



Census FAQs

It is very important that we receive the census information from the employer completed in full. We cannot begin to reconcile the plan if we are missing any fields. The employer's census must be completed and returned to TriStar Pension by January 31st of each year. Data that is received after this deadline may be subject to late penalties. Our policy is to begin working on plans on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Why is census information required every year? Census information is needed in order for TriStar to complete plan testing and the Form 5500 which is required by the IRS every year. Form 5500 reports on the financial condition, investments, and operations for pension and welfare benefit plans. Plans that fail to file Form 5500 are subject to penalties and can possibly lose the benefits of having a qualified retirement plan.

When is the census information deadline? The deadline to return completed census information to TriStar is always January 31st unless otherwise specified. Your plan administrator will drop the blank census and other documents in your secure portal for you to complete. It is important that we receive this information by the deadline so that we can begin the proper testing and allocations.

Which employees do I include on the census? Any employee receiving W-2 compensation is required to be reported on the census, including; terminated employees, part-time employees, seasonal employees, and employees who don't defer compensation into the plan.

Why do I include employees on the census data if they don't qualify to be in the plan (i.e. part-time employees)? Part-time and non-deferring and non-eligible employees are needed for TriStar to perform accurate testing for the plan. TriStar must also provide an accurate employee count for the Form 5500. We have discovered employees who were excluded from the plan but who were eligible to participate. By asking for each employee, we assist the employer in avoiding compliance errors.

What information do I need to submit along with the census? Along with a completed census, we will also need a completed questionnaire, along with a W-3, and a copy of your bond certificate.

What is the questionnaire? TriStar utilizes the questionnaire to prepare your Form 5500. It is important that this form is filled out accurately because the TriStar administrators compare the questionnaire with the census and W-3 to ensure they "tie out" or add up properly without discrepancies. TriStar will supply you with this form in your secure portal.

What is a W-3? A W-3 is a summary of W-2's for the company. Whoever prepares your W-2's will also be able to provide you with a copy of your W-3.



Filling out the Census Spreadsheet

SSN: Employee's Social Security Number. We cannot begin reconciling without this information.

First and Last Name: Enter employee's first and last legal name in the appropriate columns.

Date of Birth: Enter the employee's birthdate.

Original Hire Date: Please enter the date the employee was originally hired the first time.

Rehire Date: If your employee previously terminated and was rehired, enter the most current hire date under this column. This section is important for determining the employee's eligibility and vesting.

Date of Termination: If an employee has been terminated from the company during the plan year, then please enter the date of their termination. Leave this column blank if they are still employed.

Ownership Percentage: Please indicate any owners of the company along with their percentage of ownership.

Officer: Please list any officers of the company by inserting "yes" in this column.

Hours of Service: Include hours worked for each employee for the plan year, including terminated and part time employees. 2,080 hours is an appropriate estimate for a full time salaried employee.

Gross compensation: List how much the employee made during the year prior to taking out taxes, deductions or deferrals.

Fringe Benefits: This could be education reimbursement, employee discounts, cell phone, and personal use of a company vehicle, or childcare assistance/reimbursement.

Moving Expenses: List any relocation expenses you provided during the plan year per employee.

Section 125 (Cafeteria Plan): Please list, if any, benefits that the company offers under a cafeteria plan. A cafeteria plan allows participants an opportunity to receive certain benefits on a pretax basis. Some examples include; accident and health benefits, adoption assistance, dependent care assistance, group-term life insurance, and a health savings account).

Compensation prior to participation: This is the amount the participant made prior to participating in the plan. Example: if employee enters the plan on July 1, we want compensation from January 1-June 30.

Pre-Tax Deferral: Amount of money deferred from paycheck by employee into 401k account.

Roth Deferral: If your company offers a Roth account, please list the employee's deferral amounts in this column.

ER Match (Employer Match): Please enter the employer's matching contribution if applicable.

Safe Harbor Match: If your company offers a safe harbor matching contribution, please input that matching contribution per employee.

Loan Repayments: List the total of remitted loan payments for the plan year.

