

Frequently Asked Questions

Voluntary Early Retirement Program (2027 VERP) for Non-Represented Employees

As announced on October 21, 2026, the University of Pittsburgh and the Medical and Health Sciences Foundation (together, the University) has taken action to approve and adopt the 2027 Voluntary Early Retirement Program (2027 VERP) for eligible non-represented employees. This document serves as the terms and provisions of the 2027 VERP for eligible non-represented employees. Some key features of the 2027 VERP are also provided under the formal legal documents for one or more employee benefit plans of the University. If there are conflicts between this FAQ and the Retirement and Health and Welfare Plan Documents or the incentive payment/release agreements, the Plan Documents and legal agreements control.

Eligibility

What are the eligibility requirements for the 2027 VERP?

There is both an age and service requirement. Employees must meet both the age and the service requirements to be eligible:

- **Age requirement:** The employee must be a minimum of 57 years of age as of May 14, 2027. This means they have a birthday on or before May 14, 1970.
- **Service requirements:** The employee must be employed in an eligible job type as of May 14, 2027 **and** have been continuously employed at the University in an eligible job type for the 10 years immediately prior to May 14, 2027.

The University's official records will be used to determine length and continuity of service and these records will control.

What are the Eligible job types?

The eligible job types are:

- Full-time regular non-represented staff
- Part-time regular non-represented staff hired prior to July 1, 2004
- Full-time regular non-represented faculty (excluding dually-appointed University of Pittsburgh Physicians (UPP) employees)
- Part-time regular non-represented faculty if tenured or tenure stream and no less than 50% effort
- Full-time and part-time regular executive
- Full-time regular non-represented research associate

Temporary service and other non-retiree eligible jobs do not count towards credited service. Work for other employers, even those that operate closely with the University (such as the UPMC entities), will not count as unbroken or continuous service for the University unless it is officially documented in university records as an employer-initiated reorganization. Breaks in service may be treated differently under the provisions of the [Reemployment after Separation from the University](#) section of the staff handbook.

Is there a limit on the number of eligible employees who can take the 2027 VERP?

Generally, no. However, the University reserves the right to limit faculty and staff participation in the 2027 VERP as necessary to protect institutional and programmatic accreditation. This means that the University may deny an eligible faculty or staff member's election to participate in the 2027 VERP if the reduced faculty and staff levels would adversely affect accreditation (such as by triggering any monitoring, corrective action, reporting, administrative review, sanction, non-compliance, adverse action status or the like).

Who is not eligible for the 2027 VERP?

Anyone who does not meet the program criteria outlined is not eligible for the 2027 VERP.

I am a union-represented employee, am I eligible for the 2027 VERP?

Union-represented employees (represented staff and represented faculty) should check with their union representative regarding participation in the 2027 VERP.

Am I eligible for the 2027 VERP if I am on Long-term Disability (LTD)?

No. While LTD participants may remain on active medical coverage, their employment is terminated once they receive benefits under LTD.

I meet the eligibility requirements, but I am also on an approved leave of absence. Am I able to elect to participate in the 2027 VERP?

Yes. The 2027 VERP is available for eligible employees who are not actively at work due to an authorized leave of absence. Individuals on Long Term Disability are not eligible for the 2027 VERP.

Will all campuses, schools and departments at the University participate in the 2027 VERP?

Yes, all campuses, schools and departments will participate. Campuses, schools and departments are not able to opt-out of the 2027 VERP.

I was recently told my position is being eliminated and my assignment will end before May 14, 2027. Do I qualify for the 2027 VERP if I meet the age and service requirements?

No, employees whose assignments will end prior to May 14, 2027 are not eligible for the 2027 VERP.

If I have already submitted my resignation or retirement notice for a date before or after May 14, 2027, can I rescind that and participate in the VERP instead?

Generally, yes. To do so, the employee must submit in writing to their department that they wish to rescind their resignation or retirement, what that resignation or retirement date was, and their intention to take the 2027 VERP. This must be submitted by the 2027 VERP election deadline (which will occur in January 2027) or prior to their intended retirement date, whichever is sooner. The employee will still be required to complete the election form and other legal documents related to the 2027 VERP, and must work until the 2027 VERP retirement date.

I am eligible, but do not wish to take the 2027 VERP. Do I still need to complete an election form?

Yes, the University requires all eligible employees to make an election, even if they do not wish to participate.

I may want to wait until later than May 14, 2027 to retire. Would I still be eligible for the 2027 VERP if I give the University an election form by January 2027?

No. If an employee would like to take advantage of the enhanced benefits of the 2027 VERP, they must retire on the specified 2027 VERP retirement date. It is entirely up to the employee to decide to wait to retire at a later date. If they retire after the outlined in this document, they will not be eligible for the enhanced benefits of the 2027 VERP.

I have worked at the University for more than ten years altogether. However, I worked at the University for four years before leaving the University voluntarily for a few years. Later I came back to the University and have been working continuously for the last eight years. Do I have enough years of service to be eligible for the 2027 VERP?

No. In this example, the employee is not eligible to participate in the 2027 VERP because they will not have at least 10 consecutive years of continuous service at the University as of May 14, 2027. If an employee had any type of a break in service, excluding that which may fall under the staff reemployment policy in the staff handbook, and worked less than 10 years since that break in service, they are not eligible. Temporary service and other non-retiree eligible jobs do not count towards credited service. The University's official records will be used to determine unbroken or continuous service and will control. Work for other employers, even those that operate closely with the University (such as the UPMC entities), will not count as unbroken or continuous service for the University unless it is officially documented in university records as an employer-initiated reorganization.

Am I able to retire before the outlined retirement dates, and still remain eligible for the 2027 VERP?

No. If an employee would like to take advantage of the enhanced benefits of the 2027 VERP, they must retire on the VERP retirement date.

Provisions of the 2027 VERP

What are the 2027 VERP incentives?

Eligible employees who complete all requirements of the 2027 VERP will receive:

- **Incentive Payment:** A lump sum incentive payment equal to 50% of their annual University base pay, less required tax withholdings. It will be paid in the manner as explained in this FAQ and subsequent retirement incentive agreement. Please note that this payment does not include overtime, supplemental pay or any other earnings.
- **Earlier access to retirement benefits:** Employees and their eligible spouses/domestic partners and dependent children may be eligible for the [retiree medical benefits](#) prior to when they would normally be eligible under the standard eligibility provisions of the retiree plan. This includes cost-share medical benefits for retirees under the age of 65 and [Defined Dollar Benefit \(DDB\) credits](#) for retirees over the age of 65. Details of the retiree plans and costs are available on the [Office of Human Resources Website](#).

- **Enhanced benefit for spouse/domestic partners:** If the retiree is under 65, and the spouse/domestic partner is under the age of 62, the spouse/domestic partner will qualify for the medical plan premium cost-share until the retiree reaches 65. You can find the [premium costs for FY 2026/2027](#) on the Office of Human Resources website. Additional information about benefit premiums can be found in the VERP Coverage Scenarios outlined in this document.

How is the incentive payment calculated?

For eligible employees paid on a monthly basis, base pay is defined as the monthly salary in the payroll system as of May 14, 2027. For faculty paid on an 8-month contract, base salary is defined as the monthly salary in the payroll system as of April 30, 2027. For staff paid on a biweekly basis, base pay is defined as the hourly rate as of May 14, 2027. Overtime is excluded from this calculation.

Note: If the eligible employee is less than a 12-month staff, their 6-month lump sum payment will be based on their distributed monthly salary as of May 14, 2027.

- **Example, salaried faculty, staff, executive or research associate:**

Monthly base salary: \$5,000
 x 6 months
 \$30,000 payment — less required tax withholdings

- **Example, hourly staff**

Biweekly hourly rate: \$20
 x (100% x 975*)
 \$19,500 payment — less required tax withholdings

* If the biweekly employee is on a standard 40-hour schedule, the hourly rate would be multiplied by 1040.

- **Example, 50% effort hourly staff:**

Biweekly hourly rate: \$20.00
 x (50% x 975)
 \$9,750 payment — less required tax withholdings

Will there be any deductions taken from my incentive payment for participating in 2027 VERP?

Yes. All applicable federal, state, and local taxes and deductions will be deducted from the incentive payment. The federal tax withholding rate will be 22%. This payment will not have any deferrals for retirement savings or matching University contributions to any retirement plan. There are no deductions taken for future benefits coverage.

If I elect to participate in the 2027 VERP, but pass away before my incentive payment is made, will my survivors get this payment?

Yes. The employee's estate will receive the incentive payment if they pass away after their retirement date and before the payment is made. However, if they pass away before they retire, the payment will not be made as they would have passed away as an active employee and their estate would not be eligible for the payment. However, their beneficiary/estate will receive the proceeds from their active life insurance and any optional active life insurance they elected as an active employee.

Will my incentive payment be included in my final paycheck?

No. The lump-sum incentive payment will be issued separately. Monthly paid employees will receive the payment on June 30, 2027. Biweekly paid employees will receive the payment on June 25, 2027 (the second biweekly pay in June). It will be provided to the employee in the chosen pay method at the time of their retirement, including direct deposit. If the payment is sent through direct deposit, the employee will receive a paper pay statement delivered to the address on file at the time of retirement since they will no longer have access to online pay statements.

Payment for unused accrued sick and/or vacation time may be payable to eligible employees separate from the incentive payment. Refer to the question on unused sick and vacation time in this document for more information.

By what date will I need to make an election decision and what is the latest date I must retire to qualify for the 2027 VERP?

The University will send specific timing information and other documents to those who may be eligible for the 2027 VERP by late November 2026. As those documents will explain, eligible employees who want to take the 2027 VERP will need to submit a signed election form in DocuSign by January 2027. The last day of employment with the University will be determined based on job type as shown below.

Job Type	Pay Year Type	Retirement Date
Faculty	8 month contract	4/30/2027
Faculty	9, 10 and 12 month contract	5/15/2027
Staff, Executive, and Research Associate	Any	5/14/2027
Falk School Faculty and Staff	Any	6/15/2027

Will this type of voluntary program be offered to employees again at a later date?

There are no plans to offer any additional programs at this time.

Documentation Requirement

Besides the election form, is there any other documentation that will need to be signed?

Yes; in addition to the election form that is due by January 2027, participating employees will be required to sign a retirement incentive agreement containing a release of claims. Those employees who may be eligible for the 2027 VERP will receive a sample of this agreement with the additional information that is emailed to their University of Pittsburgh email address in November 2026. The agreement (with release) is the legal document that the employee signs to agree to the terms of the 2027 VERP, and it is executed in two parts. The first part must be signed and received by the University in April 2027. The second part will be signed on or promptly after the retirement date.

Am I able to change my mind about retiring?

After signing and submitting the retirement incentive agreement with release of claims ("Release of Claims"), eligible employees will have seven (7) calendar days from the date they signed the retirement incentive agreement to change their mind. An employee can change their mind by submitting written notice to the University that overrides their earlier signed Release of Claims. Only one change is permitted and will only be valid if received by the University within the stated seven (7) day period. If the employee does not change their mind or submit written notice about changing their mind within the seven (7) day period, their decision about whether to retire will be binding and, as appropriate, the University will begin to take action to arrange for their retirement, which will be considered official based on retirement dates based on job types as outlined in this document.

Retiree Benefit Coverage and Payouts

If I take retiree medical coverage from the University, what will this mean for any right to COBRA continuation coverage that I may have?

Retiree medical coverage from the University is provided in lieu of COBRA continuation coverage. For those who begin retiree medical coverage, COBRA continuation coverage is available but might not be necessary at any time in the future. It will be up to the employee to decide whether COBRA continuation coverage will be needed.

Will medical coverage be provided to my spouse/domestic partner? What about my children?

Yes, eligible spouse/domestic partners and dependent children will qualify for continued medical coverage. Please see the payment schedules in the tables that follow. You can find the [premium costs for FY 2026/2027](#) on the Office of Human Resources website.

VERP Coverage Scenarios — At Retirement (Retiree Age 57–64)

Eligible Spouse/Partner on coverage as of the retirement date	Dependent Child(ren)* on coverage as of the retirement date	Retiree Between 57-64
No	No	Retiree: Individual Pre-65 plan at cost share
No	Yes	Retiree & Dependent Child(ren): Parent/Child(ren) Pre-65 plan at cost share
Yes (Spouse Under Age 62)	No	Retiree: Two Adult Pre-65 plan at cost share Spouse/Partner: Under Retiree's Two Adult plan at cost share
Yes (Spouse Under Age 62)	Yes	Retiree: Family Pre-65 plan at cost share Spouse/Partner & Child(ren): Under Retiree's Family plan at cost share
Yes (Spouse between 62-65)	No	Retiree: Two Adult Pre-65 plan at cost share Spouse/Partner: Under Retiree's Two Adult plan at cost share
Yes (Spouse between 62-65)	Yes	Retiree: Family Pre-65 plan at cost share Spouse/Partner & Child(ren): Under Retiree's Family plan at cost share
Yes (Age 65 and over)	No	Retiree: Individual Pre-65 plan at cost share Spouse/Partner: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB
Yes (Age 65 and over)	Yes	Retiree & Child(ren): Parent/Child(ren) Pre-65 plan at cost share Spouse/Partner: Post-65 plan with DDB

VERP Coverage Scenarios — Retiree At Age 65 and Beyond

Eligible Spouse/Partner on coverage as of the retirement date	Dependent Child(ren)* on coverage as of the retirement date	Retiree 65 and Over
No	No	Retiree: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB
No	Yes	Retiree: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB Dependent Child(ren): Individual Pre-65 plan at full cost
Yes (Spouse Under Age 62)	No	Retiree: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB Spouse/Partner: Individual Pre-65 plan at full cost
Yes (Spouse Under Age 62)	Yes	Retiree: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB Spouse/Partner & Child(ren): Parent/Child(ren) Pre-65 plan at full cost
Yes (Spouse between 62-65)	No	Retiree: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB Spouse/Partner: Individual Pre-65 plan at cost share
Yes (Spouse between 62-65)	Yes	Retiree: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB Spouse/Partner & Child(ren): Parent/Child(ren) Pre-65 plan at cost share
Yes (Age 65 and over)	No	Retiree: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB Spouse/Partner: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB
Yes (Age 65 and over)	Yes	Retiree: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB Spouse/Partner: Individual Post-65 plan with DDB Dependent Child(ren): Individual Pre-65 plan at full cost

I have a disabled dependent children over the age of 26, are they eligible to continue medical coverage after my retirement date?

Yes. Disabled dependents are eligible for the University cost-share of coverage through the end of the month in which the retiree or spouse/domestic partner turns age 65, whichever occurs later. After that date, disabled dependents may continue University coverage but will be responsible for the full cost of coverage.

I understand that the Health and Welfare benefits under the 2027 VERP can cover a spouse or domestic partner. What if I marry after I retire?

An eligible spouse is the person to whom the employee is married at the date of retirement. This means that if the employee marries or remarries after retirement, that spouse is not covered by the program.

An eligible domestic partner is the person for whom an approved affidavit is on record at the University as the partner of record at the time of retirement. As above, the same concept applies, if the employee registers a domestic partner after they retire, that person is not covered by the program.

What happens to my spouse/domestic partners benefits if I precede them in death?

The eligible spouse/domestic partner of a deceased retiree will have continuation of coverage for three months following the end of the month in which the retiree dies. Additional details can be found on the [Office of Human Resources website](#).

My eligible dependents and/or I are currently utilizing the University's tuition remission/benefit programs. Will our eligibility continue as of my retirement date?

Yes. Eligible University retirees (including those who elect the 2027 VERP) and their eligible spouses/domestic partners and dependent children may continue to access tuition benefits, whether they are currently using the benefit or plan to use it in the future, in accordance with the applicable University policy in place at the time of retirement. Details of the tuition policy upon separation may be found under University policies [ER 05 Effect of Separation on Eligibility for Staff Scholarship Benefits](#) and [AC 02 Effect of Separation on Eligibility for Faculty Scholarship Benefits](#).

I am an eligible staff employee and choose to retire under the 2027 VERP, what will happen to any accrued unused sick time, vacation time, or personal time that I may have at my retirement date?

Staff members may receive payment for unused sick time only if certain age and service criteria are fulfilled. If a staff member has reached age 60 or older and has a minimum of 10 years of service, or has reached age 57 or older and has a minimum of 25 years of service, they will be eligible for the payment. The payment will be equal to 1) the accumulated unused sick time multiplied by one-half of the final base pay daily rate, or 2) \$2,500, whichever is less. For additional information, please review the [Termination Date section of the Staff Handbook](#).

When a staff member retires from the University, vacation and sick pay accruals will be prorated for the pay period in which the staff member terminates in accordance with their official date of termination.

Payment for unused accrued sick time and unused accrued vacation time will be issued on May 31, 2027, for monthly employees and May 28, 2027, for biweekly employees.

Personal time is not payable as a cash benefit. Any remaining personal time upon retirement will be lost.

If I am an eligible executive employee and choose to retire under the 2027 VERP, what will happen to unused vacation time, or personal time that I may have at my retirement date?

Executives track vacation time. Any unused vacation time as of the retirement date will be paid out and must be submitted by the department for payment. At retirement, a one-time Sick Time payment of \$2,500 will be provided if the Executive is 60 years or older with 10 years of completed service. Personal time is not payable as a cash benefit. Any remaining personal time upon retirement will be lost.

I am a less than annual faculty member, and my pay is spread over 12 months. How will I be paid my distributed salary?

Any distributed salary owed will be paid in the final paycheck.

Will I receive retiree medical benefits after the age of 65?

Upon reaching age 65, retirees become eligible for several University-sponsored post-65 programs. The change occurs because of the integration with Medicare programs. Retirees are provided Defined Dollar Benefit (DDB) credits to help pay for the cost of this coverage. Details about the DDB program can be found on the [Office of Human Resources](#) website.

Retirement Savings under the Defined Contribution Plan

How do I manage my savings under the Defined Contribution Plan upon retirement?

Most employees are saving for retirement under the [Defined Contribution Plan](#), also commonly known as the 403(b) plan. The University may also have matched retirement savings plan contributions in a 401(a) plan. Some members may also participate in the voluntary 457(b) plan. **An individual cannot take a distribution from these plans until they are age 59.5 without penalty in accordance with the University's plan document.** TIAA financial consultants are available at no cost to employees/retirees. They can help determine and manage retirement income strategies. To schedule an in-person or virtual appointment with a financial consultant, visit tiaa.org/schedulenow-pitt or call 800-732-8353.

Noncontributory Defined Benefit Pension Plan

I participated in the “pension plan” and was not involved with the matching retirement savings program. What do I need to do to determine my monthly benefit?

Some employees participated in the [Noncontributory Defined Benefit Pension Plan](#). The retirement benefit received under this Plan is determined by a set formula that takes into account salary, years of participation in the Pension Plan, and age at retirement. Questions about the pension plan and determining the monthly benefit should be directed to the Pension Administration Center by calling 866-283-0208.

Next Steps: 2027 VERP

What is the general timeline for the 2027 VERP?

Date	Milestone
Late November 2026	Distribution of enrollment packets to eligible non-represented employees via University email
January 2027	Submit an Election Form
March 2027	University will send/provide those who elected to participate in the 2027 VERP a retirement incentive agreement with release of claims document
April 2027	Sign and submit retirement incentive agreement (with release of claims)
April – May 2027	Retirement date: Faculty on an 8-month contract: 4/30/27 Faculty on a 9, 10, and 12 month contract: 5/15/2027 Falk School Faculty and Staff: 6/15/2027 Staff, Executives and Research Associates: 5/14/2027
June 2027	Incentive Payment

What are my next steps if I want to participate in the voluntary 2027 VERP?

Eligible employees should review the materials they receive, including the election form. At their discretion, the employee may want to contact an attorney, financial planner, tax advisor, or any other professional for advice. By January 2027, they will need to sign, date, and submit the “University of Pittsburgh 2027 Voluntary Early Retirement Program Election Form” via DocuSign, even if they choose not to participate. Paper forms will not be accepted.

While employees have until January 2027 to submit the election form, it is recommended that they provide their department with as much advance notice as possible of their intent to retire.

To help employees make an informed decision and prepare for the transition, please consider the following items before and after submitting the election form:

1. Review a recording of the [Retiree Information Sessions](#) for information about retiree benefits.
2. Sign up and attend a live webinar hosted by the Office of Human Resources that will explain the 2027 VERP and the benefits available to employees as a retiree. This session will be available to all eligible employees after eligibility packets are sent out.
3. Sign up and attend an in-person or virtual [counseling session](#) with a TIAA financial consultant.
4. Involve any eligible spouse/domestic partner in the decision-making process; they are welcome to attend any of the sessions conducted by the University or TIAA financial consultants.

When will the University conduct live webinars to explain the 2027 VERP and retirement benefits?

A live webinar will take place after 2027 VERP documents are emailed to eligible employees. Eligible employees will be notified by email to register for the webinar. A recording of the session will be available after the webinar has taken place.

After I elect to retire, what happens?

Upon retirement, retirees will receive:

- A retiree benefits enrollment packet from UPMC Benefit Management Services (BMS) will be sent up to 60 days prior to the retirement date, depending on when the department processes the employee's retirement. The package will include information about enrolling in retiree medical, dental, and vision coverage.
- There will be no gap in coverage when transitioning from active employee coverage to retiree coverage; however, enrollment is not automatic, and action is required to elect coverage. If the employee and/or their eligible spouse or domestic partner are enrolling in post-65 coverage, separate enrollment packets will be provided for each individual.
- Within 30 days of retirement, information from Securian Financial will be sent regarding the portability of optional term life insurance coverage as well as conversion of basic life coverage to a whole life policy. Employees may convert the difference between their \$15,000 in retiree life coverage and their active basic life insurance coverage.

What happens to my employment after I retire?

Retirees are no longer employed by the University and give up any and all opportunities to apply for reemployment, even in a temporary capacity. The only exception applies to Faculty as stated in [Chapter 2, Section 3.5c](#) of the University bylaws.

A few months after I retire, I may decide to move to another state. Will I be able to change my medical plan election?

Yes. Any time a retiree experiences a qualified life event, such as relocation, they are able to make a change in their elections. Additionally, all retirees will be provided with an annual enrollment that will allow them to make a change.

Is there a claims and appeals process that must be followed if I want to challenge or dispute any aspect of my eligibility for, or payments and benefits under, the 2027 VERP?

Yes; the University has established claims and appeals procedures that must be followed to pursue, challenge, or dispute any aspect of the 2027 VERP. Any claims associated with this 2027 VERP must be initiated within no more than 18 months from the date on which such claim first arises. More information on the claims and appeals procedures is available from the Office of Human Resources by submitting an online inquiry.

The University has the authority to interpret and construe the terms, conditions and provisions of the 2027 VERP and to implement rules and procedures as may be necessary and appropriate. The University has always had, and reserves, the right to amend, modify or terminate its employee benefit programs (including this 2027 VERP) at any time and for any reason. Nothing in the descriptions and explanations contained in this document can or should be used in any way to diminish or alter the University's ability to make necessary and appropriate future changes to the 2027 VERP. In the unlikely event that a provision of the 2027 VERP is found to be legally ineffective, the other provisions hereof shall remain in force. The 2027 VERP shall be administered in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania which shall control for all purposes.