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## **Employer Question & Answer**

### **Frequently Asked Questions from Employers to the Division**

#### **Questions:**



When do school district PERS members enroll in the Alternate Option? Are elections to participate retroactive?

#### **Answer:**

It is extremely important to submit a change form for the Alternate Option when an employee is eligible. Employees are eligible to change their election only from July 1 through September 30 of each year. If they do not change their election (if eligible) during this time period, they will need to wait until the following year. See the definitions below to ensure your employees are correctly enrolled in the Alternate Option:

#### **New Hire**

Someone who was not working for a school district on July 1, 1999, or someone who first became a member on or after July 1, 1999, may, within 90 days of date of hire, make an election. AS 39.35.300 (c) and AS 39.35.310 (c).

**Re-Employed**

Someone who was working for a school district, who was inactive on July 1, 1999, and later reemployed, may, within 90 days of date of hire, make an election. AS 39.35.300 (c) and AS 39.35.310 (c).

**Change in Status**

You may make an election during the period July 1 through September 30 if your position went from working 12 months to less than 12 months. AS 39.35.300(e) and AS 39.35.310 (e). You may make an election during the period July 1 through September 30 if your position went from working less than 12 months to 12 months. AS 39.35.300 (d) and AS 39.35.310 (d).

An election to enroll in the Alternate Option made between July 1 and September 30 is effective July 1 of the current school year. It cannot be made retroactive to a prior school year even if the employee's status changed before the current school year.

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## **Verifying PERS Service for Non-Certificated Employees Electing the Alternate Option**

Effective with the school year beginning July 1, 1999, non-certificated employees of a school district who work less than 12 months in a full or part time position can elect to have their PERS service credit calculated under the TRS (AS 14.25.220 (47)) definition of "year of service."

A full year of membership credit is earned if the member works at least 172 school days between July 1 of one year and June 30 of the next year. If a member works six hours or more per day, the service is considered full-time.

Part-time eligibility to participate in the PERS is determined using PERS statutes. The member must be regularly scheduled to work a minimum of 15 hours per week. Part-time service under the alternate option is prorated against a six hour day, the PERS full-time equivalent.

For further information, please contact the Regional Counselor for your area.

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## **Save the Date: Employer Training Workshops**

**December 6 and 7 in Anchorage**



Mark your calendar and stay a couple of extra days at the ALASBO Conference in December to attend **Employer Training Workshops** sponsored by the Division of Retirement and Benefits. All Employers and Political Subdivisions are invited to participate in this special training. Training sessions will be held at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage. Some event details and times are listed below. Additional details and registration information coming soon.

#### **Thursday, December 6**

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

#### **Accounting and Retirement Section (Retirement Funding)**

Topics Include:

- Rehired Annuitants
- Salary Floor
- And more...

#### **Friday, December 7**

8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Social Security Administration (SSA) and Audit will present with additional Q & A Session.**

Topics Include:

- Federal Voluntary Compliance Program
- Guidelines for Gaming Activities
- Independent Contractors vs. Employees
- And more...

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# Find PERS and TRS Handbooks at [Alaska.gov/drb](http://Alaska.gov/drb)

## Share with Employees in the Defined Benefit Plans



PERS and TRS Information Handbooks are available for download from the Division of Retirement and Benefits Web site. Since the Division no longer prints the handbooks for distribution, it is important to share these links with employees on a regular basis. The information in the handbooks is valuable and clearly explains the PERS (Tier I, II, and III) and TRS (Tiers I and II) programs for employees.

- [PERS Handbook](#)
- [TRS Handbook](#)

Employees without Internet access should [contact the Division](#) toll-free at (800) 821-2251 or in Juneau at (907) 465-4460 for a printed copy of the PERS or TRS Handbook.

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## Who to Contact

[Contact the editor](#) with questions or suggestions about this newsletter. [Archives to 2008](#) are available.

- [Audit Section](#) (907) 465-5707
- [eReporting/Payroll Processing](#)
- [Financial Education and Advice Services](#) (800) 232-0859
- [Health and Optional Benefits Section](#) (907) 465-4460
  
- [Retirement Counseling Services](#) (907) 465-4460
- [Retirement Customer Service Center](#) (907) 465-4460
- [HealthSmart \(formerly Wells Fargo TPA\)](#) (877) 517-6370

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