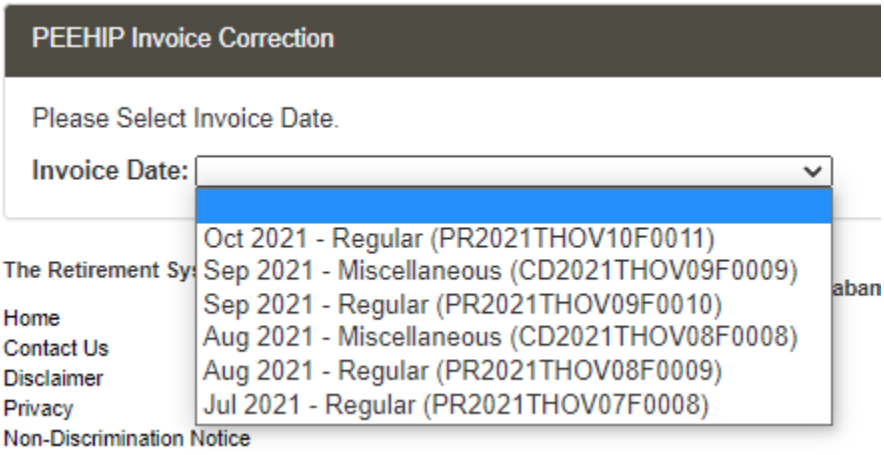
- **Employer Invoice Comparison Report**
  - Services tab > Reports.
- **Employer W-2 Reporting for Box 12 code DD**
  - PEEHIP tab > Employer W-2 Reporting for Box 12 code DD.
- **Monthly Coverage Report**
  - Services tab > Reports.
- **Monthly Invoice Report**
  - Services tab > Reports.
- **Pay Invoice Online**
  - Report tab > Invoices.
- **PEEHIP Invoice Corrections**
  - PEEHIP tab > PEEHIP Invoice Corrections.
- **PEEHIP Payroll Deduction File**
  - PEEHIP tab > PEEHIP Payroll Deduction File.



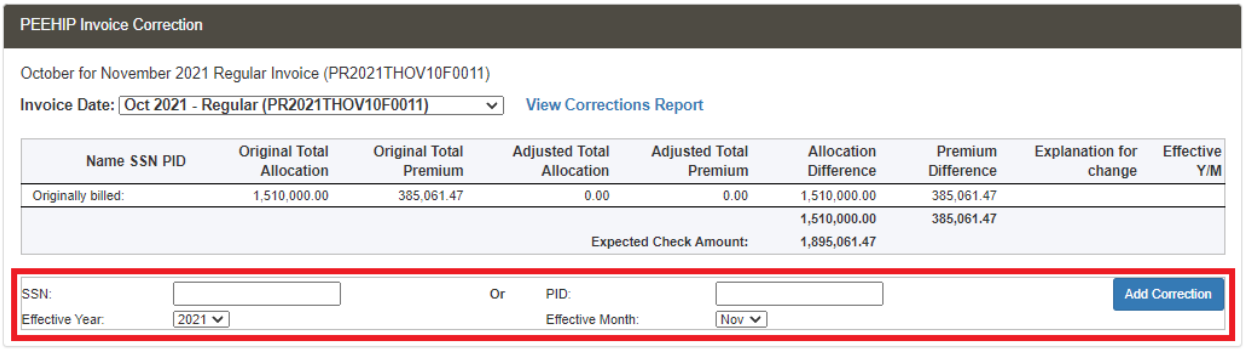
# PEEHIP Invoice Correction

ESS Portal users will go here to make corrections to a PEEHIP Invoice. Usually this is used when the user needs to add a new hire that was not added before the invoice was generated but should be on the selected invoice, or to remove an employee that was terminated after the invoice was generated and should not be on the selected invoice, or any other invoice adjustments can be done here.

- Select the month the invoice was created.



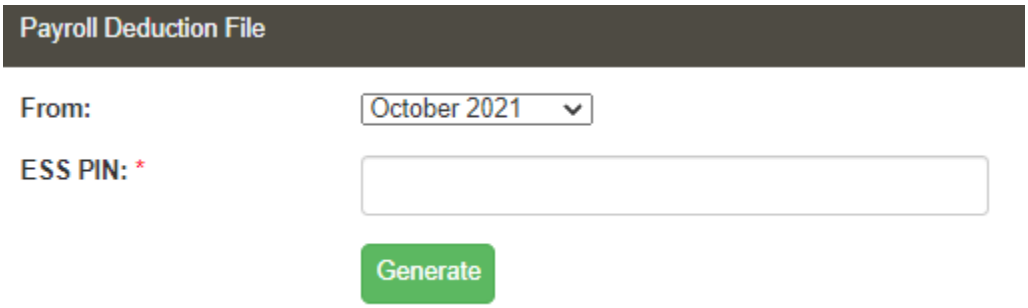

- This will bring users to a summary view of the selected invoice.
- Users can add corrections here.



## PEEHIP Payroll Deduction File

Users will go here to download the monthly Payroll Deduction file. This file is uploaded to ESS once every month and the users are notified when the latest file is available.

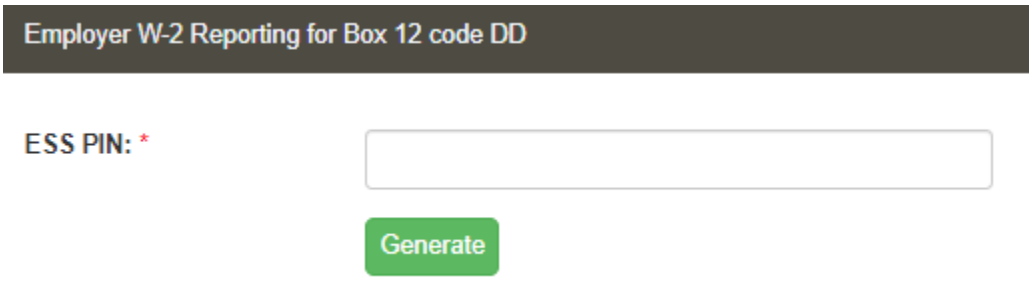
- Select the month the invoice is effective.
    - Invoices are generated for the following month.
    - For example: In September, the invoice effective for October is created. In October, the invoice effective for November is created, etc.
    - Users will enter their PIN > select Generate.




## Employer W-2 Reporting for Box 12 code DD

Users will go here to download the Employer W-2 Reporting file. This is uploaded to ESS once every year and the Employers are notified when the file is available.

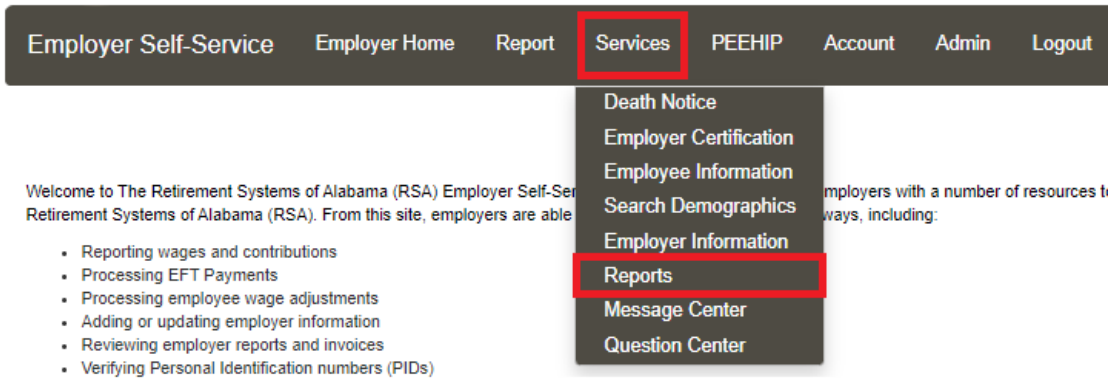
- Users will enter their PIN > Generate.

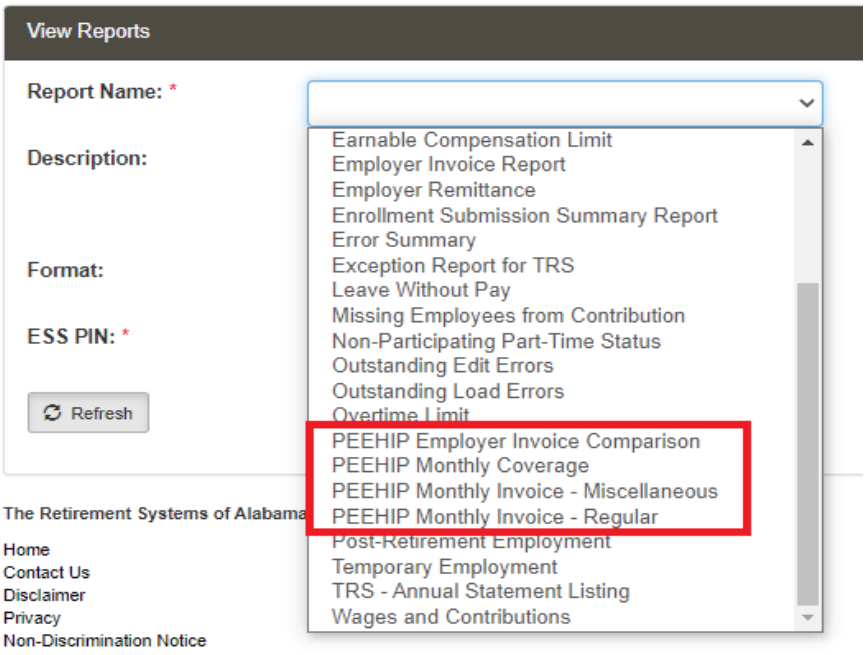


# Services Tab

Some PEEHIP reports for Employers can be found under the Services Tab.

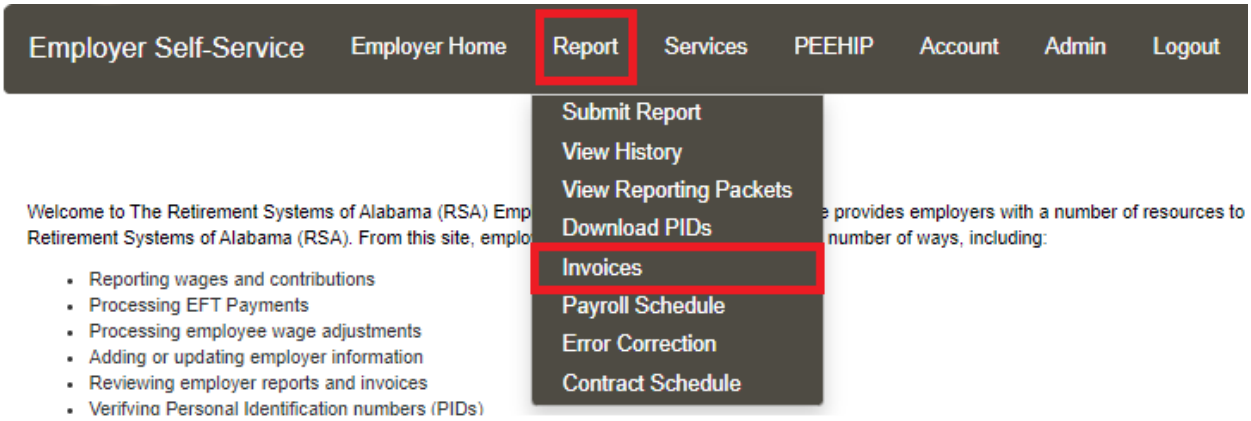
- **PEEHIP Employer Invoice Comparison**
  - This report allows the user to view a comparison list of the selected month's invoice and the previous month's invoice.
- **PEEHIP Monthly Invoice – Regular**
  - The user can download the itemized invoice for the selected month here.
- **PEEHIP Monthly Coverage**
  - The user can download the itemized list of their employees' active PEEHIP coverage for the selected month here.



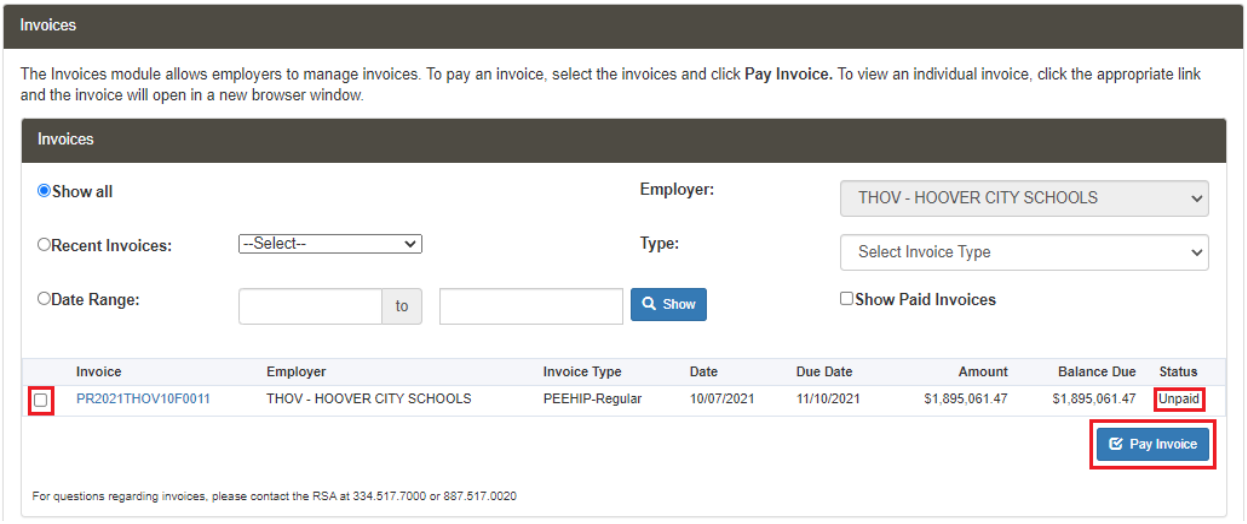



## Reports Tab

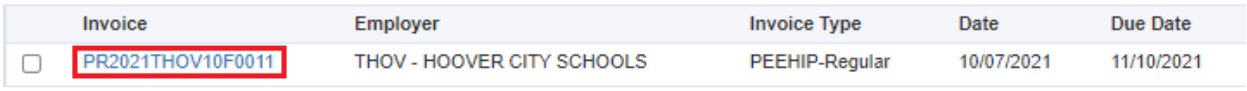
The employer will pay their PEEHIP Invoices online under the Report tab in Invoices.



If the employer has any invoices in the unpaid status, they can make the payment online. The user will need to select the checkbox next to the unpaid invoice and then select Pay Invoice.




If the user would like to view the invoice, click the invoice number hyperlink.




The information provided in this manual is meant to be a resource to assist employers with ESS Portal reporting processes. This manual will not address every scenario that employers may have. We also encourage Employers to periodically refer to the RSA website for important TRS information.

If you have any questions, please contact the Employer Services Division at 334.517.7005, option 2, or by email at Employer.Services@rsa-al.gov.