

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges 2025 Faculty Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan

INTRODUCTION

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) is pleased to present the **2025 Faculty Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan** (the “Plan” or the “VSIP”) to eligible IECC faculty bargaining unit members of the IECC Education Association (the “IECCEA” or the “Faculty Association”). The purpose of the Plan is to align IECC’s programs with the community’s educational interests and support a venture of financial savings by reducing IECC’s workforce through voluntary separations while minimizing the potential or scope of future reductions-in-force.

This document outlines the terms of the Plan and explains one’s rights and benefits as it relates to the plan. The Plan will terminate when all separation incentive benefits described herein have been provided.

THE PROGRAM IS VOLUNTARY

Participation of eligible faculty members in the Plan is entirely voluntary. The decision to participate in this Plan is at the sole discretion of the eligible faculty member. This Plan does not provide any right to future employment or alter the terms and conditions of employment, except if the faculty member elects to voluntarily separate his/her employment with IECC. The voluntary separation of employment will be effective on the agreed upon “voluntary separation date,” as defined below. When the faculty member has signed and not revoked the attached Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement within the seven-day revocation window.

ELIGIBLE FACULTY

To be an eligible participant for this Plan shall be contingent upon the following criteria:

- A faculty member must be a current **full-time faculty bargaining unit member** of the IECC Education Association at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges
- A faculty member must be at least **50 years old**
- A faculty member must have at least **10 years of total teaching or work related experience**. See attached experience chart. A Faculty member’s total experience includes all higher education teaching at IECC (Seniority is determined as set forth in the Illinois Public Community Colleges Act), and higher education teaching elsewhere, and K-12 teaching and all related work experience.
- The definition of total experience used in this plan is intended only for the purposes of this plan. By signing this agreement neither the Association nor IECC

are admitting to any specific interpretation of seniority outside this agreement or conceding their respective positions on the interpretation of the “seniority” provisions of the Illinois Public Community College Act or how seniority is interpreted and applied with regards to the collective bargaining agreement.

- A faculty member must not be in the process of being involuntarily terminated for just cause.
 - A faculty member must have not submitted a letter of resignation or retirement.
-

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

If a faculty member meets the eligibility criteria and wishes to participate, s/he must complete the attached application form (Attachment A) with a live signature and return it to **Andrea McDowell** at mcdowella4@iecc.edu during the application period. Email submission of the application is required.

- **Application Period:** The application period begins on - **March 28, 2025** and ends at 4:00 PM on **April 15, 2025**. Eligible faculty electing to participate in the Plan will submit his/her application in accordance to his/her group as identified on page 3. Applicant submissions will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis within each group's designated submission window.
 - **Group I (faculty with 21 - 30+ years Total Experience) March 28 – March 31**
 - **Group II (faculty with 16 - 20 years Total Experience) April 1 – April 7**
 - **Group III (faculty with 10 – 15 years Total Experience) April 8 – April 15**

A decision and notification to faculty on the application will be made by IECC within 24 hours after the application window closes for the applicant's designated group.

Applications received after the April 15, 2025 deadline will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- IECC will review and approve all applications of the applicants who meet the eligibility criteria set forth contingent on availability of funds set aside for this program. If for some reason IECC is unable to approve a faculty member's application, IECC will return the application and all related materials and notify the faculty member of the denial with a written reason for the denial. No adverse action will be taken against a faculty member whose application is not accepted.

- After acceptance of the faculty member's application, IECC will confirm the preferred **voluntary separation date**, which must fall between **May 8, 2025** and **July 31, 2025**.
- Teaching in the 2025 summer session does not prevent the faculty member from being eligible for this program.

After the voluntary separation date is established, IECC will provide him/her with a Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement (Attachment B) for his/her review and consideration. The faculty member will submit his/her signed Separation and Release Agreement on the separation date.

SEPARATION INCENTIVE BENEFIT

Eligible faculty who elect to participate in the "VSIP" and submit the Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement shall receive the following incentive compensation benefits:

1. Health Insurance:

IECC will pay the lump sum compensation of \$18,000 before taxes and withholdings, for the purposes of obtaining (healthcare) insurance/s through:

- The State Universities Retirement System (SURS) for those faculty members who meet the minimum retirement vesting requirement with SURS of five years of service for Tier I or 10 years of service for Tier II, are eligible to participate in the State of Illinois Group Insurance Program at the time of retirement, if they choose to receive a monthly retirement benefit; or
- Obtain coverage through the Affordable Healthcare Act, based on a life-changing event, if the faculty member does not seek to retire under SURS; or
- Elect COBRA healthcare insurance through IECC, if the faculty member elects to continue health insurance coverage with IECC. The faculty member can obtain COBRA healthcare insurance coverage for eighteen (18) months; or
- Elect to use the compensation in whatever manner is determined by the faculty member to meet his/her needs medically or otherwise.

2. Lump Sum Payment:

IECC shall pay the following lump sums, minus state and federal taxes and withholdings, determined by the eligible faculty member's years of total experience as prescribed on page one (1) of the Plan. (Please see the attached chart of each group's total experience and placement.)

<u>Group</u>	<u>Years of Total Experience</u>
I	21-30+ Years of Total Experience \$50,000
II	16-20 Years of Total Experience \$35,000
III	10-15 Years of Total Experience \$25,000

All of the above lump sum payments are gross payments. All legally required taxes, withholdings, and employee requested deductions (e.g., 403B, etc.) will be deducted and paid in accordance with state and federal laws by direct deposit to the faculty member's indicated financial institution or by paper check for those faculty who have not elected direct deposit arrangements with IECC.

The above payments will be made approximately twenty-one (21) days after the designated voluntary separation date, and only after the seven-day revocation period of the signed and dated Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement.

3. Reporting to SURS:

Upon a faculty member's separation of employment, reduction-in-force, voluntary or retirement, IECC shall report to SURS, the final creditable earnings of the faculty member, and the nature of the separation of employment from IECC. IECC shall also report to SURS all unused and unpaid sick leave days accrued during his/her tenure that was not used prior to the voluntary separation date. IECC shall provide a copy of this information to the faculty member with his/her last payroll paycheck.

4. POSITIVE LETTER OF REFERENCE:

A positive letter of reference from IECC ("letter") will be drafted and provided by the IECCEA as one of the documents of the plan and (upon review by IECC) included in your official personnel file.

5. RE-EMPLOYMENT AFTER TWO YEARS OF VOLUNTARY SEPARATION FROM IECC

A faculty member may re-apply for employment with IECC and/or accept future employment, if offered, after two (2) academic years of the voluntary separation

provided s/he adheres to provisions of the statutes of Illinois, SURS and any other governmental agency that is applicable.

VOLUNTARY SEPARATION AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

To receive the separation incentive benefits described above, the faculty member must:

1. Submit a signed application form (Attachment A) via email according to the schedule on page 2.
2. Sign and email the Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement (Attachment B) to Andrea McDowell at mcdowella4@iecc.edu no earlier than the designated voluntary separation date.
3. The faculty member may revoke his/her signed Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement within seven **(7) days** of signing it. To revoke, the faculty member must email notice to **Mrs. Andrea McDowell** at mcdowella4@iecc.edu of his/her rescission of the Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement. If the faculty member revokes the Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement, the faculty member shall not receive any of the above-described compensation benefits of the Plan and will retain their position as faculty.

A faculty member signing the Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement indicates his/her agreement to voluntarily separate from IECC employment on the voluntary separation date in exchange for the benefits described above.

IMPORTANT DETAILS

- **Recommendation of Attorney Review:** You are encouraged to consult both SURS and a personal attorney, at your own expense, to review the Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement.
- **Plan Administration:** Questions about the Plan should be directed to **Andrea McDowell** at mcdowella4@iecc.edu or **(618) 879-9421**. The IECC Chancellor will have final authority for interpreting and applying the terms of this Plan.

AMENDMENT/TERMINATION

No IECC representative has the authority to make verbal or written promises or representations that are contrary to the terms of this Plan. No eligible faculty member

has a vested right to the benefits under this Plan until they have executed the Voluntary Separation and Release Agreement and fulfilled all conditions outlined herein.

APPLICABLE LAW

This Plan shall be governed by the laws of the State of Illinois. IECC will submit this plan and agreement to the State University Retirement System (SURS) for its comment and review.

SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Plan is declared unlawful or unenforceable or not in accordance with applicable statutes or ordinances, all other provisions of the Plan shall remain in full force and effect.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Faculty Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan is designed to offer eligible IECC faculty members an opportunity to transition to retirement while supporting IECC's long-term financial health. We appreciate your service to IECC and your thoughtful consideration of this opportunity. Our goal is to provide a pathway forward that reflects our deep respect and gratitude for the dedication, hard work, and positive impact each faculty member has had on our institution and the communities we serve.

In closing, the 2025 Faculty Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan (VSIP) represents IECC's sincere effort to honor and support our valued faculty during this time of transition. IECC remains committed to ensuring that all transitions are handled with dignity, fairness, and transparency. We thank you for your years of service, your commitment to student success, and the lasting contributions you have made to the IECC community.