

Are State Workers Protected in Haslam's Outsourcing Scheme?

Governor Haslam has promised to protect jobs and benefits in his massive scheme to outsource thousands of state workers and services, but that's not what the Request for Proposals (RfP) says at all. Take a look at what the RfP actually stipulates:

- Job protections only count for full-time employees. **No part time and temporary facilities staff will be protected.** Full-time employees who stay on are called "transition employees." (Attachment 6.10, A.19.a.i.1)
- Transition employees will be offered "total equitable compensation," which promises undefined "similar essential value," and that salary will be adjusted to offset differences. **There is no discussion of what those differences may be or any protections surrounding the specifics of benefits packages.** (A.19.b.ii.1)
- **The contractor is not required to offer a worker their current position.** They can offer any job within a 50-mile radius from the worker's current job location—depending on a worker's circumstances, this may be an impossible position. However, if the worker turns down that job, they are no longer considered a "transition employee" and do not receive pay and benefits protections. (Attachment 6.10, A.19.b.i)
- **The contractor is not allowed to implement a Reduction in Force (RIF), but the state retains that privilege if an employee is not able to be offered a job within a 50 mile radius** (Attachment 6.10, A.19.d). This undermines their promise completely. (Attachment 6.10, C.3.b)
- **Those who would like to take advantage of tuition benefits will now have to front the cost of tuition,** should the contractor replicate the state benefit. Alternatively, the contractor may offer their own tuition benefit, the quality of which is unknown.
- **Transition employees lose the state's calculations of severance pay.** So, if a transition employee is laid off from the contractor, severance pay calculations would only include the time the worker has been employed by the contractor, not the time the worker spent working for the state (Attachment 6.10, A.19.b.ii.1). State workers will sign a contract that concedes this loss (Attachment 6.10, A.19.c).
- **The contractor may offer a position to an affected worker with an entity not covered by this contract. If the worker takes that position, none of these protections apply** (Attachment 6.10, A.19.e).
- **Workers within 1 year of retirement (30 years service) will be required to retire from the state at the 30 year mark.** Once they retire, they are eligible for these protections and will be offered a job with the contractor—however it is unclear how they will continue to accrue retirement benefits (Attachment 6.10, A.19.f).

If the Governor is already breaking his promises to state workers about outsourcing, then what are we supposed to think about the rest of his claims? Please take action to stop this plan today; your constituents are counting on you.