

# Compensation Policy

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**§-I. PURPOSE** To provide regulations concerning the compensation of approved county positions.

**§-II. SCOPE** All Graded Full-time and Part-time Employees.

**§-III. POLICY** The Compensation Plan is designed as a fair and equitable method of payment for employees in the county. The plan shall establish a basic salary schedule as approved by the Board of Commissioners. The salary ranges will include minimum and maximum rates of pay for all positions included in the classification plan. The compensation of each employee is the product of the basic salary structure and the components that shall be used to adjust employee compensation.

## **§-IV. PROCEDURES**

### **A. GRADED EMPLOYEES ONLY**

#### **1. Compensation Plan Structure Adjustments**

The structure adjustment is the process that will be used to ensure that the salary structure is adjusted equally across the board to reflect changes in the wage index. Each year the Board of Commissioners will decide on the applicability and the ability of Cobb County to apply an adjustment to the salary structure. These adjustments will be considered according to changes in the wage index based upon references such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics and budgetary constraints. Structure adjustments will be implemented through a percentage increase which will be applied equally to all salary ranges and/ or employee salaries.

#### **2. Merit Award Adjustments**

The merit award adjustment will be used to reward employees for job performance. Increases, if funding is approved by the Board of Commissioners, are awarded to employees whose job performance is described as either "meets" or "exceeds". The performance appraisal instrument is essential to administering this process effectively. The merit award program is based upon the principle that performance that is described as either meets or exceeds should be rewarded, because such performance is a greater contribution to the jurisdiction than unsatisfactory or needs improvement.

##### **(a) Determination of Merit Award Levels**

The level of merit award is determined by the point in the salary range the employee has reached and the employee's job performance. The salary range is composed of the minimum rate of pay for the job (apprentice level), the market rate of the job (journey level), and the maximum rate of pay for the job (master level). Progression through the salary range from the minimum rate to the market rate is allowed to be more rapid than from market rate to the maximum rate. Progression through the range will be based solely on performance awards. An employee is deemed eligible for a Merit Award if the employee's performance is rated above as "Meets" (fully

competent performance) or as "Exceeds". The following Merit Guide is an example of the type of formula to be used to establish the amount of a Merit Award:

### MERIT GUIDE

Rating	(% applied to MCP)
Exceeds Performance	X + 1.0%
Meets Performance	X
Unsatisfactory or Needs Improvement	0%

#### (b) Actual Amount of Merit Award

- i. The Target Merit Award (TMA) will be determined by the Board of Commissioners as a part of the budget process. The value of "X" in the merit guide will be determined after performance appraisals are completed and processed, through an equitable division of the budgeted dollars available and based on the Merit Guide.
- ii. The award program provides an opportunity for the department management to have discretion in using the targeted merit amount from the budget of their salary dollars as a department award pool. Each department will be allocated the same percentage of its salary dollars for awards.
- iii. The job performance of all employees is reviewed and appraised once a year. Under the "common review date" plan, all appraisals will be completed in October, November and December of each calendar year; merit increases become effective the first full bi-weekly in February of the next year for full-time employees and two pay periods later for part-time employees. Employees with less than one year service for the calendar year, shall have their merit award prorated for the partial time employed during the calendar year.
- iv. If a merit increase would cause an employee to exceed the salary range on the merit effective date, then the employee shall be provided non-cumulative payment(s) which shall not increase the employee's base salary or rate of pay.

#### 3. **Non-Cumulative Payments**

**The Board of Commissioners may approve payments to employees as single or multiple non-cumulative payments that do not adjust base salary. Such payments will be based on available funding in accordance with eligibility criteria. Such payments will be administered as determined by the Board of Commissioners.**

#### **4. Starting Rates for New Employees**

In most cases, a new employee will be paid the minimum rate of pay for the position.

a. The minimum rate of pay for each position is based on the assumption that a new employee meets the minimum qualifications stated in the class specification. In the event that qualified applicants cannot be located for a given position, consideration should be given to holding the position and creating a lower level position which will reflect lower level duties and corresponding lower entrance requirements.

b. If a selected candidate exceeds the minimum qualifications stated in the class specification and will not accept appointment at the minimum rate of pay for the position, the candidate may be appointed at a higher rate within the salary range with the Human Resources Director, upon verifying the request will not result in a salary inequity. However, every effort should be made to recruit a qualified candidate who will accept appointment at the minimum rate of pay for the position.

c. Difficulty of recruitment may require payment of a higher rate of pay. If difficulty of recruitment at the minimum rate of pay for a class specification persists, consideration may be given to assigning a higher pay rate or reevaluation of the position to determine if a higher pay grade is indicated. Positions above the minimum rate must be secured within the framework of the budget of the department employing the individual.

#### **5. Employee Transfers**

An employee may be transferred to another department in a position with the same pay grade, and such transfer will not change the employee's pay or the date from which eligibility for consideration for a merit increase shall be counted.

#### **6. Promotional Increase Policy**

When an employee is promoted or advanced to a position in a higher grade, the employee's salary will increase at least to the minimum of the new grade. If an employee is promoted or advanced to a position one grade or more higher, the increase will be at least the minimum of the new grade or at least a percentage increase of the MCP that will not create a salary inequity that cannot be justified. The maximum increase will be 15% of the MCP unless an equity adjustment is warranted. The County Manager, with the recommendation of the Human Resources Director and the requesting management, is granted the authority to make the appropriate adjustment to the salaries of the incumbents to avoid any inequity. No employee's salary will be set below the minimum or increased above the maximum of a salary range.

Typical promotions are one to four pay grades. On the rare occasion where a promotion is more than four pay grades, the maximum 15% increase is not sufficient without causing an inequity with other incumbents. In these instances, the County Manager, with the recommendation of the Human Resources Director, is granted the authority to approve the promotional increase requested by management. Such approval must be documented in a letter of justification from management and placed in the employee's file.

Procedures for determining a promotional increase are:

a. The department head will recommend the amount of the promotional increase within the standards stated in these policies.

b. The Human Resources Director will ensure that the standards of these policies are met before processing the recommended change.

c. The decision regarding a promotional increase will reflect the promoted employee's experience, seniority and performance in comparison with other employees'

backgrounds in the same job or in the same department. Final approval for promotional salary rates and pay adjustments will be determined by the Human Resources Director upon verification the adjustment will not result in a salary inequity.

#### **7. Effects of Demotion**

When an employee is demoted to a lower position, the employee shall be paid at a rate which is within the approved range for the position. The rate of pay will be set by the County Manager in consultation with the Human Resources Director, taking into consideration the circumstances surrounding, and the reasons for, the demotion. Typically, demotions will follow the promotional policy in reverse and the employee's salary amount should be reduced by the amount it was increased when the promotion occurred. An employee who is demoted in a reduction in force action shall have his/her salary reduced to a point on the lower range which will cause a 5% reduction in compensation. All salary adjustments are limited to the salary range approved for the position.

8. Whenever a new or different scale of salaries is made applicable to a class of positions, persons employed in these positions will have salary adjustments as follows:

1. All employees whose salaries are below the minimum rates for the new grades will be brought to the minimum of the new grades in the proposed compensation plan.

2. Employees whose salaries are currently at or above the new range maximums will receive no adjustment in the implementation. Their base salaries shall be "frozen" until such time as the pay structure is adjusted upward and their current salaries are incorporated.

#### **9. Supplemental Salaries**

Some groups of employees receive salary jointly from Cobb County and other government agencies, i.e., extension service staff, superior court judicial assistants. In this employment situation, employees will be eligible to receive salary and adjustments to salary as provided in this policy for the portion of total salary paid by Cobb County. Salary and adjustments to salary paid by other agencies are due to the employee and will not impact the supplement paid by Cobb County, except to establish the minimum and maximum total salary recognized by Cobb County.

10. **Employees in the Sheriff's Office and Public Safety Department** assigned in designated areas, will receive supplemental pay for that assignment. Employees in sworn classifications up to and including Deputy Sheriff Lt, Police Lt and Fire Battalion Chief are eligible for this pay. These assignments are made at the discretion of the Sheriff or Department Directors of each affected agency.

a. Employees will receive one supplemental pay designation or 5% of Market Control Point (MCP) for the following assignments

- Bomb Squad
- Civilian Training Officer
- Community Affairs
- Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT)
- Deputy Sheriff III
- Investigator
- Detention Training Officer
- Dive Team
- Hazardous Materials Response Team (HazMat)
- K9 Unit
- Medical Operations Team
- Motorcycle Unit
- Paramedics BLS Station

- Police Training Instructor
- Ranger Unit
- SWAT
- Tactical Dispatch (E911)
- Technical Rescue Team (TRT)

b. Employees will receive two supplemental pay designations or 10% of Market Control Point (MCP) for the following assignments

- Firefighter III
- Recruitment & Background Investigator (E911)
- Paramedics ALS Station
- POST Training Officers (FTO/CTO)
- Quality Assurance Specialist
- Safety Village Educator

c. Sworn and civilian employees assigned to the Adult Detention Center up to and including the rank of Lieutenant will receive specialty pay in the amount of \$1.30 per hour.

Supplemental pay will be discontinued in the event the employee is reassigned to a different position not eligible for supplemental pay.

### **11. Shift Differential**

Shift Differential is defined as additional pay received by full-time employees for working non-traditional hours that are generally less desirable or more hazardous. Shift differential shall not apply to 24-hour shifts. This policy outlines guidelines to be utilized in determining shifts and calculating pay for applicable employees.

a. Shift Definition: Departments utilize a number of different shifts. Therefore, the following are guidelines utilized by department heads to determine shift assignment for employees under this policy. The department head will have final authority regarding shift designation.

1. Day Shift is defined as official shift assignment in which the majority of the total regularly scheduled hours falls between 8AM and 4PM. Shifts that are evenly split between morning shift hours and day shift hours (i.e. 4AM to 12PM) will be considered day shift for the purposes of this policy.

2. Evening Shift is defined as official shift assignment in which the majority of the total regularly scheduled hours falls between 4PM and 12AM. Shifts that are evenly split between day shift hours and evening shift hours (i.e. 12PM to 12AM) will be considered evening shift for the purposes of this policy.

3. Morning Shift is defined as official shift assignment in which the majority of the total regularly scheduled hours falls between 12AM and 8AM. Shifts that are evenly split between evening shift hours and morning shift hours (i.e. 6PM to 6AM) will be considered morning shift for the purposes of this policy.

b. Only full-time employees are eligible to receive shift differential. Part time employees are not eligible to receive shift differential.

c. Shift Differential Pay shall apply as follows:

1. Employees assigned to day shift shall not receive shift differential pay.

2. Employees assigned to evening shift shall receive an additional \$0.50 per hour for all hours worked including hours outside their normally scheduled shift. This shall include on-call, standby pay, and leave pay.

3. Employees assigned to morning shift shall receive an additional \$1.00 per hour for all hours worked including hours outside their normally scheduled shift. This shall include on-call, standby pay, and leave pay.
4. Shift transfers must occur only after the required HR transaction deadline notice has been met so that pay rates can be adjusted in advance of such transfer. A copy of all shift transfer orders must be provided to Human Resources in advance of the HR transaction deadline.