



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

SECTION: 300 – Human Resources	POLICY#: 313
TITLE: Voluntary Separation Program	R & O #: 20-126
SPONSORING DEPT/DIV: Department of Support Services/Human Resources Division	
ADOPTED: December 2010	REVISED: November 3, 2020

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Voluntary Separation Program ("Program") is to provide an incentive in the form of a one-time lump sum payment to eligible employees ("Employee(s)") who may wish to voluntarily end their employment with Washington County ("County"). The Program may be offered to Employees within designated departments or workgroups as part of formal efforts to reduce or otherwise adjust the existing workforce and pursue long term cost reductions.

AUTHORITY: Final authority for interpretation of and exceptions to the Program shall rest with the County Administrator or designee.

APPLICABILITY: This policy applies to full-time and part-time regular Washington County employees except as defined in the eligibility section below.

POLICY GUIDELINES:

1. Eligibility

1.1. Upon approval of the County Administrator or designee, the Program may be offered to eligible employees in designated departments, divisions, or workgroups. The designation will be based on the following considerations:

- 1.1.1. Financial duress of any given fund or funding source;
- 1.1.2. Sustained reduction in workload;
- 1.1.3. Restructure or reorganization that reduces staffing needs; and/or
- 1.1.4. Other planned staffing reduction strategies.

1.2. The Program may be made available to regular employees in the impacted designated workgroup(s).

1.3. Employees in the following categories are not eligible to participate in the Program:

- 1.3.1. Employees represented by a collective bargaining agreement;
- 1.3.2. Employees in their initial probationary period;
- 1.3.3. Employees in temporary positions; and/or
- 1.3.4. Employees in positions that must be refilled due to essential business operations.
- 1.3.5. Employees who have submitted a notice of resignation prior to a notice of the Program.

2. Duration

- 2.1. The Program will begin on a date designated by the County Administrator or designee, in their sole discretion, and will have duration of no less than forty-five (45) days and no more than ninety (90) days.
- 2.2. Employees choosing to participate in the Program must inform the County of their intention to participate by providing a completed Election to Participate and Release of All Claims (“Election and Release”) Agreement form to Human Resources prior to the designated expiration date of the Program.

3. Electing Participation:

- 3.1. An Employee will be entitled to receive Program benefits if the following requirements are satisfied:
 - 3.1.1. Within the designated program period, the Employee voluntarily signs the Election and Release Agreement, and does not thereafter revoke that Election and Release within seven (7) days after signing it; and
 - 3.1.2. The Employee resigns from County employment with an effective date not later than the expiration date designated by the County under the Program.
- 3.2. Prior to deciding whether or not to participate in the Program, employees in the affected workgroup will be provided with information showing the number of employees eligible for the Program by job title and age. This information will be current as of the date the Program is offered.

4. Program Benefits

4.1. Lump Sum Payment

- 4.1.1. An Employee who agrees to participate will receive a lump sum payment in an amount to be determined and authorized by the County Administrator or their designee.
- 4.1.2. The lump sum payment will be paid in the same amount for every employee entitled to receive Program benefits during each specific Program duration.
- 4.1.2. The lump sum payment will be paid no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after the effective date of the Employee's termination of employment with the County.
- 4.1.4. The lump sum payment is a taxable benefit to the Employee. Employees electing to participate are responsible for all appropriate federal, state and local income taxes and other statutorily required withholdings. All applicable taxes and other

required withholdings will be deducted from the amount of the lump sum payment.

4.2. Continuation of health care coverage

4.2.1. Upon separation from employment, former employees covered under the County's group health plans (medical, dental, vision and EAP) at the time of separation from the County may elect to continue to participate in the County's group health plan through COBRA. The former employee pays the premium.

4.3. Unemployment Benefits

4.3.1. Employees participating in the Program may apply for unemployment compensation benefits. When responding to a request from the Employment Division, Washington County will state that the Employee accepted a voluntary separation as part of a planned reduction in force. Washington County makes no guarantee or representation regarding whether or not an employee participating in the Program will be eligible to receive unemployment benefits.

5. Re-Application for employment with Washington County

5.1. Acceptance of Program benefits requires the Employee's agreement not to pursue employment in any position (including regular, temporary, extra help, and provisional positions) within Washington County for a period of twelve (12) months.

6. Notice to Employees

6.1. Prior to electing to participate, it is strongly recommended that Employees use the designated Program period to review and consider the Program details and the Election and Release Agreement.

6.2. It is also recommended that the Employee utilize the entire seven (7) day revocation period. Employee should consider consulting with an attorney and tax consultant during the review and revocation period.

6.3. The Program is entirely voluntary, and employees may choose not to participate. Any decision of an employee to decline the benefits provided under this Program will not be considered as a part of any future employment action by the County.

6.4. No action is required for Employees choosing not to participate in the Program.

6.5. An expiration date will be designated at the time the program is offered. The Election to Participate and Release of All Claims Agreement form will not be accepted after the designated expiration date.

6.6. Questions about this Program should be directed to the Washington County Department of Support Services Human Resources Division at (503) 846-8606.

7. Appeal

- 7.1. This Program is not subject to any appeal procedure provided under the Civil Service Rules of Washington County, the Washington County Revised Personnel Rules and Regulations, or the Washington County Charter. Washington County retains the right to change, modify or discontinue the Program at any time.

RESPONSIBILITIES: The Department of Support Services Human Resources Division is responsible for working collaboratively with directors, managers, and supervisors to implement this policy.

DISTRIBUTION: This policy shall be made available to all employees of Washington County. Any questions, concerns, or comments related to this policy should be directed to the Chief Human Resources Officer or their designee.

IMPLEMENTATION: Observance of and adherence to this policy is mandatory for all County employees. Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

ADMINISTRATION: The County Administrator or their designee is authorized to implement and monitor the Program and may modify as necessary to carry out the intent of the Program.

PERIODIC REVIEW: This policy shall be reviewed by the County Administrative Office at least every three years, or more often if needed, and updated as necessary.