



September 2021

Did Your Lowest Entry-Level Teacher Salary Increase?

Reminder: If you are using the lowest entry level teacher salary to calculate the number of days for members being paid by stipend, you will need to update the data in your system when the entry level increases. Failing to update that rate may result in inaccurate reporting of service credit.

Verifying or Registering New Employees

When you have a new hire reportable to NYSTRS, always check the Membership Verification page in the [Employer Secure Area](#) (ESA - found under the Membership menu) to see if the employee is already a member of this Retirement System. If he or she is already a NYSTRS member, you will find the date of membership. If not, have the employee complete NYSTRS' [Application for Membership](#) (NET-2) and return it to you.

Once you receive the completed NET-2 you may register the employee as a NYSTRS member via ESA (please make sure to enter the expected earnings to establish the member contribution rate). **Be sure to then forward completed membership applications to NYSTRS. Without the application we do not have the mailing address or beneficiary designation for the member.** If the employee's membership in NYSTRS is optional, please do not register the employee for membership until he or she has actually rendered service.

Mandatory or Optional Membership?

Membership in NYSTRS is restricted to teachers as defined by Section 501-4 of the Education Law. (This includes teachers, teaching assistants, guidance counselors, educational administrators, or any other title covered by this System.) Teachers must also be employed by one of our participating employers in "UNCLASSIFIED SERVICE" pursuant to Section 35 of the Civil Service Law. These are educational positions, generally considered to be professional in nature.

Under certain conditions, membership in NYSTRS is mandatory as required by Section 503-1 of the Education Law. Membership is mandatory if an employee meets conditions 1, 2 and 3:

1. **Full-time** employment (i.e., they will be employed for the full day, every day school is in session).
2. **A contractual relationship** exists between employee and employer.
3. Employment will be on a **per annum basis** (i.e. through the end of school year) regardless of the date employment commences.

NOTE: In the case of SUNY and community college employees, membership in this System is mandatory if the employee meets conditions 1, 2, and 3, and did not elect membership in the Optional Retirement Program or the New York State and Local Employees' Retirement System within the first 30 days of employment.

The **date of membership** for an individual whose membership is **mandatory** is the first day conditions 1-3 noted above are satisfied. This is also the date you should begin withholding the mandatory membership contributions.

OPTIONAL memberships are assigned the earlier of the first day of the month in which both service was rendered and the application was notarized, or member contributions were taken. (Service can be rendered after the month of notarization.)

Employer Secure Area Incomplete Membership Registrations

NYSTRS has recently completed a review of all incomplete membership registrations listed on ESA under “Tier 6 Action Items” to verify that the [Application for Membership](#) (NET-2) for each of these members is still outstanding. Please review your updated *Incomplete Membership Registrations* list and provide NYSTRS with the original *Application for Membership* (NET-2) for each member listed as soon as possible.

As stated in the NYSTRS [Employer Manual Section 1](#), eligible employees joining the System must complete and have notarized an *Application for Membership* (NET-2) and return it to your business office. You, as the employer, must then complete Part 2 of the application and mail to NYSTRS.

It is necessary that we receive these applications from you for contact information, proper service crediting, and beneficiary information for the employees. Once received, the employee will be notified of the completed registration and will be removed from your Tier 6 Action Items.

GASB Statements

For all employers, by early December each year required GASB 68 disclosure materials will be available on NYSTRS.org for the System’s June 30 fiscal year-end date (i.e., measurement date) of that same year.

Employer-specific GASB 68 information is provided in the form of a personalized letter found in the [Employer Secure Area](#) (ESA) of this website. Should you have any questions, please contact us at GASBMail@nystrs.org.

More information is available on our website at [NYSTRS.org/Employers/GASB-Public-Pension-Accounting-Standards](https://nystrs.org/Employers/GASB-Public-Pension-Accounting-Standards).

Fraud Attempts

On a nationwide level during the COVID-19 pandemic, imposters have been filing claims for unemployment benefits using personally identifiable information (PII) stolen from unsuspecting individuals. Some of our members and retirees were among those targeted in these scams.

While NYSTRS has multiple security measures in place to help protect data, it is important to note that one of the ways that employers can help prevent fraud is by safeguarding employees’ personal information, including their NYSTRS EmplID, and not providing that information to employees by phone. Often, employees will call their Human Resources Office or Payroll Office to obtain their NYSTRS EmplID. This number is required to establish or access a MyNYSTRS secured account. We at NYSTRS will not provide this information by phone, but we will mail it to the member at the address of record.

Members or retirees who believe their personal information was compromised should contact NYSTRS at (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6250 to discuss options for adding a theft of ID flag to their System account. A flag will notify NYSTRS staff to take extra caution in authenticating a member’s identity before sharing specific information over the phone or processing any transactions. In severe cases, signed written communication may be required to process member requests.

Fraud victims should also reach out to their employer, the Federal Trade Commission at IdentityTheft.gov, and the NYS Department of Labor at labor.ny.gov or by phone at (888) 598-2077.

Victims may also file a report with their local law enforcement agency and notify the three major credit bureaus: Equifax (www.equifax.com/personal/), Experian (www.experian.com/) and TransUnion (www.transunion.com/).

Filing for Disability or Disability for Protection

If a NYSTRS member is facing a potentially life-threatening illness or surgery, the member should immediately call NYSTRS at (800) 348-7298, Ext. 6010 to discuss filing for disability retirement. When a member files a disability application “for protection” and recovers, the member can withdraw the application and file for service retirement in the future. However, if the member does not recover, having the application in place can provide an important safety net for the member and any beneficiaries. Refer the member to our video “[Filing for Disability Protection: What You Need to Know](#)” and our pamphlet, [If You Are No Longer Able to Work](#), both of which are available at NYSTRS.org (see the Benefits > [Disability Retirement](#) page).

The timing of filing for this protection is critical, so the member should not delay in contacting NYSTRS. We encourage you to be proactive by contacting us about members with a serious illness so we can reach out to them directly with the information they need.