



FALL 2021



Annual Leave Reporting

PERA's Summer 2021 Employer Newsletter announced a change in how we collect information on member leaves of absence. In July, we provided information during our Legislative Update webinar and shared the new Annual Leave Report file format specifications. This article provides further detail to help employers prepare for the 2022 rollout.

Any employer with at least one PERA member must now complete an Annual Leave Report listing all leaves that resulted in any unpaid time during the year. A response is required from every employer, even those without any employee leaves of absence to report for the year.

Local government employers will report on a calendar year (CY) basis, with the 2021 report due by January 31, 2022. The first report for school employers is fiscal year (FY) 2022, due by July 31, 2022.

ERIS Reporting Options

Our online Employer Reporting & Information System (ERIS) offers two reporting options: you may upload a properly

formatted data file or enter the data into an online report.

For each member, you will provide:

- Leave type
- Social Security number
- Leave start date
- Leave end date
- Hourly rate
- Total hours

PERA will use the reported data to notify the member of their option to purchase the salary credit for their unpaid leave. Information about salary and service credit purchases is available on our [website](#).

Testing Data Files

The current file format is posted on our Employer Education page. We updated the Description for Hourly Wage to clarify that the average wage should be listed on the report if the employee had multiple wage rates during the leave period.

ERIS will begin accepting test files on Monday, October 18, 2021. Testing is not

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Administer and promote sustainable retirement plans and provide services that our members value.

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required, but is an opportunity to confirm that your file formatting is correct. The test environment is not linked to our records and will not compare data on active members. By the same date, the “Computer File Format” section in the Employer Manual (chapter 9) will also be updated with Annual Leave Report information.

Reporting Tips**Leave Spans Multiple Reporting Periods:**

If a member’s leave continues into a subsequent year, employers will report the leaves over two annual reports.

Example: For Year 1, report dates are Leave Begin Date to 12/31/YEAR 1 (or 6/30). Next year, you will report the remaining portion of the leave; the dates will begin with 1/1/YEAR 2 (or 7/1) to Leave End Date.

Terminations: When you report member



terminations throughout the year, PERA will send a request asking that you report any leaves on the member’s account management screen in ERIS.

Multiple Leaves: Separate lines will allow for accurate reporting of different leaves; however, any that occur within 30 days of each other should be reported as one continuous period.

Optional Reporting

If you currently report leaves in ERIS or transmit a demographic file, you may

continue to do so. Any leave information reported throughout the year will be prepopulated on your annual report, and you may review and modify the dates of those records. The prepopulated leave data may also be exported within ERIS to Excel for your records.

Upcoming Training

A webinar will be held in early November to provide an overview of the report, a look at the new ERIS screens, and an opportunity to ask questions. Check our [website](#) for more information in the coming weeks.

Welcome Employer Time Change: 5:00 pm Thursday, September 30

*This special session has been scheduled for those of you who aren’t available during regular business hours.

PERA Reporting Training: Thursday, September 30, 5:00-6:30 pm

Recommended for payroll, HR, and business managers who are new to PERA reporting.

Can’t make it on September 30? We have additional programs scheduled for the coming months:

- Thursday, October 28, 11:00 am-12:30 pm
- Thursday, November 18: 11:00 am-12:30 pm
- Thursday, December 16: 11:00 am-12:30 pm

Coming in November: Informational webinar about the new leave reporting process. More details to come.

Sign up today on our [website](#)

ERIS Security Overview

The Employer Reporting and Information System (ERIS) allows employers to create and update members' accounts and maintain information regarding your agency's PERA contacts. Each employer is allowed up to two Administrators and an unlimited number of Representatives. ERIS Administrators maintain ERIS security for their agency, create Representative accounts, and assign security rights.

Each ERIS user is required to have a unique login ID, and it is critical that users **do not share ERIS User IDs and passwords with others**. Think of your ERIS User ID as your electronic signature. PERA tracks all actions taken by each User ID, which means that users are responsible for any changes made under their ID. This requirement helps to protect the integrity of PERA's data.

PERA has streamlined the registration process. Many new PERA contacts



can gain access within 1-2 business days. Ideally, when a staffing change is anticipated, the new contact should be registered immediately so that their account will be accessible as the transition between the former and new contact takes place.

However, we understand that staff and

personnel changes can occur suddenly. In these situations, please reach out to us and our team will assist you in gaining access and addressing any questions you may have.

We occasionally discover a new employee who continues to use the User ID assigned to their predecessor. These situations are often detected when the new user needs assistance but is unable to provide the correct answer to the account's security question, or when PERA receives a bounce-back email notice. When this occurs, PERA reaches out to the agency to obtain current contact information and assist in registering for an ERIS account.

More information about ERIS Access and Reporting is available in Chapter 6 of the [Employer Manual](#). If you have additional questions, contact our Employer Line at 651.296.3636 and select option 4.

On-Demand Legislative Update

PERA legislative update webinar for employers: Available on our website through the end of the year

Learn about the 2021 Omnibus Bill and how it will impact the day-to-day administration of PERA benefits. (Note: This is a recording of the July 15 legislative update webinar.)

Topics covered include:

- Overview of 2021 legislative changes
- Exclusion of certain visa holders
- Spotlight: Changes to leave reporting
- Process change: Request for evidence of employment

Watch it today on our [website](#)

Virtual Benefit Fair: Coming to our website in October!

From new and currently working employees to those approaching retirement, members will soon be able to find the PERA resources they need—all in one place.

Resources will include:

- Welcome to PERA overview (introduction to PERA's plans)
- Registration for member education programs
- Quick links to important forms and publications
- Access to benefit counselors and individual phone conferences

Stay tuned for more details!



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Ask PERA!

Have a question for PERA?
 We'd love to hear from you!

Email

employer.reps@mnpera.org

Employer Line

651-296-3636 (metro area)

1-888-892-7372 (toll-free)

Member Line

651-296-7460 (metro area)

1-800-652-9026 (toll-free)

Website

www.mnpera.org



I've heard people say, "Once in PERA, always in PERA." What does this mean?



This phrase has been used casually over the years to sum up a key element of PERA's membership rules. We currently avoid its use, however, because it can lead to enrollment errors when interpreted literally.

In general, it means: Once an employee is eligible for PERA coverage, their membership continues until termination of employment with that employer. This is true even if their earnings fall below the salary threshold in subsequent years. **However, there are limits and exceptions, such as:**

- **It isn't forever.** If an eligible member terminates employment, has a break in service of at least 30 days, and is subsequently rehired by the same employer to a non-temporary position, the employee must re-qualify for PERA coverage.
- **It doesn't transfer.** An employee's eligibility for membership is based upon their employment with a single public employer. An individual who is employed by more than one public employer must qualify with each employer separately.