



2024 Voluntary Retirement & Separation Incentives Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

For Eligible Full-Time Tenured or Tenure Track Teaching Faculty

Monroe Community College is successful because of its people—people like you who believe in and live the mission of transforming lives and communities by fostering the success of diverse students. We know you are one of the reasons for our success, and we appreciate your dedication to our institution. As with many higher education institutions across the country, we continue to face challenges that force us to explore new capacity-building strategies to ensure the long-term fiscal health of MCC.

As a result, there has been a multi-phased process to improve the fiscal health of the College. In this next phase, the College will offer Voluntary Retirement and Separation Incentive Plans (VRIP and VSIP, respectively). These include a VRIP (non-phased), a VRIP (phased) and a VSIP (non-phased) to eligible full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty. These incentives have been presented to the Faculty Resources Committee (FRC), which comprises representatives of the MCC Faculty Association (FA) Union and the Faculty Senate, and have been approved by the College President and the Board of Trustees.

The purpose of this document is to provide answers to addressed anticipated questions, thus providing clarity regarding these voluntary retirement and separation incentive plans. In addition to this document, employees can reference the Voluntary Retirement & Separation Incentive Comparison table located within the online tile for more information. This tile can be found on [myMCC](#). Go to: Employee Home -> Human Resources -> 2024 VRIP/VSIP Incentives.

1. What is VRIP (Non-Phased), VRIP (Phased) and VSIP (Non-Phased)?

- **VRIP non-phased for retirement eligible full-time teaching faculty**
 - **Option A:** Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan (VRIP) non-phased is being offered to eligible full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty who work through the end of the Fall 2024 semester and who voluntarily retire effective December 31, 2024. This population would be eligible to receive salary continuation (incentive) through June 30, 2025 and also receive a one-time lump sum (incentive) equal to \$1,000 for each year of full-time, continuous, active service with MCC up to a maximum of 20 years. The one-time lump sum is payable in the Spring 2025 semester, on or by June 30, 2025. All other rules apply as outlined per Article 27 of the [Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement \(PDF\)](#) with respect to retirement.
 - **Option B:** Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan (VRIP) non-phased is being offered to eligible full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty who work through the full year, until the end of the Spring 2025 semester and who voluntarily retire effective June 30, 2025. This population would not be eligible for salary continuation but would be eligible to receive a one-time lump sum (incentive) equal to \$1,000 for each year of full-time, continuous, active service with MCC up to a maximum of 20 years. The one-time lump sum is payable the beginning of the Fall 2025 semester, on or by September 1, 2025. All other rules apply as outlined per Article 27 of the [Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement \(PDF\)](#) with respect to retirement.
- **VRIP phased for retirement eligible full-time teaching faculty:** Voluntary Retirement Incentive Plan (VRIP) phased is being offered to eligible full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty who, in exchange for their notice to retire and reduce their contact hours and corresponding base salary, will receive a one-time lump sum incentive. The lump sum incentive amount depends on the academic year the employee elects to voluntarily retire from the College. Specifically, those

who elect to retire in Year 2, or in academic year 2025-2026 with a retirement date of June 30, 2026, will be eligible for a one-time lump sum of \$15,000 (incentive). Those who elect to retire in Year 3, or in academic year 2026-2027, with a retirement date of June 30, 2027, will be eligible for a one-time lump sum of \$10,000 (incentive). All other rules associated with Phased Retirement apply as outlined in Article 27, Section E. However, once the application is approved, the employee will retain their current rank and tenure, as well as their basic due process protections under Article 7 through the date of retirement on a non-precedent setting basis, so long as they maintain an acceptable standard of performance throughout the phased period. Approved lump sum incentive will be payable following the employee's final payroll. All other rules apply as outlined per Article 27 of the [Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement \(PDF\)](#) with respect to retirement.

- **VSIP non-phased for non-retirement eligible full-time teaching faculty:** Voluntary Separation Incentive Plan (VSIP) non-phased is being offered to eligible full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty who elect to voluntarily resign from the College and agree to work through the full academic year 2024-2025. These faculty members would voluntarily resign effective June 30, 2025 and would be eligible to receive salary continuation (incentive) through the end of the Fall 2025 semester or through December 31, 2025. Effective July 1, 2025 these employees will be eligible to apply for COBRA.

2. Who are eligible for these incentive plans?

- Full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty may apply for either the VRIP (phased) or VRIP (non-phased) incentive plan as long as they are retirement eligible as outlined under Article 27 of the [Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement \(PDF\)](#).
- Full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty may apply to the VSIP plan as this is a voluntary separation of service incentive with no age and/or continuous years of service requirements.
- Other eligibility requirements do apply for each of the incentive plans. Please see #3 and #4 below for further details regarding eligibility.

3. What does “retirement eligible” mean?

- Retirement eligibility for full-time teaching faculty includes reaching the minimum retirement age of their retirement system (NYS or SUNY ORP) at the time of separation from service under the retirement incentive plan. Individuals electing to voluntarily retire must also meet the criteria outlined in Article 27 of the [Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement \(PDF\)](#). By meeting these criteria, employees will be eligible for retiree health benefits from the College.
- Eligible employees meeting the retirement age and vesting requirements of their retirement system may elect a service retirement from their system. For further information, you can contact your specific retirement systems for additional details.
- [SUNY Optional Retirement Program \(ORP\) \(https://www.suny.edu/retirement/orp/\)](https://www.suny.edu/retirement/orp/)
- [Financial investment company contact \(TIAA, Fidelity, Corebridge or VOYA\) \(https://www.suny.edu/retirement/orp-vendors/\)](https://www.suny.edu/retirement/orp-vendors/)
- [New York State Teachers' Retirement System \(https://www.nystrs.org/\)](https://www.nystrs.org/)
- [New York State & Local Retirement System \(ERS\) \(https://www.osc.ny.gov/retirement\)](https://www.osc.ny.gov/retirement/)
- Full-Time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty who do not meet the minimum age and/or full-time continuous years of service to retire from the College may elect the VSIP incentive plan and voluntarily resign/separate from the College.

4. **Besides age and years of service, what additional requirements determine if my application is approved?**
- Voluntary retirement/separation incentives will be available to eligible full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty in cases precluding the need to hire a full-time replacement to ensure continuity of students' learning experience—which includes, but is not limited to, academic program sustainability.
 - Eligible VSIP and VRIP applicants whose voluntary resignation or retirement would prove detrimental to the sustainability of academic programs and/or a department's capacity to oversee and provide discipline-specific program requirements or General Education courses or curricula may not be approved for a voluntary incentive.
 - Your division's Vice President (VP) will work with their Dean(s), Department Chairperson(s) and the AVP of Academic Affairs (as applicable) in making the decision to approve or not approve an incentive application.
5. **If I sign up for an incentive plan, can I return to the College as an adjunct faculty member?**
- Yes. Eligible employees whose application for an incentive is approved and they voluntarily separate from the College may be rehired as an adjunct with their rank intact, subject to position availability, and/or to other vacant part-time positions, such as tutors, at the discretion of the College.
6. **Why are non-teaching personnel not eligible for these plans?**
- Due to trends of declining FTE enrollment, we see opportunities to reduce the number of full-time teaching faculty. These offerings will enable the better utilization our full-time teaching population and reduce costs. Therefore, at this time, the College is only offering these incentives to eligible full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty.
7. **If I elect to apply and I am approved for an incentive plan, will I continue to receive my Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) or NYS pension contributions?**
- No. Only earned wages while actively working in your full-time position shall apply.
 - Payments made in anticipation of retirement or as an incentive to retire are considered severance and are not eligible for SUNY ORP or state pension contribution. SUNY ORP or NYS pension contributions will end upon commencement of salary continuation.
8. **If approved for VRIP or VRIP Phased, am I able to tax defer the lump sum incentive payment?**
- No. Based on current IRS rules, you are unable to tax defer the lump sum incentive payment to a 403(b) or 457 account as the monies are considered severance payments, as opposed to earned income.
9. **What will happen to my accrued sick time?**
- Your accrued sick time will be processed by the College based on the rules of your retirement system. For more information, you can contact your specific retirement systems. *See FAQ question #3 above for retirement system contact information.*
10. **Under any plan, including the Phased VRIP, can an employee still use their available sick time or will use of sick time impact their eligibility?**
- Sick time rules apply as they do for those in active status. Upon the effective date of the employee's retirement date or voluntary separation date, they will no longer be eligible to earn or utilize sick time.

- 11. Under any plan, including the Phased VRIP, is eligibility impacted if the employee is currently out on an approved leave or will eligibility be impacted if employee is placed on an approved leave in the future after being approved under a VSIP/VRIP?**
- If an eligible employee today is out on an approved leave and is interested in applying to a VSIP/VRIP, we would encourage them to apply, as their leave status would not be a factor in eligibility. Additionally, if an employee needs to go out on an approved leave after being approved for a VSIP/VRIP, their leave status would not be a factor in remaining eligible for the plan's incentive. However, as is required today, a medical certification to support an approved FMLA leave of absence is required.
- 12. If I am approved for an incentive plan, what would be my retirement or separation date from MCC?**
- VRIP (Option A) non-phased: Retirement date: December 31, 2024
 - VRIP (Option B) non-phased: Retirement date: June 30, 2025
 - VRIP Phased: Retirement date will be based on the eligible applicant's phased retirement date election. This date will either be June 30, 2026 (Year 2) or June 30, 2027 (Year 3).
 - VSIP: Voluntary Separation date: June 30, 2025
- 13. What will happen to my active employee benefits?**
- Employees approved for either the VRIP or VRIP Phased Incentive Plan will move to retiree health benefits upon their date of retirement.
 - Employees eligible for retiree health benefits may elect coverage other than through the College without losing their right to return with a qualifying event or during an Open Enrollment period.
 - Those who are Medicare eligible upon separation will be provided with information to enroll in Medicare.
 - Effective July 1, 2025 employees approved for the VSIP incentive plan will be eligible to apply for COBRA.
- 14. What does salary continuation mean?**
- If you are approved for a salary continuation incentive, you will continue to receive your base bi-weekly salary following either your voluntary separation or retirement date.
 - Your base salary will be dependent on your annual salary at the time of voluntary separation date or retirement date.
- 15. During salary continuation, will I be eligible to still receive the annual increase?**
- If you are approved for a salary continuation incentive, your base salary will be dependent on your annual salary at the time of voluntary separation date or retirement date.
 - As an Example: A voluntary resignation under VSIP is effective June 20th, 2025. Salary continuation after this effective date will be based on salary as of the resignation date. The employee will not receive an increase to salary continuation on September 1, 2025.
- 16. Is the application process first come, first served, with respect to approval?**
- These incentives **are not** being considered on a first come, first serve basis as we want eligible employees to have time to thoughtfully consider their options.
 - Eligible employees will have a minimum of 60 calendar days from the time these incentives are announced to apply for an incentive of their choosing.
 - The deadline to submit an application for consideration is August 16, 2024 (by 5:00 pm EST).
 - Employees who submit an application for consideration will be advised whether or not their application is approved on or before September 20, 2024.
- 17. Is there a specific number of volunteers that the College is seeking?**
- The College is seeking to achieve targeted cost savings under all three voluntary separation incentive options.

- 18. What are the desired cost saving that the College is looking to achieve by offering these incentives?**
- At this time, the College is seeking between \$3.1 and \$3.5 million in sustainable cost savings year over year as this will reduce our unsustainable reliance on the Fund Balance.
- 19. What if multiple full-time teaching faculty apply in a particular department, program or discipline?**
- In the event that multiple eligible employees from a particular department submit a VRIP or VSIP application, the review process would examine the impact of their collective departure on the College's ability to ensure academic program sustainability and overall continuity of the student learning experience. In circumstances where it is deemed detrimental to allow all applicants in a particular department to participate in an incentive plan, eligibility would be approved or denied based on seniority as outlined within Article 8 of the [Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement \(PDF\)](#).
- 20. What if the College does not receive enough volunteers under the three incentive plans, will this mean that the College will proceed with an involuntary reduction in force?**
- The College is committed to building its capacity to sustain its operations while making significant and strategic investments for the success of its students. This means, we need to reduce our reliance on the Fund Balance (i.e. "savings account"), which requires us to continue to seek ways in which to improve our financial health.
 - Although we wish to exercise involuntary separations as a last resort, this option remains a possibility.
 - The College may need to implement an involuntary reduction in force in the future in order to meet the desired cost savings.
- 21. I served as a non-teaching employee for several years prior to accepting a full-time teaching position. Do those years of service in a non-teaching position count in terms of my eligibility for this incentive?**
- Yes, your application eligibility will be based on if you are currently a full-time teaching faculty member. This will include considering your total full-time continuous years of service with MCC.
- 22. Do I need to notify my supervisor if I am planning to submit an application to participate in an incentive plan?**
- Do so at your own discretion. However, your application will first be reviewed by Human Resources to confirm eligibility to participate and then your application will be reviewed by the Vice President of your division. Your VP will consult with your supervisor/department head, including your Chair, Dean and AVP of Academic Affairs (as applicable) to confirm the impact on academic program sustainability if your application is accepted.
- 23. If I have already been approved for Phased retirement under Article 27, Section E will I be eligible for VRIP Phased retirement incentive?**
- You will need to submit your application for VRIP Phased for review. You will be notified if you have been approved for the incentive on or before September 20, 2024.
- 24. If I have already submitted a letter of retirement or resignation to the College and I am a full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty member, will I be eligible for a VSIP or VRIP incentive plan?**
- You will need to submit your application for either VSIP or VRIP within the required timeline. You will be notified if you have been approved for the incentive on or before September 20, 2024.

- 25. If I am interested in applying to one of the incentive plans, how do I submit my application for consideration?**
- You can submit your application using the online form under the Human Resource tile found on the [myMCC](#) tile system. Go to: Employee Home -> Human Resources -> 2024 VRIP/VSIP Incentives
- 26. Can I apply to more than one incentive plan?**
- You can only apply to one (1) incentive plan. Additionally, these incentives cannot be combined with each other or applied to other incentives already outlined with the [Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement \(PDF\)](#).
- 27. Do I have to submit my application online or can I instead hand deliver a paper application to Human Resources?**
- The application must be submitted by using the application links found on either the [Voluntary Retirement / Separation Incentive Plan website](#) or in the [myMCC](#) tile system. Go to: Employee Home -> Human Resources -> 2024 VRIP/VSIP Incentives
- 28. What is the due date for me to submit my application?**
- The deadline for application submission is **August 16, 2024 (by 5:00 pm EST)**.
- 29. If my application for VRIP or VRIP Phased is denied and I meet the criteria for Article 27 or Article 50, can I retire?**
- Yes, you can still voluntarily retire but you are not eligible for incentives outlined above within the VSIP, VRIP Phased or VRIP.
 - For a comparison of options please reference the [Voluntary Retirement & Separation Incentive Comparison Table](#).
- 30. Will I receive an email notification from the College confirming my eligibility to participate in these incentive plans?**
- Email notifications will not be sent out regarding eligibility. If you are interested in an incentive plan and you are a full-time tenured or tenure-track teaching faculty member, you will need to submit your online application in order to be considered.
- 31. I submitted my online application; now what?**
- Applications will be reviewed in the order they are received.
 - If your application was denied, you will receive an email with information on why you were ineligible.
 - It will be critical that employees who submit their application continue to monitor their MCC email in order to receive timely communication.
 - On or before September 20, 2024 you will be notified whether your application has been approved or denied.
 - If you have already submitted an online application and want to be considered for a different incentive plan, please contact HR to assist with withdrawing your initial application. You can then reapply and select a different incentive for review and consideration. Please note that your new application must be submitted by the August 16, 2024 due date.
 - If your application has been approved, HR will email you via your MCC email address, a confirmation letter that will also include a Separation Release Agreement.
- 32. What is a Separation Release Agreement?**
- A Separation Release Agreement requires your review and signature in order to be eligible for each plan's incentive(s).
 - Approved employees will have 45-days to review and return the signed Separation Agreement to Human Resources (HR) and may have additional time following HR receipt to revoke.

- Signing and returning this agreement within the defined period of time and not revoking, is a condition of receiving the severance (salary continuation and/or the lump sum, as applicable) under the specific incentive plan.
- Employees who receive a Separation Release Agreement may consult an attorney and/or an accountant, at their own expense, to discuss the incentive plan and review the Separation Release Agreement prior to signing and returning to HR.
- Once HR receives your signed, non-revoked Separation Release Agreement, your retirement or resignation from the College is irrevocable.

33. Will I be able to continue with access to my MCC email, M drive, or my office following the effective date of my retirement or resignation?

- Employees who are voluntarily separating from the College and who will not be immediately returning as an adjunct or in a part-time capacity, should plan accordingly to clear out their personal belongings from their office, including MCC emails or M drives. Access to electronic files, including MCC email and M-Drive access will suspend effective on the voluntary retirement or separation date. Please work directly with your Department Chair if additional time is needed in order for you to collect personal items from your MCC office.
- Employees who are voluntarily separating from the College and who are immediately returning in an adjunct or in a part-time capacity, a transition period can be provided to allow for the retention of IT access (MCC email and M-Drive access) following your retirement or separation effective date. In order to ensure this transition, please work directly with your Department Chair in collaboration with Human Resources and local IT to extend your access for an agreed upon timeframe.

34. I plan to attend an information session. Can you tell me what other steps I should take to help me make a decision to submit my application for an incentive?

- If you have a personal financial advisor and/or an accountant, it would be advisable to consult with them.
- If you are a member of a retirement system (SUNY ORP, NYS ERS, NYS TRS, etc.), it would be advisable for you to consult with your respective retirement system representative. *See FAQ question #3 above for retirement system contact information.*

35. What actions do I need to take to ensure a seamless separation from the College if my VSIP application is approved?

- Human Resources will provide you and your supervisor with detailed information, including a comprehensive checklist, about actions that need to be taken by you, and by your supervisor, to ensure a smooth transition for you and your department.

36. What will be involved in the exit process from the College if I am approved?

- Based on your last day of full-time employment with the College, you will be scheduled for an exit meeting with Human Resources.
- Human Resources will also be offering two informational sessions on the below dates and times for employees to review benefit, payroll continuation and incentive lump sum information.
 - Thursday, 9/26/2024 12:00 PM in the Empire Room
 - Wednesday, 10/2/2024 12:00 PM in the Empire Room

37. How can I find out more about the three incentive plans?

- We highly encourage a thorough review of this FAQ and consider attending one or more of the informational sessions that are scheduled for the following dates, times and location:
 - Tuesday, June 18 at 12:00 noon in the Empire Room
 - Wednesday, July 17 at 12:00 noon in the Empire Room
 - Wednesday, August 7 at 1:00 pm in the Empire Room