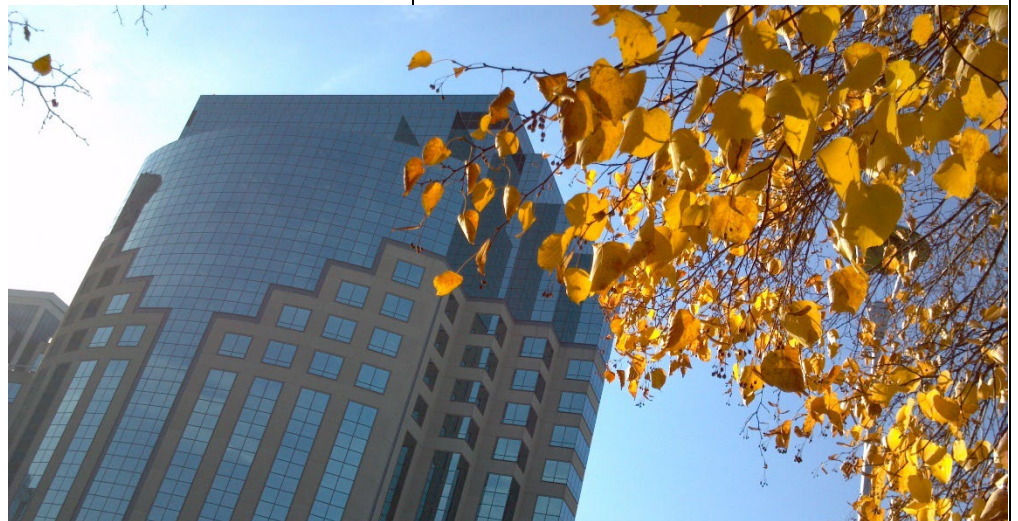# THE PPSD REGISTER

It is the mission of the Personnel and Payroll Services Division to provide accurate and timely personnel and payroll services through quality customer service.

Key Highlights This Month

SCO KEY INITIATIVES

SCOCONNECT:
CAL EMPLOYEE CONNECT
CONNECTHR

CALIFORNIA STATE PAYROLL SYSTEM PROJECT

CONTACT US

(916) 372-7200

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PPSD Register Anniversary-Action Needed!

The PPSD Register is celebrating four years of connecting Human Resources (HR) professionals throughout state government with SCO! Thank you to our subscribers for reading our monthly newsletter over the last four years. This newsletter was created to be a resource for you, and we strive to provide valuable content and insight each month. We encourage you to participate in our survey.

If you have any additional suggestions on how we can improve our newsletter, please email PPSDHRSuggestions@sco.ca.gov.

-PPSD Register Team

HELPFUL TOOLS

Email Subscriptions

Civil Service Weekly Processing Dates

Decentralized Payroll Calendars

SCO Letters

Personnel Action Manual (PAM)

Payroll Procedures Manual (PPM)

Requesting Employment History

Requesting Pay History

Statewide Training

Payroll Flyers and Global Messages

Verification of Employment

Our Promise Campaign

Show you *Care for California* by making a payroll deduction or increasing your donation during the Our Promise Campaign, now through December 31.

Each year, thousands of state employees make a difference by giving back to their local communities. Giving is easy! Simply register via Cal Employee Connect (CEC), find a nonprofit cause that speaks to you, and make your pledge by clicking the "Donate now to your favorite nonprofit(s)" button under your User Profile in CEC. You can donate as little as $5 a month, or the average cost of one latte!

Did you know you can also donate the equivalent of 15 minutes of your salary to your favorite cause instead? Just divide your monthly salary by 173.33 to determine your hourly rate and then divide by 4 to see what 15 minutes of your salary would be.
Example:

Monthly Salary = $6000

$6000 / 173.33 = 34.62 / 4 = **$8.65 monthly donation**

Your gift makes a huge difference for your fellow Californians. Please share this information with all state employees. Let's all be "United in Giving" this year!

Don't forget to make your pledge for #GivingTuesday, which is Tuesday, November 28, 2023. Giving Tuesday is all about celebrating every single act of generosity we have to offer. Whether it's making someone smile, helping a neighbor out, or showing up for an issue or people we care about, we each have something to contribute. Identify your gifts, pick a cause that gets you fired up, and give back – not just today but every day.

Need ideas? Visit GivingTuesday.org or the Giving Tuesday toolkit. Don't forget to share how you're participating on social media!

Lump Sum Separation Peak Workload Season Is Approaching

Lump Sum Personnel Action Request (PAR) Receipt Dates During Peak Season:
- If separating in November 2023:
  - o First PAR must be received at SCO by December 8
  - o Second PAR must be received at SCO between December 11—December 22

- If separating in December 2023:
  - o First PAR must be received at SCO by December 8
  - o Second PAR must be received at SCO between December 28, 2023—January 12, 2024

When submitting your lump sum separation PAR packages to SCO:
- In the ConnectHR dropdown menu, select *CS Audits – Separation PAR Package (Lump Sum)*.
- Upload one PAR package per Social Security number (SSN). Do not *combine* PAR packages in an upload.
  - o **NOTE**: PAR package includes: Coversheet, PAR, Election Form, and 457(b) Traditional Catch-Up Letter (if applicable).

Reminder: Do not submit an inquiry or a duplicate PAR, as this may significantly impact processing time. See question #8 in the 2023 Lump Sum Separation FAQ for information regarding checking the status of a PAR package.

Contact the Statewide Customer Contact Center at (916) 372-7200 with questions.

Year-End Payroll Processing and Tax Reporting

Year-end payroll processing and tax reporting season has arrived! Below are a few reminders to consider as you work through the peak season.

Document Cutoff Dates for Calendar Year-End Processing

- Review Payroll Letter 23-017 – Document Cutoff Dates for 2023 Calendar Year-End Processing to ensure that each employee's 2023 Form W-2 is accurate.

- In December, SCO will issue a Payroll Letter with the date that departments may see employee address listings on Mobius View as the 2023 Form W-2s will be mailed to employees no later than January 31, 2024.

Salary Advance Initial/Offset Reporting

- Review Payroll Letter 23-018 Salary Advance Initial/Offset Reporting – Year End for cutoff dates and reporting to ensure that the employee's 2023 Form W-2 is accurate.
- After December 9, no initial reporting for the 2023 tax year will be accepted. The SCO will need to issue before a corrected 2023 Form W-2 can be generated.

Deceased Employee and Designee/Beneficiary Reporting

- Review Payroll Letter 23-019 – Deceased Employee and Designee/Beneficiary Reporting for cutoff dates and reporting to ensure that the employee's 2023 Form W-2 is accurate and the designee/beneficiary receives a Form 1099 MISC, Miscellaneous Income timely.

Cal Employee Connect Through the Years

Did you know? 2023 marks the three-year anniversary of the statewide rollout for the California Employee Connect (CEC) Portal. CEC provides employees with a secure, self-service portal providing state employees with instant access to view and print their earnings statements, Form W-2's, leave balances, timesheets, and more. This homegrown effort was developed to substantially reduce state costs and workloads, such as the manual processing of forms for direct deposit requests, along with providing a tool for state employees to access the information they need. However, the CEC Portal you see today was not always what the SCOConnect team had initially envisioned. This started as a single application for state employees and has drastically grown and is now a dual package, with portals to serve both employees and HR staff in ways that were not initially imagined. The SCOConnect team has always been a cross-divisional team, comprised of the SCO Information Services Division (ISD) and PPSD. The team is dedicated to ensuring CEC is and continues to be a platform that meets the personnel and payroll needs for all users.

CEC Development Timeline:

2014: David Akins, (SCO ISD) was working on his personal New Year's resolution for 2014 which was to go completely paperless at home. Ensuring he had scanned images or online access to receipts, bank statements, and utility bills, David had saved every pay stub ever handed to him from his 22 years of state service. That's 264 pay stubs! He wanted to make all of his pay stubs electronic. The year prior, David worked on a project to automate the transfer of payroll files between the mainframe and SCO's Disbursements Division. He saw first-hand how the payroll files were structured and realized it wouldn't be very difficult to write a program to generate digital PDF versions of pay stubs. Once he received approval from management, he came up with a program to generate PDF versions of pay stubs from the raw mainframe payroll files. Seeing how simple this was to implement, ISD management tasked David with creating a proof-of-concept portal to access these PDF pay stubs. This portal was demoed to various members of management and was universally applauded.

However, at the same time, meetings for payroll modernization began and the California State Payroll System (CSPS) Project was established. The application was then shelved for two years.

2016: During a payroll modernization meeting, a member of ISD informed PPSD of the proof-of-concept that the ISD team had created two years prior. Sparks flew, and SCO began the work to develop the application that would be hosted on SCO's network and would directly interface with SCO's mainframe payroll system.

2017: The ISD team was given the green light to begin developing the portal for an internal SCO pilot. One of the main challenges was how to get a modern web application to interface in real-time with the legacy mainframe payroll system. In April 2017, the first live data was exchanged between the new portal and the mainframe system. By October 2017, the ISD team had perfected this interaction using REST API, which is what ISD's production application uses to interface with the mainframe. In late October, the front--end web application development began. By December, the application entered user acceptance testing, and was readied for use by the first pilot divisions within SCO.

2017-2018: Chris Maio, SCO CSPS Project Director, took the application on the road, demonstrating the preliminary application. He hosted a presentation where he brought in the hefty stack of David's paycheck stubs to tell the story. Taking that bold first step, SCO invited chief executives from the Government Operations Agency (Gov Ops), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Technology (CDT), FI$Cal, Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), and Legislative consultants to establish top-level support for this development effort. Later, Maio presented at the Annual California State University (CSU) Benefits and Payroll Conference where the application presentation was met with "oohs" and "aahs". The application was well-received and was encouraged and resourced to move forward.

Spring 2018: The ISD team announced to SCO that the application – then known as Employee Self Service, or ESS – was ready for testing by ISD and PPSD employees. These SCO employees were encouraged to register and provide customer feedback and input to the SCOConnect team. The access to the application was limited to SCO employees. Access was not yet available on personal computers or mobile devices. ESS was on its way to becoming available for all state employees. A pie chart broke down the components of the Earnings Statements. Employees could view their Form W-2s for 2016 and 2017. Employees could also view their leave balances.

CEC was developed entirely in-house by SCO staff, using 100 percent free open-source languages, frameworks, and databases, requiring no additional purchases. The technologies chosen to build CEC are the same ones used to power the likes of Netflix, LinkedIn, and more. The application is completely SCO-owned and is free to use by all state employees. The goals established while developing CEC were that it be compatible on any mobile device and be user-friendly. In fact, nearly 60 percent of the usage of CEC is from a mobile phone, and the most popular device used to access CEC is an iPhone.

2019: After successfully using CEC within SCO over the course of 2018, and then receiving approval for the Project Approval Lifecycle (PAL) by CDT in January, SCO opened the application up to six pilot agencies to use from their agency networks. Those agencies included the California Department of

Human Resources (CalHR), Department of Water Resources, and the California Military Department. By June, there were a total of 12 agencies piloting the CEC application.

Spring 2020: In March, the COVID-19 pandemic forced California to transition its workforce to a hybrid work model to include telework. The SCOConnect team saw an opportunity to accelerate the application rollout in a compressed schedule, thereby providing a service to the state employees by relieving the workload and cost of departments mailing out pay stubs. The original plan was to roll this out in six waves over the course of two years, but due to the pandemic and accelerating the rollout, the CEC Executive Steering Committee approved releasing the application in three phases (as shown below):

1. April 15, 2020 – 129,000 employees across 73 departments
2. May 6, 2020 – 93,000 employees across 46 departments
3. June 15, 2020 – 66,000 employees across five departments

In April 2020, the project hit a milestone of 10,000 total registered users, demonstrating the application received effective word-of-mouth marketing ahead of its formal release. This was a 38.5 percent increase from the 7,400 registered users as of March 18, 2020. State employees were driven to register quickly, as the state printing of direct deposit pay stubs was suspended due to the pandemic. Because of the paper supply shortage, having access to CEC was the only way employees were able to view their payroll information.

With CEC being the sole application during the pandemic for employees to view their payroll information, the SCOConnect team expressed that the accelerated rollout was more challenging than expected. This resulted in long hours, but it was extremely rewarding. The team was able to assist Californians in need who were suddenly working from home and adjusting to new ways of living. The CEC technology created a new way of doing business for the state.

While change can be difficult for some, especially when it comes to implementing a new system, the CEC application created a sense of adaptation to technology and acceptance as the access to pay stubs and Form W-2's became a necessity. Employees quickly figured out how to register and provided feedback about how easy the application was to use and navigate.

Summer 2020: As departments were mostly remote, SCO received countless phone calls and inquiries requesting assistance from departmental HR offices. SCO provided those departments with resources, including enabling the eTimesheet feature. The eTimesheet feature had already been in the works for SCO use but was accelerated and expanded to other departments due to the pandemic.

Because of remote work, many paper processes became obsolete. For example, during the "Our Promise" campaign, there were no paper donation forms to hand out to employees. Therefore, the SCOConnect team met with the "Our Promise" staff to automate the campaign donation form. The SCOConnect team decided to post a direct link on CEC, allowing employees to donate directly through their user profile.

During the pandemic, all development was paused. This allowed the SCOConnect team to change methodology from predictive to iterative and begin the process of releasing features with continuous updates after rollout. The team continued to support customers during the various phases of functionality rollout. This allowed customers to witness the changes in real time, and for them to provide timely feedback.

June 2020: Printing was shut down at SCO's Disbursement Center to reduce the number of staff in office. CEC, which was initially used as the back-up form for pay stubs, leave balances, and Form W-2s, was now the primary method employees were using. ISD set up a disaster recovery system as a backup method to ensure stabilization.

September 2020: CEC won the Best of California Award at the Government Technology Conference (GTC) for Best Application Serving an Agency's Business Needs. David Akins (Principal Engineer), Albert Chang (Co-Developer), and Todd Boltjes (Chief Information Officer) accepted the award.
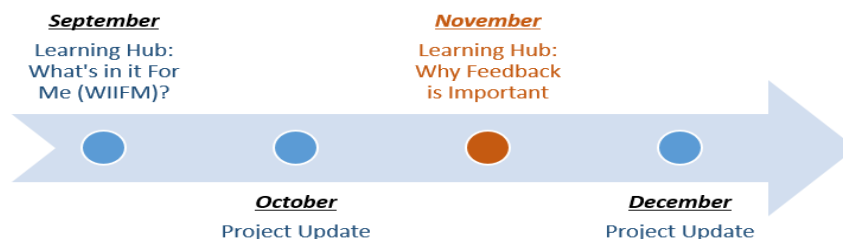
Winter 2020: Anecdotally, on New Year's Eve in 2020, CEC Business Analyst Moe Adam's car needed repairs that would cost $10,000 to fix. Since Moe was at the Auto Mall when he received the unpleasant news, he decided to shop for a new car. Moe was able to confidently purchase his new vehicle as CEC was accessible at his fingertips, and he was able to provide his earnings statements timely to the dealership. The SCOConnect team had received feedback from employees like Moe who were excited about the new application, but they also heard from employees who were not ready for the technological shift. Those who saw the change as a challenge and still wanted to continue receiving paper documents voiced their concerns to the team.

Continuing to Develop and Present New Functionality

CEC began with an employee's personal goals of wanting to be completely paperless. During the pandemic, the rollout was accelerated, and departments were successful in informing their employees of how to register to view their payroll information. This made the sudden transition to a hybrid or remote work schedule run effortlessly.

Stay tuned: In the next issue of the PPSD Register, learn how the development of CEC grew rapidly from an application where employees could only view their pay stubs, leave balances, and Form W-2s, to a platform introduced to departmental HR offices with interactive features that improve services for both employees and HR staff.

California State Payroll System Monthly Snapshot

September — Learning Hub: What's in it For Me (WIIFM)?

November — Learning Hub: Why Feedback is Important

October — Project Update

December — Project Update

We work in a dynamic world! Whether it is new processes, technology, or organizational structure, the ability to effectively manage change is vital for success. One crucial component in this process is feedback. Why is feedback so important from a change management perspective? We will begin by taking a short excursion to find out more about this essential aspect of change management.

1. Assessing Progress
Imagine you are embarking on a journey. You need a map to know if you are moving in the right direction and see how far you have come. Feedback serves as that map in change management. It helps you assess whether the change management tactics being implemented are working.

2. Identifying Roadblocks
Every journey has obstacles, and change initiatives are no different. Feedback acts like a spotlight, revealing these roadblocks ahead of time. It helps you spot issues, resistance, or challenges that might not be immediately visible, allowing you to address them before they become major obstacles.

3. Engaging Your Team
People are at the heart of any change. When you seek feedback, involve your team and stakeholders in the process. When you ask for their opinion, they feel heard and valued. This engagement is crucial for getting their buy-in, which is key to successful change adoption.

4. Continuous Improvement
Change is not a one-time event; it is an ongoing process. Feedback helps you fine-tune your strategy as you go along. It is like making small course corrections during your journey based on what you have learned thus far, ensuring you reach your destination smoothly.

5. Resolving Conflicts
On your journey, you might encounter disagreements or conflicts. Feedback helps you detect these issues within your team or organization. By addressing conflicts promptly, you prevent them from derailing your change efforts.

6. Enhancing Communication
Clear communication is vital in change management. Think of feedback as a signal that tells you if your messages are getting through. If they are not, you can adjust your communication strategy to ensure everyone understands what is happening.

7. Motivation and Morale
Change can be challenging. Positive feedback is like praise for your team's efforts. It boosts morale and motivation by recognizing small wins along the way. This encouragement can keep everyone committed to the change journey.

8. Promoting Learning

Lastly, feedback fosters a culture of learning. It encourages your team to share their experiences and insights. This collective learning benefits the organization in the long run, as you accumulate knowledge for future journeys.

In summary, feedback is key in the ever-evolving landscape of change management. It helps you track progress, navigate obstacles, engage your team, fine-tune your strategy, resolve conflicts, communicate effectively, boost motivation, and foster a culture of learning. With feedback as your compass, you are better equipped to steer toward successful change.

Be sure to check out the next edition of the PPSD Register for a California State Payroll System (CSPS) Project update.

We are dedicated to information sharing and will continue to keep you updated on progress and milestones. If any questions or inquiries arise, please feel free to reach out to us at CSPShelp@sco.ca.gov. We also invite you to explore our CSPS Project website.

This publication is intended for reference only. It does not supersede current applicable laws or regulations, and it is not intended for purposes of providing legal advice

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