Aloha, and thank you for attending our 2021 Employer Briefing. I am Donna Curry, a Program Specialist with the Administrative Branch of the Employees’ Retirement System and I’m glad that you have joined us today.
Our topics today will cover:

1. An overview of Employer reporting and ERS Benefits for those of you who may not have attended one of our briefings previously
2. ERS-Related 2021 Legislative Acts
3. Act 87 / Session Laws of Hawaii 2015, which is codified as Section 88-103.7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, entitled Information from the State and Counties
4. Various presenters from the ERS involved with employer reporting will cover information on Retirement Benefits Branch Services, Personnel and Payroll files and Technical Support
5. And we will conclude with some reminders and contact information

As today’s presentation will not provide the opportunity for questions and discussion, we will post the presentation to our website after both sessions are completed.
Initially, I will cover how ERS benefits are derived from the information you provide to the ERS, including the current employer contribution rates.

The 2021 legislation related to the ERS.

And finally, we will discuss the extension of Act 87’s Employer Reporting compliance evaluation period and our strategy for meeting that compliance by June 30, 2023.
The ERS is a defined benefit pension plan and an employer-sponsored retirement plan. Employee benefits are guaranteed and computed using a formula which is typically based on service and salaries.

In the case of the ERS, the basic formula is:
The benefit percentage × years of service × the Average Final Compensation

We depend on your accurate reporting to compute these defined benefits for your employees: The benefit percentage is based on the employee’s enrollment category and authorized class code report. As you will note, the benefit percentage is based on the plan category in which they are enrolled.
The years of service is based on personnel and payroll files
And the Average Final Compensation (commonly known as AFC) is based on payroll reporting.
This is a high-level depiction of how employer transactions result in ERS benefits. ERS relies on a combination of all 3 sources of information.

Class Code Reports helps the employer enroll the employee in the correct membership benefit structure (for retirement benefits and ERS benefit multiplier %) and initiates the correct employee retirement contributions.

Personnel Transaction reports (Personnel Interface File) confirms accurate membership service credit (including FTE) and the demographic information provides ERS with accurate contact information.

Payroll Transaction reports (Work Reports) provide service and compensation information used for the member’s AFC and, in addition, determines employee and employer contribution amounts due.

This results in various ERS benefits for the member:
Refunds – upon termination prior to retirement
Death Benefits – Active and Inactive death benefits
Pension Benefits – Service and Disability retirement benefits
Employer Billing – Employers’ contributions based on percentage of payroll and employer rates (General Employees and Police/Fire Employees)
Reporting Related:

- Class Code Reports: Enrollment Information for Employers
  - Tier 1 - members before July 1, 2012
  - Tier 2 - members after June 30, 2012
- Payroll and Personnel Reporting:
  - Service and Average Final Compensation
- Compensation Definition, Employee and Employer Contributions
- Retirement “Pension Spiking”
  - Excessive “non-base” pay during last years of employment

Reporting Related

There are four major compensation- and benefit-related variables to be considered when an employee’s pay is being reported to the ERS.

1. Class Code Reports are to help Employers with the enrollment of Employees
   - The CCR is an informational report only – does not enroll the employee
   - Enrollment is completed through Personnel forms and Payroll reporting
2. Payroll is processed through Work Reports and Personnel is reported through the PIF:
   - Primarily, work reports are used to determine service credit and Average Final Compensation
3. Definition of “Compensation” is determined by the tier of enrollment:
   - Tier 1 – Includes all pay types for service performed
   - Tier 2 – Excludes overtime, supplemental pay, bonuses, most differentials
   - Employer Contributions are based on ERS-eligible compensation
4. “Compensation” is also related to “Pension Spiking”
   - Which is the employer actuarial cost for excessive non-base pay during the employee’s last years of employment
Employer Contribution Rates

(See Group/Class Codes Table for Details)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer Contribution Rates by Fiscal Year</th>
<th>General Employees Rate</th>
<th>Police/Fire Employees Rate</th>
<th>General Employees Employer Surcharge Rate</th>
<th>Police/Fire Employees Employer Surcharge Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/1/2017 - 6/30/2018</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>28.00%</td>
<td>14.20%</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/1/2018 – 6/30/2019</td>
<td>19.00%</td>
<td>31.00%</td>
<td>15.20%</td>
<td>23.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/1/2019 – 6/30/2020</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
<td>36.00%</td>
<td>18.20%</td>
<td>28.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/1/2020 until statutory changes are implemented</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>41.00%</td>
<td>20.20%</td>
<td>33.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speaking of employer costs, just a quick reminder of Employer Contribution Rates – The July 1, 2020 rates of -- 24% for General Employees and 41% for Police/Fire Employees (including the Surcharge Rates) – will continue until statutory changes are implemented.

The most recent 2020 Actuarial Valuation expects that the ERS will become fully funded in 2046 – in 26 years.

However, we will definitely inform you of any future statutory changes to the employer contribution rates.
Felony Forfeiture Act 84 (HB 670, SD2)

- Authorizes court-ordered forfeiture of one-half of benefits from the ERS
  - Interest
  - Hypothetical Account Balance
  - Pension
  - Annuity
  - Retirement Allowance
- Applies to member, former member or retiree convicted of a felony related to the state or county employment of the individual
- Applies to beneficiaries of the individual if convicted of the same felony

2021 Legislation
With regards to current statutory changes, on June 24th, Governor Ige signed a bill into law relating to the court-ordered forfeiture of benefits from the Employees’ Retirement System (ERS).

Act 84 authorizes the court to order the forfeiture of one-half of the ERS benefits of an ERS member, former member, or retiree (retiree) upon conviction of the individual for a felony related to the state or county employment of the individual. It further prohibits designated beneficiaries from receiving benefits if they are convicted of a felony under the same set of circumstances as the member, former member or retirant who was subject to forfeiture of ERS benefits.

The state court could decree a civil penalty of forfeiture of one-half of any interest, hypothetical account balance in excess of the amount representing any employee contributions, pension, annuity or retirement allowance. Upon receipt of the order decreeing forfeiture, the ERS would comply with the order and reduce, suspend, or deny payment to the member, former member, retirant or designated beneficiary (if applicable) as provided by the order.

This Act does not impair or reduce benefits for felonies committed prior to the effective date of the Act.
HiDRO Processing Act 70 (HB 929, SD1)

As of July 1, 2020, ERS is authorized to pay an “alternate payee” a portion or all of ERS retirement benefits with a court-filed Domestic Relations Order (DRO) that is qualified by the ERS as a Hawaii DRO (HiDRO).

- Clarifies release of member information to an alternate payee
- ERS to notify parties of the advisory nature of review determination of proposed HiDROs
- Priority of multiple Orders will be based on the date of receipt

In addition to the benefit forfeiture bill, two ERS-initiated an administrative bill regarding Hawaii Domestic Relations Orders (or, HiDROs) is also effective on June 24.

Act 70 is an amendment to Section 88-93.5, Hawaii Revised Statues (HRS), and clarifies the implementation of HiDROs which, on July 1, 2020, allowed the ERS to make direct payments to alternate payees (or ex-spouses) of ERS members and retirees.

It clarifies that the ERS may release information to an alternate payee upon receipt of a request for information accompanied by a divorce decree or complaint for divorce, that the ERS may provide the parties with a review of proposed HiDROs of an advisory nature and specifies that the priority of multiple Orders will be based on the date of receipt rather than on the date filed by the Court.
Act 87/2015 - Employer Reporting
HRS Section 88-103.7

► State and Counties to furnish payroll and personnel transactions in required format

► Clarification of extension:
  ► Review: July 2021 to June 2022
  ► Evaluation: July 2022 to June 2023
  ► Noncompliance Employer contributions “penalty” after June 2023

As most of you are aware, during the 2015 legislative session, Act 87 was passed, which initially required:
  • That State and Counties submit personnel/payroll files to ERS in ERS required format by the end of June 2020,
  • That the ERS review of employer reporting would be completed by June 2021, and
  • That the evaluation and discussion of compliance would be completed by June 2022,

After which, “penalties” of full payment of an amount equal to the employer contributions payable to the ERS for “the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which failure to furnish the required information occurred,” for noncompliance would be imposed from July 2022.

On May 11, the ERS Board of Trustees granted an extension to Section 88-103.7 subsections (c) and (d) for the “penalty” to after June 2023.
ERS Review and Evaluation Plan

Credited and Computed Service

- Determination by reported Pay information:
  - Full Time Equivalence (FTE)
  - Base Pay (Earned at 100% FTE)
  - Regular Pay (Adjusted for FTE less LWOP)
  - Clarification of ERS Pay Types with individual employers and review of ERS work report file fields

During our ERS Staff strategy sessions to help meet compliance with Act 87, we reviewed our requirements for our work report files, and realized that both the Employers and the ERS spent an inordinate amount of time and resources on providing and interpreting information to determine credited and computed service.

- Credited (or Eligibility) service, as defined by our administrative rules, is based on calendar days worked and paid.
- Computed (or FTE-adjusted) service is determined by the conversion of part-time employees to full time equivalence for benefit computation.

We found that payroll information, when accurately reported, is consistent and complete as a record of what an employee actually worked. Therefore, if service were to be determined by pay rather than days worked, manual calculations and conversion of multiple data fields would not be necessary. Currently, a minimum of 10 payroll fields are used to determine service credit.

Our Board approved a proposed rule change to the definition of a month service credit to be based on pay. If the employee is paid for at least one half the base pay for the month (or one-half the pay that would have been earned had the employee worked for the month), service would be credited for the full month. Rather than converting pay to days of the month, months would be credited directly from reported pay.

This will require that the employers be accurate on what is being reported as:

- Full Time Equivalence (FTE)
- Base Pay (Earned at 100% FTE)
- Regular Pay (Adjusted for FTE, less leaves without pay LWOP)

To this end, the ERS will schedule meetings with individual employers to review pay types and the ERS work report file fields. You will receive more information on this later in this presentation.
Thank you, Donna.

My name is Lori Kobayashi and I’m the GP (General Professional) for the Membership section of the Retirement Benefit Branch or RBB for short. Today, I will be going over some of the updates for our section.
Servicemen’s Act- Procedure Changes

Employers Responsibilities:

1) Provide ERS the following:
   - Proper documentation for employee’s military leave
   - Calculate contributions for the Employee and Employer’s share
   - Complete & submit payroll template

As Members have been contacting ERS about their military leave without pay due to the Servicemen’s Act. Effective immediately, the Employers will play a more active role in processing the Serviceman’s Act retirement contributions for their employees.

Depending on the situation, ERS refers the member back to the department or we follow up for the employee with the department. It may be a good practice to provide the requirements to your employees for their military leave so the transition back to work is easier for all involved.

As part of the changes, the ERS will be requiring that the Employers provide us with the employee’s military leave documentation along with calculating the Employee and Employer’s contribution for the period of leave and then reporting the pay information for this period on the ERS payroll information template.

The payroll template should be populated with the pay information as if the employee was still working. Since the Employer will be paying the contributions for the Employee, the normal AS field must be populated with the contribution amount that will be paid by the Employer for the employee.
Servicemen’s Act - Procedure Changes

Employers Responsibilities con’t:

- Make payment for contributions
  
  *Note, invoice for payment will no longer be sent*

- ERS sent memorandum to departments on the changes dated July 23, 2021, which will be posted on our website.

The calculated contributions submitted on the payroll template can then be directly paid to ERS. As a result, ERS will no longer need to bill the Departments for the contributions.

ERS will continue to work with the departments to ensure your employees and our members receive their service credit timely for their Servicemen’s Act leave.

The Servicemen’s Act information for both the Employer and Employees can be found on our website.
RBB Update

- **Personnel Interface Files (PIF)** - RBB continues to work on the PIF Conversion to moving to be current in early 2022.
  - Employers will continue to report accordingly with the personnel data available.

- **Neighbor Island Staff**
  - Our staff at our Hilo, Kauai, and Maui office are available to provide you any assistance. Contact information is on our website.

Next we will cover some of our activities and information:

- **PIF** – Our electronic personnel interface file or PIF. ERS would first like thank all of the departments for diligently providing your personnel transactions. We have not been very good on providing feedback as we have been converting the PIF backlog since 2017 and making progress. ERS is currently reviewing our requirements for personnel transactions to make it easier for departments. More information to be provided in early 2022.

- **Neighbor Island Staff** – The ERS has offices on the neighbor islands who play a huge role in our membership services on their island as well as Oahu. In fact, our NI Staff have done most of the voiceover for our recent virtual presentations. We have outstanding employees there that can assist your departmental personnel and payroll staff. So please feel free to reach out to them.
RBB Update

▶ Virtual Presentations and Counseling Services
  ▶ ERS has started virtual Pre Retirement presentations.
  ▶ ERS plans to begin virtual counseling beginning August and continues to provide phone counseling.
  ▶ All offices are open to assist members with our COVID protocol in place.

Virtual Presentations and Counseling Services – RBB is currently exploring various ways to service our membership. Currently, staff is providing phone counseling in lieu of in-person filing session appointments and we are allowing members to drop off their forms. There are no in house appointments, if at all possible. We will also be starting to provide virtual counseling services as an option beginning this August. We try our best to make accommodations for the membership depending on the situation.

This concludes our portion of the presentation. We thank you for all you do and will continue to work together for your employees and our members.

Jennifer Tanaka, Accounting Supervisor, is up next.
Aloha! My name is Jennifer Tanaka and I am the Disbursements and Benefits Section Supervisor in the ERS's Accounting Branch. My section handles processing of your work report files and adjustments, applying employer and employee contributions to your due amounts, and assessing the pension spiking bill. My section also processes ERS’ pension and refund payments to over 53,000 retirees, beneficiaries, and terminated members each month.

This portion of the presentation covers our upcoming plans for ensuring Act 87 compliance as it relates to employer payroll reporting. As mentioned earlier, it is important that payroll information is reported accurately and timely. Unreported, erroneously reported or manually reported payroll transactions, adjustments, retroactive payments, and corrections require ERS and your staff to research potentially years of salary and leave information. In some cases, it could be correcting information from 30 years ago. This may delay benefit calculations or result in benefit overpayments or excess contribution refunds.
Act 87 - Review period - July 2021 to June 2022

- July 2021 - September 2021
  - Gather updated lists of pay types from all employers
  - Review current payroll file layout and payroll information template
  - Review ERS’ pension system processes
  - Review definition of compensation for Tier 1 and Tier 2 and base/non-base pay components

- October 2021 - December 2021
  - Meet with employers to discuss their list of pay types
  - Meet with ERS’ pension system vendor on system changes

- January 2022 - June 2022
  - Determine changes, if any, to the payroll reporting requirements
  - Meet with employers to review and implement changes

As Donna mentioned, the ERS Board of Trustees approved a one-year extension for Act 87 compliance. During what’s called the review period, from July 2021 to June 2022, we plan to conduct the following activities:

From now until September 2021:
- we will gather updated lists of pay types from all employers including how you currently report these pay types and which pay types apply to multiple employers;
- we will review our current payroll file layout and the payroll information template including the fields needed for the proposed service credit calculation change;
- we will review the processes, validations, and calculations within our pension system;
- we will review the definition of compensation for Tier 1 and Tier 2 and the base/non-base pay components;

From October 2021 to December 2021:
- we will meet with employers to discuss pay type listings with a focus on the reporting differences among employers for the same types of pay;
- we will also meet with the ERS’ pension system vendor on potential system changes.

From January 2022 to June 2022:
- we will determine changes, if any, to the payroll reporting requirements including when the payroll information template will and will not be considered an acceptable method of reporting electronically;
- we also will meet employers to review and implement the changes.
Act 87 - Evaluation period - July 2022 to June 2023

- **July 2022 - December 2022**
  - Test payroll file changes
  - Test pension system changes
- **January 2023 - June 2023**
  - Review current payroll files to verify changes implemented successfully
  - Review submission or lack of submission of the payroll information templates

During the evaluation period, from July 2022 to June 2023, we plan to conduct the following activities:

- From July 2022 to December 2022, we will work with you to test your payroll file changes as well as our pension system changes to ensure it meets the updated requirements as outlined during the review period.

- From January 2023 to June 2023, we will review your current payroll files to verify that changes have been implemented successfully. We will also review submissions or lack of submissions of the payroll information templates. We will verify that it is completed correctly and submitted when needed.
Act 87 - Penalty period

► July 2023
  ► Calculate penalty for noncompliance

► July 1, 2024
  ► Deadline to submit full penalty payment to avoid incurring interest charges

Lastly, during the penalty period, we will determine compliance based on the information gathered during the review period. For noncompliant employers and departments, penalties will be calculated on July 1, 2023. Full payment is due on July 1, 2024 to avoid incurring interest charges.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your help over the past year, especially with the retroactive pay increases and covid challenges. Together, we were able to process over 2.5 million transactions. We look forward to working with you in the future. Thank you.
My name is Mikhail, and I am with the ERS Information Services branch, which is responsible for secure transfer of Payroll, PIF and Class Code Report files. We do the first pass on your files and import your information to the ERS Database.
Technical Support

- Contact us to modify existing Axway accounts, passwords, and email lists
- Use appropriate Axway accounts and folders to send / retrieve files
- Inform ERS of any changes in your payroll / personnel contact information or computer system

For secure file transfers, we use the State System called Axway.

You can contact ERS to modify existing Axway accounts, email lists, and password resets. Any other questions and issues should be addressed directly to ETS Service Desk. Please contact your IT department for additional information.

Please use appropriate Axway accounts and folders. Example: use CCR account for Class Code Reports, PIF for Personnel files, etc. Please use the TO-ERS folder to send files to ERS and the FROM-ERS folder to retrieve files from ERS.

Contact us if there are any changes or updates to your computer systems and provide us with a test file before go live. Even minor changes can cause data errors or compatibility issues.
Technical Support

Reminders:

► Provide us with all necessary data

► Complete all required fields; verify values and data types

► Unexpected data can be lost or delay processing

It is especially important to provide us with all necessary data. Missing, incorrect or unexpected information can delay data processing.

Now we would like to talk about some common issues. For that we are going to use a Class Code Report. The most common issues with the reports are: no information, incorrect information and unexpected information.
Class Code Report Errors

For the Class Code Report template and instructions check our website https://ers.ehawaii.gov
Navigate to Employers » Employers Forms

No information
We ask employers to complete all fields. Sometimes we receive files without Position Title or Group Codes. Without this information we are not able to process files. Those files will be rejected.

Incorrect information
The full SSN field is a good example of the incorrect information. For SSNs, the Class Code template requires numeric only values. However, sometimes we receive SSN with dashes. In these cases, we have to remove the dashes manually. Considering the amount of CCRs, it could be a challenging task: since May 2020 we’ve processed 1,100 CCR files and 3,400 individual records.

Also, please do not change the template's predetermined data types as it can result in missing values. For example, if you change the Full SSN field data type from ‘Text’ to ‘Number’, Excel will remove the leading zero(s) from SSN.

Unexpected information
We ask employers not to add extra or modify existed columns and fields. Sometimes we receive CCRs with comments and remarks. ERS imports CCR files to our system to process the data. Any additional - unexpected - information can be lost or delay data processing. Please contact us if you have comments or remarks for any records.
Aloha, this is Donna Curry again and thank you for staying with us through this presentation. This concludes our 2021 Employer Briefing.

Should you wish to review or share this presentation, it will be posted to our website under the “Employers” menu.

With regards to individual employer review, a member of our employer reporting team will contact you directly to schedule a meeting.
ERS Contact Information

- ERS Website: ers.ehawaii.gov
- Phone: (808) 586-1735
- Online Information
  - Membership Category (Plan)
  - Service Credit
  - Contributions (Hybrid and Contributory)
- Benefits Calculator
- Employer Information and Memorandums
- Group and Class Code Tables
- Email: dbf.ers.sss@hawaii.gov
  - Subject line: “Employer Team ...”

In addition to the Employer information, our website is a source of information for you and your employees:
- Online information for active members
- Benefits calculator for self-service estimates
- Current and past copies of our Holomua newsletter
- Employee and employer forms
- Updated Group and Class Code tables

Email access for general questions as well as Employer Team questions
ERS - Oahu Office

- City Financial Tower
- 201 Merchant Street, Suite 1400
- Validated Parking in the building
- Ph. (808) 586-1735
- Hours: 7:45 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Except Holidays)

Our office hours are from 7:45am to 4:30pm – we are closed on holidays.

On Oahu, we are located at the City Financial Tower on Merchant Street. This information can also be found on our website.
ERS Neighbor Islands - Hawaii, Kauai, Maui

Hawaii

101 Aupuni St., #208
Hilo, Hawaii  96720
Ph. (808) 974-4074
(808) 974-4000 Ext. 61735 (toll free to Oahu)

Kauai

3060 Eiwa St., #302
Lihue, Hawaii  96766
Ph. (808) 274-3010
(808) 274-3141 Ext. 61735
(toll free to Oahu)

Maui

54 S. High St., #218
Wailuku, Hawaii  96793
Ph. (808) 984-8181
(808) 984-2400 Ext. 61735
(toll free to Oahu)

Molokai/Lanai members: 1-800-468-4644 Ext. 61735 (toll free to Oahu) or our Maui Office

We also have staff on our neighbor islands to assist you.
Our website is updated regularly, so please check with us regularly for our “News and Updates”

Again, we regret that we were not able to offer an interactive format for this session, so please utilize our general and Employer Team email for feedback and questions.
Mahalo for your time and attention, and thank you for all that you do for your employees and for the ERS. We realize that besides the demands of your own departments and personnel, we are not the only agency that you work with, and we appreciate your cooperation and willingness to work with us.

With great commitment, we believe this renewed direction for Employer Reporting will be successful for us and, ultimately, for our members and retirees.