



Staff Voluntary Separation Program FAQ's for IT

If you apply for the Texas A&M University Staff Voluntary Separation Program (SVSP) for employees who report to Texas A&M Information Technology and are accepted in the program, the following frequently asked questions will provide information concerning your SVSP payment, and impact on Texas A&M group insurance and retirement benefits.

1. Does my acceptance in the SVSP and separation from Texas A&M mean that I am retiring from Texas A&M University?

No. You may be accepted in the SVSP and separate from Texas A&M, but not be eligible for Texas A&M System retirement status or may choose not to retire at the time of separation. However, please be aware that in order to be eligible for the group insurance plans, you must be actively employed in a benefit-eligible position or be in a retired status with Texas A&M University System. Employees separating without retiring will be offered a COBRA continuation policy.

2. What are the Texas A&M retirement eligibility rules?

The brochure, *A Look Ahead, A Guide to Retiring from the A&M System* assets.system.tamus.edu/files/benefits/pdf/publications/AGuide.PDF explains the eligibility rules to retire and the rules to qualify for the employer contribution for insurance premiums as a retiree.

3. Will retirement contributions be made on my SVSP payment?

No. The SVSP payment does not count as "earnings" for TRS or ORP purposes and is, therefore, not eligible for TRS or ORP contributions.

4. Can I defer my SVSP payment and receive it at a later date?

No. Receipt of the SVSP payment cannot be deferred. You will receive payment within forty-five (45) days of your voluntary separation date.

5. Can I invest my SVSP payment in the voluntary tax deferred savings program?

No. The SVSP payment is considered "separation" or "non-regular" compensation and not eligible for tax deferral under Internal Revenue Code 415.

6. If I am accepted in the SVSP and I am eligible to retire, how will my group benefits change if I elect to retire?

The document *Impact of Separation or Retirement on Benefits FAQ's* employees.tamu.edu/media/1198314/VSPBenefitsFAQ.pdf, explains how your group benefits may be impacted at retirement. Employees wishing to retire are encouraged to review this information and contact Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (HROE) Benefit Services at benefits@tamu.edu or 979-862-1718. Benefit Services will confirm retirement eligibility, schedule a retirement counseling session to discuss specific impacts on your benefits and assist in the completion of the appropriate retirement paperwork.

7. Where do I find out about social security benefits?

The Social Security website ssa.gov will answer questions regarding eligibility for social security benefits.

8. If I am accepted in the SVSP, separate from Texas A&M University, and do not retire, how will my group benefits change?

If you are accepted in the SVSP, separate from Texas A&M, and are not eligible to retire or choose not to retire at time of separation, your group benefits will terminate on the last day of the month in which you voluntarily separate. You will be offered COBRA continuation for health, dental, and vision coverage. You may be eligible to regain A&M System benefit coverage when you meet the Texas A&M System retirement eligibility rules *as long as you have an intact ORP or TRS account*. See pages 3 and 4 of the brochure linked here, *A Look Ahead, A Guide to Retiring from the A&M System* assets.system.tamus.edu/files/benefits/pdf/publications/AGuide.PDF

9. If I am accepted in the SVSP and separate from Texas A&M University but do not retire, can I collect unemployment?

No. By signing the Separation Agreement you are voluntarily separating from Texas A&M and, therefore, not eligible for unemployment compensation.

10. If I am accepted in the SVSP and separate from service but am subsequently rehired by Texas A&M University, will I receive a pay-out of my accrued vacation leave?

Your accrued vacation leave will be paid if:

- 1) You retire, or
- 2) There is at least a one day break in service from Texas A&M, or
- 3) There is not a break in service from Texas A&M but you are rehired into a non-vacation accruing position.

11. Who do I contact for further questions regarding the SVSP?

Contact Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness, Benefit Services at benefits@tamu.edu or 979-862-1718.