



# Understanding Civil Service Layoffs & Furloughs in State & Local Government

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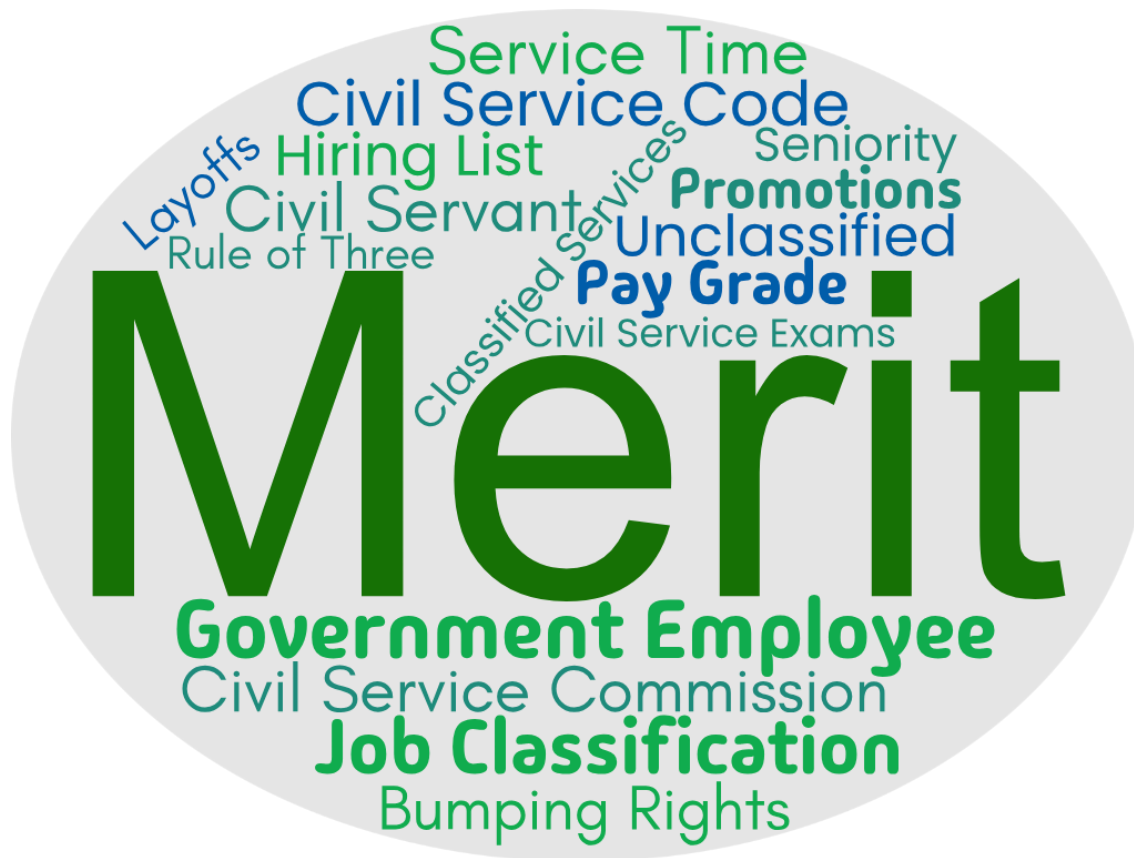


# Agenda

1. Civil Service Essentials
2. Understanding Layoffs
3. Alternatives to Layoffs
4. AFSCME Resources and Tools



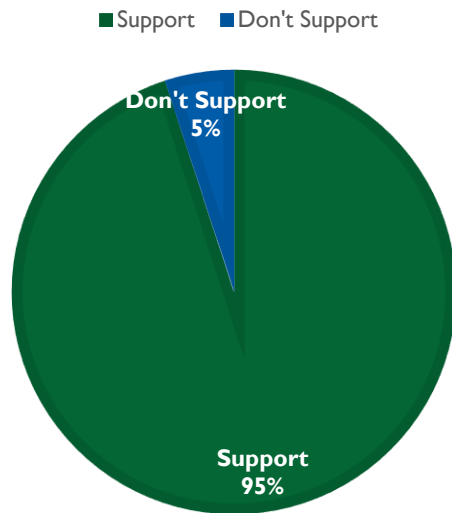
# What is Civil Service?





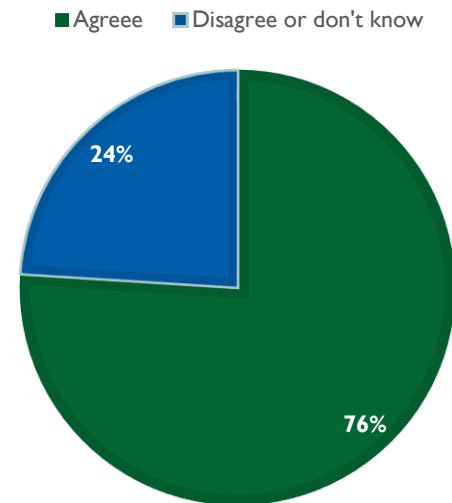
# The Public Supports Merit Based Civil Service

## CIVIL SERVANTS SHOULD BE HIRED BASED ON MERIT - NOT POLITICAL VIEWS



Data Source: <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/state-of-trust-in-government-2024/>, as of August 19, 2025

## SUPPORTERS OF TRUMP'S GOVERNMENT CUTS THINK CIVIL SERVANTS SHOULD BE APOLITICAL



Data Source: <https://ourpublicservice.org/publications/mad-money-the-public-believes-the-trump-administrations-cuts-to-the-federal-government-will-harm-the-u-s-economy-and-make-the-country-less-safe/>, as of August 19, 2025.



# How Does Civil Service Relate to CBAs?

Overlaps

Exempts

Preempts



# Threats to Civil Service





# Poll Time!

Question 1: Does your government employer have a projected deficit?

Question 2: Has your government employer started talking about layoffs and or furloughs?



Layoffs

VS

Furlough



# Key Layoff Terms

**Seniority**

**Service  
Time**

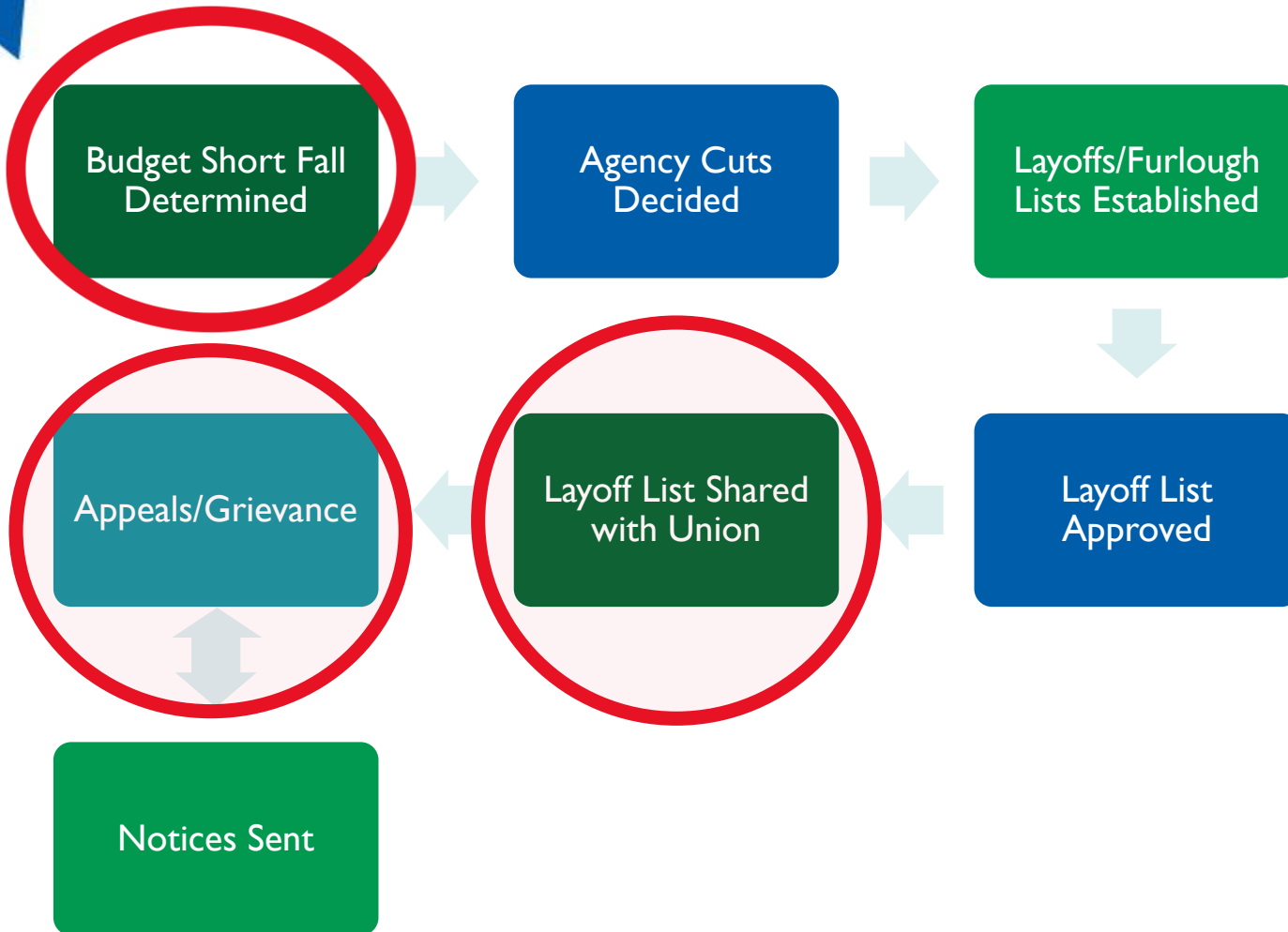
**Seniority  
Unit**

**Recall List**

**Bumping  
Rights**

**Seniority  
List**

# Typical Layoff Process





# Alternative to Layoffs

- Raise Revenue
- Tapping Reserve Funds
- Hiring Freezes
- Limit Overtime
- Early Retirement Incentives
- Furloughs
- Delayed pay increases

## Preparing for Layoffs and Furloughs - Worksheet



Use this worksheet to track the 10 key elements of the layoff or furlough process outlined in your civil service rules and CBA.

	Civil Service Rules	CBA
Seniority Rights		
Bumping Rights		
Exemptions		
Recall List		
Notice to Union		
Timeline to Bargain		
Notice to Workers		
Recall List		
Notice to the Worker		
<b>Record below the following information:</b>		
Who assembles the lists?		
Alternatives considered		
How is management sharing the pain?		

# Where You Can Find Tools & Resources

## Preparing for Layoffs and Furloughs - Worksheet



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Who assembles the lists?		
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## Layoffs & Furloughs Frequently Asked Questions

Arm yourself with knowledge as you Get Organized! Use this [FAQ](#) to familiarize yourself with layoff terminology, then use AFSCME's Layoff & Furlough Preparation Tool to outline the key provisions in both your civil service law and your CBA.

### What is a layoff or reduction in force?

A layoff or reduction in force (RIF) is when an employer reduces the size of its workforce through terminations that are not related to job performance. Layoff and RIF are interchangeable terms. The employer does not need to have a "just cause" and usually one cannot grieve individual termination decisions unless the process is laid out in the collective bargaining agreement (CBA), and it was not followed.

### What is a furlough?

Furloughs are a cost-saving measure where staff are put on unpaid leave, thus saving the employer's payroll costs for the duration of the furlough. Furloughs are done to avoid or reduce layoffs. The length of a furlough will depend on the total amount of cost savings needed.

### What causes layoffs or furloughs?

A layoff or furlough process is usually caused by a significant budget deficit where a state, county or local government does not have sufficient funds to cover its budget. Such a deficit can be caused by unplanned federal funding reductions, insufficient tax revenue collections or another

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PREFERENC

### Databases

#### \*AFSCME Contracts

- AFSCME Contracts Archive
- AFSCME Video Archive
- Magazine Archives
- Model Legislation
- Proceedings

#### AFSCME Leader Resources

- AFSCME Strong: Sound Practices in 2019
- AFSCME Stronger - Our Response to COVID-19

#### AFSCME Staff Resources

- AFSCME Strong Resources
- Model & Sample Contract Language
- Civil Service Pathway Tools



## Civil Service Pathways Facilitating Access to Civil Service

Understaffing our state, county and municipal agencies is overburdening our civil service workforce and threatening the quality of services to the public. This section of the toolkit is designed to provide you with strategic and thoughtful information along with potential solutions that will support you and your members' efforts to streamline the hiring process without risking the fundamental elements and integrity of your civil service system.

**Where do you start?**

**CIVIL  
SERVICE  
STRONG**



# Contact Information

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