

Response to Questions on the FY 2019 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: How many current employees and consultants are receiving Fairfax County pension payments?

Response:

As of December 31, 2017, a total of 249 positions were filled by 248 different employees who concurrently received an annuity from one of the County retirement systems. This represents a small fraction of the total County workforce, which included 12,480 merit positions in FY 2017 as well as many additional non-merit positions. Retirees are reemployed in both merit and non-merit positions. Of the 106 merit positions that were filled with reemployed annuitants in 2017, 91 were in public safety agencies. Among the 143 non-merit positions that were filled with retirees were positions such as Park Authority instructors and support assistants, child care specialists in the Department of Family Services, and psychiatrists in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board.

This count includes all individuals paid directly through County payroll, but does not include former County employees currently employed by firms that provide contracted services to the County. Former County employees can represent a valuable resource for filling vacancies based on the skills and experience gained in their former employment. For example, the majority of the reemployed annuitants working in public safety agencies were previously uniformed police, sheriff, or fire and rescue employees. These former uniformed employees have often been reemployed in positions that will make use of the skills that they gained during their career. This includes situations such as the former police officers who have been reemployed as deputy sheriffs or code compliance investigators, and the former firefighters who have been reemployed as fire inspectors and instructors. Retirees are also occasionally rehired to fill a temporary, critical need in an agency, or to accomplish succession planning activities.

Fairfax County has instituted policies and procedures relative to the reemployment of annuitants. If an employee is rehired into a position that is covered by the same retirement system from which they previously retired, then the employee may be required to waive their retirement annuity and make additional contributions to the retirement system during the period of reemployment. In other cases, such as when an employee is rehired into a non-merit position or a merit position that is covered by a different retirement system, the employee is able to continue to receive an annuity during the period of reemployment. However, the combination of salary and retirement annuity for these employees is capped at 115 percent of the maximum pay level for a Deputy County Executive. Finally, it is important to note that chapter 9 of the Personnel Regulations states that no retiree will be permitted to participate in a second County retirement system. Therefore, retirees that are rehired into a merit position covered by a different retirement system, such as a retired police officer being rehired as a deputy sheriff, are eligible for non-pension benefits such as health and dental insurance but will not earn a second pension.