
SUBJECT: REDUCTION IN FORCE POLICY

Revised: November 21, 1994

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Purpose: To set out the procedures to be followed in selecting positions and employees for reduction in force due to budgetary cutbacks, reorganization and redistribution of work.

The decisions of the Cass County Commission regarding where and how its resources (including personnel) will be used are necessarily management decisions. Decisions on reduction in force are made in the context of overall budget cuts and reallocation of work. The Cass County Commission, in consultation with the Personnel Overview Committee, will establish a list of governing principles to clarify the way in which the missions and duties of the County are to be maintained while making budget adjustments. The principles will help guide the decision-making process for a reduction in force by having identified the duties that need to be performed and eliminating less crucial tasks.

It is the policy of Cass County to conduct any reduction in force required by the budgetary need of the County or required by the reallocation of work assignments in a manner that does not discriminate against any employee in violation of existing North Dakota Human Rights Act and/or Federal Civil Rights laws. The following steps will be followed:

1. The Cass County Commission, in consultation with the Personnel Overview Committee, will identify the amount of budgetary reductions to be made in each of the departments. These reductions will identify, to the extent feasible and practical, the specific departmental services, programs and activities that will be reduced or discontinued. This information will be shared with all department heads affected.
2. The Cass County Commission will determine the amount of salaries and wages and the number of positions to be cut from each county department.
3. Prior to conducting a full reduction in force analysis, a Department Head may seek to find other county employment opportunities either in the department or within the county for employees whose positions are designated to be eliminated. These employees may be given opportunity to apply for positions for which they are qualified. If an employee whose position is being eliminated is offered another county employment opportunity and declined that offer, a reduction in force will not be implemented, but an individual severance plan could be developed for that employee.

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4. The department head will submit a proposed plan to the Personnel Overview Committee consistent with the governing principles specifying how work will be reallocated or reorganized to meet statutory requirements and satisfy the salary reductions. These recommendations will specify what functions can be eliminated. These recommendations should include specific classifications of positions which could be eliminated or reduced under the reallocation or elimination of work. Analysis of employees for consideration in a reduction in force will be done by classification within each department.
 5. If an employee is hired in a time-limited position, a grant-funded position for example, they will not be included in reduction in force analysis. Time-limited employees will also not be eligible for continued employment (RIF process) with the County at the completion of the time-limited positions.
 6. An analysis of employees for consideration in a reduction in force will be done by classification within each department using the following guidelines:
 - a. An analysis of the acquired knowledge, demonstrated skills and versatility of employees compared to the work done and the available funding. Employees lacking the necessary skills and versatility should be considered for reduction.
 - b. An analysis of the levels of demonstrated documented work performance. Employees having documented consistently low levels of performance should be considered for reductions.
 - c. A review of the length of service of their employees. The review should list the number of years and months employees have been in the County and the number of years and months an employee has been in the current classification. Employees with the least number of years of service should be considered for reduction.
 - d. An analysis of the extent of required training needed to train a reassigned employee to full productivity in different positions. Employees requiring substantial retraining should be considered for reductions.

Prior to the analyzing of positions, the department head will identify any weighing of importance to be given each of the four factors. The analysis will be documented. If all staff of a program is proposed to be cut due to a decision to eliminate the program, the documentation of the analysis must still be completed.

All written documentation will be reviewed by the portfolio commissioner prior to submission to the Personnel Overview Committee. The Personnel Department shall provide technical assistance and consultation to department heads during the entire RIF process.

7. All departments' reduction in force plans shall be approved by the Cass County Commission.
8. Employees who are terminated pursuant to the reduction in force policy will be given a minimum of one month's notice and offered an individualized severance package. All severance packages must have full approval of the County Commission.

Severance packages would include at least one month's salary and health insurance. Severance packages will be based on years of service with one week of salary for every year of service up to six months.

OUTPLACEMENT SERVICES

Outplacement services are primarily available to those employees required to leave employment with the County due to no fault of their own. The County is willing to extend assistance to the employee upon his/her request, in making the transition from one position to another. Such services, unless otherwise indicated, may be provided prior to termination of employment and may take the form of the following:

1. Help in preparing, typing and photocopying employment resumes.
2. Typing and photocopying applications.
3. Use of telephone for job applications.
4. Referrals to other employers.

Where applicable, ND Central Personnel Administrative Code applies to Social Service Employees and will take precedence over this policy.