

LAYOFF GUIDELINES and INFORMATION

SUGGESTIONS FOR LAYOFF PROCESS AND NOTIFICATION

- This is an emotional time—be prepared. Before notifying the employee of the layoff, you may want to call the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at (800) 523-5668 and ask for a Supervisor Consultation (*see brochure in front pocket of packet*) on how to deal with the notification process and employees venting strong emotions.
- Choose a time at the end of the day and a private place to notify the employee of the layoff.
- Be professional and supportive of the decision to layoff the employee. Avoid blaming others for the layoff decision.
- Avoid blanket promises or guarantees of any kind, such as "No additional employees will be laid off after this round of layoffs."
- Avoid statements that are discriminatory (based on age, sex, race, or other protected status).
- Most people go through a typical grieving process: denial, shock, pleading, anger and finally, acceptance. Allow the employee to vent their feelings.

ADVICE TO OFFER LAID-OFF EMPLOYEES

- Begin the job search process immediately (refer employee to **Employee Layoff Packet** for job search information).

QUESTIONS FROM THE MEDIA REGARDING LAYOFFS

- Media questions should be referred to the Department Head or to the Executive's Office.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH REMAINING EMPLOYEES

- Break down barriers to open communication with employees. Disconnect the voice mail or e-mail. Walk around and communicate with employees. Put a stop to rumors and gossip by being open, accessible and honest.
- Advise employees that services are available through the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if they would like to discuss their feelings about the layoffs.
- Try to get back to normal operations; don't let fear and gossip about the layoffs take over work hours.
- Avoid statements to remaining employees that are contractual in nature, such as "You'll have a job here until you retire."
- Recognize that morale cannot be turned around overnight. Creating a positive environment often requires time for employees to redevelop trust in the organization.

Following are questions you may be asked by employees who are being laid-off. Listed after each question are things to think about when responding to questions to ensure responses are consistent and are not discriminatory.

Why am I the one who is being let go?

- Layoffs are by position. Functions are reviewed and determinations are made after that review as to what program areas can be reduced or eliminated.
- Remember to keep in mind that layoffs are determined by organizational need and are not based on an employee's age, sex, race, or other protected status.

How and why was the decision to reduce the workforce reached?

- County budgetary constraints were the driving force. Your particular position was designated because _____ .

*What are my **bumping rights**?*

- Refer the employee to Article V of the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement. A copy is enclosed in your packet and attached to their notification letter.

*What are my **recall rights**?*

- Refer the employee to Article V of the Master Collective Bargaining Agreement. A copy is enclosed in your packet and attached to their notification letter.

Is this layoff related to some performance issue of mine?

- Layoffs are by position and the functions associated with that position.

What kind of references will you provide me?

- Refer to the employee's most recent performance review and say that, if contacted for a reference, your responses would probably be similar to comments on the performance review.

*What kind of **job training** is available to me?*

- Refer employee to **Employee Layoff Packet**.

*Will I get time off to go to **job search workshops**, and will I be paid for the time I spend attending those workshops?*

- The County will be flexible in allowing laid-off employees to attend job search workshops and in paying for work time spent attending those workshops. Employees should consult with their supervisor and make arrangements well in advance to attend workshops.
- Refer employee to **Employee Layoff Packet**.

*Where can I find help with **money management**?*

- Refer employee to **Employee Layoff Packet**.

*What kind of **unemployment benefits** am I eligible for?*

- Refer employee to **Employee Layoff Packet**.

*Is there any way I can **continue my medical, dental, and vision benefits** after I leave County employment?*

- A layoff is a qualifying event, under COBRA, for continuation of medical, dental, and vision benefits on a **self-pay** basis.
- Refer employee to **Employee Layoff Packet**.

*Are any **counseling services** available to help me and my family cope with this layoff?*

- The County is providing access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for three months after the employee's last day of employment.
- Refer employee to **Employee Layoff Packet**.