

Frequently Asked Questions

2020 Dutchess County Voluntary Separation Incentive Program

Q: Who qualifies to apply for the program?

A: All County employees are eligible to apply. In order to select options 1 or 2, employees must be eligible for retirement and have at least 10 years of service. Option 3 does not have a minimum years of service requirement. Both permanent and non-permanent staff, as well as part-time and full-time staff are eligible to apply. In all cases, the County will approve or deny applications on a case by case basis based on the cost effectiveness of each circumstance.

Q: What would be a reason an employee would be denied from taking part in the program?

A: The purpose of the voluntary separation incentive is to provide cost savings for the County by either holding vacant or eliminating positions that are vacated or other similar positions within the department. In circumstances where the County is unable to save money by keeping the position vacant, applications may be denied.

Q: Would an employee who takes the incentive be banned from working for the County in the future?

A: No. Employees who take part in the program cannot and will not be barred in any way from applying for future positions in county government. However, vacated positions will need to be eliminated or held vacant and the County plans to minimize hiring for the foreseeable future as a cost saving measure.

Q: If New York State passes a retirement incentive, will Dutchess County participate?

A: Current legislation is written to allow local entities to opt-in and participate, and Dutchess County would certainly consider doing so if it would provide a benefit to County employees. It is unlikely that the current draft legislation would be adopted in its current form or until early next year based on the State's fiscal calendar.

Q: Will I be eligible for unemployment if I participate in the program and resign from the County?

A: No. The application clarifies that this is a voluntary program and would make participants ineligible for unemployment benefits.

Q: Can any lump sum cash payment be put toward Deferred Compensation?

A: Yes. Employees will have the opportunity to arrange for payments to be credited towards their deferred compensation but will need to make these arrangements themselves.

Q: What happens if the Legislature does not approve the program?

A: In the unlikely event the cost-saving program is not approved by the Legislature, all applicants will be notified that their application will be considered null and void and no one will be required to resign or retire without the incentive/benefit.

Q: What happens if the County Executive’s Office or Human Resources denies my application?

A: Human Resources will notify the employee that their application has been denied and the employee will not be permitted to receive the incentive. The employee’s application will then be considered null and void and the individual will not be required to resign or retire.

Q: When can I retire/resign?

A: Based on the program timeline, a “normal” separation date would be any date between September 1 – October 31. Applicants may include a date earlier than this on their application to be considered for an early separation. Such applicants should turn in their application as soon as possible to allow for expedited processing. Applicants may also include a date between November 1 – December 31 on their application based on a specific need or circumstance. Separation dates during this period may be approved at the sole discretion of the County Executive. In the case of all applications requesting separation prior to September 1 or after October 31, if the date of early or late separation is not approved, the employee will be notified and allowed to either modify their requested separation date or rescind their application.

Q: How will a lump sum payment impact my taxes?

A: Each individual’s tax circumstances are unique. Employees are encouraged to consult a tax professional for advice on the tax implications related to these benefits.

Q: If my spouse/dependent is not currently on my health insurance or vision or dental plan, can I add them before selecting option 1 or 2?

A: Yes. Retirement is considered a qualifying event and employees would have the opportunity to adjust their coverage as needed.

Q: Is there a limit to the number of people who will be allowed to take each of the options?

A: No. There are no specific minimum or maximum limits on the number of individuals able to select each option. The County will approve or deny applications on a case by case basis based on the cost effectiveness of each circumstance.

Q: Where do I submit my completed application?

A: Completed applications should be submitted to your Department Head for initial review and sign-off. Once completed, the Department will forward the application to the Human Resources Department who will coordinate final review with the Executive’s Office.