

NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR MULTIEMPLOYER PLANS

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The National Coordinating Committee for Multiemployer Plans (NCCMP) is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization dedicated to representing the interests of multiemployer plans with Congress, the regulatory agencies, the courts, and in the media. To fulfill this mission, we are largely dependent on the voluntary efforts of the thousands of trustees, administrators and professional advisors who make up the multiemployer community. These efforts take the form of financial support paid by NCCMP members, the dedication of individuals who serve on our advisory committees, and on the hundreds of individual plans that have provided us with funding and other data that we have used to develop invaluable reports and resources.

In recent years, the data that funds have provided to us has been especially critical, as countless stakeholders and decision makers in the multiemployer system have looked to us for hard data to support our advocacy efforts. In this letter, we are asking funds to provide us with the data necessary to support a new NCCMP initiative, which will focus on the economic importance of multiemployer plans to communities across the country.

Project Background and Overview

In our work in support of multiemployer pension plans, we frequently encounter legislators, regulators, and media personnel who do not understand or appreciate the economic importance of these plans. Often they have preconceived beliefs that these plans serve small regional populations of participants and that they do not make material contributions to local economies. While we know that multiemployer pension plans make vital contributions to retirement security and economic activity in every city and state across the country, we do not currently possess the comprehensive data that is necessary to demonstrate this fact.

In order to fully address this issue, we have undertaken a vital project to develop a new database that we can use to measure and demonstrate the economic impact that multiemployer pension plans have on communities across the country. For this purpose, we are asking all multiemployer plans to provide us with two data files as follows:

1. Benefit Payment File
2. Contributing Employer File

We understand that plan administrators and professional staff have many pressures on their time, and we wish to express our sincere gratitude in advance to all the funds that are able to support our efforts by responding to this request. While this letter describes this project in greater detail below, please note the following critical highlights:

- We have designed this data request to be as simple as is possible, with a bare minimum of staff time necessary for plans that are willing to submit data.
- We are not requesting any information that would allow us to identify either individual participants or individual contributing employers.
- At no time and under no circumstances will we disclose the identities of the plans that choose to provide us with data for this project.
- We will distribute all summary reports that we develop from this project to all funds that contribute data to it.

It is our hope that the representatives of multiemployer plans who read this request will respond by providing the data files outlined below. Further, we hope that professional advisors and other vendors will bring this request to the plans with which they have relationships, and will encourage them to participate in this effort.

Benefit Payment File

Pension plans must provide IRS Forms 1099-R annually to all participants who received a benefit payment in the previous year. The data file that the plan administrator uses to generate these forms provides an ideal source of data for the NCCMP to use to create our benefit payment database. We hope that many multiemployer plans will be willing to share information from their 2012 1099-R data file for this purpose, modified only to protect the confidentiality of participants by deleting their identifying information, such as names, Social Security Numbers and addresses (except for their zip codes). It is critical that the data we receive does contain zip codes so that we can filter the data and generate reports either by state, city / town, or Congressional District – whatever level is appropriate and meaningful for a particular audience. The remaining data elements – particularly the benefit amounts that populate the numbered boxes in the 1099-R Forms – should remain for all of the participant records present in the full 1099-R file.

Contributing Employer File

In addition to the benefit payment data, we would also like to receive data on contributing employers from as many multiemployer pension plans as are able to provide us with this information. In the past, government agencies have asked us for information on how many employers contribute to multiemployer plans and where they are located, so they may develop a better understanding of the numbers and locations of the businesses, both small and large, which are affected by their policies. While there is no parallel report to the 1099-R that contains employer data, funds must maintain this information in order to comply with the reporting and disclosure requirements of the Pension Protection Act. We are asking that funds share this information with us so that we can develop a database that will capture the size and geographic diversity of the companies that sponsor multiemployer plans.

For this purpose of this request, the ideal data file will consist of only a single field. This field will contain the zip codes from the business addresses of all employers who remitted contributions to the fund for work performed in 2012. Each row in the file should correspond to an employer that remitted 2012 contributions to the plan. In the event that multiple employers with the same zip code remitted contributions, that zip code will simply appear in the file multiple times. For example, if we receive data from Fund ABC, and the file contains the zip code 12345 fifteen times, we would know that the fund received 2012 contributions from fifteen companies that are located in that zip code.

Data Format

We would ideally like to receive the requested data as either a text file or an Excel file. However, we understand that different funds use different recordkeeping methods. Please let us know if it is more practical to provide us with data in a format that differs from what we have requested. Please also provide us with a layout for all data files.

While our objective is to gather both benefit payment data and contributing employer information from as many plans as is possible, we understand that it is possible that not all funds will be able to provide us with both sets of information. If you are only able to provide one of the two requested files at this time, please proceed with the data that you have available.

The contact information for sending us data is as follows. While we would prefer to receive the data via email, we are open to any transmission method that funds find convenient and appropriate.

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About the NCCMP

While we hope that most multiemployer plan trustees and professionals are familiar with the NCCMP, for those who are not the following brief summary provides an overview of our organization.

The NCCMP is the only national organization devoted exclusively to protecting the interests of the more than ten million active and retired American workers and their families who rely on multiemployer plans for retirement, health & welfare, and other benefits. The NCCMP's purpose is to assure an environment in which multiemployer plans can continue their vital role in providing benefits to working men and women. The NCCMP is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization, with member plans in every major segment of the multiemployer plan universe,

including in the airline, building and construction, entertainment, health care, hospitality, longshore, manufacturing, mining, retail food, service and trucking industries.

The NCCMP monitors, on a non-partisan basis, legislative, regulatory and legal developments from conception to implementation to enforcement. By communicating with government officials, members of Congress, and staff about the unique characteristics of multiemployer plans, the NCCMP has saved multiemployer plans hundreds of millions of dollars in regulatory and administrative costs. These savings enable plans to remain financially secure and healthy, while providing enhanced benefits to plan participants.

Conclusion

The database that we will develop in this project will be absolutely invaluable as we seek to convince both Congress and the regulatory agencies of the importance of supporting multiemployer pension plans. We cannot stress enough how vital this data request is to our advocacy efforts, and how deeply we appreciate the efforts of all plans that submit data to us. Your participation and generous support is what allows us to fulfill our mission on behalf of multiemployer plans.

Thank you for your kind attention, and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Best regards.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Josh Shapiro", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Josh Shapiro
Deputy Director for Research and Education