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A Message From Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli

More than a million NYSLRS members and retirees count on the secure benefits provided by the Retirement System, and NYSLRS employers like you help make them possible.

Monthly reporting, member enrollment and other important information you provide help us to calculate benefits. I thank you for this essential work you do.

When we were updating *Retirement Online* for employers, we brought an employer focus group together to hear what was important to them and how we could improve their work with the Retirement System. Your guidance was invaluable.

One innovation that came from our employer meetings is enhanced reporting. In this edition of *Employer Forum*, you can read about an employer who is using enhanced reporting to improve their Retirement System work. If you're not already an enhanced reporter, I urge you to contact us and start the process right away. Remember, all employers must be using enhanced reporting by the end of this year.

Again, I can't stress enough the importance of the data that you provide. This information is vital to NYSLRS in the maintenance of member accounts. Be assured that enhanced reporting offers you the most efficient way to provide NYSLRS with timely and accurate employee data.

Thank you for helping us to provide our members with the benefits they've earned. We couldn't do it without you.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Thomas P. DiNapoli
State Comptroller

Enhanced Reporting

“
You'll Be So
Happy You Did It
”



NYSLRS employers have been making the switch to *Retirement Online* enhanced reporting. From the smallest villages to the largest cities and counties in the State, they've found that enhanced reporting provides a better way to submit monthly reports and do business with the Retirement System.

One of those employers is the Town of Wilton in Saratoga County, where Comptroller Maria Moran oversees the town's NYSLRS reporting and works closely with their HR department to enroll new members.

In late 2022, the town began collaborating with a team of NYSLRS staff who specialize in helping employers switch to enhanced reporting. This one-on-one process focuses on the unique needs of each NYSLRS employer.

For Maria Moran, the individual support from NYSLRS was key for adopting enhanced reporting. "Even though we're all part of the same Retirement System," she said, "every employer is different."

"The training has been phenomenal," said Maria. "They walked us through all sorts of scenarios for hiring and reporting and were always available when we had questions."

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Town of Wilton Comptroller Maria Moran

Enhanced Reporting “You’ll Be So Happy You Did It”

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Wilton has about 75 full-time employees and, like many employers, the town hires seasonal staff to run camps and recreational programs. “This will really improve the onboarding of these part-timers,” she told us. “And since it’s a better way to track their employment and earnings, it will really pay off in the future if someone’s looking for service credit.”

What would Maria Moran tell other employers getting ready to get started with enhanced reporting? “It may seem like a lot of work now, but in the long run, it will make things easier and save time,” she said. “Nobody likes change — but once you get there, you’ll be so happy you did it.”

Start Your Transition to Enhanced Reporting

Employers **must switch** to enhanced reporting by the end of 2023. Enhanced reporting enables employers to meet their reporting requirements under the Retirement and Social Security Law. Legacy reporting is being replaced because it does not allow employers to report efficiently or comply with many recent changes in State law.

Our staff is ready to support you every step of the way to make sure you get the training and assistance you need.

Your enhanced reporting transition plan will be customized for your location based on the four-step Gold Certification process:

1. MAP YOUR DATA TO NYSLRS CODES

NYSLRS transition coaches will help you take your location’s payroll and personnel codes and associate them with the codes used in the enhanced report. This one-time exercise provides several long-term benefits. Job Codes determine an employee’s NYSLRS retirement plan. HR Transaction Codes are used for changes to an employee’s job status, for example, if they are hired or on leave. Earnings Codes define which earnings are used to calculate a member’s retirement benefit, ensuring your employees receive the retirement benefits they’ve earned.

2. SELF-PACED TRAINING

You’ll take online training on how to submit the enhanced report based on the reporting method that you use (file upload or manual).

3. LIVE TRAINING WITH YOUR TRANSITION COACH

You and your transition coach will practice in a training environment that simulates *Retirement Online*. You’ll run through enrolling and hiring employees, submit a report and adjustments, fix errors and warnings and learn how to look up member data.

4. PRACTICE SUBMITTING YOUR REPORT

You and your coach will submit your first enhanced report in *Retirement Online*.

After you’ve completed Gold Certification, your transition coach will be available to help for an additional three months to ensure you’re comfortable with enhanced reporting. After this time, NYSLRS’ Employer Services staff will assist you with reporting questions.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

[Email the Retirement Online Gold Certification team](#) to set up your personalized transition timeline.

Not sure whether your organization has made the switch? Check the [full list of employers and payroll providers who have completed Gold Certification](#).

Already Transitioned to Enhanced Reporting?

Our new [Enhanced Reporting guide](#) contains everything you need to know about reporting employee earnings and service information to NYSLRS. It provides all the essentials for the enhanced report, including how to submit adjustments to previously reported data and more.

You can also find the link, along with other helpful resources, on our [Employer Reporting webpage](#).

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New Employees, New Members



You just hired a new employee. They are eager to learn and asking you questions about their NYSLRS membership. Encourage them to visit our [New Members webpage](#), which has the information and resources they need. Here are some of the highlights:

CONTRIBUTIONS

Most NYSLRS members contribute a percentage of their earnings to help support retirement benefits. For Tier 6 members, their contribution rate depends on their annual wage. New members can click "[How membership contributions work](#)" to find out how much they'll contribute.

THE RETIREMENT PLAN PUBLICATION

The retirement benefits available to NYSLRS members depend on their tier and retirement plan. For members of the Police and Fire Retirement System, public employment usually must be in specific job titles in order to count toward their retirement benefit. The [Find Your Retirement Plan](#) button will help your employees find their specific retirement plan publication — a comprehensive description of their benefits that will be a valuable resource to them throughout their career.

SERVICE CREDIT

NYSLRS pension benefits are usually directly related to retirement service credit. If your employees worked for a public employer before joining NYSLRS, they may be able to purchase credit for that service. And the earlier they purchase it, the less it will cost them. For more information, they should click "[Getting credit for all of your public service.](#)"

The New Members page also provides links to Tier 6 membership overviews, milestones and death benefit information. Topics such as how a NYSLRS pension works and starting a retirement savings account can boost their retirement confidence and help them achieve financial security later in life.

What to Know About Sex Designation and Member Enrollment



State agencies are required to offer "x" as an identifier when collecting information about a person's sex. Now, when you enroll new members in NYSLRS, they can identify as "x," "male" or "female."

We have updated the [Retirement Online Enrollment Dashboard](#), the [enhanced report](#) (Transaction 1: Biographical Information), and our [membership application forms](#) to accommodate the new "x" option. Going forward, please ask your new employees which sex identifier they would prefer to use when you enroll them in NYSLRS.

If you have member enrollment questions, please message us using our [help desk form](#) (select "Member Enrollment" from the dropdown) or call 866-805-0990 (press 1, then 3).



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Employer Billing Basics

As a participating NYSLRS employer, you are billed each November for your share of the cost of your employees' retirement benefits. Your invoice is based on the retirement plans you offer, the contribution rates for those plans, and the pensionable earnings reported for members employed during the last State fiscal year.

THREE TYPES OF INVOICES

Projected Invoices

To help your organization prepare its budget, NYSLRS sends Projected Invoices 16 months before payment is due. To create these invoices, we project your employees' anticipated earnings.

Estimated Invoices

Estimated Invoices, issued several months before your due date, are provided for informational purposes only. To determine this amount, we use your employees' reported earnings from the last completed State fiscal year, which ends March 31.

Final Annual Invoice

In November, NYSLRS issues your final Annual Invoice. This is the actual amount that will be due on February 1. Payments received after February 1 are subject to interest. Your amount is discounted if you pay by December 15 of the previous year.

We email your organization's billing contacts when each invoice becomes available in *Retirement Online*. You can find more information, including links to resources, on our [Employer Billing webpage](#).

Thomas P. DiNapoli State Comptroller

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The *Employer Forum* is a semiannual newsletter published by the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) for participating employers. This newsletter is a summary of benefits, rights and responsibilities. It is not a substitute for New York State or federal law.

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2023

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Here are the approximate dates when employer billing and reporting information becomes available in *Retirement Online*:

JULY

- Estimate of invoice due February 2024 (actual invoice will be provided in November)
- Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) information

SEPTEMBER

- Employer contribution rates for projected February 2025 invoice
- Projection of invoice due February 2025

