

# Pension Division Newsletter

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## State Auditor’s Working Group

The Office of the State Auditor (OSA)’s Volunteer Fire Relief Association Working Group met on November 26 and December 17. The Working Group members discussed interest (or augmentation) for deferred relief association members. The Working Group members agreed to move forward with a legislative proposal that requires relief associations with a defined contribution plan to provide interest or additional investment earnings to deferred members. The legislation will be drafted so that it applies to both future deferred members and members who are currently deferred.

The Working Group also agreed to move forward with a legislative proposal that updates the formula used to calculate active-member accrued liabilities for relief associations with a defined-benefit lump-sum plan. The current liability formula in statute assumes that members will serve for 20 completed years of active service to receive a fully-vested service pension. Beginning on January 1, 2020, relief associations will have the option of allowing full vesting after as few as ten completed years of active service. The formula used to calculate accrued liabilities therefore needs to be updated to ensure that those relief associations electing to set lower requirements for full vesting are calculating accurate liability amounts. The liabilities are used to determine municipal contribution requirements, so accurate formulas are necessary and important.

Another legislative proposal that the Working Group agreed to pursue is a change to the new requirement that fire chiefs annually certify active service credit information to the relief association and municipality. The change would reduce the amount of time the fire chief must wait to certify service credit amounts after providing notice of the amounts to each firefighter.

The final meeting of the 2019-2020 Working Group will be held on Thursday, January 23, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the first floor board room at the Retirement Systems Building in Saint Paul, at 60 Empire Drive, Saint Paul, MN 55103.

Meetings are open to the public and those interested are encouraged to attend. Agendas and materials are available on the [OSA website](#).



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**What’s Ahead:**

**January 15:**

Certified Listing of Individuals Who Filed a Statement of Economic Interest due to the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board.

**January 23:**

Working Group meeting from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Retirement Systems Building.

**February 15:**

Final deadline for submitting 2019 Supplemental Benefit Reimbursement Forms to the Department of Revenue.

**March 15:**

Fire Equipment Certification Form (FA-1) is due to the Department of Revenue

## Statement of Economic Interest

Every year, each volunteer fire relief association board member and chief administrative officer is required to complete a *Statement of Economic Interest*. The Statement must be filed with the chief administrative officer of the relief association and be made available for public inspection.

The chief administrative officer of a relief association must also submit a *Certified Listing of Individuals Who Filed a Statement of Economic Interest* form to the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board (CFPDB) by **January 15**. This form must list all individuals who have filed *Statements of Economic Interest* with the relief association for the preceding 12 months, along with the address of the office at which the statements are available for public inspection.

For your convenience, the required CFPDB’s *Statement of Economic Interest* and *Certified Listing of Individuals Who Filed a Statement of Economic Interest* forms are available in the Pension Forms section of our website under the [“Current Forms”](#) heading.

## Key Reporting Requirements Calendar and Information for New Trustees

An updated Key Reporting Requirements calendar is now available on the OSA’s website. This PDF document lists each reporting form that relief associations must submit to the OSA and additional required State reporting. Links to the forms and their applicable due dates are also provided. The calendar can be found in the Pension Forms section of our website under the “Resources for Completing Forms” heading, or you can access it directly by clicking [here](#).

Many relief associations will be holding their annual meeting and elections soon. The OSA makes available a one-page document that provides links to resources available on our website. These resources are intended to help individuals who are elected to a relief association’s board of trustees be successful in their new positions. The information document can be found in the Pension Documents section of our website under the “Other Resources” heading, or you can access it directly by clicking [here](#).

**Statements of Position:**

[Management of Records](#)

[Firefighter Service Credit Determinations](#)

[Considerations When Making Benefit Changes](#)

[Paying a Defined-Benefit Lump-Sum Service Pension](#)

**2020 SAFES User Authorization Form**

Access to SAFES for accountants, auditors, and other consultants who work with relief associations will expire at the end of the calendar year. SAFES access allows an authorized individual to download, submit, and electronically sign relief association reporting forms. Relief associations will need to renew SAFES access for their accountants, auditors, and consultants by completing the 2020 User Authorization Form that is now available for download on the [OSA website](#).

**Helpful Contact Information**

The OSA provides contact information, including phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and websites, for many of the government offices and agencies with which volunteer fire relief associations interact. The information can be found on the OSA website [here](#).

**State Aid Forfeiture Deadline Update**

The OSA is pleased to announce that all but two relief associations submitted their 2018 reporting-year forms to the OSA by the November 30 deadline. State law requires automatic forfeiture of fire state aid for relief associations that do not file all reporting information by November 30.

We would like to thank the relief association trustees, municipal officials, auditors, investment brokers, Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division staff, and members of the OSA Pension Division team, who worked right up to the deadline to ensure that reporting forms were submitted.

**Pension Division Staff**

If you have questions, please contact us:

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