

KANE COUNTY LAYOFFS RESOLVED



For the most part when layoffs happen they go off without a hitch, at least on the employers side. We all know what happens to the people who are out of a job. They get a severance package, if they are lucky, unemployment insurance benefits and they go back on the hunt for a job. The now former employer is free and clear. Or at least they are in most cases. In some cases the employees do not take losing their jobs lying down. Sometimes they use the courts, or arbitration, in order to ensure that their employer treats them fairly when they are put out of a job. That was the case for the workers of Kane County. After laying off workers in November of 2010 the union for the workers fought back. The resolution of those workers layoffs came recently. This week the Kane County Board voted yes on an agreement reached between the Kane County Health Department and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees concerning the 45 union employees laid off in November 2010. For those of you who do not remember our [earlier coverage](#) of the layoffs here is an excerpt: "Kane County, Illinois will likely lay off over 70 health care workers on August 15th. This in response to growing frustration over the state's pending late payments of \$1.5 million in grants to the county. The county currently intends to forgo the grants, which require it to perform certain services, effectively ending the programs they fund. 'People ask: why don't we just see what happens,' Health Department Executive Director Paul Kuehnert commented. 'I think we've already done that. We know the direction the state of Illinois is going.' Kuehnert went on to say that continuing to provide the services funded by the grants without guarantee of payment would put his department at risk of not being able to perform its core functions." The layoffs turned out to only affect 45 workers, but still this caused a stir. The agreement will help to keep the unexpected costs of the layoffs down. Since the county would have to incur extra costs if they had to deal with the fees associated with arbitration. The other choice, taking this problem to the courts, would have been even more expensive. Paul Kuehnert, The Executive Director of the Health Department had the following to say about the agreement to a reporter from the [Beacon News](#), "This really closes a chapter in the health department's history. This agreement makes for a fair settlement." So, what will the laid off employees be getting. Not their jobs back. They will be getting a one time payment of \$500, which is the amount that they would have gotten in 16 days of work and short term sick day accrual benefits. The workers will also be eligible to be recalled to work for up to three years. This means that if the county decided to hire more health services workers, these guys will be the first ones hired.

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