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Authorized Agent Responsibilities

2.00 Introduction

This section of the manual explains the need for an Authorized Agent, defines the qualifications, powers, and duties of the position, and gives the procedures for appointment of an Authorized Agent.

2.10 Necessity for an Authorized Agent

The IMRF program is complex. It involves substantial cash outlays by units of government (IMRF employers) and precious rights to IMRF members.

Its benefits as part of an effective personnel program may be lost—or even turned into a disadvantage—by weak or ineffective local administration. Therefore, a well-informed local official or employee is essential as the point of contact with IMRF.

Specific reasons why an Authorized Agent is necessary:

1. To centralize the local administration of IMRF in one person.
2. To file payroll reports and member forms, pay contributions, file benefit applications for members and advise members and local governing bodies.
3. To act as the agent of the governing body in IMRF matters. (An Authorized Agent is not an agent of IMRF.)

2.20 Qualifications of an Authorized Agent

The Authorized Agent should be a person with the necessary skills and authority to serve both the unit of government (the IMRF employer) and its IMRF members.

It is recommended that the Authorized Agent be a member of IMRF. (A “member” refers to an employee working in an IMRF-qualified position as well as an employee receiving an IMRF pension and working in a position that does not qualify for IMRF participation or provides the employee the option of participating in IMRF, e.g., elected office.)

All Authorized Agents, regardless of IMRF participation status, may submit a nominating petition and cast a ballot in an Executive Trustee election. The Authorized Agent’s governing body must still delegate such powers to the Authorized Agent on his or her notice of appointment (Form 2.20). The Authorized Agent does not need to be an officer in the unit of government, but preferably should be a full-time employee.

The Authorized Agent should have the following qualifications:

1. A close working knowledge of all personnel employed by the unit of government, including new and terminated employees.
2. Access to personnel records, payrolls, and other employee compensation records.
3. An adequate channel of communications with the local governing body or chief executive officer.
4. Sufficient time to perform local administrative IMRF functions.

2.30 Powers and Duties of an Authorized Agent

The IMRF Act specifies the general powers and duties of an Authorized Agent, and the powers and duties which a governing body may by law delegate to its Authorized Agent.

2.31 Powers and Duties of an Authorized Agent as Specified by the Illinois Pension Code

The duties of an Authorized Agent as they appear in the Illinois Pension Code: (40 ILCS 5/7-135)

Sec. 7-135. Authorized Agents

- a. Each participating municipality and participating instrumentality shall appoint an Authorized Agent who shall have the powers and duties set forth in this section.

In absence of such appointment, the duties of the Authorized Agent shall devolve upon the clerk or secretary of the municipality or instrumentality and in the case of township school trustees upon the township school treasurer.

- b. The Authorized Agent shall have the following powers and duties:
 1. To certify to the fund whether or not a given person is authorized to participate in the fund;
 2. To certify to the fund when a participating employee is on a leave of absence authorized by the municipality;
 3. To request the proper officer to cause employee contributions to be withheld from earnings and transmitted to the fund;
 4. To request the proper officer to cause municipality contributions to be forwarded to the fund promptly;
 5. To forward promptly to all participating employees any communications from the fund for such employees;
 6. To forward promptly to the fund all applications, claims, reports and other communications delivered to him or her by participating employees;
 7. To perform all duties related to the administration of this retirement system as requested by the fund and the governing body of his or her municipality.

2.32 General Powers and Duties Explained

The general powers and duties are as follows:

1. To determine and certify to IMRF which employees are covered by IMRF (see Section 3, Part I - Schools or Section 3, Part II - Other than Schools for coverage).
2. To see that proper IMRF member contributions are withheld from employees' earnings (see Section 4 for withholding procedures).
3. To complete payroll reports and promptly forward IMRF member and employer contributions to IMRF (see Section 4 for reporting procedures).
4. To promptly forward all communications directed to members and beneficiaries by IMRF, including:
 - a. Member ballots for employee trustees
 - b. Personal Statements of Benefits (member statements of account)
 - c. Leaflets, bulletins, and other informational material.
5. To keep the governing body informed regarding:

- a. Employer contribution rates and funds required to meet participation costs
 - b. Employer accounts receivable and other charges
 - c. Matters requiring governing body approval as well as the general administration of IMRF.
6. To assist members in filing participation papers (see Section 6), and applications for retirement pensions and other benefits, and to assist members' beneficiaries in filing applications for survivor's benefits (see Section 5).
7. To perform other administrative duties in connection with IMRF, such as:
 - a. Answering members' questions, including questions about Personal Statement of Benefits, and if necessary, assist them in communicating with IMRF.
 - b. Carefully reviewing the annual statements of employer account issued by IMRF and reconciling them with the unit of government's records.
8. To sign all payroll reports, notices of member participation and termination, and other forms and communications on behalf of the unit of government. The Authorized Agent may affix his or her signature by stamped facsimile signature. **In the absence of the Authorized Agent, the person authorized to sign should be instructed to affix the Authorized Agent's name, then add "by" and sign his or her own name.**

Such procedure should NOT be followed when submitting information via Employer Access. Anyone authorized to act on behalf of the Authorized Agent should be assigned an Employer Access Web Assistant account. See section 2.90.

2.33 Delegated Powers and Duties

The governing body of an employer may delegate the following powers and duties to an Authorized Agent regardless of the Agent's IMRF participation status:

1. To file a petition for nomination of an executive trustee of IMRF.
2. To cast a ballot for election of an executive trustee of IMRF.

All Authorized Agents, regardless of IMRF participation status, may submit a nominating petition and cast a ballot in an Executive Trustee election.

The Authorized Agent's governing body must still delegate such powers to the Authorized Agent on his or her notice of appointment (Form 2.20).

2.35 Authorized Agent Training

IMRF provides training for Authorized Agents and other individuals involved in the administration of IMRF.

IMRF's Authorized Agent Certification Programs offer an overview of an Authorized Agent's responsibilities. Topics covered include enrollment, wage reporting, service credits, benefits, and employer rates. After an individual attends all the sessions, he or she receives a plaque identifying him or her as a Certified Authorized Agent.

IMRF recommends that **anyone** involved in the administration of IMRF attend a Certification program, including individuals who attended previous training sessions or who have been involved in the administration of IMRF for many years.

2.40 Appointment of an Authorized Agent

The procedures for appointment of an Authorized Agent are as follows:

1. The governing body would appoint an Authorized Agent by passing a resolution. As required by law, the governing body would appoint only one Authorized Agent.
2. The resolution must specify the powers and duties, if any, delegated to the Authorized Agent by the governing body (see paragraph 2.33 Delegated Powers and Duties).
3. IMRF is to be notified of the appointment and of the powers and duties delegated. Use IMRF Form 2.20, “Notice of Appointment of Authorized Agent” (Exhibit 2A).
4. To change Authorized Agents, the governing body would follow the same procedures used in the original appointment.

If an Authorized Agent is not appointed, the unit of government’s clerk, or the secretary of the governing body is the Authorized Agent.

2.50 Township Supervisors

Public Act 98 – 0218 removed the requirement that the Township Supervisor must serve as the Authorized Agent. Townships can name any person with the necessary skills and authority to serve both the unit of government (the IMRF employer) and its IMRF members as its Authorized Agent.

2.60 Web Assistants

IMRF employers (units of government) that have several instrumentalities and/or departments may wish to appoint Web Assistants.

Web Assistants are responsible to the appointed Authorized Agent and would perform such functions as are delegated to them by the Authorized Agent and the governing body. In contacts with IMRF, they must operate through the appointed Authorized Agent.

1. Employer Access account
The Authorized Agent should set up an Employer Access Web Assistant account for any Web Assistants (see Section 2.90). An Employer Access User ID functions as an electronic signature.

Each employee who submits information to IMRF through Employer Access should have his or her own Employer Access account. Using another employee’s account to submit information to IMRF is the same as signing that employee’s name—instead of your own—on a form.

2. Training
IMRF recommends that **anyone** involved in the administration of IMRF attend an Authorized Agent Certification program, including individuals who attended previous training sessions or who have been involved in the administration of IMRF for many years.

2.70 Delivery of Communications

Delivery of any communications or document by a member or unit of government (IMRF employer) to the Authorized Agent does not constitute delivery to IMRF.

2.80 IMRF Forms

IMRF no longer mails paper forms to employers that have Internet access. IMRF forms can be downloaded from www.imrf.org. Several forms can be completed electronically via secure Employer Access. Employers without Internet access can continue to request blank forms from IMRF.

2.85 Quick Reference Guides

IMRF has developed a series of Procedure Checklists as well as an Employer Forms Guide for use by Authorized Agents and their assistants—anyone involved in the local administration of IMRF.

2.90 Secure Employer Access Area of www.imrf.org

IMRF's Employer Access area is a secure area of IMRF's website (www.imrf.org). The purpose of Employer Access is to provide IMRF employers with information specific to your employer's account.

IMRF Online employer functions can be divided into three functions:

1. Administrative functions will allow you to:
 - a. Sign on to IMRF's Employer Access area.
 - b. Update and maintain your own profile information.
 - c. There are three types of Employer Access accounts:

Authorized Agent (AA) account: Administers all accounts and has access to all Employer Access functions. The AA account is ultimately responsible for setting up and maintaining all other accounts.

Security Administrator account: Set up by the AA, has access to all the functions of an AA account. This type of account is a good choice when the Authorized Agent at your employer would prefer someone else to handle the day-to-day administration of IMRF and Employer Access. There can be only one Security Administrator account for each employer.

Web Assistant account: Set up and maintained by either the AA or Security Administrator. The ability to use Employer Access functions is limited by security permissions set up by the AA or Security Administrator.

Note: If you have a Web Assistant account and later become the AA at your employer, you must set up a new AA account for your use. You should not continue to use your Web Assistant account.

Your User ID functions as an electronic signature. **Each employee—including Web Assistants—who submits information to IMRF through Employer Access should have his or her own Employer Access account.**

IMRF sends most employer communications electronically. We send these electronic communications to the email addresses in Employer Access. Each account owner should have his or her *own unique email address* entered into the contact information for the account.

Keep the account active

Logging in to your Employer Access account at least every 60 days (especially AA accounts) keeps the account active. After an account has been unused for 90 days, IMRF begins the steps to delete the account.

Delete Unused Accounts

You should delete unused accounts as soon as they are no longer needed (for example, when an employee leaves). While IMRF will eventually delete unused accounts, from a security standpoint it is better if you delete an account as soon as you are aware that it is no longer necessary.

2. Current Employer Account functions will allow you to:
 - a. View resolutions your employer has adopted.
 - b. View your employer contribution rates.
 - c. View/update certain wage report information.
 - d. View/update certain member information.
 1. Participation information (enrollment date, termination date if applicable, plan type, etc.)
 2. Member address
 3. Member employment/plan information
 4. Benefit application status
 5. Payments from member
 6. Final rate of earnings (FRE) and service credit
 7. Documents received or requested
 - e. Transmit monthly wage reports.
 - f. Upload documents to IMRF.
3. Because online transactions are more accurate, more efficient, and faster, employers with Internet access are required to submit the following transactions via Employer Access.
 - a. Monthly wage and contribution transactions and related reports
 - Report wages
 - Report wage adjustments (Form 3.20)
 - Display wage adjustment history
 - Display wage report history
 - Display contribution rates
 - b. Certain member transactions
 - Enroll a member (Form 6.10)
 - Report member employment information (Form 6.19)
 - Complete employer report of a member's disability (Form 5.41)
 - Report member information change (Form 6.20)
 - Terminate a member's IMRF participation (Form 6.41)

To register for an Employer Access account, go to the Employer Access area of the IMRF website at www.imrf.org, and complete the online registration process.

Please note: You cannot request a user ID and password by phone or email due to security restrictions.