



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

Office of the  
Regional Administrator

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** July 13, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority Opportunities

**FROM:** Alexis Strauss *Alexis Strauss*  
Acting Regional Administrator

**TO:** Employees in VERA/VSIP-Eligible Positions in Region 9

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management and the U.S. Office of Management and Budget have approved our request to offer Voluntary Separation Incentive Payment (buy-out) and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (early-out) opportunities. As our organization explores various workforce planning efforts, we want to take advantage of these and other flexibilities and tools to help ensure that our workforce possesses the mix of skills most appropriate for carrying out our mission. This decision was not made lightly; we value our dedicated employees and appreciate the work you perform on behalf of the American people.

In accordance with statute and regulations, we identified the specific grades, occupational series, and geographic locations designated for VERA and VSIP for OPM and OMB, and have received their approval for the categories identified in Attachment A. The maximum number of VSIPs offered in Region 9 will be 23. If the number of applications received exceeds the maximum number of VSIPs we can offer under one of the categories identified in Attachment A, approvals will be based first on service computation date for leave and then on entry on duty date (total EPA years of service). If the SCD and EOD dates are the same for two eligible employees, then the offer will be granted to the employee who submitted his or her application first. Attachment A also shows the maximum number of VSIP offers that will be approved by organization, grade, occupational series, and geographic location, as applicable.

You can find basic eligibility criteria for VSIPs and VERAs in Attachment B. The Las Vegas Shared Service Center can provide you with more information regarding your benefits and retirement, and can assist you with obtaining a retirement annuity estimate. Attachment C provides instructions on how to contact the LV SSC.

If you decide to apply, you should do so early in the application period, which opens today, July 13, 2017 and closes at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on July 26, 2017. Applications submitted between July 13, 2017 and 11:59 p.m. EST, July 26, 2017, will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis if the number of applications does not exceed the maximum VERA/VSIP offers available.



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Applications will only be accepted during this period using the [online application system](#). Specific instructions on how and when to apply are in Attachment D. If your application is approved and you decide to proceed with VERA and/or VSIP, you must depart during the separation window which ends on September 2, 2017.

The decision to take advantage of a VERA or VSIP is **entirely voluntary**. This is a very personal decision. No one will be pressured to submit an application, and no one is required to accept an offer. Please carefully consider the information provided and your personal situation prior to making a decision.

We will continue to provide anyone considering this decision with useful information and expert contacts. We plan to use all flexibilities and tools available to help Region 9 most effectively support both individual employees as well as the EPA's strategic mission.

Attachments

## REGION 9 APPROVED EMPLOYEE CATEGORIES FOR VERA AND VSIP

Workforce Category	Total # Eligible Positions	Total # Max Offers	Positions / San Francisco Duty Station
Supervisory Positions (increasing staff to supervisor ratio)	4	2	1 ORA Supv. Public Affairs Spec, GS-1035-14
			1 EMD ISB Supv. IT Spec, GS-2210-14
Administrative Support Positions (consolidating & streamlining)	4	4	1 ORA Admin Spec, GS-301-11
			1 WTR Env. Protection Asst., GS-029-7
			2 WTR Env. Protection Asst., GS-029-8
GS-14/15 Non-supervisory Positions (reduce/restructure)	3	3	2 ENF EPS, GS-028-14/15
			1 SFD OSC, GS-14
STEM/Programmatic Positions (reduce/restructure to focus on core priorities)	104	12	1 ENF EPS, GS-028-12
			4 ENF EPS, GS-028-13
			2 ENF Env. Engr, GS-819-13
			2 ENF Env. Sci, GS-1301-13
			1 SFD OSC, GS-13
			1 SFD RPM, GS-13
			1 EMD ISB Env. Sci, GS-1301-13
Attorney-Adviser Positions (reduce/restructure to focus on core priorities)	52	2	1 ORC Attorney-Adviser, GS-905-14
			1 ORC Attorney-Adviser, GS-905-15
<b>Total</b>	167	23	3.13% of Total Workforce

All positions are located in San Francisco, CA

**VOLUNTARY SEPARATION INCENTIVE PAYMENT (VSIP) AND VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT AUTHORITY (VERA) ELIGIBILITY**

**NOTE: This chart is intended to provide information about general eligibility. If you have any questions about whether or not you meet any of the criteria, you should apply, so the Human Resources Shared Service Center can make an official determination.**

<b>You ARE eligible for a VSIP if you:</b>	<b>You ARE eligible for VERA if you:</b>	<b>You are NOT eligible for VSIP if you:</b>
are serving under an appointment without time limitation	meet the minimum age and service requirements: - at least age 50 with at least 20 years of credible federal service OR - any age with at least 25 years of creditable federal service	are a reemployed annuitant
have been currently employed by the federal government for a continuous period of at least three years	have been continuously employed by the Agency for at least 31 days before the date your region or program office initially requested OPM approval for VERA	have a disability such that you are or would be eligible for disability retirement
are serving in a position covered by your region or program office's VSIP offer	are serving under an appointment without time limitation	have received a decision notice of involuntary separation for misconduct or unacceptable performance
apply for and receive approval for a VSIP from the Agency	have not received a final removal decision based on misconduct or unacceptable performance	have previously received a VSIP from the federal government
separate by September 2, 2017	are serving in a position covered by your region or program office's VERA offer	performed service during the 36-month period preceding the date of separation for which a student loan repayment benefit was paid or is to be paid
	retire under the VERA option during your program or region's VERA window	performed service during the 24-month period preceding the date of separation for which a recruitment or relocation bonus was paid or is to be paid
		performed service during the 12-month period preceding the date of separation for which a retention bonus was paid or is to be paid

## **POINTS OF CONTACT**

If you have questions about retirement and benefits or general questions about VERA and VSIP, please contact the Las Vegas Shared Service Center as shown below.

If you have questions about FedHR Navigator (the on-line retirement annuity tool) or wish to have a retirement estimate prepared, please send an email and use the subject heading: VERA/VSIP Related Request. For example:

Email: [ESB\\_SSC\\_LV@epa.gov](mailto:ESB_SSC_LV@epa.gov)

Subject Heading: VERA/VSIP Related Request

LV SSC Mainline: 702-798-2401

Points of Contact: Elaine Jimenez or Crystal Ponich

If you have specific questions about Region 9's VERA or VSIP package, please contact Vicki Lane, Human Resources Officer, at [lane.vicki@epa.gov](mailto:lane.vicki@epa.gov) or 415-972-3827.

## HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY FOR VERA AND VSIP

<b>Before You Apply</b>	<p>Read the memorandum from your region or program office announcing the VERA and VSIP. You should ensure that you are in a targeted position by reviewing Attachment A. <b>If you are interested in the VERA and/or VSIP but are unsure about your eligibility, you should apply during the application window, so the Las Vegas Shared Service Center can make an official determination.</b></p>
<b>Where to Find Additional Information</b>	<p>The Office of Personnel Management has information on its website regarding <a href="#">VERAs</a> and <a href="#">VSIPs</a>. You may also view additional information on the agency's VERA/VSIP <a href="#">intranet</a> site. If you need additional information, please call or email the servicing SSC points of contact identified in Attachment C.</p>
<b>Estimating Retirement Pay</b>	<p>There are two methods for you to obtain an annuity estimate. The <a href="#">FedHR Navigator</a> allows you to estimate your own basic annuity. A webinar with instructions on using the FedHR Navigator can be found at <a href="http://intranet.epa.gov/policy/buyouts/pdfs/FHR-Navigator-Webinar.pdf">http://intranet.epa.gov/policy/buyouts/pdfs/FHR-Navigator-Webinar.pdf</a>. Or, you may contact the servicing SSC identified in Attachment C to request an annuity estimate.</p>
<b>Application Window</b>	<p><b>The application window (the time during which you must apply for a VERA or VSIP) opens July 13, 2017 and closes at 11:59 pm Eastern standard time on July 26, 2017.</b> Applications submitted between July 13, 2017 and 11:59 p.m. EST, July 26, 2017, will be accepted on a first come, first service basis. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. EST, July 26, 2017, will not be considered.</p>
<b>Application Process</b>	<p><b>Step 1:</b> From your EPA computer, login to the online application at <a href="http://drupal.rtp.epa.gov/veravsip/">http://drupal.rtp.epa.gov/veravsip/</a></p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Complete your application and press submit when you have fully completed all of the blocks. If you need assistance completing this form and/or you require an alternative application method, please contact your servicing SSC identified in Attachment C for assistance in submitting an application.</p> <p><b>You should apply early in the application window in case you experience any problems or issues in applying.</b></p> <p><b>Step 3:</b> You will receive an email notification from the VERA/VSIP online system when your application has been received.</p>
<b>After You Apply</b>	<p>The servicing SSC will review your application and notify you of your eligibility. You should receive a notification no later than August 2, 2017. If you are eligible and your application is approved, the servicing SSC will ask you to complete the necessary paperwork to process your separation.</p>