



# Pension Division Newsletter

July 2024

## Inside this issue:

*Municipal Ratification  
of Benefit Levels and  
Interest Rates* 2

*Pension Division Staff* 2

## Schedule Form Reminders

The 2024 Schedule Form for relief associations with a defined-benefit lump-sum plan must be certified by the relief association **on or before August 1, 2024**. The certification must be made to the entity responsible for satisfying the minimum required contribution to the relief association's special fund.

The form is designed to help determine a relief association's projected assets and liabilities for 2024 and the minimum required contribution for 2025, and can be accessed in the [State Auditor's Form Entry System \(SAFES\)](#).

Visit the Office of the State Auditor (OSA)'s [website](#) for additional information, including details about the optional Benefit Level Projections Tool contained within the form and notes about how accrued liabilities are calculated for active members.

## Protecting Private Member Data

Relief association trustees should be sure that private member data is being protected in accordance with Minnesota's [Data Practices Act](#).

Some reporting forms that a relief association completes contain private member information. For example, the Schedule Form contains member birth dates, years of service, leaves of absence, and vesting information. A relief association, therefore, should not share or post a copy of the Schedule Form or other reporting forms containing private member data without first redacting (removing or covering up) all private data, unless sharing the information with an individual authorized to access the data.

## State Auditor's Working Group

The first meeting of the State Auditor's 2024-2025 Fire Relief Association Working Group was held on July 24. The Working Group members reviewed potential topics for consideration and discussed relief association reporting deadlines. Working Group members approved moving forward with drafting a legislative proposal to change the March 31 reporting deadline to June 30.

The next Working Group meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 21, from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm. Meeting recordings and materials are available on the [Working Group](#) page of the OSA website.

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**What’s Ahead:**

**August 1:**

The 2024 Schedule Form must be certified to the municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation.

**August 21:**

**Working Group** meeting  
1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**September 15:**

First certification deadline for 2024 fire state aid. To be certified as eligible, all 2023 information must be submitted to the OSA, the OSA review must be completed, and any issues resolved.

# Municipal Ratification of Benefit Levels and Interest Rates

Many relief associations review their finances in the summer, after completing their annual Schedule Form, and determine whether to seek a change to their benefit levels.

As a reminder, a relief association initiates a change in benefit levels by amending its bylaws. A city council or town board can choose to approve or not approve a relief association’s proposed benefit change. Once the bylaws are ratified by the governing body, however, the benefit levels are guaranteed by the municipality.

In approving benefit levels, the city council or town board assumes responsibility for ensuring the relief association special fund has sufficient assets to cover approved benefit levels.

The OSA knows of no authority for a city council or town board to ratify a relief association benefit level while simultaneously limiting any future contributions to the relief association to amounts less than those required by Minnesota law. Minnesota law is clear that a municipality is required to make any contributions that become due to the relief association at the approved benefit level.

For more information regarding the process for changing relief association benefit levels, please see the OSA’s [Statement of Position](#) on this topic.

Interest rates set by a relief association’s board of trustees become payable beginning on January 1 following the date on which the rate was ratified by the municipality or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation. For example, a relief association’s board of trustees sets an interest rate of three percent on December 15, 2024. The affiliated city council ratifies the interest rate at its council meeting on January 20, **2025**. The interest rate will become effective on January 1, **2026**. Relief associations that credit interest to deferred members should keep this timing in mind when setting interest rates and seeking municipal

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