



GASB-68 MEDIA PROTOCOL

MERS is your communications partner

The Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) is changing the way pension liabilities are reported starting in 2015. This could present a range of communications and public relations challenges as local media outlets, the public and others try to understand how these changes affect local municipalities and why liability numbers appear to have changed from previous years.

The Municipal Employees' Retirements System (MERS) of Michigan is here to help you answer these questions and support your efforts to communicate with local media. Our team of experts has been trained to explain the issues clearly, and in a way that minimizes misunderstanding and potential overreaction by the public and media. We'll work in partnership with you to deliver the most effective message to your local media in a consistent manner.

We want to encourage you to contact the team at MERS before fielding any media inquiries related to the GASB changes. We're here to support your team and be a resource for accurate information. We're also available to help with other questions about MERS or unfunded liabilities by providing support and information.

Best practices for handling media inquiries:

1. Never feel pressured to answer questions immediately. It is good practice to take a message and follow up later so that you can be prepared.
2. Use the MERS GASB resource page and Fact Sheet to familiarize yourself with the GASB changes and the best ways to answer questions from the media, your council and the general public.
(www.mersofmich.com/Employer/Work-Scenarios/GASB-68)
3. If possible, ask reporters why they are calling, where you can reach them and tell them you'll call them back. You should also ask if they have a deadline so you can be sure to follow up with them before they write their story.
4. Contact the team at MERS. We'll help you answer tough questions and respond to media questions and concerns in the most effective manner.

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Working together, we can help you deliver a clear and consistent message to the media and the public.