

# Western State College of Colorado Classified Staff Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. What is it?**

The Western State College Classified Staff Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan is a program that offers financial incentives to eligible classified staff who voluntarily decide to leave their position at WSC. Participation in the program is voluntary and subject to approval of the President, in consultation with the Cabinet.

### **2. Why is the Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan being offered?**

The administration explored offering eligible employees an opportunity to apply for participation in a voluntary separation incentive Plan (VSIP), in order to help avoid possible layoffs, achieve budget reductions and reward long term employees. Such plans are allowed by the State Personnel Director's Administrative Procedure 3-52. The Board of Trustees approved and authorized the plan on December 11, 2009 and the plan has the approval of the College President, as required.

### **3. Who is eligible to participate in the VSIP?**

Classified staff members with twenty (20) or more years of continuous state service as of December 11, 2009 are eligible for this voluntary plan. The length of service is calculated according to state guidelines and a break in service of 30 days or more, starts the clock running again. The total continuous time is rounded down to full years. Employees who have previously announced their retirement or resignation are not eligible.

### **4. Will every eligible employee be approved to participate?**

No. The decision to approve or deny an application from an eligible employee will take into account the financial benefit gained, the impact on the College and its programs and services, and the decision will be made with the best interests of the College in mind. Final approval of any separation incentive application will be at the discretion of the College President with input from the cabinet.

### **5. What are the Plan Requirements?**

Employees who agree to accept the terms and conditions of the VSIP will voluntarily resign and surrender their rights to retention and reemployment rights. Waiving those rights does not affect the employee's eligibility for reinstatement. If the President approves the application, the employee will then execute a Voluntary Separation Incentive Agreement. The individual agreement is available for you to read on the Human Resources webpage. The agreement specifies that the employee is waiving certain legal rights and employees are encouraged to seek legal counsel before signing the agreement.

### **6. How does an eligible employee apply?**

Eligible employees may apply for participation in this VSIP by submitting their application to the Director of Human Resources **no later than 5:00 pm on January 25, 2010**. The application must include the employee's proposed separation date, which must be on or before June 30, 2010.

### **7. What are the Incentives to participate in the Special Retirement Program?**

Eligible employees who accept the VSIP offer will receive a separation payment equal one week of pay at their current base rate for every year of continuous service, not to exceed 18 weeks. Employees will

receive payment in one lump sum. Federal and state taxes will be deducted from each payment. Payments under the agreement are offered as an inducement to separate from state service and are not considered earned wages for retirement purposes, and will not generate contributions to any retirement plan, nor will the payments affect the highest average salary calculation for PERA benefits.

***8. May the employee return to work at Western State College?***

Participating employees are eligible for reinstatement. What this means is that you may apply for openings in the future at WSC or any state agency. You must go through the selection process and if you are selected for the vacant position, you may return to the classified system. But you don't have a "right" to be hired in any particular job. Employees retain certification to previously certified classes, if they are rehired. Because of PERA restrictions which protect the retiree, if you retire under PERA you will not be able to work at Western State College or any state agency during the entire calendar month following date of retirement. Additionally, temporary work is limited to 110 days per year by PERA and temporary classified work is limited by the State Personnel Rules to no more than 6 months in a year.

***9. If I do return to Western State College to work, will I need to contribute to a retirement plan?***

If you are a PERA retiree receiving PERA benefits, under today's PERA rules, you will not contribute to the PERA retirement plan (this is subject to change). If you return to work in a position exempt from the state classified system, and you are working more than .5 FTE, then you must contribute to the College's defined contribution pension plan.

***10. What if I can't decide by January 25, 2010? Will this incentive be offered again?***

This VSIP is offered now as a result the state's current economic condition and resultant budget reductions to higher education. There is no guarantee that the incentive program will be offered again.

***11. Who should I contact with questions?***

You may contact the Director of Human Resources, Kim Gailey by phone at 943-3142, by e-mail at [kgailey@western.edu](mailto:kgailey@western.edu), or in person at 209 Taylor Hall.