

# Defined Benefit Plan Adoption Agreement



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The Employer, a participating municipality or participating court within the state of Michigan, hereby agrees to adopt and administer the MERS Defined Benefit Plan provided by the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Michigan, as authorized by 1996 PA 220, in accordance with the MERS Plan Document, as both may be amended, subject to the terms and conditions herein.

**I. Employer Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Municipality #:** \_\_\_\_\_

If new to MERS, please provide your municipality's fiscal year: \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_.  
Month Month

## II. Effective Date

Check one:

A. ☐ If this is the **initial** Adoption Agreement for this group, the effective date shall be the first day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

☐ This municipality or division is new to MERS, so vesting credit prior to the **initial** MERS effective date by each eligible employee shall be credited as follows (choose one):

- ☐ All prior service from date of hire
- ☐ Prior service proportional to assets transferred; all service used for vesting
- ☐ Prior service and vesting service proportional to assets transferred
- ☐ No prior service but grant vesting credit
- ☐ No prior service or vesting credit

☐ Link this new division to division number \_\_\_\_\_ for purposes of determining contributions (Unless otherwise specified, the standard transfer/rehire rules apply)

For divisions that are closing or freezing with or without conversion, the Employer must complete the Addendum for Plan Freeze, Closure and Conversions

B. ☐ If this is an **amendment** of an existing Adoption Agreement (Defined Benefit division number \_\_\_\_\_), the effective date shall be the first day of \_\_\_/20\_\_ (mm/yy). *Please note:* You only need to mark **changes** to your plan throughout the remainder of this Agreement.

C. ☐ If this is a **temporary benefit** (Defined Benefit division number(s) \_\_\_\_\_), select one of the following:

- ☐ This is a **temporary Benefit Window** with a duration of 2-6 months. Effective dates are from \_\_\_/01/\_\_\_ through the last day of \_\_\_/20\_\_ (mm/yy). Complete provisions as applicable under Section IV of this form.
- ☐ This is a **temporary Lump Sum Buyout Program** for terminated vested participants with a duration of 6-24 months. Effective dates are from \_\_\_/01/\_\_\_ through the last day of \_\_\_/20\_\_ (mm/yy). Payout will reflect \_\_\_% (1-100%) of the participant's present value of accrued benefit. For example, if 40% is used, the payout will be 40% of the present value of the benefit. This percentage cannot be changed once adopted.

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- D. ☐ If this is to **separate employees from an existing Defined Benefit division** (existing division number(s) \_\_\_\_\_) into a new division, the effective date shall be the first day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.
- E. ☐ If this is to merge division(s) \_\_\_\_\_ into division(s) \_\_\_\_\_, the effective date shall be the first of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.
- F. ☐ If this is an amendment to close Defined Benefit division(s) # \_\_\_\_\_, with new hires, rehires, and transfers going into an **existing** Defined Benefit division # \_\_\_\_\_, the effective date shall be \_\_\_\_\_ (month/year).

**Note: Closing this Defined Benefit division(s) will change future invoices to a flat dollar amount instead of a percentage of payroll, as provided in your most recent annual actuarial valuation.**

(The amount may be adjusted for any benefit modifications that may have taken place since then).

## III. Plan Eligibility

Division Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Only those employees eligible for MERS membership may participate in the MERS Defined Benefit Plan. If an employee classification is **included** in the plan, then employees that meet this definition will receive service credit if they work the required number of hours to meet the service credit qualification defined below. All eligible employees must be reported to MERS. Please describe the specific classifications that are eligible for MERS within this division:

(For example: e.g., Full-time employees, Clerical staff, Union Employees participating in XXXX union)

This Division includes **public safety employees** (this information is used for actuarial purposes only. It does not relate to the additional tax for early distribution): ☐ Yes ☐ No

To further define eligibility (select all that apply):

Employee Classification	Included	Excluded	Not Employed
<b>Temporary Employees:</b> Those who will work for the municipality fewer than _____ months in total	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Part-Time Employees:</b> Those who regularly work fewer than _____ per _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Seasonal Employees:</b> Those who are employed for tasks that occur at specific times of the year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Voter-Elected Officials</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Appointed Officials:</b> An official appointed to a voter-elected office	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Contract Employees</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Other:</b> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other 2:</b> _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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## Probationary Periods (select one):

- ☐ Service will begin after the probationary period has been satisfied. Probationary periods are allowed in one-month increments, no longer than 12 months. During this probationary period, the employer will not report or provide service. Service will begin to accrue and contributions must be reported when the Probationary Period ends.

The probationary period will be \_\_\_\_\_ month(s).

Comments:

- ☐ Service will begin with the employee's date of hire (no Probationary Period). Effective with the date of hire, wages paid and any associated contributions must be submitted to MERS.

## IV. Provisions

### 1. Service Credit Qualification

To clarify how eligible employees earn service credit, please indicate how many hours per month an eligible employee needs to work. For example, if you require 10 eight-hour days, this would be 80 hours per month. If an *hours and days* has been previously defined (like 10 seven-hour days), stating "70 hours" will be required. Employees must meet the definition of Plan Eligibility in order to earn service credit under the plan.

To receive one month of service credit, an employee shall work (or be paid for as if working) \_\_\_\_\_ hours in a month.

### 2. Leaves of Absence

Indicate by checking the boxes below, whether the potential for service credit will be allowed if an eligible employee is on one of the following types of leave, regardless of meeting the service credit qualification criteria.

Regardless whether an eligible employee is awarded service credit while on the selected type(s) of leave:

- MERS will skip over these months when determining the FAC amount for benefit calculations.
- Third-party wages **are not** reported for leaves of absence.
- Employers **are not** required to remit employer contributions based on leaves of absence when no wages are paid by the employer.
- For **contributory divisions**, employee contributions are required where service credit is granted and due at the time of monthly wage and contribution reporting. Employers may use the following formula to calculate employee contributions: the employee's current hourly rate (prior to leave), multiplied by service credit qualification (hours) multiplied by employee contribution. For example, if employees' hourly rate is \$20, the division requires 120 hours to obtain service credit, and employee contributions are 5%, the calculation will look like:  $\$20/\text{hour} \times 120 \times .05 = \$120$  in employee contribution for that leave month. Employers may use another internal formula, if they choose and MERS will make note of it.

If an alternative formula is going to be used, please describe that here:

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Type of Leave	Service Credit Granted	Service Credit Excluded
Short-Term Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Long-Term Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workers' Compensation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unpaid Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____ For example, sick and accident, administrative, educational, sabbatical, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other 2: _____ Additional leave types as above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Leaves of absence due to military service are governed by the Federal *Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act* of 1994 (USERRA), IRC 414(u), effective January 1, 2007, IRC 401(a)(37). Military reporting requires historical wage and contribution reporting for Defined Benefit as applicable.

### 3. Definition of Compensation

The Definition of Compensation is used to calculate a participant's final average compensation and is used in determining both employer and employee contributions. Wages paid to employees, calculated using the elected definition, must be reported to MERS.

Select your Definition of Compensation:

- ☐ Base Wages    ☐ Box 1 Wages of W-2    ☐ Gross Wages  
☐ Custom Definition

Click here to view details of Base, Box 1, and Gross Wages

(To customize your definition, please complete the [Custom Definition of Compensation Addendum](#).)

## V. Valuation-Required Provisions

Valuation Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

### 1. Review the valuation results

It is recommended that your MERS representative presents and explains the valuation results to your municipality before adopting. Please choose one:

- ☐ Our MERS representative presented and explained the valuation results to the \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Board, Finance Cmte, etc.) (mm/dd/yyyy)
- ☐ As an authorized representative of this municipality, I \_\_\_\_\_ (Name)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Title) waive the right for a presentation of the results.

This Adoption Agreement will be implemented in conjunction with a current actuarial valuation certified by a MERS actuary that sets contribution rates.

Annually, the MERS actuary will conduct an actuarial valuation to determine the employers' contribution rates. Employers are responsible for payment of said contributions at the rate, in the form and at the time that MERS determines.

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2. **Benefit Multiplier** (1%-2.5%, increments of 0.05%) \_\_\_\_\_ % (max 80% for multipliers over 2.25%)

☐ Check here if multiplier will be effective for existing active members' future service only (Bridged Benefit as of effective date on page 1)

If checked, select one below:

☐ Termination Final Average Compensation (calculated over the members entire wage history)

☐ Frozen Final Average Compensation (FAC is calculated twice, once for the timeframe that matches the original multiplier, and once for the new multiplier)

3. **Final Average Compensation** (Min 3 yr, increments of 1 yr) \_\_\_\_\_ years

4. **Vesting** (5 -10 yrs, increments of 1 yr) \_\_\_\_\_ years

5. **Normal Retirement Age** will be the later of: \_\_\_\_\_ (any age from 60-70), or the vesting provision selected above (#4).

6. **Required employee contribution** (Increments of 0.01%) \_\_\_\_\_ %

7. **Unreduced Early Retirement/Service Requirements:**

☐ Age 50 – 54 \_\_\_\_\_ Service between 25 and 30 years \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Age 55 – 65 \_\_\_\_\_ Service between 15 and 30 years \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Service only (must be any number from 20 – 30 years accrued service): \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Age + Service Points (total must be from 70 – 90): \_\_\_\_\_ points

8. **Other**

☐ Surviving Spouse will receive 50% of Straight Life benefit without a reduction to the employees' benefit (also known as an RS50)

☐ Duty death or disability enhancement (add up to additional 10 years of service credit not to exceed 30 years of service)

☐ Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) – If selected, complete the following:

• Credited interest rate: \_\_\_\_\_ % (please select either 0 or 3%)

• The employer, if selected, will delay a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) during the DROP period (skip if not applicable): ☐ Yes ☐ No

• Credited payment percentage will be: \_\_\_\_\_ % (enter a number from 1-100% in increments of 1%) throughout the duration of the DROP period.

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☐ Annuity Withdrawal Program (AWP)

Calculation of the actuarial equivalent of the lump sum distribution made under AWP will be done using:

- ☐ Interest rate for employee contributions as determined by the Retirement Board, or  
☐ MERS' assumed rate of return as of the date of the distribution.

## 9. Cost-of-Living Adjustment

<input type="checkbox"/> All <b>current</b> retirees as of effective date <input type="checkbox"/> Retirees who retire <b>between</b> ____/01/____ and ____/01/____	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Future</b> retirees who retire after effective date
Increase of ____% or \$____ per month	Increase of ____% or \$____ per month
Select one: <input type="checkbox"/> Annual automatic increase <input type="checkbox"/> One-time increase	<input type="checkbox"/> Annual automatic increase
Select one: <input type="checkbox"/> Compounding <input type="checkbox"/> Non-compounding	Select one: <input type="checkbox"/> Compounding <input type="checkbox"/> Non-compounding
Employees must be retired ____ months (6-12 months, increments of 1 month)	Employees must be retired ____ months (6-12 months, increments of 1 month)

- ☐ Check here if the existing COLA will be bridged for active participants as of the effective date selected on this form. Benefits accrued for service after the effective date will have no COLA increase applied.

## 10. Service Credit Purchase Estimates are:

- ☐ Not permitted  
☐ Permitted

## VI. Appointing MERS as the Plan Administrator

The Employer hereby agrees to the provisions of this *MERS Defined Benefit Plan Adoption Agreement* and appoints MERS as the Plan Administrator pursuant to the terms and conditions of the Plan. The Employer also agrees that in the event of any conflict between the MERS Plan Document and the MERS Defined Benefit Plan Adoption Agreement, the provisions of the Plan Document control.

## VII. Modification Of The Terms Of The Adoption Agreement

If the Employer desires to amend any of its elections contained in this Adoption Agreement, including attachments, the Governing Body or Chief Judge, by resolution or official action accepted by MERS, must adopt a new Adoption Agreement. The amendment of the new Agreement is not effective until approved by MERS.

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## VIII. Enforcement

1. The Employer acknowledges that the Michigan Constitution of 1963, Article 9, Section 24, provides that accrued financial benefits arising under a public Employer's retirement plan are a contractual obligation of the Employer that may not be diminished or impaired, and prohibits the use of the Employer's required current service funding to finance unfunded accrued liabilities.
2. The Employer agrees that, pursuant to the Michigan Constitution, its obligations to pay required contributions are contractual obligations to its employees and to MERS and may be enforced in a court of competent jurisdiction;
3. In accordance with the Constitution and this Agreement, if at any time the balance standing to the Employer's credit in the reserve for employer contributions and benefit payments is insufficient to pay all service benefits due and payable to the entity's retirees and beneficiaries, the Employer agrees and covenants to promptly remit to MERS the amount of such deficiency as determined by the Retirement Board within thirty (30) days notice of such deficiency.
4. The Employer acknowledges that wage and service reports are due monthly, and the employee contributions (if any) and Employer contributions are due and payable monthly, and must be submitted in accordance with the MERS Enforcement Procedure for Prompt Reporting and Payment, the terms of which are incorporated herein by reference.
5. Should the Employer fail to make its required contribution(s) when due, the retirement benefits due and payable by MERS on behalf of the entity to its retirees and beneficiaries may be suspended until the delinquent payment is received by MERS. MERS may implement any applicable interest charges and penalties pursuant to the MERS Enforcement Procedure for Prompt Reporting and Payment and Plan Document Section 79, and take any appropriate legal action, including but not limited to filing a lawsuit and reporting the entity to the Treasurer of the State of Michigan in accordance with MCL 141.1544(d), Section 44 of PA 436 of 2012, as may be amended.
6. The Employer acknowledges that changes to the Employer's MERS Defined Benefit Plan must be made in accordance with the MERS Plan Document and applicable law, and agrees that MERS will not administer any such changes unless the MERS Plan Document and applicable law permit same, and MERS is capable of administering same.

## IX. Execution

### Authorized Designee of Governing Body of Municipality or Chief Judge of Court

The foregoing Adoption Agreement is hereby approved by \_\_\_\_\_ on  
the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_. (Name of Approving Employer)

Authorized signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

### Received and Approved by the Municipal Employees' Retirement System of Michigan

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Authorized MERS Signatory)