

# CASE STUDY

Charter Township of Northville



## Key Takeaways

- Innovative benefits strategies help address recruitment and retention challenges. Police and Fire Departments are fully staffed and there are ample candidates for vacancies.
- Employee satisfaction with benefits helps to sustain a positive and productive workplace.



## Municipality Profile

- Northville Township is a growing suburban community in northwest Wayne County, committed to providing exceptional services to approximately 30,000 residents and workers.
- The Township was the first public employer to win the Detroit Free Press Top Workplaces Award in 2023.

## MERS Programs Used

- Defined Benefit Plan
- Defined Contribution Plan
- 457 Program



## Situation

Northville Township's Public Safety Department, accounts for half of all employees. Like other such departments, it faces significant recruitment and retention challenges.

## Process

In January 2024, Northville implemented a project to enhance its retirement benefits. Most employees have a defined benefit, and the Township explored creative ways to enhance retirement savings without increasing unfunded liabilities.

## Strategy

- **Collaboration:** Working with public safety labor organizations, the Township implemented 457 contributions of a fixed percentage to supplement the defined benefit. This initiative was well received and may be extended beyond public safety.
- **Affordable Benefits:** The defined benefit divisions require only a 3% employee contribution, making the benefits affordable.

## Results

- **Enhanced Employee Satisfaction:** 82% of Township employees rated their benefits package favorably in an annual survey, compared to the industry benchmark of 62%.
- **Third-Party Recognition:** Northville Township received the 2024 Top Workplaces Award for Culture Excellence in the compensation and benefits category.

- **Effective Recruitment and Retention:** The Township has fully staffed Police and Fire Departments and ample candidates for vacancies. The benefits package and workplace culture play a crucial role in attracting and retaining employees, supported by employee word-of-mouth networking.



Best-in-class team accepting Impact Award at the MERS 2024 Annual Conference



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