The Voluntary Separation Program was developed to address the anticipated reductions in state appropriations. The Program maximizes personnel savings by offering retirement-eligible employees financial support to facilitate career transition, such as retirement. The Program is entirely voluntary, and any decisions made by employees to retire under this Program are not grievable or appealable.

Eligibility:
To be eligible for the Program, an employee must be: 1) an active, benefits-eligible faculty or staff member, 2) enrolled in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS), Employees’ Retirement System (ERS) or Optional Retirement Plan (ORP), and 3) meet the following USG Board of Regents definition of a retiree by the effective date of retirement.

Effective November 1, 2002, to be eligible for retirement from the USG, an employee must meet one of the following four conditions at the time of his or her separation from employment, regardless of the retirement plan elected by the employee:

1. An employee must have been employed by the USG for the last 10 years in a regular, benefited position and have attained age 60; or
2. An employee must have at least 25 total years of benefited service established with a State of Georgia sponsored retirement plan, of which the last five years of employment must have been continuous and with the USG. An early pension benefit penalty will apply to an individual who elects to participate in TRS or ERS if he or she decides to retire with between 25 and 30 years of benefited service, prior to attaining age 60;
3. An employee must have at least 30 total years of benefited service established with a State of Georgia sponsored retirement plan, of which the last five years must have been continuous and with the USG; or
4. An employee must be deemed to be totally and permanently disabled, as documented through the receipt of disability benefits from Social Security or from TRS, following 10 years of continuous service to the USG in a regular, benefited position.

Additionally, the employee must not have already declared intent to retire.

An individual who has retired from another State of Georgia-sponsored retirement plan may not count such retirement service toward meeting the eligibility criteria for retirement from the USG.

A State of Georgia employee who transfers to the USG without a break in service shall be eligible to retire as a career employee provided that on the date of his or her separation of employment:

1. He or she has attained age 60 and has a minimum of 10 years of service established with a State of Georgia-sponsored retirement plan and the last 12 months of employment have been served with the USG; or,
2. He or she has a total of 25 years of service established with a State of Georgia-sponsored retirement plan, regardless of age and the last 12 months of employment have been served with the USG.

An employee must be enrolled in the Health and Life benefits coverage at the time of retirement to continue coverage in retirement. A qualifying life event does not allow a retiree to add coverage in retirement.

An individual who has retired from another State of Georgia-sponsored retirement plan may not count such retirement service toward meeting the criteria for being a career employee.

**Employee Benefits of the Voluntary Separation Program:**

1. Employees who are approved for the voluntary separation will receive a lump sum payment equal to 4 months of annualized base salary without benefits. All payments will occur by December 31, 2020, and will be subject to appropriate taxes.

2. The USG benefits provided to regular retirees, including optional health, life, vision and dental insurance, will be available to employees approved for voluntary separation through this plan.

3. Employees approved for voluntary separation through this plan will also receive payment of accrued, unused annual leave (not to exceed 360 hours), per University policy.

**Limitations to the Voluntary Separation Program:**

The Program is a one-time only opportunity and will be available for a limited time. The Program is offered on a resource-availability basis. At the time of submitting of application, the eligible employee must agree to an effective retirement date of December 31, 2020. Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on August 31, 2020. Employees taking advantage of the Voluntary Separation Program will be prohibited from working for another USG institution for five (5) months beginning the first day after the effective retirement date.

It is the University's sole discretion whether an application to participate in the Program will be approved. UNG reserves the right to limit the total number of applicants approved for reasons including, but not limited to, continuing our core mission, preserving the stability of current and future programs and services, and meeting the needs of our students.

**Application Process:**

Eligible employees who elect to participate in the Voluntary Separation Program will need to:

1. Complete and sign the Voluntary Separation Program Application.
2. Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on August 31, 2020

**Review Process:**

1. A campus committee, appointed by the President, will review all applications after eligibility is verified by the Office of Human Resources. The committee will prioritize
their application review based on years of service, with UNG years of service receiving preference.

2. Any academic department with 25% or more participation rate will require Provost review and a workforce management plan prior to committee review.

3. Once review of the application has been completed by the committee, the Office of Human Resources will notify the employee of the decision.

Additional Notes:

1. Any questions about the Program should be directed to Kathy Martin at (706) 864-1646 or Sabrina Wall at (678) 717-3824.

2. Eligible employees are encouraged to consult with their tax advisor and private attorney before agreeing to participate in the Program. Any costs or fees for such consultation are the responsibility of the employee.

3. Those employees with voluntary retirement plans 403(b) & 457(b) through UNG, should contact their plan vendors for additional guidance.

4. All payments under the Program are taxable income.

5. An eligible employee may withdraw his/her application any time before the applicant executes and submits a Voluntary Separation Agreement and Release. A withdrawal must be in writing and be signed by the employee. Once a Voluntary Separation Agreement and Release is executed by the employee, he or she may not withdraw his/her application.

Workforce Management Plan:
Departments must complete a Workforce Management Plan for any vacancies created by the approval of a Voluntary Separation Agreement. The plan must describe how the employees' duties will be performed after his or her retirement. In addition, if the position will be refilled, the plan must describe the timeframe for refill and the anticipated salary to ensure actual savings are realized by the Voluntary Separation Agreement.

Accessibility Statement
If you need this form in an additional format, reach out to Michael McLeod. 678.717.2232