

Update on Voluntary Separation and Retirement Incentive Program

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In September, I shared with you information about a pilot program that provides an incentive for certain employees to leave state service, either through voluntary resignation or retirement.

We have just completed the pilot and will begin implementing this program throughout the rest of the agency.

You know that all of state government is faced with declining revenues, and we are no exception. Our goal is to achieve a smaller and more sustainable transportation workforce. The voluntary separation program is just one of the tools that will help us get there in a way that honors and supports our employees as we near completion of the \$15.5 billion capital investment program and size our organization to the level of work that we have.

Over the next few months, managers will be taking a close look at their future business needs and determining if the Voluntary Separation and Retirement Incentive Program is a tool that will work for them. Those who decide to utilize this incentive program will develop a voluntary separation and retirement plan proposal to be approved by the Assistant Secretary for Administration, and will work with Human Resources to identify eligible employees.

Your manager may decide this is not the right tool for your part of the organization. This means not all employees will be eligible to participate, and not all employees who appear to meet the eligibility criteria will be invited to participate. Please remember that this is not an entitlement program; no employee has a contractual right under existing bargaining agreements to a financial incentive offered through this program.

Employees who occupy specific positions that have been identified by management and approved by the Secretary's Office will be invited to participate in this incentive program. Employees who do not receive an invitation to participate in the incentive program will not be able to volunteer for it. We anticipate invitations will go out in early to mid-March.

Meetings will be scheduled with those employees who are eligible and they will then have 45 calendar days to decide whether to accept the offer, plus another seven days to rescind their acceptance. Current legislation authorizes this incentive program only through the end of this biennium and employees who accept will have until June 30, 2011, to depart state employment.

Voluntary Separation and Retirement Incentive Program details, as well as questions and answers about the program, can be found at <http://wwwi.wsdot.wa.gov/HR/Employees/default.htm>.