

Santa Clara County Layoff FAQ

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SEIU
LOCAL 521
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This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is intended to help workers understand the County layoff process, timelines, union rights, and the support available to them.

ABOUT THE PROCESS

1. Does a deleted position mean I am definitely laid off?

No. A deleted position code does not automatically mean the worker sitting in that position will be laid off. The County must first review: vacancies, seniority, reassignment options, return rights, displacement rights, and other alternatives. The worker sitting in the deleted position may not ultimately be the worker impacted.

2. How does the County decide who is impacted?

The County follows the order of layoff under Article 5:

- Provisional workers (least senior first)
- Probationary workers (least senior first)
- Permanent workers (least senior first)

Seniority, vacancies, reassignment rights, and return rights are critical in determining who is ultimately impacted.

3. What is seniority and how is it calculated?

With the exception of the Social Services, Supervisor and Environmental Health bargaining units, Seniority generally reflects your Date of Hire in your classification, service time and employment status.

For the Social Services, Supervisor and Environmental Health bargaining units, Seniority generally reflects your days of accrued service in the county, service time and employment status.

The County may also use tiebreakers including accrued service days, prior hire dates, and name draw if needed. Extra-help time does not typically count toward seniority for layoff purposes.

4. What if my seniority date or employment history is wrong?

Tell your union representative immediately. Gather documents such as: offer letters, promotion notices, records of previous classifications, and proof of continuous service.

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5. What should I do right now if I think I may be impacted?

You should:

- Forward any notices to your union immediately at LayoffSCCO@seiu521.org
- Keep communication with your union consistent.
- Gather your employment documents.
- Do not assume outcomes or decline anything yet.

VACANCIES, TRANSFERS, AND REASSIGNMENT

6. Can layoffs be prevented?

Sometimes. The County must first determine whether vacancies exist that could absorb impacted workers before layoffs become final.

7. What is Article 5.8(b)?

Article 5.8(b) allows your union to meet with the County regarding: the affected unit, available vacancies, reassignment opportunities, and transfers that may reduce layoffs.

8. Can I voluntarily transfer to another position?

Possibly. Your union and County may review transfers, department moves, shifts, and vacancies that could reduce layoffs. Timing depends on available vacancies, classification, department structure, and the overall layoff timeline.

9. Can I see vacancy lists before bidding?

Typically, yes. Your union is also reviewing vacancy lists for accuracy because lists may initially contain errors or missing positions.

10. Is hiring frozen during this process?

Your union is pushing the County to prioritize impacted workers and existing vacancies before continuing outside hiring wherever possible.

11. What if I previously held permanent status in another classification?

You may have return rights. The County must review whether there are vacancies in classifications where you previously held permanent status. This is why it is important to tell your union your classification history, previous promotions, and previous permanent positions.

12. What is displacement or "bumping"?

A more senior worker may have rights to displace or "bump" a less senior worker (same classification, same dept/agency).

13. Can workers in the same classification but different departments bump each other?

It depends. Layoff rights are generally applied first within the same classification and department/agency structure. Some departments may be considered part of a larger agency for purposes of the process.

BIDDING PROCESS

14. What is bidding?

If vacancies exist, impacted workers may bid for available positions based on seniority. The bidding process may determine worksite, shift, supervisor, department, and full-time/part-time status.

15. Do I have to participate in bidding?

Yes. Even if you are on leave, out sick, or on vacation, you are still expected to participate in the process.

16. What if I cannot attend bidding?

You may send a proxy. You must notify your union, and the County Layoff Team. If you do not attend and do not send a proxy, the County may bid for you.

17. How much time do workers have to choose during bidding?

Workers will have 10 minutes to make a selection. If a worker does not make a selection during that time, the County may select for the worker.

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18. Will I have to interview again for a position I bid into?

Generally, no. The layoff bidding process is not a traditional interview process. Workers bid based on seniority and available vacancies.

19. Can our union tell me which position to choose?

No. Union representatives can explain the process, clarify vacancy information, answer questions, and help you think strategically. But they cannot choose for you, promise outcomes, or guess about future vacancies.

20. How should I prepare for bidding?

Before bidding, workers should:

- Review vacancy lists carefully
- Rank preferred options
- Think about commute/location
- Review shifts and schedules
- Prepare questions ahead of time

INPLACEMENT AND LAYOFF RIGHTS

21. What is Inplacement?

Inplacement is when the County attempts to place an impacted worker into another vacant position they may qualify for before layoff becomes final. This may include transfers, demotions, related classifications, or other vacant positions.

22. Who decides whether a worker qualifies for inplacement?

ESA (Employee Services Agency) generally determines qualifications, placement options, and whether workers may be considered for inplacement opportunities.

23. Will I receive training if I move into a new position or department?

Workers should receive onboarding and operational training needed for the position. If you move into a new department, workflow, or system, raise training concerns early with management and your union.

24. What documents should I gather now?

You should gather: resume, licenses/certifications, bilingual documentation, offer letters, promotion notices, and prior classification history.

REEMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

25. What happens if I am ultimately laid off?

Eligible workers are placed onto reemployment lists by classification and seniority. These lists are used when future vacancies occur.

26. How long do reemployment rights last?

Generally, reemployment lists are maintained for three years.

27. Can I lose my place on the reemployment list?

Possibly. Workers may be removed after refusing two offers of employment. However, refusing part-time instead of full-time, or refusing full-time instead of part-time, does not count against you.

28. Can I take temporary work while on the reemployment list?

Yes. Workers on reemployment lists may receive preference for temporary work, and refusing temporary work does not remove reemployment rights.

PAY, BENEFITS, AND LEAVE

29. What if I am on medical leave during this process?

You should make sure your union has your personal contact information, keep your personal email updated, and stay connected with your union since you may not have access to your County email.

30. Will layoffs affect my retirement?

Retirement impacts are highly individual. Workers should contact CalPERS directly regarding retirement-specific questions.

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31. Will I still get paid while waiting for reassignment?

If you remain employed with the County through the process, you generally continue receiving the pay associated with your classification and assignment.

TIMELINE AND UNION SUPPORT

32. What are the key upcoming dates?

Current projected timeline includes:

- May 25: Seniority lists and vacancy information released
- June 1: Departments distribute impact letters
- Week of June 15: Bidding process
- July 5: Last day in deleted position
- July 6: First day in new assignment
- July 8: Reemployment lists created

33. Has the Board of Supervisors already finalized the budget?

No. The budget process is still ongoing, including Board hearings and opportunities for workers and your union to advocate alternatives to layoffs and service cuts.

34. Why is our union asking workers to attend actions and hearings?

Your union's position is that layoffs are not simply administrative decisions — they are political choices. Workers speaking publicly and participating collectively can help pressure decision-makers to reduce layoffs, preserve services, and explore alternatives.

35. How is SEIU 521 supporting workers?

SEIU 521 is:

- Reviewing vacancy and seniority lists
- Auditing the County's process
- Challenging mistakes
- Pushing to reduce layoffs
- Invoking contractual protections
- Hosting Layoff Schools
- Providing office hours and resource support
- Organizing collective action around alternatives to layoffs

FINAL REMINDERS

36. What should I do if information I receive seems inconsistent or unclear?

Contact your union immediately. LayoffSCCO@seiu521.org or the Member Resource Center at 833-734-8521

37. What is the most important thing workers should remember right now?

- Do not panic.
- Do not assume outcomes.
- A deleted position does not automatically mean you are laid off.
- Stay connected with your union.
- Gather your documents now.
- Ask questions early.
- Do not navigate this process alone.

STAY INFORMED

Scan the QR code or visit: <https://linktr.ee/seiussc>

