

# WVU 2019 VSIP PROGRAM FAQs

## Q. Why is WVU offering a VSIP program for faculty and staff?

- A. West Virginia University is working towards reducing its overall operating costs and prioritizing funding for investment in the University's most strategic initiatives. In support of these efforts, WVU is launching a Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan (VSIP) program for eligible faculty and staff.

The program is designed to provide our academic and business units the opportunity to adjust their workforces to offer more enhanced programming while also providing a cash incentive to eligible employees who may be thinking about retiring or leaving WVU to start a new career.

Based on the number of employees who are eligible to retire and the number of inquiries we have received, the University recognizes many faculty and staff may be considering retirement but are uncertain whether they can do so financially. The VSIP program offers these individuals greater flexibility with their retirement options while also providing a potential cost savings for WVU at the same time.

## Q. Who is eligible for the VSIP program?

- A. In general, all regular, benefits-eligible WVU employees with 20 or more years of service as of March 31, 2019, are eligible to express interest in the VSIP program. However, any offer made through the program must be approved by WVU administrators.

Further, employees with established employment end dates will not be eligible to participate in the program. Established employment end dates are dates now or in the future that have been documented in writing on or before April 18, 2019. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Employees who have submitted written documentation of their plans to resign or retire on a specific date; or
- ✓ Employees who have received official notice from the University regarding plans to end their employment on a specific date.

## Q. How will I know if I am eligible to participate in the program?

- A. Faculty and staff who meet eligibility requirements for the VSIP program will receive an invitation to express their interest via email. The email will come from [WVUSeparationIncentives@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:WVUSeparationIncentives@mail.wvu.edu) and will be distributed on Monday, April 22. The email will contain a link to an online interest form that has been customized

for each employee. The deadline for employees to express their interest in the VSIP program is Friday, May 10, at 5 p.m.

## Q. I am eligible for the VSIP program. What would my incentive payment be through the program?

- A. Eligible employees who receive an offer from the University and choose to voluntarily separate from employment with WVU will have two exit date options:
- ✓ Employees who separate from employment with the University through the VSIP program on December 31, 2019, will receive a lump-sum payment equal to 100% of their annual base salary for their primary assignment.
  - ✓ Employees who separate from WVU through the VSIP program at the end of their FY20 appointment (or June 30, 2020, whichever comes first) will receive a lump-sum payment equal to 50% of their annual base salary for their primary assignment.

**NOTE:** Alternative exit dates may be approved in limited situations and will require the approval of WVU administrators. Further, all payments through the VSIP program will be subject to required federal and state taxes and any other legally required deductions.

## Q. Has the University offered similar programs to faculty and staff in the past?

- A. While WVU has made VSIP offers to certain individuals within designated colleges in recent years, a University-wide VSIP program has not occurred since 2003. The 2003 VSIP program was limited to classified staff.

## Q. Is participation in the VSIP program mandatory?

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

## Q. If I express interest in the VSIP program, am I obligated to take an offer if I receive one?

- A. No. If you express interest in the VSIP program and an offer is made, you will have a 45-day consideration period in which you may choose to accept or reject the offer. Further, if you accept an offer, you will have an additional seven-day revocation period after submitting your paperwork in which you may choose to cancel your VSIP contract.

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

- A. No. University administrators will review each expression of interest individually. Operational needs and available funds will determine whether an eligible employee who expresses interest in the program receives an official offer. Once the operational and financial review is complete, all eligible employees who have expressed interest in the program will be notified in early fall regarding the University's decision and whether they will receive an official offer.

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

- A. For the purposes of the VSIP program, the years of service calculation for each eligible employee was determined by using the highest-calculated number of one of the following (as of March 31, 2019):
- Annual leave years of service (combined State-eligible service);
  - Increment/longevity years of service (combined State-eligible service); or
  - Number of years since the start date of the employee's PEIA basic life insurance.

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

- A. No. Once an employee accepts an official VSIP offer, they no longer would be eligible for any additional WVU compensation programs offered before their exit date.

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

- A. If you submitted written documentation prior to April 18, 2019, indicating your intention to resign or retire on a specific date, you are not eligible to take part in the VSIP program.

## Q. How do I know if I am eligible to retire?

- A. Information regarding retirement eligibility can be found on the [Talent and Culture](#) website. For questions or

more information about retirement eligibility, contact Benefits Administration at [Retirement@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Retirement@mail.wvu.edu) or [304-293-4399](tel:304-293-4399).

## Q. If I accept a VSIP offer, can I get a job at another State agency?

- A. In accordance with State code, an eligible employee who receives and accepts a VSIP offer will be ineligible for reemployment with any West Virginia State institution of higher education – even on a contract basis – for wages in excess of \$5,000 per fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). This restriction includes all WVU campuses and locations, WVU Research Corp. and WVU Innovation Corporation. The \$5,000 limit also applies to the combined total of all wages earned at WVU and the affiliates listed above.

## Q. Would participating in the VSIP program affect my eligibility for emeritus status?

- A. No. Any participant in the VSIP program still would be eligible for faculty or staff emeritus status as long as they meet the eligibility requirements detailed within [BOG Faculty Rule 4.2](#) or through the [Classified Staff Council procedures](#).

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

- A. In accordance with [University policies and procedures](#), as well as State laws and regulations, employees who participate in the VSIP program would be eligible for payment of accrued and unused annual leave or CTO upon separation from employment with WVU.

Accrued and unused sick leave is not eligible for payment. However, eligible employees with certain conversion rights who retire in conjunction with their VSIP exit may use accrued and unused sick leave for the purchase of retiree health insurance premiums or to increase their retirement annuity under STRS, if applicable. Employees also may be eligible to transfer accrued and unused annual and sick leave to another State agency that is not a higher education institution depending upon their situation. View [BOG Talent and Culture Rule 3.5](#) for specific details regarding employee leave.

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**Q. Are WVU Research Corp. or WVU Innovation Corporation employees eligible for the VSIP program?**

- A.** No. The 2019 VSIP program is not open to WVU Research Corp. or WVU Innovation Corporation employees; however, the program is open to WVU Research Office State employees who meet eligibility requirements.

**Q. I am eligible for leave or years of service conversion rights that may be exercised at retirement to purchase retiree health insurance or increase my retirement annuity under STRS, if applicable. If I accept an offer through the VSIP program, what will happen to my leave or years of service conversion rights?**

- A.** If an employee with leave or years of service conversion rights retires in conjunction with their VSIP exit, they may exercise their conversion rights subject to the laws and regulations of the State. If an employee with conversion rights does not retire in conjunction with their VSIP exit, they may lose those conversion rights depending upon the specifics of their situation. For questions or more information about leave or years of service conversion rights, contact Benefits Administration at [Retirement@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Retirement@mail.wvu.edu) or **304-293-4399**.

**Q. I am eligible to retire. If I participate in the VSIP program, would I still be eligible for the regular retiree benefits (e.g., email, library use or ability to purchase Athletics tickets)?**

- A.** Yes. Eligible employees who choose to retire through the VSIP program will receive retiree benefits. More information is available on the [Talent and Culture](#) website.

**Q. Does WVU plan to offer additional VSIP programs in the future?**

- A.** While we always must look for opportunities to ensure we are operating as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible, there currently are no plans for any additional University-wide VSIP programs.

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

- A.** For questions or more information about the program, contact the WVU Separations Incentives team at [WVUSeparationIncentives@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:WVUSeparationIncentives@mail.wvu.edu) or **304-293-4399**.