

[VSIP FAQs](#)

Why is the university doing this?

As a result of an enrollment decline for Fall 2021 and expecting a similar decline for Spring 2022, the University needs fiscal flexibility. Providing faculty and staff the opportunity to participate in a voluntary separation incentive program (VSIP) can assist in accomplishing the needed fiscal flexibility.

Faculty and staff nearing the end of their careers are often in a position to retire, but remain for a variety of personal and professional reasons. The Voluntary Separation Incentive Program allows administrators to offer eligible employees incentives for an accelerated departure. The resulting faculty or staff line may be held open for future or strategic programmatic directions. In all cases the decisions about vacated positions will be prioritized based upon the university's financial and strategic needs, which are in the best interest of the university community.

How can I learn about what my incentive payment would be?

Eligible staff and faculty who are considering applying should request information about their specific base salary by emailing vsip@fhsu.edu.

In general, the incentive payment is a lump-sum cash payment of the participant's FY 2022 budgeted annual base salary.

Any VSIP payment will be subject to required payroll deductions, including applicable federal and state taxes and any other legally required deductions. Neither the employee nor FHSU will make mandatory retirement contributions on the incentive payment amount and the incentive payment amount cannot be used in the calculation for voluntary retirement plan contributions.

For faculty members, base salary is the annual budgeted salary not including summer sessions, overloads, or other one-time payments; endowed or distinguished professor supplements; research or external funding; endowment income; or any other administrative payments.

Who is eligible?

The VSIP is available only to eligible FHSU Faculty and Staff who are active participants in the KBOR Mandatory retirement plan, the KPERS Retirement Plan or the KP&F Retirement Plan who:

- 1) Are 60 years of age or older at the Retirement Date;
- 2) Have completed at least five (5) years of service in a benefits-eligible position at FHSU or a State of Kansas agency at the Retirement Date;

- 3) Meets retirement program requirements for full retirement as outlined in the KBOR Mandatory retirement plan, the KPERS Retirement Plan or the KP&F Retirement Plan
- 4) Are not otherwise ineligible, as set forth below.

The following employee groups are ineligible:

- Employees who already have an active phased-retirement agreement or are scheduled to begin phased-retirement at a future date,
- Employees who have already announced intention to retire or separate employment and their unit has acknowledged such request,
- Employees whose positions are funded entirely (100%) through grants,
- Employees on approved long-term disability or who are in the waiting period,
- Employees with an identified or projected Date of Separation with FHSU,
- Employees who have retired and have been rehired, and
- Employees who have been approved for a partial or full-year Sabbatical beginning Spring 2022, unless revoked.

What if I change my mind after I've returned my Notice of Retirement document?

You will be required to retire on the documented retirement date, regardless of whether you choose to sign the Separation Agreement and Release document. ***Please consider your options carefully as deadlines are rigid and this step is binding.***

You will be required to retire on your selected retirement date because the university and your department will be making a financial commitment to you, perhaps to the exclusion of another faculty or staff member. Additionally, the University will need to begin planning to meet the academic and departmental needs prior to your actual retirement.

Potential participants are strongly urged to consult with an attorney. They are also encouraged to discuss this option with their family and personal tax advisor as the University cannot provide tax advice or legal advice.

What is the deadline for the Notice of Retirement Document to be returned?

If you are accepted for the VSIP, the Notice of Retirement document must be completed and submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. CST on March 11, 2022. Your signature is binding and indicates the date you agree to leave university employment and may not be rescinded. Selected applicants who return the Notice of Retirement will later receive an electronic Separation Agreement document. This document outlines the financial transaction that will take place at the time of separation. Failure to sign this document at the time of retirement will mean you revoke the payout, not that you refuse to retire.

Where can I have specific questions addressed?

If your questions are seeking more detail about the VSIP program, the dates, or deadlines, please email vsip@fhsu.edu.

How was eligibility for the program determined?

Eligibility of staff and faculty to apply for the VSIP was based upon a number of factors, including the faculty or staff member's length of service to the university, the individual's age, and the assurance that the faculty or staff member was eligible to retire under the KPERS', KP&F, or Kansas Board of Regents' retirement plan.

Additionally, while it is the intention of FHSU to allow as many eligible faculty and staff as possible to participate in the VSIP, FHSU reserves the right to limit the total number of participants in order to preserve the viability of programs and services and the integrity of financial resources. We must be sure that the unit's operational and accreditation needs are served so that each unit can achieve its strategic and organizational mission. Ultimately, the university needs to make certain that the needs and best interests of the entire university community are served.

Is it advisable to discuss this possibility with one's supervisor before submitting the interest form?

The decision to submit an application must be an independent and voluntary decision. Supervisors have been directed to neither encourage nor prohibit employees from applying.

I've already discussed retirement with my manager, am I eligible for this program?

If your division Vice President or the President has not yet accepted or acknowledged your decision to retire and you meet the VSIP eligibility criteria you would be able to apply. If you and your unit administrators have already determined a date for your retirement or have entered into a phased-retirement agreement you would not be eligible.

Can I retire under this program and get a faculty job at another KBOR institution?

Yes. Other KBOR institutions or Kansas state agencies are not covered by the FHSU VSIP Plan. However, there are other important considerations that you may wish to consider, including KPERS and KBOR's Working After Retirement and Bona Fide Separation guidelines.

If I want to participate but get denied, is there an appeal process?

Participation decisions will be made by Executive Leadership Team in consultation with Deans, Chairs, Directors and other FHSU leaders. Decisions will be final and are not eligible for appeal.

Will participating affect eligibility for emeritus status?

VSIP participants are eligible for emeritus status as long as they meet the qualifications outlined in FHSU Emeritus Status policy.

If I'm accepted may I still use my vacation and sick leave?

Yes. Employees can continue to use available accrued vacation and sick leave under the current leave policy guidelines with supervisory approval. Availability of the use of accrued leave may be impacted if other cost-savings measures are announced and enacted by the University.

What happens if I apply and am accepted, but then need to change my decision?

It depends. You can decide not to participate in the VSIP at any point in time, BUT once you sign and return the Notice of Retirement document (due March 11, 2022 at 5 pm CT), **your decision to retire is final**. Participants cannot later revoke their retirement as the University will make decisions related to finances, academic services and staffing based upon this notice.

The Separation Agreement outlines the financial and legal terms of the arrangement, including a release of claims against the university, and is due on May 16, 2022 for 9 month appointment or June 13, 2022 for 12 month appointment. You can always choose not to sign the Separation Agreement. **If you decide not to sign the Separation Agreement, you will not receive the incentive pay** but will otherwise be treated as a retiree.

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If I participate in the program will I still be eligible for the regular retiree benefits like email, parking, Forsyth Library use?

Yes. Individuals who successfully complete the retirement process whether or not they are part of the Voluntary Separation Incentive Program are eligible for a variety of FHSU Retiree benefits. A complete list can be found on the [FHSU Retiree Benefits](#).

If I am selected to take part in the program when do I finish my teaching responsibilities?

Selected individuals will be expected to complete instructional activities through the end of the Spring 2022 semester.

Can I direct the lump sum and/or my leave payouts into a tax-deferred retirement plan?

You can elect to direct some of your sick and/or annual leave payout into a voluntary retirement plan. The VSIP lump sum payment amount **will not** be included in the calculation of mandatory retirement contributions and will not be included to calculate the maximum deferral for voluntary retirement plan contributions.
