

Archdiocese of Baltimore eliminates 30 positions at Catholic Center

The Archdiocese of Baltimore announced April 30 that it is eliminating 30 positions at the Catholic Center, its administrative headquarters in downtown Baltimore. Five additional vacant positions will not be filled.

The moves are part of a budget-cutting effort designed to address an operating deficit that stood at \$1.68 million in Fiscal Year 2009 and grew to \$2 million in Fiscal Year 2010.

"The last 24 hours have been very painful for everybody," said Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien, noting that most of those who were affected responded with "acceptance and understanding."

"We are pledged to do all we can to ease the burden with the benefits as they leave," he said, "and also with counseling with new employment."

Archbishop O'Brien said the job reductions were needed because the archdiocese is "way too deep in the red."

"When you looked at the numbers, you said, 'We better take some drastic action,' " Archbishop O'Brien explained. "So, this was a tough one. They're good people who have left. They've served us very well - some from administrative positions and others from support positions."

Sean Caine, archdiocesan spokesman, said the reductions affect every department at the Catholic Center, including the archbishop's and auxiliary bishops' offices, development, management services, human resources and education ministries.

Caine said benefits will be in effect through a severance period that consists of two weeks for each year of service, with a minimum of four weeks and a maximum of 20. Once that period is completed, affected employees will have the option of retaining

benefits for another 18 months at their cost.

Early retirement was offered to a number of people who met the requirements of being 62 and older with at least 10 years service, he said.

“Affected employees will be receiving transition services to help them with unemployment compensation, resume preparation and job-search strategies,” Caine said.

Archbishop O’Brien said archdiocesan programs are bound to suffer as a result of the cuts, but he noted that archdiocesan leaders are working on ways to collaborate more closely to ease the burden.

“Our people who remain are very saddened,” he said. “It’s going to take a lot of work for all of us to pull together and not only do our job, but bring that sense of joy and mission that this building has always had.”

The reduction in the employment level follows job furloughs and cost-cutting measures that trimmed \$1 million from the budget.