COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
SEPARATING EMPLOYEE INFORMATION PACKET

Employees separating from budgeted positions within the County of Santa Cruz have options available regarding health benefits, insurance coverage, and future employment with the County, which are outlined in this notice. Some separating employees may be required to file a Conflict of Interest Statement under State law as described in item D of this document.

A. HEALTH INSURANCE

If you are enrolled in a CalPERS group health plan and lose coverage as a result of your separation from County service, a COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) packet on continuation of benefits will be mailed to the mailing address on file following your separation.

If you or your qualified dependent (s) are interested in continuing this coverage, you must complete the required forms provided in the COBRA packet and return these forms to the Benefits Unit of the Human Resources Department no later than 60 days from the date of your notification. For questions regarding continued coverage please contact the Benefits Unit Hotline at (831) 454-2241 or email the Benefits Unit at benefits.questions@santacruzcounty.us.

- **If you retire through the CalPERS retirement system and are enrolled in a CalPERS medical plan on the date you separate from County service, you are eligible to continue participation in that medical plan provided your retirement date through CalPERS is within 120 days of your separation date.**

Information regarding retiree medical plans is available from the CalPERS website at: www.calpers.ca.gov or by calling (888) 225-7377.

B. LIFE INSURANCE

Employees have 30 days following their separation date from County service to convert their basic group life insurance to an individual policy. Employees who are participants in the voluntary life insurance program with the County through payroll deduction have 30 days following their separation date from County service to convert this coverage to an individual policy.

Information on how to obtain a quote for life insurance conversion will be contained in the COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) benefit continuation packet that will be mailed to your mailing address on file following your separation.

C. FLEXIBLE SPENDING ACCOUNT

Employees separating from County service who participate in the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) program, may continue their participation in this benefit plan for the current plan year only. To continue participation, you must elect this coverage on the form provided in the COBRA packet that will be mailed to the mailing address on file and return the completed form to the Benefits Unit no later than 60 days from the date of notification.

Separating employees may utilize their FSA debit card or make claim for qualifying FSA expenses **until their separation date only** unless COBRA continuation of FSA is elected.

- **Failure to elect COBRA continuation of FSA within 60 days of the COBRA notice will result in the forfeiture of any balance of funds remaining in your FSA.**

D. FILING CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT UPON SEPARATION

Employees who are required to file an annual Conflict of Interest Statement under the Political Reform Act of 1974 must file a “Leaving Office” statement within 30 days of separation from County service. Failure to do so may result in a significant fine assessed by the State Political Practices Commission. If the filing requirement applies to you, **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to ask your department for a copy of the statement upon your separation from County service. The statement should be completed electronically or delivered (mailed or personally delivered) to the County Clerk, County of Santa Cruz, 701 Ocean St, Room 310, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, within 30 days of separation from County service.

E. OPTIONS FOR FUTURE EMPLOYMENT WITH SANTA CRUZ

If you have attained permanent status in your budgeted position with the County of Santa Cruz, reinstatement or re-employment privileges may apply should you desire to return to work with the County of Santa Cruz. For further information, please contact the Employee Services Division of the Human Resources Department at (831) 454-2600.

F. UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program provides weekly UI payments for workers who lose their job through no fault of their own. If you apply for UI benefits, you will be asked for the name and address of your former employer. The employer should be referenced as: County of Santa Cruz, Risk Management Division, 701 Ocean St, Suite 510, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, regardless of the location of your worksite or department. Please contact Human Resources at (831) 454-2600 for more information.

In accordance with CA Government Code Section 21224, if you are retired and apply for and receive UI compensation at the end of a permanent or extra help appointment, the County of Santa Cruz cannot reemploy you for a period of 12 months following the last day in which you collected UI. If you plan to return to work as extra help for the County within one year of separating employment, the County is prohibited from reemploying you.

G. DEFERRED COMPENSATION

Employees receiving a lump sum payout of the value of their accrued time off, upon separation from County employment (i.e. annual leave, vacation, sick leave), may be able to have these accrued time off values added to their deferred compensation plan. Accrual values added to the participant's Deferred Compensation plan may not exceed the maximum amount allowed under the Internal Revenue Code for that year. By selecting this option, the separating employee can defer taxability of this amount until a later date. Please be aware that you must submit your completed request to the Human Resources Department, Benefits Office, Suite 510 the month prior to your separation date and at least one pay period before your separation date. For additional information, please contact Human Resources at (831) 454-2600.

The Internal Revenue Service requires that deferred compensation plan participants notify the Deferred Compensation Plan Administrator, MissionSquare, at (800) 669-7400 regarding any distribution of funds.

H. PUBLIC EMPLOYEE'S RETIREMENT SYSTEM INFORMATION

The following options are available, regarding the disposition of your retirement contributions, at the time of separation from County service:

1. If eligible, you may retire by completing an application and submitting it to CalPERS. The eligibility requirements for retirement are having completed at least 5 years of service with a CalPERS agency and having reached at least 50 years of age.

2. You may leave your contributions in the CalPERS system and retain your membership in the CalPERS system. If you are not of retirement age yet, or do not have 5 years of service with a CalPERS agency, the County will notify CalPERS of your separation date and CalPERS will send you election forms with instructions to your mailing address.

Since information is mailed to the employee's mailing address on file, it is important that you notify your departmental human resources liaison of your correct address.

I. TEMPORARY PROHIBITION ON FORMER COUNTY EMPLOYEES ENGAGING IN LOBBYING ACTIVITIES

In accordance with County Code Chapter 2.29, former employees are prohibited for a period of one (1) year from their last day of employment with the County from engaging in lobbying activities on any issue related to or involving the subject matter of their former employment. For additional information see County Code Article 2.29.