

How to Win the RIF

Today, more than ever before, Air Force commanders must tighten their money belts and find more efficient, economical and expeditious ways to perform their mission. Commanders are taking a hard look at the way they have organized positions. They are reshaping the civilian work force, and exploring ways to transition support functions to contractors using OMB circular A-76 studies. This has resulted in reorganizations, transfers of work from one location to another, reassignments of people from one job to another and separation of employees. Reduction-in-Force (RIF) procedures have been used to complete some or all of these actions.

RIF, however, is probably the most disruptive option to reorganize because it involves either moving employees from their current jobs to other jobs or separation. When you separate, demote or reassign employees (displacing other employees), you not only adversely affect them, but also their organization. RIF results in at least the temporary loss of organizational efficiency, employee morale and productivity. RIF is also probably the most expensive option for a base. It results in increased payroll costs.

- Employees who are demoted usually keep their higher grades for two years (grade retention) and/or salary indefinitely (pay retention)
- Employees who are reassigned are normally those with greater seniority and higher pay rates (step in grade) than those displaced
- Employees who are separated usually have entitlements to severance pay equal to as much as one year's salary

There are additional one-time costs as well

- Outplacement entitlements of employees include Priority Placement Program (PPP) registration that requires the losing activities to fund the Permanent Change of Station (PCS) moves outside the commuting area
- Unemployment compensation and lump sum payment of annual leave must be paid to separated employees

RIF also has indirect costs to the organization

- Lost productivity to the affected organizations
- Disruption to additional organizations on base
- Moving employees, phone lines and equipment
- Staff costs for appeals and grievances filed as a result of RIF

One of management's chief concerns when reorganizing is to minimize the RIF's adverse effects. This occurs in the Pre-RIF process. When a RIF is anticipated, the Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF) can recommend to management many proactive steps to avoid or lessen the likelihood of adverse action, prepare employees for it, and forestall administrative problems. Some actions may accomplish substantial savings and avoid the necessity for a RIF or reduce the number of employees to be affected. Some of these include:

- Hiring freezes
- Stockpiling vacancies
- Management reassignments before the RIF
- Filling positions with temporary employees

- Notifying unions of potential RIF
- Briefing employees on RIF procedures to include temporary employees
- Providing Career Briefs & severance pay calculations (if applicable)
- Approving VSIP/VERA applications
- Publicizing cut-off dates for updating records (e.g., veterans' preference, Service Computation Date, education, experience and performance appraisals)
- Obtaining authority for early registration of employees in PPP (if applicable)

A more detailed list of actions is available in the Procedures Guide, RIF Responsibility Chart A, Pre-RIF Timeline. Additional information on Pre-RIF is also available in the OPM Restructuring Information Handbook, [Module 2, Human Resource Responsibilities in Restructuring](#).

The RIF Unit, AFPC/DPCTI, is available to help and advise you in your Pre-RIF efforts. Contact us on DSN 665-3045 for assistance.