



Employer *Bulletin*

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Exciting News! New Benefit Administration System Underway

The Department of Employee Trust Funds is excited to announce that implementation of a new benefit administration system is underway. The new system will modernize and improve our information technology system capabilities and business processes. The transition is in its initial stage and will be an ongoing effort over the next several years. We anticipate the new system going live for employer reporting in late 2016 or early 2017.

ETF recognized the need to replace our disjointed and aged information technology systems with an integrated benefits administration system that is consolidated to allow us to operate more efficiently. The benefit administration initiative will provide participating employers and employees with the best service possible.

Along with updates to employer reporting, the new system will offer a robust library of new features in employer self service. Employer self service capabilities will expand to include (but are not limited to) viewing account activity, making real-time updates and changes, submitting files and updating records. In addition, employer reporting will change to a more frequent basis, and there will no longer be a need for an annual reconciliation process. The annual reconciliation process currently in practice will continue until the new system is fully implemented.

ETF is collaborating with 30 WRS employers from the Employer Advisory Council (EAC) to identify opportunities for improvement and for assistance with the benefits administration system implementation. ETF will involve and utilize the EAC for feedback, testing and training of the new system.

One member from our EAC shared the challenges she faced when her colleague was out for a long-term leave of absence. She was left to get up to speed on ETF's current benefit systems and was quickly reminded of their complexity. She said, "I soon discovered there was a tremendous amount of duplication occurring, particularly between different benefits. If I needed to change an employee's last name, I had to do it separately for WRS, life and health insurance." The new benefits administration system will establish one, comprehensive, accurate picture of our members that will be stored in just one location.

The system is designed specifically to meet the needs of ETF, its employers, members and third party administrators. It will be a fully integrated solution, allowing for a degree of automation and user empowerment, straight through processing and excellence in customer service. It will include all pension functionality, as well as capabilities related to insurance and other benefit administration functions. There will also be online and real-time self-service features for both participants and employers. All of these capabilities will be integrated into one unified benefit administration system. The new system is extremely powerful and will allow for complete control over business processes impacting all stakeholders involved with ETF.

While implementation of this new system may change employer reporting as it currently exists, the new system will streamline processes and improve overall business efficiency. Changes within ETF in regard to employer reporting policies and procedures will require that all employers modify the files they currently share with ETF, which may involve some cost. Format requirements and specifications to the file have not yet been determined. ETF will notify employers when a determination is made.

Note: As employers, it will be your responsibility to share changes of the file format with your payroll vendors to validate that the file meets the format specification. If payroll vendors have questions regarding updating the file format specification, please contact the Employer Communication Center.

Many more great changes are planned for the future, and there will be ongoing communication as these changes occur.

Contact

For questions related to the contents of this *Employer Bulletin*, please contact the Employer Communication Center toll free at 1-877-533-5020 or 608-266-3285.

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