Staff Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (SVSIP)
Job Bands 1000 and 3000-7000

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q.1. What is the “Staff Voluntary Separation Incentive Program”?

The Staff Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (SVSIP) provides eligible, approved applicants with an incentive payment equal to one week of pay based on the applicant’s annual base salary per completed year of service to the North Dakota State University, up to a maximum of 50 percent of annual base salary, if they choose to separate from employment and agree to the conditions of the program.

Q.2. Why is this Program being offered?

The purpose of this Staff Voluntary Separation Incentive Program (SVSIP) is to implement a limited time incentive to eligible NDSU employees in order to achieve specific institutional objectives. These objectives include:

A. Reducing salary, wage and benefit costs.
B. Increase efficiencies and/or reduce expenses.
C. Redirecting the allocation and appointment of positions at the University to maximize the University’s ability to fulfill its mission on a continuing basis in the future.

Q.3. How is this Program being funded?

All costs of the Program will be the responsibility of the existing employee’s college/department. There are no central funds set aside for this program.

Q.4. Why should I consider participating?

The SVSIP is strictly voluntary, and there may be a variety of reasons why you decide to submit an application. For example, if you are considering retirement or separation from NDSU for other reasons, the SVSIP could provide additional flexibility and options.

Q.5. What is the incentive that is being offered for this Program?

In exchange for his or her separation from employment at NDSU, approved, eligible applicants will receive a payment equal to one week of pay per completed year of service to the NDSU, up to a maximum of fifty percent of annual base salary (as of 11/20/2018), less all required federal and state taxes and deductions as required by law.

Q.6. What is a base salary?

Your annual base salary does not include overloads, stipends, overtime, summer payments or salary increases received due to an acting or interim assignment, responsibility, or any other payments above base salary.
Q.7. **Who is eligible to apply for participation in this Program?**

Benefited employees at NDSU who meet the Rule of 65, by February 15, 2019, which is calculated as the sum of the employee’s age and total years of benefited employment at NDSU. For example, if you are an employee who is 55 years old and have been a benefited employee at NDSU for 10 years, you would be eligible to apply for the Program. Employees must be in good standing with no current disciplinary letters or corrective action, performance improvement or other similar plans in place.

Q.8. **Am I required to apply for the Program if I am eligible?**

No. Participation in the program by an eligible employee is strictly voluntary.

Q.9. **If I submit an application for consideration, will I automatically be approved for the Program?**

No. Not all SVSIP applicants will be approved. All eligible employees are invited to apply, but not every individual who meets the minimum requirements and submits an application may be approved. The decision to approve an applicant is entirely at the discretion of NDSU and will take into account the impact on the applicant’s college/department, and will be made with the best interest of NDSU in mind.

Q.10. **Is it possible that some staff employees who meet the rule of 65 are still not eligible for the Program?**

Yes, even if an employee meets the rule of 65, he or she may not be eligible for the Program. For example, employees who have already given written notice of their intent to retire or resign would not be eligible for the Program. Please refer to the Program Guidelines for a complete list of who is not eligible for the Program.

Q.11. **How do I apply for the Program?**

Applications will be available beginning on November 20, 2018. You can get an application from the NDSU Office of Human Resources and Payroll located in SGC H102, or you can print off an application from the SVSIP website: https://www.ndsu.edu/hr/empltoolbox/vsip/. Completed applications must be submitted to the NDSU Office of Human Resources and Payroll no later than 5:00 p.m. CDT on February 15, 2019. You can either hand deliver your application to the SGC or submit it via email to ndsu.hr.vsi@ndsu.edu. It is your responsibility to ensure that your application has been received, and NDSU recommends that you contact the NDSU Office of Human Resources and Payroll to confirm receipt.

Q.12. **Can I withdraw my application after it is submitted to Human Resources?**

Yes. You may withdraw your application at any time prior to signing a separation agreement. The withdrawal should be in writing and sent to the NDSU Office of Human Resources and Payroll as soon as possible.

Q.13. **What is a separation agreement? Will I be required to sign it if my application is approved?**

If your application is conditionally approved, you will be required to accept and sign a separation agreement. The separation agreement will outline the terms of the accepted applicant’s separation from NDSU and will include a release of all continuing employment rights and any and all claims against NDSU and/or the NDUS. Once your application has been conditionally approved and you have been provided the separation agreement, you will have forty-five (45) calendar days to sign and submit the separation agreement to the NDSU Office of Human Resources and Payroll. You then have seven (7) calendar days from the date you submitted your signed separation agreement to revoke your acceptance and withdraw it. If you decide to revoke your acceptance, you must provide notice in writing to the NDSU Office of Human Resources and Payroll no later than seven (7) calendar days after you submit it.
Q.14. Does submitting an application obligate me to separate?

No. The separation agreement will be presented to those who are selected from among the applicants. If you are accepted, you will have forty-five (45) calendar days to decide you want to move forward. Once you have submitted your signed release and an additional seven (7) calendar day revocation period has passed, your decision to participate in the Program cannot be rescinded.

Q.15. What happens if I am eligible, but I do not apply for the Program?

A decision to apply or not apply for consideration is strictly voluntary. If you are eligible and choose not to apply, your work status and benefits will remain the same.

Q.16. What are the deadlines for applying to this Program?

You will have from November 20, 2018 through 5:00 p.m. CDT on February 15, 2019, to submit an application to the NDSU Office of Human Resources and Payroll either in person or by e-mail. Applications received after 5:00 p.m. CDT on February 15, 2019, will not be considered.

Q.17. Why is February 15, 2019 the final date for applying to this program?

This date was selected to ensure sufficient time to administer the SVSIP, which will include a review and signing of separation agreements, processing payments and separating accepted employees from their respective departments and colleges.

Q.18. How will NDSU determine which applications are approved?

The Office of Human Resources and Payroll will first verify that each application submitted meets the minimum eligibility requirements of the SVSIP. After the application deadline has passed, the application will go to the VSIP Campus Program Committee. The VSIP Campus Committee will evaluate the applications received in relation to the objectives of the SVSIP.

Applications may be approved or denied with respect to specific employees within organizational units and funding categories depending on budgetary and programmatic demands.

Q.19. How will I know if my application to participate in the Program was accepted or denied?

If you apply for participation, you will be notified as soon as possible, but no later than February 28, 2019.

Q.20. When will I have to be officially separated from employment at NDSU if my application is accepted?

If you apply and are approved for participation in SVSIP, your separation date from NDSU will be May 15, 2019. Exceptions to this date may be approved in specific instances for the benefit of the university.

Q.21. When will I be provided with the incentive payment?

Approved applicants will receive one payment on May 31, 2019 OR one-half payment on May 31 and one-half payment on January 15, 2020. Applicants will also receive a payment of accrued annual and sick leave calculated pursuant to NDSU and NDUS policies.
Q.22. Why does NDSU require that I separate on a specific date?

The date designated for separation is based on a required timeline that includes, but is not limited to, the signing of separation agreements, the campus budget process, reorganization within affected departments/colleges and administration of SVSIP.

Q.23. Can I be rehired at NDSU after I separate from employment under the SVSIP?

If you participate in the SVSIP, you will be restricted from being rehired or compensated in any capacity at NDSU for one year from the date of separation, unless authorized by the President for exigent circumstances.

Q.24. If I am selected and accept the separation, does that mean that my position(s) will not be filled?

Not necessarily. The eligibility criteria are not limited to those whose functions may be reduced or eliminated due to their departure. Cost savings may be realized even if the position is filled, or if there is a delay in filling the position.

Q.25. If I do not apply for the Program and am involuntarily separated from employment at a later date, will I get an incentive payment?

The SVSIP is anticipated to be a unique and limited time offering by NDSU. If you are involuntarily separated from employment at NDSU at some point in the future, you may be eligible for severance compensation (however, severance compensation is not required and not guaranteed), in accordance with NDSU and NDUS policies.

Q.26. If my application is accepted and I separate from NDSU, will it save one of my colleagues from involuntary separation in the future?

The possible impact of this program on layoffs and notices of non-reappointment will depend on a number of factors, including how many employees participate in the program, strategic plans, impact on a department or program, and changes in budgetary process, among other factors.

Q.27. Will I be required to retire if my application is accepted?

No. This is not a retirement program. Participation in this Program does not automatically make you eligible for retirement benefits under NDPERS or TIAA or any other institutional, state or federal retirement program. If you have questions about retirement, you should consult with your retirement program provider.

Q.28. Will I continue to receive health care coverage after my separation date under the Program?

As stated in the Program guidelines, health insurance benefits will terminate for approved applicants on June 30, 2019.

Q.29. Will Social Security be deducted from the payment as part of the taxes?

Yes. The employee share of FICA will be deducted from the staff payment and NDSU will pay its employer share. Exception: If the employee has reached his or her Social Security wage limit, only Medicare will be deducted/paid.
Q.30. **What about money I have in my Flex Account?**

Flexcomp participants must incur medical expenses prior to separation, to be eligible for reimbursement. Participants will have 30 days from date of termination to submit claims for reimbursement.

Q.31. **Will I be eligible for Unemployment Insurance?**

No. Because this a voluntary separation, unemployment insurance benefits are NOT available.

Q.32. **Why are the terms different for the SVSIP than they are for the VSIP program?**

The employment rights and policies are different.

Q.33. **Will I still receive my annual and sick leave payout if I accept the SVSIP?**

Yes. Employees who are approved and accept the SVSIP are eligible to receive annual leave accrual payout as well as 10% of sick leave accrual payout, if they meet the eligibility requirements for sick leave payout.

Q.34. **If my application is accepted do I have to continue working until May 15, 2019?**

The last day worked will be negotiated per the agreement, but will be no later than May 15, 2019. However, all employees participating in SVSIP must remain in good standing for the duration of their employment.

Q.35. **Where can I find out more information?**

More information can be found at the NDSU Office of Human Resources and Payroll website at [https://www.ndsu.edu/hr/empltoolbox/vsip/](https://www.ndsu.edu/hr/empltoolbox/vsip/) or by emailing ndsu.hr.vsi@ndsu.edu.