

**Sent:** Thursday, June 26, 2014 3:07 PM  
**To:** Employers  
**Subject:** New Web features for Tier and retirement statuses

Dear Employer:

The Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Illinois notified all employers in mid-May of the addition of a new Employee Information section under the Employer Services menu in the Employer Access area of our website. The initial capability provided in May was to view and print a list of all members with a tier status of Tier II based upon the TRS members reported on your district's 2012-13 Annual Report of Earnings. This feature has since been enhanced to include the report options to view and print a member listing for either "Employee Tier Report" (includes both Tier I and Tier II employees), "Tier I Employee Report," or "Tier II Employee Report." The members listed on any of these three selected reports will be based upon the TRS members reported on your district's Annual Report most recently **audited** by TRS; currently the 2012-13 school year.

TRS has developed and just deployed an online retrieval system, called "Employee Lookup," for employers to identify a member's tier and retirement statuses. This feature has been added to the menu in the Employer Access area of our website under Employee Information. All security administrators for the Employer Access area and all district personnel who have access to complete the Annual Report and Supplementary Reports in the Employer Access area have access to the Employee Information section.

To access this new feature:

- Sign into the Employer Access area.
- Click on "Employee Lookup" under Employee Information.
- Enter the member's Social Security number and click "Search by SSN."

A member's tier status is identified by analyzing all reported service and the first year and date of contributing service reported to TRS from all TRS-covered employers and the member's reported service from other qualifying Illinois reciprocal systems. A TRS member is considered to be Tier II if the member's first day of contributing service in TRS or other qualifying Illinois reciprocal retirement systems didn't occur until on or after January 1, 2011. Through subsequent reciprocal reporting and occasional corrections of prior year's TRS reporting records, there could be a rare case of a member's tier status changing. However, Employee Lookup provides the most current information available to TRS.

TRS may not know the tier status for a TRS member newly hired by your district in the current reporting year. Employee searches that state, "No information was found matching the Social Security number (SSN) of XXX-XX-XXXX," signify that the member does not even have a member record set up in our database. Please verify the accuracy of the entered SSN for this member from available district records. It is important that a Member Information and Beneficiary Designation (MIBD) form is submitted to TRS for all new members. The sooner TRS receives a new member's MIBD, the sooner we can determine the new member's tier status.

Employee retrieval searches that label the member's tier status as "Unknown" signify the member has a member record set-up in our database; however, there is currently no TRS service reported for the current or any prior school years and sufficient reciprocal data exchanges have not been performed yet. For these members, you may tentatively assign a temporary Tier II status and continue to perform periodic searches via the Employee Lookup system beyond the next Annual Report filing season and subsequent quarterly reciprocal reporting.

The retirement status search results (either "Yes" or "No") via the employee retrieval system signify whether or not at the time of the search the queried TRS member is currently at a retired status with TRS (*i.e.* receiving a monthly TRS retirement annuity). A member's receipt of other TRS benefits, including a single-sum retirement benefit, and his/her current retirement status in the Chicago Teachers' Retirement Fund and other Illinois reciprocal retirement systems are **not considered** when processing the "Retired?" search results.

If you have any questions concerning the use of these enhancements to the Employer Access area, please contact Employer Services at (888) 877-0890, and press option 1 or email us at [employers@trs.illinois.gov](mailto:employers@trs.illinois.gov).

Employer Services Department  
Teachers' Retirement System of the State of Illinois