

## A Message from Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli



As head of the New York State and Local Retirement System (NYSLRS) and Trustee of the New York State Common Retirement Fund (Fund), I am committed to ensuring the Fund remains one of the strongest, best-managed public pension funds in the country. Despite challenges in the market, the Fund ended the State fiscal year 2014-2015 with a value of \$184.5 billion, achieving a 7.16 percent rate of return on investments.

I have long maintained that a strong partnership with our participating employers is crucial to the successful operation of NYSLRS. Over the past few years, we have made various online tools available to you in an effort to make your retirement-related work easier.

This summer, we launched another online application — one that provides information you need to comply with the Governmental Accounting Standard Board's (GASB) new Standard No. 68. This standard requires changes to financial reporting, but has no effect on your contribution rates or how pensions are funded. You'll find more information about the application and the standard on page 3.

Additional online tools will be available soon when we introduce NYSLRS' new secure self-service portal. Initially, you will be able to use this new system to perform simple transactions, but eventually you will use it for all your retirement tasks. You can read more about the portal on page 4 and in upcoming NYSLRS publications.

As always, feel free to contact my office with any questions or comments you might have.

Sincerely,

Thomas P. DiNapoli  
State Comptroller

## How to Classify: *Employee or Independent Contractor?*

Most people hired to provide services to participating employers in the Retirement System are considered employees, or in some cases, are appointed or elected as public officers. Employees and public officers are eligible for membership in the Employees' Retirement System. Sometimes, however, there are individuals who provide services, not as employees, but as independent contractors or consultants. They may not join the Retirement System. So how do you tell the difference?

The *Employer's Guide* (VO1700) Membership section is a good resource. There you will find a list of general characteristics for employees, independent contractors and public officers. Our *Classifying an Employee or Independent Contractor* webpage also provides important information to help you determine if newly hired individuals are independent contractors or consultants.

In addition, you should be aware that for each person hired as an attorney, physician, engineer, architect, accountant or auditor, you must send us a completed Certification for Individuals Engaged in Certain Professions (RS2414) if they were hired on or after April 1, 2008. If they were

*Continued on page 2*

## Is Your Contact Information Correct?

Each February and October, we write to all participating employers asking you to review the contact information we have on file and send us any corrections.

We need accurate contact information (names, addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses) for you: CEO, CFO, Personnel Officer, Billing or Payroll Officer, and Clerk or Secretary to the Governing Board. Having this information is vital to ensuring you receive timely notifications on important topics such as newly enacted legislation that could affect you and your employees, upcoming employer reporting seminars and billing rates.

However, if there have been changes to your officers' contact information since the last time you received our letter, you don't have to wait for the next one to send us your updates. Please take a moment and email us the new information at [REmpSer@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:REmpSer@osc.state.ny.us).

## Employee or Independent Contractor?

*Continued from page 1*

hired prior to that date, you would submit a Certification for Determining Independent Contractor or Employee Status (RS2415). This form can also be used for other titles if you're not sure how to classify them.

### Resources

*Employer's Guide (VO1700):* [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/word\\_and\\_pdf\\_documents/employers\\_files/employer\\_guide.pdf](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/word_and_pdf_documents/employers_files/employer_guide.pdf)

*Classifying an Employee or Independent Contractor:* [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/employers/classify\\_an\\_employee.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/employers/classify_an_employee.php)

*Certification for Individuals Engaged in Certain Professions (RS2414):* [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/forms/rs2414.pdf](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/forms/rs2414.pdf)

*Certification for Determining Independent Contractor or Employee Status (RS2415):* [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/forms/rs2415.pdf](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/forms/rs2415.pdf)

## New Employees — New Membership Applications

Your new employees who elect to join or are required to join the Retirement System must complete a Membership Registration application for the appropriate System (form RS5420 for ERS and form PF5022 for PFRS). If your new employee is already a member of either Retirement System, we highly recommend he or she complete a new application when changing public employers. It's **mandatory**, however, for all ERS Tier 6 members and all PFRS Tier 3, 5 and 6 members to complete a new application.

These applications provide us with important updated information, including new start date, job title and salary data. For all Tier 6 members, we need the annualized salary to correctly calculate their variable contribution rate. For PFRS Tier 3 and 5 members, new applications allow us to capture the correct retirement plan, which in turn determines the contributory status of these members.

To find out if your new employees are already members of the Retirement System, call our automated information line toll-free at 1-866-805-0990, or 518-474-7736 in the Albany, New York area, and press 5, then 2 for Member Registration. This service is available every business day from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm. Be sure you have the following information available:

- Your five-digit employer location code;
- Your three-digit employer report code;
- The new employee's Social Security number; and
- The new employee's birth date.

For new employees who are already members of the Retirement System, membership is not optional. These members must be reported to us and make retirement contributions, if applicable.

For more information, please see Chapter 3 of the *Employer's Guide (VO1700)* available on our Publications page at [www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/index.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/publications/index.php).

STAY CONNECTED WITH  
 NYS LRS

LIKE. FOLLOW. SHARE.

Our social media pages highlight more than just the nuts and bolts of the Retirement System. Please share these links with your staff to help them get answers to their basic membership and retirement questions!

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[NYRetirementNews.com](http://NYRetirementNews.com)



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## Online GASB Help Is Here for You

As a participating employer in the New York State & Local Retirement System (NYSLRS), you may be required to comply with a recent standard issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). In fact, some employers have already begun implementing this standard.

GASB Statement No. 68, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions*, requires you to report expanded information concerning pensions in your financial statements, as well as your proportionate share of the Net Pension Liability (NPL). It is effective for fiscal years beginning after June 15, 2014.

However, you do not have to determine your NPL. The information you need to comply with GASB Statement No. 68 is available to you in a new online application, which was launched this past July. We have calculated the NPL, pension expense and deferred inflows/outflows annually based on current actuarial and financial information. We are also assisting with the related disclosures.



You can view the GASB application via our employer web portal — the same portal you use to access your Annual Invoice, Salary Listing, Retirement Internet Reporting, and other Employer Online Programs. As with all the online programs we offer, this new application is a secure site. You must have a username and password to enter.

### Online GASB Resources

Don't know when you have to implement GASB Statement No. 68?

- The implementation chart on our website can help:  
[www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/employers/gasb/implementation\\_dates.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/employers/gasb/implementation_dates.php).

Need more information on GASB?

- Read the special GASB section on our website:  
[www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/employers/gasb/index.php](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/employers/gasb/index.php).
- View a slideshow of the webinar presented by NYSLRS and the Division of Local Government and School Accountability on LGSA's website:  
[www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/training/pdf/slideshow042215.pdf](http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/training/pdf/slideshow042215.pdf).
- Email us at [NYSLRS\\_GASB@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:NYSLRS_GASB@osc.state.ny.us)

## New Way to Pay Employer Invoices

Your invoice, which is made available to you every November through our Employer Invoices Application, itemizes your NYSLRS employer contributions owed for the current fiscal year. Your November invoice must be paid by February 1 of the next calendar year; however, you may choose to prepay a discounted amount by December 15 of the same calendar year.

Did you know that you can now pay your invoice electronically using Automated Clearing House (ACH)? It is less costly than wiring money, and faster and more reliable than mailing a check. ACH payments must be set up in advance, generally two or more business days prior to the debit date. Please keep this in mind if you are trying to meet either the December 15 or the February 1 payment deadline, and check with your bank on the timing if you are not familiar with the process.

The ACH and Wiring Instructions within the Invoices Application (under *How to Pay*) will let you know what information you need to include with your payment.

If you choose to pay by ACH or by wire, it is very important to let us know that your payment is being sent so that you may be properly credited. Email the Employer Billing Unit at [NYSLRS\\_Billing@osc.state.ny.us](mailto:NYSLRS_Billing@osc.state.ny.us), and include the date of payment, employer name, five-digit location code, and retirement system (ERS or PFRS) in your email.

We will send you an email when the Invoices Application becomes available this November. Included in that email will be detailed instructions about how to pay your invoice and links to more information on our website.

# Retirement Online

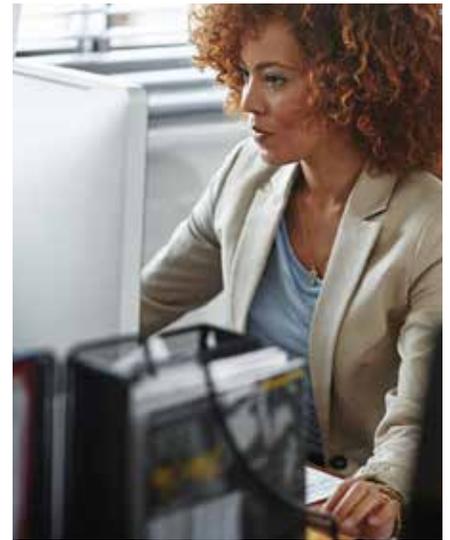
## Coming in 2016

Employers will soon begin conducting business with the Retirement System in a new way — on our updated and improved *Retirement Online* portal. You will be able to use the new system to perform simple tasks like managing your contact information and participating in training and education — but that's just the beginning.

Over the next few years, many important employer reporting functions will be moved to the new *Retirement Online*, and tasks like reporting wages and contributions and registering new employees will become faster and easier. The Retirement System will also introduce new web-based self-service tools for our members and retirees. These new capabilities will provide greater access to information and simplify account administration.

To help make sure that the new *Retirement Online* system meets the needs of our employer partners, we have formed the Employer Advisory Council (EAC). The members are from State agencies and local municipalities of all sizes, and represent a broad cross-section of employers. Their role is to advise us of potential impacts to employers and members throughout the life of the project.

We will contact you with more information about how to begin using your *Retirement Online* account. As we introduce new features, the Retirement System will provide all the information and training you need to get started. Our goal is simple — to bring more tools to help you administer your account and create a better experience for you and your employees.



The *Employer Forum* is a semiannual newsletter published by the New York State and Local Retirement System for participating employers.

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## IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

### SEPTEMBER 2015

2016 Projections & Rates Available Online

### NOVEMBER 2015

Annual Invoice Issued Online

### DECEMBER 2015

Discounted Prepayment of the Annual Invoice due December 15

### FEBRUARY 2016

Payment of the Annual Invoice due February 1

### MAY 2016

Member Annual Statement Mailing Begins