The New eSERS: Your Hotline to SERS

January 23, 2015

SERS is working to make the transition from the current *e*SERS to "new *e*SERS" as seamless as possible.

The new *e*SERS portal will offer a number of new and enhanced applications. In this issue of the *e*SERS *Hotline*, we will discuss the Enrollment and Contribution applications. We will post copies of the proposed *e*SERS input screens to the website as soon as they are available.

To see the approved file layouts for the applications on the SERS website, click this link. ■

Enrollment and Contribution Applications

Enrollment

Over the past year, SERS has made a number of enhancements to the Enrollment application in the current version of *e*SERS.

SERS made these changes in anticipation of the *e*SERS upgrade coming July 2015.

If you use the Upload Member Enrollment File application today, you will experience little change when moving to the new *e*SERS portal. The changes you will see are:

- Real time error processing
- On-line editing
- Minor change to the file layout – (Contractor ID if applicable)
- File layout on SERS website

If you use the Member Enrollment application in *e*SERS, the screens will look similar, and the process will vary slightly. The changes you will see are:

- Real time error processing
- On-line editing
- Input screens will look similar
- Screen copies on SERS website as soon as they are available

Contributions

You also will see many process changes related to contribution reporting. Many of these changes will parallel those in the Enrollment application, including file upload capability, real time error reporting, and on-line error correction. The primary changes for reporting employee contributions will be related to the timing and substance of information sent to SERS.

As of July 2015, contribution reporting will change from "monthly" to "per pay." This means that rather than gathering the detail from several payroll files into one "monthly" file, you now will report contributions with each payroll. This will ease the process of tracking down problems.

The change will require more frequent reporting, but less follow-up time. You will see:

- Immediate feedback on errors
- Immediate access to on-line correction
- Earnings periods align better with reporting periods

In addition to changes in the timing of reporting, the level of detail reported is changing.

With the new *e*SERS, you have the capability to report wages as "regular," "stretch," and "supplemental."

"Stretch" refers to the summer pay for employess who work 9 months but are paid for 12. "Supplemental" is used most frequently for coaches.

Each type of earnings will be subject to edits specific to the type.

For example:

- The current system rejects wages reported without days and hours, and prompts follow-up for both SERS and the employer. By marking wages as "stretch" pay, the system accepts the contribution record without days and hours, which prompt no extra follow up.
- Similarly, the current system seeks and flags "excessive" days or hours for follow-up communications. By marking those wages as "supplemental" for employees who might be paid only two or three times a year, like a coach, the system accepts the contribution report and reduces the follow-up communication.

Employers that use *e*SERS for contribution detail reporting will need to collect the new information and begin to report on a pay-cycle basis. SERS will post copies of the proposed eSERS input screens to the website as soon as they are available.

Employers using an Information Technology Center or other entity operating a version of the state's Uniform Staff Payroll System will probably need to change some operating procedures. Otherwise, the State Software Development Team will be providing you with the proper reporting file structure.

Employers that run payrolls from a third-party software or that design their own system may need to discuss the necessary changes with SERS' staff.

Please call Employer Services toll-free at 877-213-0861 with the contact information of your technical personnel. ■

Training Opportunities

In order to assist you with the transition to the new *e*SERS portal, we also will be offering numerous training opportunities. Training will include:

- Mandatory training this spring, which will include in-person assistance and a how-to workbook
- An on-line test facility
- On-line video simulations

If you have any questions, email Employer Services at employerservices@ohsers.org or call us toll-free at 877-213-0861. ■