

Frequently Asked Questions - Classification and Pay Structure

1. How was the County able to afford these increases?

- a. The County made a commitment to its workforce after wage freezes to evaluate the current classification and compensation system. In 2015, the cost to have an outside company perform a classification/compensation analysis was budgeted. In addition, funds were budgeted to rectify any wage issues after the study was completed. The total cost of the study, as well as the increases in wages, was within the budgeted amount.

2. Can the county sustain these wage increases in the future without raising taxes?

- a. The County is optimistic that these increases are sustainable moving forward. The Workforce has identified numerous cost savings initiatives, and efficiencies, which has shown significant cost savings in the County's overall budget. Although nothing is guaranteed, the current County Commissioners have committed not to raise taxes and this new classification/compensation structure has not changed that commitment.

3. Why are the increases so high?

- a. The County has not benchmarked positions to the market value since 2008. When the compensation study was finalized, 44% of the County's positions were below the market minimum value for that position. Many of these positions were our higher skilled positions, mainly in the Human Services Department. Increasing these starting wages allows the County to recruit and retain qualified individuals to provide excellent services to the citizens of Cumberland County.

4. Are pay compression issues with seniority being looked at in extreme cases?

- a. No. The new classification/compensation system was based on the job complexity, independent judgment, and level of decision making for each position. Although it is recognized that there are instances where a "short-term employee" may make the same amount as a "long-term employee," the compensation looks at the position not the person. There will be opportunities for "long-term employees" to score higher on the annual evaluations based on their job knowledge and other skills they may bring to the position.

- 5. What is the process to appeal my classification and salary?**
 - a. There is currently a six month moratorium on position reclassification until January 2016. Guidelines and procedures for this process are currently being developed and will be available after the six month moratorium process on the employee intranet.

- 6. Will the County still approve COLAs in the future?**
 - a. A cost of living adjustment (COLA) will be applied to the salary ranges in order to preserve the pay ranges' competitiveness to the market. A COLA is independent from salary adjustments received through the pay for performance initiative.

- 7. Who determines how often salary benchmarking will be completed?**
 - a. Commissioners in conjunction with the Salary Board. Industry standard is that benchmarking be done every 5 years.

- 8. Will supervisory pay compression be addressed?**
 - a. Potentially. This is an issue HR will be researching within the next 3 months.

- 9. Do Elected Officials fall under the new system?**
 - a. No. Compensation for those positions is set by County Code.

- 10. If you are over the maximum for your salary range, are you still eligible to receive a COLA?**
 - a. If a COLA is awarded, it will be applied to the DBM salary ranges. After the adjustment is made, employees' whose pay is below the maximum of the range will receive the COLA. If the pay is above the maximum for that range, they will not receive a COLA. COLAs are designed to keep the pay ranges competitive to the market value.

- 11. How do we know what the minimum, median, and maximum rates are for the salary ranges?**
 - a. They can be located [here](#)

12. How was the Salary Benchmarking completed?

- a. The salary benchmarking was performed by using 19 published surveys from four sources. There was a requirement to have at least a 70% match of the duties and responsibilities of the County position to the surveyed positions to be considered a match. Data was then aged to the common date of July 1, 2015 and geographically adjusted.

13. Did the salary benchmarking include entities that specialize in specific types of industries (nursing homes, IT companies) or did it include entities with broad functions like the County?

- a. The published data sources included both types of entities.

14. Who was in charge of the salary benchmarking?

- a. The salary benchmarking was performed by Arthur J. Gallagher and Company as part of the classification and compensation study.

15. Did all job titles change?

- a. The new classification system provides the benefit of grouping similar positions into a classification structure. This makes classifying positions easier and more consistent throughout the county. Most job titles were changed to match the classification title. However, there are some specific positions where Department Heads/Elected Officials may choose to use working titles. Human Resources will be working with Department Heads/Elected Officials to determine where this is appropriate.