



WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

2021 Voluntary Separation Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Revised: February 11, 2021

Q. Why is WVSU offering a Voluntary Separation Program for faculty and staff?

A. West Virginia State University is working to realign expenses and implement strategic budget initiatives. Through the Voluntary Separation Plan the University will make payments to eligible faculty and staff who in return would agree to separate from employment with WVSU either by resignation or retirement.

Q. How will the program be offered?

A. The University will offer the Plan to eligible employees with the criteria of sound fiscal management of the University, utilization of instructional resources, and impact on the mission of the institution. The University exercises the right to limit the number of employees participating in the Plan. Participation will be based on seniority and individuals meeting the requirements of Tier I eligibility criteria will receive first consideration. Interested employees who meet the eligibility requirements of Tier II will be determined by the University *after* Tier I participation has been determined.

Q. What are the eligibility requirements of the tiers?

A. Tier 1 ELIGIBILITY: At least twenty-five (25) years of West Virginia state benefit-eligible service AND any combination of age, for a total of 85 years or greater. Individuals who are in the WV State Teachers Retirement System (TRS) must be at least 70 ½ years of age.

Tier 2 II ELIGIBILITY: At least fifteen (15) years of West Virginia state benefit-eligible service AND any combination of age, for a total of 80 years or greater. Individuals who are in the WV State Teachers Retirement System (TRS) must be at least 70 ½ years of age.

Q. I am eligible for the VSP program. What would my payment be through the program?

A. The payments you receive are dependent on factors including your years of service and age. The payment would be up to one year's salary made over 52 payments. The table below provides a helpful at-a-glance explanation.

Participant's Eligible Years of Service*	% of Fiscal Year Ending Base Salary** Paid Out Over Two-Year Period (52 Total Installments)
15	60
16	64
17	68
18	72
19	76
20	80
21	84
22	88
23	92
24	96
25 and Over	100

**Partial years of service are not applicable. Years of service are ANNUAL INCREMENT years of service as calculated per the WV Division of Personnel formula, as of June 30 of each fiscal year. (For faculty, a full nine months is equal to one increment year. Years of fewer than nine months' service do not count.) The severance plan is a seniority plan.

**Does not include any overload pay, supplements, stipends, e.g. base salary only.

Q. Is participation in the VSP program mandatory?

A. No. Participation in the VSP program is completely voluntary. Whether an eligible employee chooses to take advantage of this opportunity is entirely at their discretion.

Q. If I express interest in the VSP program but then change my decision, what is the process?

A. If you express interest in the VSP program you will have a 45 calendar day period to revoke the agreement in writing.

Q. Am I guaranteed to receive an offer if I express interest in the VSP program?

A. No, eligibility does not mean acceptance. The University reserves the right to set a limit on the number of faculty/staff who are approved to participate in the Plan. The President, in her sole discretion, determines the eligible interested employees who may participate. If the entry of certain eligible employees into the Plan would cause undue disruption to the operational needs of the University, the President may restrict participation in the Plan to a defined number of employees or to certain job statuses of departments or employees only; and in any other way that she deems necessary to maintain the operational needs and mission of the University.

Q. How are my years of service determined for the program?

A. Years of service refers to West Virginia state service during which the faculty/staff member was benefits-eligible and actually and actively contributing into a West Virginia state retirement Plan, or in the case of Extension Services (if applicable), the federal CSRS Plan. Service years are annual-increment years, per calculation on the WV Division of Personnel formula.

Unpaid leaves of absences are not included as eligible service time.

Military service performed between September 16, 1940, and July 1, 1973, can be credited if such service does not exceed 25% of a participant's total service. (For every four ((4)) years of West Virginia state service, one year of military service is allowed.) The maximum military service credit cannot exceed ten (10) years. The military discharge form DD214 shall be used to verify military service.

Q. If I accept an offer through the VSP program, would I be eligible for any additional compensation programs offered by the University before my transition date?

A. No. Once an employee accepts an official VSP offer they no longer would be eligible for any additional WVSU compensation programs offered before their separation date.

Q. I already applied for retirement. Am I eligible to participate in the VSP program?

A. If you submitted written documentation prior to January 30, 2021 indicating your intention to resign or retire on a specific date, you are not eligible to take part in the VSP program.

Q. If I accept a VSP offer, what will happen to my accrued and unused annual leave, sick leave or compensatory time off (CTO)?

A. In accordance with State laws and regulations, employees who participate in the VSP program would be eligible for payment of accrued and unused annual leave upon separation from employment with WVSU.

Accrued and unused sick leave is not eligible for payment.

Eligible employees with accrued sick leave or service credit may use that time/credit to pay for PEIA health insurance premiums. The employee must be eligible for retirement, officially retire, and have such accrued leave/service credit on balance and available.

An employee's participation in the Plan does not prevent or preclude the employee from applying for or using those benefits which s/he has accrued and/or is entitled to (retirement, Social Security, service/sick leave credits to pay health insurance premiums, e.g.), so long as the employee meets the eligibility requirements to use or access those benefits.

Employees with no service credit/sick leave accruals may continue their PEIA coverage by paying the full cost under COBRA. This coverage will begin immediately upon entry into the Plan and end with appropriate COBRA timeframes.

Q. Who do I contact with questions or for more information about the VSP program?

A. The Human Resources Department shall serve as the administrator of the Plan to disseminate information about the Plan, to determine faculty/staff eligibility, and to bring eligible employees' applications to the President for consideration, to coordinate communications, and processing of approvals. For questions not answered here you may email VSP2021@wvstateu.edu.

Q: Will WVSU provide a verification of employment or some other document used to verify my employment to use for Medicare, Social Security, or future employment?

A: At the request of the employee, WVSU Human Resources can verify employment in writing to include your job title, dates of service, and hourly rate.

Q: How will my separation be recorded at WVSU if I participate and separated as part of the VSP?

A: Your separation will be recorded as a voluntary resignation or retirement.

Q: Can I reduce the amount I am given over twenty-six (26) pay periods and instead get a lump sum payout but in a smaller amount? If so, how is that figure calculated.

A: No. You will be paid up to one year's salary via 52 installments as referenced above.

Q: If my application is accepted and I participate in the VSP, can I still file for unemployment benefit compensation through WorkforceWV?

WVSU cannot stop you from applying for unemployment benefit compensation. WVSU will report your separation as a voluntary resignation or retirement. WorkforceWV will then use available information to determine unemployment benefit compensation eligibility.

Q: How will I receive my payments?

A: You will be paid via direct deposit.

Q: What tax rate will be used for my payments?

A: Please contact a tax professional for questions regarding taxation rates and this Plan.

Q: Can you explain the linkage between Medicare and PEIA if I separate from WVSU?

A: If you or a covered dependent are eligible for Medicare, you must enroll in Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B. Medicare will be your primary coverage and PEIA as secondary. Per the PEIA Shopper's Guide "to be eligible for benefits from PEIA, the Medicare-eligible member is REQUIRED to enroll for both Medicare Parts A and B."

Q: If I am accepted into the plan and decide to resign or retire, am I still eligible for the years of service incentive payment typically paid out in July?

A: Yes.