



TEXAS ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS POOL

February 2, 2026

Affordable Care Act Reporting and Tracking Service (ARTS) Renewal Information

The Texas Association of Counties Health and Employee Benefits Pool (TAC HEBP) has begun the renewal process for those counties and districts participating in the Affordable Care Act Reporting and Tracking Service (ARTS). Renewal will enable your entity to produce the forms required by IRS Sections 6055/6056 for calendar year 2026, assuming this reporting continues to be a requirement. Reporting will consist of Form 1095C in electronic format, which must be made available to employees and filed with the IRS (plus transmittal Form 1094C, filed with IRS). Current law requires all employers with 50 or more full-time equivalent employees to file these forms. ARTS will provide measurement period tracking for 2026 and beyond (to determine whether an employee must be offered health coverage), as well as affordability testing for groups that require employee contributions toward the cost of their own health coverage.

As your county or district provides health benefits through TAC HEBP, ARTS will continue to be available at NO COST in 2026, assuming program deadlines are met.

Your entity will need to continue sending employee, payroll, and unpaid leave of absence files to TAC HEBP in order to utilize this service for the 2026 reports. **Payroll data must be provided for each payroll cycle. Employee files must be provided, at a minimum, once per quarter. LOA files may be provided if and when applicable.** The information provided will be used to determine:

- 1) whether individuals are eligible for a federal premium subsidy or tax credit; and
- 2) whether your entity is subject to penalties under the ACA employer mandate.

Some payroll vendors have worked with TAC to produce these files for you. You will be responsible for the completion of required information in your payroll system and submission to TAC, but this eliminates the need for manually producing additional spreadsheets.

If you use a payroll system that will produce the required IRS forms, and you determine that your entity does not need measurement period tracking or affordability monitoring, you may not need ARTS. It is a service offered by TAC and is completely optional.

Enclosed is the **2026 ARTS Renewal Confirmation Program Agreement** on page 1. Please return a signed copy (initials on pages 1 and 2, signature on page 3) to your Employee Benefits Consultant or email to ARTS@county.org no later than **3/31/2026** if your entity wishes to continue its participation in the program. If you have any questions, please contact your Employee Benefits Consultant at (800) 456-5974.



TEXAS ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS POOL

ACA Reporting and Tracking Service (ARTS) 2026 ARTS Renewal Confirmation Program Agreement HEBP Member: (Pooled Group or ASO)

Program Services

The ARTS program includes the following services:

- *Measurement, Administrative, and Stability Period tracking for 2026 and notification of eligibility for part-time / variable / seasonal employees (can provide tracking back to beginning of Measurement Period if 2025 data was provided by county/district).*
- *Reporting for your county/district regarding the status of potential benefits-eligible employees.*
- *Production of your county/district's 1095C forms, provided electronically* in PDF format*
- *Transmission of your county/district's 1094C and 1095C forms to the IRS.*

*optional: printed forms to employer or direct mail service to employees for additional fee(s)

Program Requirements

- 1) Participants agree to provide employer, payroll, employee and unpaid leave of absence (LOA) files related to the group's Health Benefits Plan in the file format designated by TAC HEBP (ARTS Data File Guide attached):

- Payroll data files must be provided for each payroll cycle and should be submitted at least once per calendar month.
- Employee data files must be provided, at a minimum, once per quarter.
- LOA data files may be provided if and when applicable.

NOTE: *It is critical that we receive the files in the proper format and the correct naming convention. Failure to do so may result in our inability to provide this service to your county or district.*

- 2) Group agrees to pay program fees as described in the 2026 ARTS Fee Schedule on page 2.

Enrollment and Data Submission Deadlines

- Please refer to the enclosed "2026 Deadlines for ARTS Files" document for details.
- Groups who wish to participate in the ARTS program must return the signed documents to TAC HEBP no later than **March 31, 2026** in order to participate.
- Data file transmission to TAC HEBP must begin no later than August 7, 2026, to avoid late fees, however, **we recommend that you continue sending your files after each payroll or at least monthly** to avoid getting backlogged.

Initials



TEXAS ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS POOL

ACA Reporting and Tracking Service (ARTS) HEBP Member (Fully Insured or ASO) 2026 Fee Schedule for Renewing Participant

1	☐	ARTS Annual Subscription Fee	*\$4.75 / form	Waived
2	☐	Late fee for service election form (after 3/31/2026)	\$1,500	
3	☐	Late fee for data submission (after 8/7/2026 and/or 1/8/2027)	\$3,000	If applicable, will be billed in 2027 after forms are produced
4	☐	Optional Printed Forms** (group chooses to have TAC print forms and mail to group contact listed on page 3)	\$3 / form	If applicable, will be billed in 2027 after forms are produced
5	☐	Optional Forms Distribution Postage (group chooses to have TAC mail printed forms directly to employees)	\$1.50 / form	If applicable, will be billed in 2027 after forms are produced
		Total Amount Due: (if zero, enter 0.00)	\$ _____	

**Per 1095C form*

**** You are not required to provide printed forms. If you do not, the requirements for making forms available to your employees are:**

- Provide a written notification to your full-time / benefits-eligible employees to let them know that printed forms will not be automatically provided to them.
- Provide a place on your County/District website where employees can request a copy of their 1095-C form.
- Upon receipt of a request, you have 30 days to respond and provide the requested form.

Note: Fees subject to change annually

Initials



TEXAS ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES HEALTH AND EMPLOYEE BENEFITS POOL

ACA Reporting and Tracking Service (ARTS) Contact Designation Form

Contracting Authority: _____ (Group Name) hereby designates and appoints, as indicated in the space provided below, a Contracting Authority of department head rank or above and agrees that any notice to, or agreement by, a Group's Contracting Authority, with respect to service or claims hereunder, shall be binding on the Group. Each Group reserves the right to change its Contracting Authority from time to time by giving written notice to HEBP.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Primary Contact: Main contact for data file and reporting matters pertaining to the ARTS program.

Name: _____ Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Delivery Address (no PO Boxes): _____

Phone: _____ HIPAA Secured Fax#: _____

Email: _____

Other Contact Emails for ARTS correspondence regarding data files, if any:

Signature of County Judge or Contracting Authority

Date

Print Name and Title

Payroll Software provider: _____
Software Version #: _____



BASIC FILE INFORMATION

- The top row **MUST BE** the column headers only
- The column headers **MUST NOT** be changed
- **DO NOT** insert or delete columns
- **DO NOT** change the order of the columns
- Use only one tab per Excel file ("Sheet1")

File Types

There are three separate files your group should provide to TAC for participation in the ARTS program: *Employee Information*, *Payroll Detail*, and *Leave of Absence*, if applicable. TAC has provided a template for each of these three files. Please note that file specifications can change due to modifications in Affordable Care Act legislation and / or enhancements or updates to the ARTS program.

File Format

The templates provided by TAC are in Excel 97-2003 format. If your version of Excel is newer, there should not be any compatibility issues. If you are providing the files directly from your payroll software, the file format should be CSV (comma-separated variable). CSV is the preferred format.

When to send files

Employee Information: Send an initial file containing every county employee who was on your payroll as of the first of the year. You can send an updated file after every payroll cycle, but must send an updated file **AT LEAST** once per quarter.

Payroll Detail: Send after every payroll cycle, beginning with your first payroll period of the year.

Leave of Absence: Send **only** if the leave is for FMLA, Jury Duty, Military Duty or Worker's Comp **AND** the employee is projected to be on LOA for four weeks or more.

File Names

The standardized naming convention for ARTS files is: **County_Name_filetype_filedate**. File types are "EEFile", "PRFile", and "LOAFile". The date should be entered in YYYYMMDD format.

Example: For Your County's Employee Information file containing all employees as of January 1, 2023, the file name would be "*Your_County_EEfile_20230101*" e.g. Bee_County_EEfile_20230101.

The Your County Payroll Detail file with a pay date of January 11, 2023, would be named: "*Your_County_PRFile_20230111*" e.g. Bee_County_PRfile_20230111.

The Your County Leave of Absence file with a pay date of January 11, 2023 would be labeled: "*Your_County_LOAFile_20230111*" e.g. Bee_County_LOAfile_20230111.



Please note that file specifications can change due to modifications in Affordable Care Act legislation and/or enhancements or other changes to the ARTS program.

Should you have more than one of the same type file for the same paydate/file date, include an A, B, C, etc. to designate an additional file.

Example: Your County employees with monthly pay frequency are paid on January 11, 2023 and employees with biweekly pay frequency are also paid on January 11, 2023. The monthly employees' payroll file would be named "Your_County_PRFile_A_20230111" e.g. Bee_County_PRfile_20230111. The biweekly pay frequency employees' payroll file would be named "Your_County_PRFile_B_20230111" e.g. Bee_County_PRfile_B_20230111. The employee file for January 11, 2023 can be one file with all employees listed or you can provide two separate files for the respective groups, distinguished with the A, B, C, etc.

Where to send files

Your files will be uploaded to TAC using *Syncplicity*. The information in your *Syncplicity* folder is secure. The folder resides at TAC behind our firewall; your information is secure once it is placed in the *Syncplicity* folder. Contact us at ARTS@county.org to receive instructions on how to set up and use *Syncplicity*. Then upload files to your online *Syncplicity* account in the folder named: 0000 ARTS Files. **NOTE: TAC does not use the desktop version of *Syncplicity* so please do not download this software to your desktop – use the web version at [Syncplicity.com](https://syncplicity.com).**

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH FILE TYPE

File 1: Employee Information (EEFile)

The Employee Information file contains basic employee information about every *county* employee* on your payroll. Your initial Employee Information file should contain all county employees as of the first of the current calendar year. Only include retirees that retire after the first of the year and are covered on your medical plan. Subsequent files will be sent along with the Payroll Detail file after every payroll cycle (or at least once per quarter). When creating these files after the first time, TAC suggests you open the most recent version of the file and save it as a new file, changing the date to correspond with the payroll period ending date. In the newly saved file, you will make any changes that occurred since the last payroll, such as new hires, terminations, pay rate changes, etc.

***Note: Do not include records for non-county employees, such as Adult Probation or Agrilife Extension personnel, who are state or A&M employees and receive their health benefits from them.**

Column Descriptions

All fields are required, except for MiddleName, HomeAddressLine1*, HomeAddressCity*, HomeAddressState*, HomeAddressZIP*, and NotificationEmail.

** these fields are required for Reporting Services Only (RSO) groups*



FEIN – enter Federal Employment Identification Number. You will only need to enter this on the first line, it will automatically insert this value for the rest of your records. Do not include a hyphen. For example: If your FEIN is 74-1234567, enter 741234567.

SSN – enter employee's 9-digit social security number. Do not include hyphens. We have the template set up to insert the hyphens for you.**

CurrentStatus -- choose the appropriate current status from the drop down list. The options are A = Active, **G = Terminated**, I = Inactive and R = Retired.

OriginalHireDate -- enter the original hire date in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes.

Example: April 15, 2023 will be entered as 04/15/2023.

MostRecentHireDate --enter the most recent hire date in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes.

Example: April 15, 2023 will be entered as 04/15/2023. This date may be the same as or later than the Original Hire Date.

MostRecentStartDate -- enter the most recent hire date in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes.

Example: April 15, 2023 will be entered as 04/15/2023. This date may be the same as or later than the Most Recent Hire Date.

TerminationDate – enter this date if applicable. Enter termination date in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes. Example: April 15, 2023 will be entered as 04/15/2023. Leave this field blank if it is not applicable (do NOT enter 00/00/0000).

FirstName – enter employee's first name.

LastName – enter employee's last name.

MiddleName – enter employee's middle name or initial. This is not a required field.

PayRate – This is the rate of pay at the time of this pay cycle and is related to the Pay Type. Do not include any currency symbols or commas. Example: Enter 10.50 if employee is paid \$10.50 an hour (Pay Type = HY). Enter 1500.00 if employee is paid \$1,500.00 biweekly (Pay Type = TW).

PayType – This relates to the Pay Rate (i.e. \$10.50 per hour, \$1250 every two weeks, etc.) Choose the appropriate option from the drop down list. The options are HY = per hour, TW = every 2 weeks, HM= per half month, MY = per month, WY = per week, DY = per day, YY = per year and SH = per shift.

PayCycleFrequency – The frequency of your payroll cycles. Choose the appropriate option from the drop down list. The options are BW = BiWeekly, SM = SemiMonthly, MY = Monthly and WY = Weekly.

HomeAddressLine1 – enter the employee's full address. If the employee has an apartment, duplex, unit number etc., include on this line. Do not include punctuation. Example: Enter 123 St Louis Ave Apt 4A if employee's home address is 123 St. Louis Ave., Apt 4A. Physical address is preferred. This is not a required field*.



HomeAddressCity -- enter the employee's address city. Do not include punctuation. Example: enter St Louis if employee's home address city is St. Louis. This is not a required field*.

HomeAddressState -- enter 2-letter abbreviation for employee's address state (i.e. TX for Texas). This is not a required field*.

HomeAddressZIP -- enter employee's zip code. You may add the +4 zip code extension however, you should not use a hyphen. Example: enter 787682131 if employee's zip+4 is 78768-2131. This is not a required field*.

NotificationEmail -- enter the employee's email address. This is not a required field.

DateOfBirth -- enter the employee's birthdate in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes Example: April 15, 2023 will be entered as 04/15/2023. You may enter 00/00/0000, if DOB is not known.

ACAEmployeeDesignationCode -- Choose the appropriate employee designation code from the drop down list. The options are FT= Full Time, PT = Part Time, S = Seasonal and V = Variable.

ACAPayTypeClassificationCode -- Choose the appropriate employee designation code from the drop down list. The options are H = hourly or S = Salaried.

JobTitle -- enter the specific job title for employee. This is limited to 45 characters. If you do not have a specific job title for an employee, or employee has terminated and you typically remove that title from their file, you may enter "none".

***Reporting Services Only (RSO)** Groups will be required to provide this information in the Employee File. All other groups will have the information taken from OASys. To ensure the most up to date information is pulled, make sure to update OASys as soon as a change is made.

******The templates are designed for the information to be keyed into it. If you cut and paste from a different source, the fields may not work as designed. Thus, if you cut and paste the SSN from a source that does not have the hyphens included and do not choose the option to "match destination formatting" via Paste Special, the hyphens will not show. This is not a critical error. It is an aesthetic choice.

If you use V lookups on your spreadsheet, remember to Copy and Paste Values for that column once the data is populated.

Once files are received and processed, you will receive an email or phone call if anything failed so that you can update and resubmit.



File 2: Payroll Details (PRFile)

The Payroll Details file contains basic pay information about every *county employee** on your payroll, including part-time, variable hour, and seasonal employees. Your initial Payroll Detail file should contain all county employees as of the first pay period that ended during January, 2023. Subsequent files will be sent along with the Employee Information file after every payroll cycle. When creating these files after the first time, TAC suggests you open the most recent version of the file and save it as a new file, changing the date to correspond with the payroll period ending date. In the newly saved file, you will make any changes that occurred since the last payroll, such as changes to hours worked, changes to gross pay amounts, pay rate changes etc.

***Note: Do not include records for non-county employees, such as Adult Probation or Agrilife personnel, who are State or A&M employees and receive their health benefits from them.**

When multiple pay rates are applied, please provide the **base pay rate** and do not adjust or average based on overtime or different pay rate.

If adjustments to a prior pay period are being submitted, regardless of the pay date or when the data is sent, it is critical to properly set the pay period start and end dates to associate the hours with the correct dates.

Please note that file specifications can change due to modifications in Affordable Care Act legislation and / or enhancements or other changes to the ARTS program.

Column Descriptions

All fields are required, except FirstName & LastName.

PayDate – enter the pay date in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes. Example: April 15, 2023 will be entered as 04/15/2023. You will only need to enter this on the first line, it will automatically insert this date for the rest of your records.

PayPeriodStartDate -- enter the pay date in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes. Example: April 15, 2023 will be entered as 04/15/2023. **This date must be earlier than the PayDate.** The template will prompt you if the Pay Period Start Date is later than the Pay Date. You will only need to enter this on the first line, it will automatically insert this date for the rest of your records.

PayPeriodEndDate -- enter the pay date in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes. Example: April 15, 2023 will be entered as 04/15/2023. **This date must be later than the Pay Period Start Date.** The template will prompt you if the Pay Period End Date is earlier than the Pay Period Start Date. You will only need to enter this on the first line, it will automatically insert this date for the rest of your records.

FEIN – enter Federal Employment Identification Number. You will only need to enter this on the first line, it will automatically insert this value for the rest of your records. Do not include a hyphen. For example: If your FEIN is 74-1234567, enter 741234567.



SSN – enter employee’s 9-digit social security number. Do not include hyphens. We have the template set up to insert the hyphens for you.*

FirstName – this is an optional field added due to our members’ feedback. We will ignore this column on the payroll report. Thus, you may enter first name. This is not a required field.

LastName – this is an optional field added due to our members’ feedback. We will ignore this column on the payroll report. Thus, you may enter last name. This is not a required field.

PayRate – This is the rate of pay at the time of this pay cycle and is related to the Pay Type. Do not include any currency symbols or commas. Example: Enter 10.50 if employee is paid \$10.50 an hour (Pay Type = HY). Enter 1500.00 if employee is paid \$1,500.00 biweekly (Pay Type = TW).

PayType - This relates to the Pay Rate (i.e. \$10.50 per hour, \$1250 every two weeks, etc.). Choose the appropriate option from the drop down list. The options are HY = per hour, TW = every 2 weeks, MY = per month, WY = per week, DY = per day, YY = per year and SH = per shift.

PayCycleFrequency – The frequency of this payroll cycle. Choose the appropriate option from the drop down list. The options are BW = BiWeekly, SM = SemiMonthly, MY = Monthly and WY = Weekly. This is not a required field.

HoursWorked – Enter the number of hours employee is being paid for (worked, vacation, sick etc.) in this pay cycle. Do not multiply overtime hours. Enter the appropriate number of hours for your full-time salaried employees, such as 80.0 for a bi-weekly pay cycle or 40.0 for a weekly pay cycle.

GrossPay – Enter the employee’s gross pay for this pay cycle. This includes the base pay plus any overtime, paid leave, etc. *before* any deductions. Do not include any currency symbols or commas. Example: Enter 1000.50 if employee’s gross pay is \$1,000.50 before deductions for this pay period. This is not a required field.

*The templates are designed for the information to be keyed into it. If you cut and paste from a different source, the fields may not work as designed. Thus, if you cut and paste the SSN from a source that does not have the hyphens included and do not choose the option to “match destination formatting” via Paste Special, the hyphens will not show. This is not a critical error. It is an aesthetic choice.

If you use V lookups on your spreadsheet, remember to Copy and Paste Values for that column once the data is populated.

Once files are received and processed, you will receive an email or phone call if anything failed so that you can update and resubmit.



File 3: Unpaid Leave of Absence (LOAFile)

The Unpaid Leave of Absence file contains information about any county employee who is on **unpaid protected** leave of absence during a particular payroll cycle. ONLY provide this file if the leave is for FMLA, Jury Duty, Military Duty or Worker's Comp AND the employee is projected to be on LOA for four weeks or more.

Include all unpaid, protected leaves that are not represented with compensation or hours worked in the payroll detail file. For example, if an employee had one day of jury service, but the payroll reflected that she was paid full rate that day, do NOT include the employee here. If the employee had 2 months of Family Medical leave, and was compensated only by a third-party provider, or not compensated, DO include the information here.

Column Descriptions

All fields are required, except FirstName, LastName, LOAEndDate and LOAHours.

FEIN – enter Federal Employment Identification Number. You will only need to enter this on the first line, it will automatically insert this value for the rest of your records. Do not include a hyphen. For example: If your FEIN is 74-1234567, enter 741234567.

SSN – enter employee's 9-digit social security number. Do not include hyphens. We have the template set up to insert the hyphens for you.*

FirstName – this is an optional field added due to our members' feedback. We will ignore this column on the LOA report. Thus, you may enter first name. This is not a required field.

LastName – this is an optional field added due to our members' feedback. We will ignore this column on the LOA report. Thus, you may enter last name. This is not a required field.

LOA Reason Code -- enter the reason for the unpaid leave of absence. Example: 'Family Medical Leave' or 'Military Leave'.

LOA Start Date-- enter the first date the employee is considered to be UNPAID, not the last day worked, in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes. Make sure you do not include any paid vacation time in the LOA Start Date calculation. Example: An employee takes vacation pay from April 1-14 then begins Unpaid LOA on April 15, 2023, the LOA Start Date will be entered as 04/15/2023.

LOA End Date – Not a required field - enter this date if applicable. You may provide a future date if the leave of absence days are known in advance. If the return date is not known, leave this field blank. Enter this date in MM/DD/YYYY format with slashes. Example: If the last day of unpaid leave is April 20, 2023, then enter 04/20/2023.

LOA Hours – Not a required field - enter the number of unpaid hours for **partial day leave only** (LOA Start and End Dates should be the same). This field will only be used for intermittent unpaid leave,



such as when an employee on FMLA is out for a doctor's appointment and the hours missed are not compensated. This field will only allow up to 24 hours as this is truly for a partial day of leave.

Example situations:

- 1) Employee is on unpaid LOA beginning June 1 and returns June 14. You would enter the appropriate information in FEIN, Employee SSN and LOA Reason Code. LOA Start Date = 06/01/2023. LOA End Date = 06/14/2023. You would enter nothing in LOA Hours field.
- 2) Employee is on unpaid LOA beginning June 1 and you do not know return date. You would enter the appropriate information in FEIN, Employee SSN and LOA Reason Code. LOA Start Date = 06/01/2023. You would enter nothing in LOA End Date or LOA Hours fields.
- 3) Employee is on unpaid LOA for 4 hours on June 20. You would enter the appropriate information in FEIN, Employee SSN and LOA Reason Code. LOA Start Date = 06/20/2023. LOA End Date = 06/20/2023. LOA Hours = 4

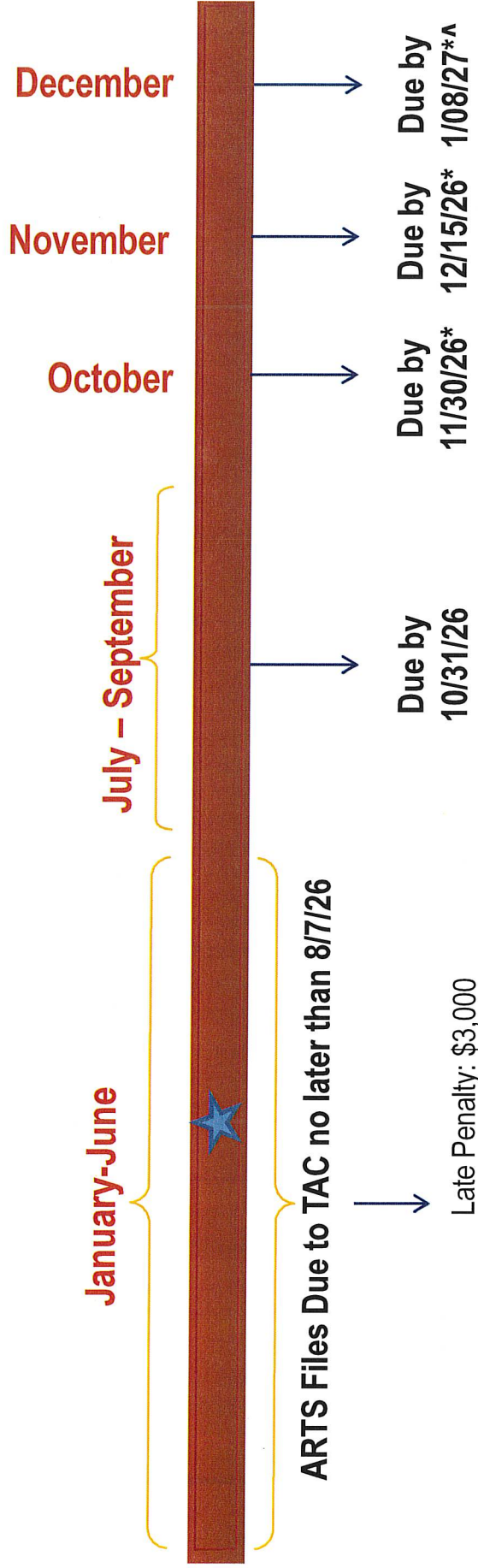
Once a person is on the LOA file, they will remain on the file for the remainder of the year.

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If you use V lookups on your spreadsheet, remember to Copy and Paste Values for that column once the data is populated.

Once files are received and processed, you will receive an email or phone call if anything failed so that you can update and resubmit.

2026 Deadlines for ARTS files



 **ARTS Agreement due by 3/31/26**
Late Penalty: \$1,500

*** NOTE: If these file deadlines are not met, TAC HEPB will not guarantee timely production of 1095C forms**

^ If all 2026 ARTS files not received by 1/08/2027: Late Penalty: \$3,000