



The Latest Budget Update and Survey Results

In February 2009, the City approached the Coalition of City Unions with concerns about the 2009 – 2010 Biennium Budget.

The City recognized that based on its original budget, there would need to be adjustments made for both 2009 and 2010. Those adjustments would mean potential layoffs of City employees.

The City approached the Coalition to see if there was any interest in agreeing to any type of mitigations to reduce the number of layoffs. Unfortunately, mitigations would not have affected the Department of Planning and Development deficit due to the significant drop in permit applications (fees are separate from the General Fund) and the lack of work associated with that.

The Coalition Requests Information

The Coalition of City Unions put together an information request (which can be viewed online at www.ifpte17.org) in order to make a decision on whether or not mitigations would make sense. The Coalition took the position that the City needed to reduce contracting out and address span of control issues (decrease management layers) before looking to our members to agree to mitigations.

In mid-April, the City came back to the Coalition with two concepts: furlough days for 2009 and 2010, and dropping the minimum and maximum on the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2010 and 2011. However, the Coalition was adamant that until it received all of the information requested and the City addressed the concerns on contracting out and span of control, it was premature to negotiate.

Survey Details

In order to get a baseline sense of how Local 17 members felt about layoffs vs. mitigations, Local 17 conducted an online survey.

On behalf of the Local 17 Bargaining Team, we want to thank all of the membership who participated. Local 17 learned that an overwhelming majority of members who

participated in the survey had an interest in pursuing mitigations rather than the layoff of employees.

However, there was not a clear distinction on what method members would like to use for mitigation (e.g. unpaid furloughs vs. reducing COLAs).

The Mayor's Message on Budget Cuts

On April 17, 2009, both the Coalition and employees were notified in an email from Mayor Greg Nickels what the cuts were going to be for 2009. The number of cuts was not nearly as significant as had originally been projected and would be no more than nine filled positions for Coalition members.

Due to available vacant positions in the City, it did not make sense to pursue mitigations for 2009 for those nine employees.

Other Cuts Announced

Since April 17, Local 17 has learned of additional budget cuts for 2009. These cuts have affected Local 17 members at the Seattle Public Utility Call Center.

The City has informed the Coalition that there will be cuts in the 2010 Budget. Local 17 does not know the severity of those cuts, nor the number of Local 17 members who will be affected. The forecast provided in April 2009 indicated a \$41 million shortfall for 2010. This number will most likely change as the Mayor's office and the City Council go through the supplemental budget process.

The City has asked that the Coalition look at mitigations for 2010. We have told the City that in order for the Coalition to move beyond conceptual discussions, we need concrete budget information and to hear what impacts it will have on members. As new information comes in for the 2010 Budget, visit www.ifpte17.org to keep updated.

LAYOFF FAQs

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City of Seattle NEWSLETTER

June 2009



Published by the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, Local 17, AFL-CIO
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LAYOFF Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do layoffs work?

A: City Departments review work functions and determine which functions they may no longer perform or what can be consolidated. They may decide to abrogate or unfund a position. The person who is working in the position that is abrogated or unfunded, gets a Notice of Layoff from the Department.

Q: What is in a Notice of Layoff?

A: Choices are given. You can accept the layoff, you can choose to resign or retire (if you are eligible to retire), or you may be given the option, if you are not the least senior, to bump the least senior employee in your classification in your department.

Q: What if I have been here a long time, but still am the least senior in my classification, is there any way that I still may keep my job?

A: You may have bumping rights into another classification in the same "class series." For example, if your classification has three levels, I, II, III, you may be eligible to bump to a lower level in the series. You must have had at least one year in that title and have more seniority than the least senior employee in the lower title. Your time in the higher level will usually count towards your seniority in the lower level in the same series.

Q: Why don't they just lay off the least senior person, instead of putting employees in a position of having to choose to bump someone else who has less seniority?

A: Departments cut positions whose work, in their opinion, most easily can be absorbed by others, or which work can be postponed or cancelled. It is the work that is being cut, not the individual who does that work.

Q: What is an "At Risk" letter?

A: Those whose positions are not being eliminated, but who may be bumped by someone more senior, receive "At Risk" letters, which state that they can be bumped if the more senior person (whose job is being eliminated) chooses to bump them. Once the higher person makes a choice in the Notice of Layoff, the "At Risk" person is notified of the choice, and learns whether he/she will be bumped.

Q: How long of a period of notice must be given before a layoff?

A: Under our Collective Bargaining Agreement, two weeks. But Local 17 has strongly urged the City to provide as much notice as possible.

Q: What about health care benefits?

A: COBRA is a federal law that allows employees to continue their health insurance at their own expense. Currently, the Federal Stimulus Package provides a substantial financial subsidy for the first five months of COBRA, depending on when someone is laid off.

Q: How do I know who is less senior and if the information is correct?

A: City Personnel goes through an extensive payroll records review to produce what is called an Order of Layoff list for the department. You can contact your department's human resources and your Local 17 representative to verify your information.

Q: Can my name appear on more than one list?

A: Yes, if you have "standing" in another title in your class series, you will appear on that list too, so it will be clear where your seniority for that title rests.

Q: What is a Reinstatement Recall List, and how long will my name appear?

A: Under Local 17's Collective Bargaining Agreements, anyone laid off has a right to be recalled back to work under certain circumstances, to a job in the same title for one year. The Coalition is speaking with the City about extending to two years.

Q: What is Project Hire?

A: Project Hire is a program that is intended to place as many people as possible, who are slated to be laid off, or at risk of being laid off, into positions at the City.

The Project Hire program guarantees that anyone on the Project Hire list be given an interview for any position that is going to be filled if he/she meets the minimum qualifications for the position. It does not guarantee that the person will be hired. Project Hire does not guarantee an interview for a position that would constitute a promotion.