



Employer *Bulletin*

Employer Communication Center 608-266-3285 Toll free: 1-877-533-5020 etf.wi.gov

2015 Wisconsin Act 174

The purpose of this Bulletin is to explain a recent law change, 2015 Wisconsin Act 174, which affects the Wisconsin Retirement System. ***This law does not affect current employees who are part of the WRS.*** Please distribute this Bulletin to your staff as appropriate if you have received questions from your employees.

Act 174 went into effect in March 2016. It allows a public employer that is either

1. not currently in the WRS, or
2. that only has some employees in the WRS* to join the WRS and only enroll employees who are hired after the employer joins the WRS.

Therefore, the current employees of the employer would not be enrolled into the WRS. Those employees would stay in their current, non-WRS retirement plan, assuming the employer offers a retirement plan.

Act 174 also gives an incoming employer the choice to allow its current employees (those hired before the employer enters the WRS) to opt into the WRS. To enter the WRS, the current employee must complete [a form provided by ETF](#) and the form must be received by the employer before the employer starts WRS participation. If the current employee chooses to enroll in the WRS, he/she will start to receive WRS service from that point forward; his/her past service will not count unless the employer decides to pay for his/her prior service.

ETF anticipates a small number of employers will utilize Act 174 because most public employers in Wisconsin currently receive the benefits of the WRS, such as employee retention and attraction, retirement security, low administrative costs, etc. In fact, Act 174 was introduced and passed because a non-WRS** employer was having difficulty attracting and retaining qualified employees. For background purposes, WRS participation by employer type is:

Employer	Number
State agencies, UW & Public Authorities	57
Counties	71
Cities	152
4th Class Cities	36
Villages	261
Towns	246
School Districts	424
CESA	12
Technical Colleges	16
Special Districts	207
Total	1,482

*For example, some school districts participate in the WRS by enrolling teachers (which is required by law), but never elected to become a full WRS employer. Therefore, the employees who are in administrative positions for those schools are not enrolled in the WRS.

**The eligible protective employees who work for this particular employer participate in the WRS, but other employees do not. This is due to a separate law that requires municipal employers over a certain population to enroll protectives in the WRS.

Reminder About Sending Employee Information to ETF

The Department of Employee Trust Funds Office of Internal Audit recently completed an audit on the accuracy of the data employers submit to ETF for its employees. The audit reviewed state and local employer reporting including the following elements that impact the calculation of retirement benefits for your employees: date of birth, date of hire and years of service. The follow-up data submitted to ETF by selected employers during the audit also included names, gender and Social Security numbers.

Due to your efforts to continually report timely and accurately, the audit did not find any material weaknesses with employer reporting in the test sampling. Thank you to those employers who were included in the test sampling and provided information to ETF auditors. We appreciate the time you took to submit the information and answer questions. We also appreciate the time all WRS agents take to send periodic reports during the year and the annual file.

One of the recommendations of the audit is to provide tips on how to securely send personally identifiable information about employees.

- ETF's Online Network for Employers (ONE), which employers use to submit periodic reports and annual files, is secure. The Secure File Transfer Protocol (SFTP), which can also be used to send periodic reports, is also secure. Please use those methods to send personally identifiable information.
- In addition, there are times when your ETF case manager or an ETF auditor may ask for employee information. The case manager or auditor will ask for employee information via an encrypted email message to you. You will receive a notification that comes with the secure message and the notification will have instructions on how to read it. First-time users will need to click on the attached file and complete a one-time registration.

The Department of Employee Trust Funds does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the provision of programs, services or employment. If you are speech or hearing impaired and need assistance, call the Wisconsin Relay Service toll free at 7-1-1 or 1-800-947-3529 (English) 1-800-833-7813 (Español). If you are visually or cognitively impaired, call 1-877-533-5020 or (608) 266-3285 locally. We will try to find another way to get the information to you in a usable form.

This *Employer Bulletin* is published by the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds. Questions should be directed to contact persons listed in the *Bulletin*. Employer agents may copy this *Bulletin* for further distribution to other payroll offices, subunits or individuals who may need the information. Copies of the most recent *Employer Bulletins* are available on our Internet site at etf.wi.gov/employers.htm

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