

The Public Pension Coordinating Council's

2001 Survey of State and Local Government Employee Retirement Systems

Database User's Guide

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April 2002

This guide is intended to assist researchers conduct their own analyses of the Public Pension Coordinating Council's 2001 Survey of State and Local Government Employee Retirement Systems. The data can be downloaded from the PPCC's survey web site at <http://ppcc.grsnet.com> as a Microsoft Access 2000 database containing three tables:

- ContactData
- SystemData
- PlanData

Systems and Plans

The survey is constructed to collect information about public retirement “systems” in one questionnaire and about the systems’ “plan(s)” in another questionnaire. The system corresponds to the administrative unit responsible for the operation of the plans. The system questionnaire collects data on system-wide administration and governance, accounting and audit, contributions, investment income, benefit payments, asset allocations, and rates of investment return.

The plan corresponds to the set of benefits provided to specific groups of covered members. The plan questionnaire collects data on the type of plan offered, the members covered, retirement benefit formulas, early retirement provisions, cost-of-living adjustments, disability benefits, survivor benefits, retiree health care, actuarial valuations and assumptions, employer and member contributions to the plan, and plan funding.

Each system has at least one plan and often several plans. Each plan has only one system. The field “SYS_ID” uniquely identifies the system in the ContactData table and the SystemData table using a four-character field (e.g., 0001, 0002, etc.). In the PlanData table, the field “SYSPLAN” uniquely identifies each plan by appending a letter to SYS_ID (e.g., 0001A, 0001B, etc.). The SYS_ID field is also included in the PlanData table. These fields can be used to link the tables when running data queries on multiple tables.

Identifying Data Items

Copies of the survey's system and plan questionnaires follow. The field name for each data item is shown in the input box related to the item. In this way the data items in the questionnaires are “mapped” to the database tables. Researchers should start by finding the data items they wish to study in the questionnaires, identifying the items' field names, and then finding the field names in the tables.

As one would expect, the data items in the system questionnaire are generally contained in the SystemData table and those contained in the plan questionnaires are contained in the PlanData table. The exception is that the

information about the system's administrative officer and address are contained in the ContactData table.

Data Format

All of the data are stored as text. This was done to allow the widest range of responses to the questions. However, it adds an extra step it for researchers who wish to do calculations on the numbers in queries. To use the text data for calculations requires converting the text to numeric values, after first testing that the value is, in fact, numeric. Generally, this can be done by:

1. Creating and saving a query that includes the text fields from the appropriate data tables.
2. For each text field that you wish to convert to a numeric field, add a new field to the query and use the Microsoft Access functions "IIf()", "IsNumeric()" and "Val()" to test the text field and convert it to a numeric value if it is numeric, or else substitute a default numeric value if it is not numeric.

For example, if you wanted to convert the text value for Total System Investments (in the SystemData table) to a numeric value, you could create and save a query that includes the TOT_INV field, and then add a new query field "numTOT_INV" which converts the TOT_INV text data using the following formula:

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numTOT_INV: IIf(IsNumeric([TOT_INV]),Val([TOT_INV]),-9)
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This formula uses the "IIf()" function to test whether the value of TOT_INV is numeric. If so, it converts the text to its numeric value in the new query field "numTOT_INV". If not, it uses -9 as the default value for non-numeric data.

It is beyond the scope of this guide to provide instruction on Microsoft Access or on data analysis using queries. The guide is intended to provide an overview of the PPCC's survey database and to offer a few pointers on database elements. Please consult with your technical staff if you need to do complex analyses. However, if you have significant trouble accessing the data or are unsure of the meaning of certain data items, please contact Paul Zorn at (248) 799-9000.

PPCC Retirement System Questionnaire

System and Chief Administrative Officer

System Name	<input type="text" value="SYSTEM"/>				
	<input type="text" value="Mr./Ms."/>	<input type="text" value="First Name"/>	<input type="text" value="Initial"/>	<input type="text" value="Last Name"/>	<input type="text" value="Suffix"/>
Chief Administrative Officer	<input type="text" value="HONOR"/>	<input type="text" value="FNAME"/>	<input type="text" value="MNAME"/>	<input type="text" value="LNAME"/>	<input type="text" value="SUFFIX"/>
Title	<input type="text" value="TITLE"/>				
Address	<input type="text" value="ADDRESS"/>				
City, State, Zip	<input type="text" value="CITY"/>			<input type="text" value="STATE"/>	<input type="text" value="ZIP"/>
Phone, Fax	<input type="text" value="PHONE"/>		<input type="text" value="FAX"/>		
Email Address	<input type="text" value="EMAIL"/>				

System Administration and Governance

Data Current For Fiscal Year Ending (MM/DD/YYYY):	<input type="text" value="FY_DATE"/>		
1. What type of governmental unit provides day-to-day administration for the system? *An "independent legal entity would typically have autonomous authority over hiring decisions, budget control, and administrative procedures.	<input type="text" value="ADM_TXT"/>		
2. What is the Retirement Board's composition?			
	<input type="text" value="Appointed"/> <input type="text" value="Elected"/> <input type="text" value="Ex-Officio"/> <input type="text" value="Other"/> <input type="text" value="Total"/>		
Number of Board Members:	<input type="text" value="BRD_APT_N"/> <input type="text" value="BRD_ELE_N"/> <input type="text" value="BRD_EXO_N"/> <input type="text" value="BRD_OTC_N"/> <input type="text" value="BRD_TOT_N"/>		
3. Over which of the following functions does the Board have controlling authority (Mark as many as apply)			
<input type="text" value="Investments"/>	<input type="text" value="Actuarial Assumptions"/>	<input type="text" value="Benefits"/>	<input type="text" value="Operating Budget"/>
<input type="text" value="BRD_INV"/>	<input type="text" value="BRD_ACT"/>	<input type="text" value="BRD_BEN"/>	<input type="text" value="BRD_BUD"/>
4. Total system staff in 2000? (If the system does not have full-time staff, please estimate the number of full-time equivalent staff who carry out system functions)	<input type="text" value="TOT_STF"/>		
5. Of total system staff, what number were dedicated to investment activities?	<input type="text" value="INV_STF"/>		

Accounting and Audit

1. Date of Most Recent Audit (MM/DD/YY)	<input type="text" value="AUD_DATE"/>
2. Audit Firm or Office	<input type="text" value="AUD_FIRM"/>
3. Is an internal control audit, (as distinct from a financial audit) performed by a qualified independent auditor (or internal auditor with independent authority) at least every 5 years? (Yes/No)	<input type="text" value="AUD_IREV"/>

4. Has the system received the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting? (Yes/No)

AUD_GFOA ▾

**Change in Net Assets - Total for All Plans Administered by the System
(As reported in the Statement of Changes in Net Plan Assets for FY 2000)**

1. Additions (in thousands of dollars)

Employer Contributions	ADD_EMP (in \$ thousands)
Member Contributions	ADD_MEM (in \$ thousands)
Other Contributions	ADD_OTH (in \$ thousands)
Total Investment Income	ADD_INV (in \$ thousands)
Investment Expenses (as a positive number)	ADD_XP (in \$ thousands)
Note: Do not include securities lending expenses among investment expenses.	

2. Deductions (in thousands of dollars)

Benefit Payments	DED_BEN (in \$ thousands)
Withdrawals/Refunds	DED_WTH (in \$ thousands)
Admin. Expenses (excluding Inv. Expenses)	DED_ADM (in \$ thousands)
Other Expenses	DED_OTH (in \$ thousands)

System Investments, Rates of Return, and Asset Allocation

1. Total System Investments (at fair value, in \$ millions) for FY End 2000

TOT_INV

2. Time-Weighted Market Rate of return (Gross of Investment Fees) on Total Investments for Calendar Year:

1998	ROR1998 %	1999	ROR1999 %	2000	ROR2000 %
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3. Asset Allocation by Major Investment Category as of FY End 2000 (as a % of Total Investments)

Domestic Equity (excluding private and real estate equity)	DSTOCK_A
International Equity	INTLEQ_A %
Domestic Fixed-Income	DBONDS_A %
International Fixed-Income	INTLFX_A %
Real Estate Equity	REALEQ_A %
Direct Real Estate Mortgages*	RLMORT_A %
Alternative Investments (including private equity)	ALT_A %
Cash and Short-term	CASH_A %
Other Investments	OTHR_A %

Other Investments	OTHR_A %
*Include GNMA and FNMA securities with domestic fixed-income rather than with direct real estate mortgages	

Investment Management

1. What percent of your equity investments are internally managed?	TOTLEQ_I %		
2. What percent of your fixed-income investments are internally managed?	TOTLFX_I %		
3. Under what investment restrictions do you operate? (Choose as many as apply)			
Prudent Person or Prudent Expert	IRES_PRU	State Legal List	IRES_LST
Other (Please specify)	IRES_OTHTXT		
4. Are investment restrictions specified in your state's constitution? (Yes/No)	IRES_CST		
5. Does the system establish and maintain written investment policy objectives and guidelines? (Yes/No)	INV_POL		
6. Does the system obtain independent investment performance evaluations? (Yes/No)	INV_PERF		

PPCC Defined Benefit Retirement Plan Questionnaire

Type of Plan

Plan Name	PLAN_NAME
Plan Data Current for Fiscal Year Ending (MM/DD/YYYY)	FY_DATE_P
Type of Benefit Offered	TYPE_BEN ▾
Type of Plan	TYPE_PLAN ▾

Active Member Data - For Fiscal Year Ending 2000

	State Employees		Local Employees	
	Number	% Covered by Soc. Sec.	Number	% Covered by Soc. Sec.
General Employees	AS_GEN_N	AS_GEN_S %	AL_GEN_N	AL_GEN_S %
Teachers/School Employees	AS_TCH_N	AS_TCH_S %	AL_TCH_N	AL_TCH_S %
Public Safety Employees	AS_PSAF_N	AS_PSAF_S %	AL_PSAF_N	AL_PSAF_S %
Legislative/Elected/Judicial/Other Employed	AS_ELJO_N	AS_ELJO_S %	AL_ELJO_N	AL_ELJO_S %

Inactive Members and Retiree Data - For Fiscal Year Ending 2000

1. Total Number of Inactive Members	INACTIVE_N
2. Total Number of Retirees and Beneficiaries	TBEN_N
3. Total Annual Benefit Payments to Retirees and Beneficiaries (in \$ thousands)	TBEN_D

Retirement Benefits

If the plan has more than one tier, use the benefits provided by the most recent tier in answering the following questions.

1. What are the vesting requirements for normal retirement? (e.g., IMMEDIATE VESTING, 5 YEARS OF SERVICE; 10 YEARS OF SERVICE, etc.)	
RB_VEST	
2. What are the age and service requirements for unreduced normal benefits at retirement? (e.g., AGE 65 w/ 5 YRS; AGE 60 w/ 10 YRS; ANY AGE w/ 30 YRS; etc.)	
RB_AGESVC	
3. How is Final Average Salary (FAS) determined? (e.g., AVG. OF HIGHEST 36 MONTHS SALARY; AVERAGE OF LAST 10 YEARS SALARY, etc.)	
RB_FAS	
4. Must the period of service (e.g., months or years) for determining FAS be consecutive?	RB_FAS_C ▾

5. What is included in FAS or service credit? (e.g., ONLY BASE SALARY; SALARY PLUS ACCRUED SICK LEAVE AND OVERTIME, etc.)

RB_FAS_A

6. What is your annual retirement benefit formula for members per year of service? (e.g., 1.67% FAS x YRS; 50% FAS AFTER 20 YRS, etc.)

For Employees Covered by Social Security

BFORM_CSS

For Employees Not Covered by Social Security

BFORM_NSS

7. Are there maximum or minimum benefits for normal retirement? (e.g., NO MAX. OR MIN.; MAX: 100% FAS / NO MIN.; etc.)

RB_MINMAX

8. If the retirement benefit is explicitly integrated with Social Security, please describe the formula used to intergrate the benefits.

RB_SSITXT

Early Retirement Provisions

1. Does the plan provide early retirement benefits? ER_YN

2. If yes, what is the minimum age and service at which early retirement is allowed? (e.g., AGE 55 w/ 20 YRS; ANY AGE w/ 25 YRS, etc.)

ER_OTH

3. If benefits are reduced for early retirement, what what is the benefit reduction per year? (e.g., NO REDUCTION; 4% FOR ALL YEARS; 6% AGES 62-65 AND 4% FOR AGES 60-62; etc.)

ER_RD_P

Post-Retirement Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs)

1. Has the plan provided post-retirement COLAs during the past three years? COLA_YN

2. If yes, what were the post-retirement COLAs (as an annual % increase) for:

1998	COLA1998 %	1999	COLA1999 %	2000	COLA2000 %
3. Does provision of the COLA require approval of the Board or legislative body?					COLA_APRV
4. How was the most recent COLA determined? (e.g., AD HOC; AUTOMATIC FIXED RATE OF 2% PER YEAR; AUTOMATIC 60% OF CPI UP TO 3% PER YEAR; AD HOC BASED ON INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE; AUTOMATIC FIXED RATE OF 1.5% PER YEAR PLUS AD HOC INCREASE OF 1%, etc.)					
COLA_DESC					
5. Is the amount of the COLA based on the original or current benefit?					COLA_BASE

Disability Benefits

1. Are disability benefits provided by the plan?		DIS_YN
2. If yes, how is disability determined?		
Any Occupation	DIS_PERM	Own Occupation DIS_OCC
3. What is the disability benefit formula for:		
Duty Disability	DIS_DUTY	
Non-Duty Disability	DIS_NDUTY	

Survivor Benefits - For Death Before Retirement

1. In the event of the member's death before retirement, are survivor benefits provided by the plan?		PSV_YN
2. If survivor benefits are provided, how are the benefits determined?		
PSV_TXT		
3. Who is eligible to receive the survivor benefits? (e.g., ONLY SPOUSE; SPOUSE AND CHILDREN; ANY DESIGNATED BENEFICIARY, etc)		
PSV_BENE		

Post-Retirement Health Care

1. Is post-retirement health care available to members of the plan?	RHC_YN
2. If yes, does the retirement system administer the retiree health care program?	RHC_ADM
3. If the system does not administer the program, who does?	RHC_OTH
4. How are the post-retirement health care benefits funded?	RHC_FUND
5. If other funding methods are used, please describe:	RHC_OTHF

Portability Provisions

1. Does the plan allow for the purchase of service credits?	PSC_YN				
2. If yes, how is the member's cost of purchased service determined? Please describe:	PSC_OT_TXT				
3. Does the plan have reciprocal agreements with other retirement systems for transferring or combining service credits earned elsewhere?	RECP_YN				
4. If yes, where are the participating retirement systems located? (Choose all that apply)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>In-State</td> <td>RECP_STAT</td> <td>In Other States</td> <td>RECP_OTH</td> </tr> </table>	In-State	RECP_STAT	In Other States	RECP_OTH
In-State	RECP_STAT	In Other States	RECP_OTH		

Actuarial Valuations

1. Is an actuarial valuation of the plan performed in a way that conforms to the standards established by the American Academy of Actuaries and/or the Actuarial Standards Board?	VAL_YN
2. If so, how often is it performed?	VAL_FREQ
3. Name of actuarial firm:	VAL_FIRM
4. Is a review of the plan's actuarial valuation performed by an independent actuary at least once every 10 years?	NA
5. What actuarial method is used for the plan?	VMTH_TXT
6. How is the actuarial value of plan assets determined?	ASTVAL_TXT
7. If a smoothed market method is used, what is the averaging period?	ASTVAL_YR years

Actuarial Assumptions

1. Interest Rate Assumption (annual % gross of investment fees)	AROR %	Note: If these rates vary with time, please provide the ultimate long-term rate.
2. Inflation Assumption (annual % not including step or merit assumptions)	AINF %	
3. What are the Salary Scale Assumptions (as a % or annual pay) for the following age and service characteristics:		
Sample Age and Service	Step/Merit Portion*	Total Annual Increase*
Age 40 w/ 10 Years of Service	AGE40_MRT %	AGE40_TSI %
Note: In some systems, these are the same rate.		

Contributions

1. How are <u>employer</u> contribution rates established? (Choose all that apply)	
Statorily at a specific rate	ERC_STAT
Result of actuarial valuation:	ERC_AVAL
2. Are members required to contribute?	
	MRC_YN
If so, at what rate? (annual % of pay)	MRC_OTH
3. Is interest credited on member contributions?	
	MEM_INT_YN
If so, at what rate? (annual %)	MEM_INT_RT
4. Are member contributions "picked-up" in accordance with IRC Section 414(h)(2)?	
	PKUP_YN
5. According to the most recent valuation, are contributions sufficient to fund the plan on a level percent of payroll basis?	
	ERC_LVL_YN
6. What is the number of remaining years needed to fully amortize the plan's current unfunded actuarial accrued liability?	
	AMORT_AAL years

Schedule of Funding Progress -- For Fiscal Year Ending 2000

1. Actuarial Accrued Liability (in \$ thousands)	AAL
2. Actuarial Value of Assets (in \$ thousands)	AVA
3. Covered Member Payroll (in \$ thousands)	COV_PAY

Annual Employer and Member Contributions -- For Fiscal Year Ending 2000

1. Actual Annual <u>Employer</u> Contributions (in \$ thousands)	ACT_EMP
2. Actual Annual <u>Member</u> Contributions (in \$ thousands)	ACT_MEM
3. Other Contributions (in \$ thousands)	ACT_OTH
4. Total Contributions (in \$ thousands)	ACT_TOT
5. What was the Actual Annual <u>Employer's</u> Contribution as a % of Covered Payroll for FY 2000?	P_EMP %
6. What was the Actual Annual <u>Members'</u> Contribution as a % of Covered Payroll for FY 2000?	P_MEM %
7. As shown in the Schedule of Employer Contributions, what percent of the Employer's Annual Required Contribution (ARC) was actually contributed by the employer for FY 2000?	CON_ARC %

PPCC Defined Contribution Plan Questionnaire

Type of Plan

1. Plan Name	PLAN_NAME	
2. Plan Data Current for Fiscal Year Ending (MM/DD/YY)	FY_DATE_P	
3. Type of DC Benefit Offered	TYPE_DCBEN	
4. Is plan a new start-up plan? Was it designed to replace or supplement a defined benefit plan?	DC_PURPOSE	

Active Member Data - For Fiscal Year Ending 2000

	State Employees		Local Employees	
	Number	% Covered by Soc. Sec.	Number	% Covered by Soc. Sec.
General Employees	AS_GEN_N	AS_GEN_S %	AL_GEN_N	AL_GEN_S %
Teachers/School Employees	AS_TCH_N	AS_TCH_S %	AL_TCH_N	AL_TCH_S %
Public Safety Employees	AS_PSAF_N	AS_PSAF_S %	AL_PSAF_N	AL_PSAF_S %
Legislative/Elected/Judicial/Other Employees	AS_ELJO_N	AS_ELJO_S %	AL_ELJO_N	AL_ELJO_S %
Number of Retirees and Beneficiaries			TBEN_N	

Vesting Provisions

1. What are the vesting requirements for normal retirement? (e.g., IMMEDIATE VESTING, 5 YEARS OF SERVICE; 10 YEARS OF SERVICE, etc.)

RB_VEST

Disability Benefits

1. Are disability benefits provided by the plan? DIS_YN

2. If disability benefits are not provided by the plan, does the employer provide disability benefits through some other mechanism? DIS_EMPLR

3. If so, please describe the mechanism: DIS_MECH

4. If disability benefits are provided, how is disability determined?

Any Occupation: DIS_PERM Own Occupation: DIS_OCC

5. What is the disability benefit formula for:

Duty Disability DIS_DUTY

Non-Duty Disability	DIS_NDUTY
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Contributions

1. How are <u>employer</u> contribution rates established? (Choose all that apply)	
Statorily at a specific rate	ERC_STAT
Result of actuarial valuation:	ERC_AVAL
2. Are members required to contribute?	
MRC_YN	
If so, at what rate? (annual % of pay)	MRC_OTH
3. What is the formula for member and employer contributions to the DC plan?	
For Members Covered by Social Security	
	BFORM_CSS
For Members Not Covered by Social Security	
	BFORM_NSS

Annual Employer and Member Contributions -- For Fiscal Year Ending 2000

1. Actual Annual <u>Employer</u> Contributions (in \$ thousands)	ACT_EMP
2. Actual Annual <u>Member</u> Contributions (in \$ thousands)	ACT_EMP
3. Other Contributions (in \$ thousands)	ACT_OTH
4. Total Contributions (in \$ thousands)	ACT_TOT
5. Total Covered Member Payroll (in \$ thousands)	COV_PAY
6. Net Plan Assets (in \$ thousands)	AVA