

COUNTY OF KNOX

Policy Title:	Position Classification & Salary Administration Policy
Applicable Law or Regulation:	Federal and State Wage and Hour Laws
Effective date:	January 1, 2012
Responsible Party:	Andrew L. Hart, County Administrator
Last Approved by Commission:	December 13, 2022
Last Updated:	Effective January 1, 2023 August 8, 2023 Link to Manager Handbook

Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the policies and procedures governing the administration of compensation for all County employees.

Scope:

This Policy covers all employees and elected officials on Knox County's payroll.

Statement of Compensation Objectives:

It the County's objective to establish and maintain a compensation system that will:

- Attract, retain, and reward qualified personnel at all levels of responsibility;
- Reflect the relative difficulty and responsibility-level of positions;
- Be externally competitive, as well as internally consistent and fair;
- Foster good employee communication by providing individual employees with information on the pay structure and its administration;
- Motivate employees to work toward achievement of the County's goals;
- Create "career paths" and incentive for personal growth and monetary advancement on the basis of demonstrated performance;
- Control and predict salary expense;
- Be straightforward to administer; and
- Comply with applicable federal and state laws.

Policy:

The following statements express the County's objectives and policies with respect to base pay of all employees. The County recognizes that not all these objectives may be completely achieved at all times for employees (due to budget constraints, etc.), but they are set forth herein to serve as guidelines against which proposed actions are to be evaluated.

- Establish grades and salary ranges that reflect the relative value to the County of the various positions, as determined by a formal system of position evaluation and review, taking into account the duties and level of responsibility of each position;
- Ensure that, for comparable positions, pay rates and benefits are competitive with those offered by other employers providing similar employment;
- Adjust pay ranges when warranted by changing economic and competitive factors, as determined by periodic surveys; and
- Ensure that compensation is not influenced by age, sex, creed, race, national origin, disability, or other protected characteristic.
- Effective January 1, 2017 the elected positions of Sheriff and Register of Probate were assigned a Grade and Salary Range based on market data; market data will be re-evaluated at least every five (5) years. The elected position of Judge of Probate will not be assigned a pay grade or salary range, as it is not a position that lends itself to an hourly rate of pay for comparison to other counties. Knox County will ensure that the

pay level is appropriate for the Judge of Probate based on amount paid in similar size counties, and provide the same cost of living increases as provided to all County employees. Pay adjustments for elected officials other than Commissioners shall be recommended by the County Administrator, and approved by the Commission and the Budget Committee. Pay adjustments for Commissioners shall be at the sole discretion of the Budget Committee.

Wage and Salary Surveys

At the discretion of the Knox County Commission, the County will periodically compare salary rates to those of other Maine Counties that are similar in structure and size.

Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Classifications

Each position (and each employee performing that position) must be classified as "exempt" or "non-exempt," according to guidelines established under the provisions of the *Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)*. Those employees in positions classified as "exempt" are exempt from the overtime provisions of the Act. Those employees in positions classified as "non-exempt" are subject to the payment of overtime, according to wage and hour regulations.

Grade and Salary Range Structure

In 2011, Thornton & Associates was engaged to conduct a Total Compensation/Position Classification Study. Employees were asked to complete Position Description Questionnaires, select interviews were conducted to fully understand each position, and job descriptions were updated accordingly. In addition, Thornton & Associates conducted an External Market Survey and performed a Wage Structure Analysis.

With the information outlined above, Thornton & Associates assigned positions to appropriate pay ranges, using the following factors:

- **FACTOR 1: KNOWLEDGE/EDUCATION**
This factor measures the nature and extent of knowledge and/or education necessary to prepare an individual for the position. This knowledge may have been acquired either by formal education or by training on jobs of lesser degree, or by a combination of the two.
- **FACTOR 2: EXPERIENCE**
This factor defines how much total work experience is required of an incumbent to perform acceptably.
- **FACTOR 3: COMPLEXITIES**
This factor evaluates the difficulties and general complexity of the position. It measures the extent to which duties are standardized. It examines the amount of planning the job requires and the creative effort in devising new methods, policies, or procedures.
- **FACTOR 4: ACCOUNTABILITY (IMPACT OF ERRORS)**
This factor measures the responsibility for results. It also measures the impact of an error on internal operations or on customers/clients and what would be necessary to correct it.
- **FACTOR 5: INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS**
This factor evaluates the frequency and importance of contacts with individuals in other areas of the County. It measures the need to make favorable impressions on others; to use tact and diplomacy; to exchange ideas and discuss problems objectively; to secure from others inside the County the proper degree of respect, attention, cooperation and concurrence, which will promote the interest of the County.
- **FACTOR 6: EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS**
This factor evaluates the frequency and importance of contacts with organizations/agencies, suppliers and the public. It measures the importance of cooperation, persuasion and securing the proper degree of respect, attention and concurrence, which will promote the interests of the County.
- **FACTOR 7: SUPERVISION**
This factor measures the responsibility for training, guidance, leadership, direction, control and supervision of others in the performance of their work. It includes organizing work, making plans and schedules, and providing leadership and supervision toward County goals.

- **FACTOR 8: PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The physical demands factor covers the requirements placed on the employee by the work assignment.

- **FACTOR 9: WORK ENVIRONMENT**

The work environment factor considers the risks and discomfort of the assignment or the nature of the work.

Guidelines for Administering Pay within Established Pay Ranges:

- **Minimum of the Range:** An employee permanently performing the duties of a position, as described in his/her job description, shall be paid not less than the minimum of the salary range applicable to that position, unless the employee's qualifications and experience do not meet the requirements set for the position and he or she is receiving training essential to meeting such requirements (designated as a "Green Circled" salary rate).
- **Maximum of the Range:** An employee will not receive a base pay that exceeds the maximum of the salary range applicable to that position. Once an employee's salary reaches the maximum of the salary range (referred to as "Red Circled" salary rate), s/he will not have the opportunity to receive an increase in base pay until: 1) the employee is promoted to a higher grade level where the base pay does not exceed the top of the salary range; or 2) the pay ranges are adjusted and the maximum of the range exceeds the base pay.
- **Midpoint of the Range:** The midpoint in the range is the salary that is considered to be a fair and equitable rate of compensation for an employee who is fully qualified from the standpoint of training and experience, and whose demonstrated performance on the job over a period of eight or more years' time is entirely satisfactory in all respects.

Hiring Guidelines

- New employees will be hired into the salary range for the position, provided they meet the minimum qualifications for the job. If an employee does not meet the minimum qualifications (e.g. training or certification requirements), s/he may be "green-circled" and hired below the minimum of the grade until the minimum qualifications are fulfilled.

Value of Prior Experience

1. Closely-related prior work experience outside of Knox County, as determined by the Department Manager/Sheriff and the County Administrator, dating back 18 years (corresponding to 18 Steps in each salary range) will be counted as follows:
 - at 50% for positions up to and including Grade 15;
 - at 100% for positions between Grades 16-20; and

Prior related experience at Knox County, in the same time frame and in the same position classification, will be counted at 100%.

2. Experience will be calculated at the inception of the Job Evaluation and Salary Administration Program for all current employees. This calculation takes the prior related experience, calculated as described above, and places employees on the corresponding step based on the calculation (rounded up). For example, an employee with 5 years of prior related experience and 1 year of experience in the position at Knox County would be placed on Step 4 ($5/2=2.5+1=3.5$, which rounds up to 4).
3. The value of closely-related prior work experience for new employees hired between January 1, 2012 and June 8, 2013 will be calculated the same as outlined in #2 above.
4. In order to enhance the County's ability to attract the best qualified workforce, the value of closely-related prior work experience for new employees hired on or after June 9, 2013 will be modified as follows. Since a new employee with no closely-related prior experience is placed on step one, those new employees with at least one year of closely-related prior experience will be placed on a higher step (effectively, one step higher than the calculation in #3 above). For example, an employee with 8 years of closely-related prior work experience would start on Step 5 ($8/2=4$; step one plus 4 equals step 5).
5. While ensuring fair employment practices and compliance with all regulations that govern these positions:

- Newly-Elected Sheriff and Register of Probate: The County Commission has the authority to set the salary in accordance with the County's Grade and Salary Range Structure.
- Newly-Elected Judge of Probate: The Commission has the authority to set the salary. This position is not in the Grade and Salary Range Structure.
- Chief Deputy - The Sheriff and County Administrator have the authority to determine the proper Step in the Grade and Salary Range Structure for a newly appointed Chief Deputy.

Salary Increases

The Knox County Commission will consider salary increases under the following guidelines:

1. **Salary Range Adjustments.** Salary ranges will be adjusted each year based on approved cost of living increases (see below).
2. **Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA).** All County employees who are not at the top of the pay ranges for their positions may be eligible to receive annual cost-of-living adjustments based on the CPI-W (Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers), as determined by the twelve-month period ending July 31st each year (the % change between August of the prior year and July of the current year). Any increase must be approved by the County Commission and the Budget Committee. Approved COLA increases will be effective the following January 1st.
3. **Step Increase.** The Commission may recommend, in addition to or instead of a Cost of Living Adjustment, a Step Increase for employees who are assigned a pay grade and range, which means that each employee's salary would be increased by approximately 2% (as long as the employee is not over the top of the salary range). More than one Step increase could be approved, across the board or in special circumstances. Employees with dates of hire between July 1 - December 31 in any year are not eligible for a Step increase the following January 1st; they will be eligible the beginning of the pay period following six months of employment (effective with employees hired on or after July 1, 2021).

Salary Increase at Time of Promotion

When an employee is promoted to a position in a higher pay grade, the employee's salary will be increased to the new grade according to the following chart:

Grade Change	Step in New Grade
Up One Grade between Grade 5 and Grade 11	Same Step in New Grade
Up Two Grades between Grade 5 and Grade 11	One Step Lower in New Grade
Up Two Grades between Grade 10 and Grade 12	Two Steps Lower in the New Grade
Up One Grade between Grade 11 and Grade 20	Same Step in the New Grade
Up Two Grades between Grades 11 and Grade 20	Three Steps Lower in New Grade

If the promotion is more than 2 grades higher, the salary increase will be determined on a case by case basis. If the employee's current salary (before the Promotion) is not on a Step, the % increase will be applied to the current salary and then adjusted down to the closest Step (as this employee's salary was already higher than the proper Step prior to the Promotion). If the new Step would be below the minimum of the Salary Range, the salary will be at Step 1. In no event will the employee's salary be increased to exceed the Maximum of the Salary Range. The employee will be eligible for a Step increase the following January 1st, as per the normal guidelines.

Promotions are recommended by the Department Manager/Sheriff and must be approved by the County Administrator. Exceptions to this methodology for promotions would require the approval of the Commission.

Salary Decrease at the Time of Demotion

When an employee is voluntarily or involuntarily demoted, the employee's salary will be decreased to the new grade according to the following chart:

Grade Change	Step in New Grade
Down One Grade between Grade 5 and Grade 11	Same Step in New Lower Grade
Down Two Grades between Grade 5 and Grade 11	One Step Higher in New Lower Grade
Down Two Grades between Grade 10 and Grade 12	Two Steps Higher in the New Lower Grade
Down One Grade between Grade 11 and Grade 20	Same Step in the New Lower Grade
Down Two Grades between Grades 11 and Grade 20	Three Steps Higher in New Lower Grade

The employee will be eligible for a Step increase the following January 1st, as per the normal guidelines. Exceptions to this methodology for demotions would require the approval of the Commission.

Salary Considerations Relative to Internal Transfers

If an employee transfers within Knox County to a position in the same Grade, the employee will remain on the same step. The employee will be eligible for a Step Increase the following January, as per the normal guidelines.

Salary Adjustments Due to Position Reclassification, Effective September 14, 2021

When a current position is reclassified to a different grade by the Position Classification Committee, the following guidelines will be followed:

- If a position is reclassified to a higher grade, incumbents will be moved to the new grade and receive an increase in pay to the same step in the higher grade, effective the first day of the next pay period following approval
- If a position is reclassified to a lower grade, incumbents will be grandfathered in the current grade, and there will be no change in pay as a result of the reclassification. Any new employees hired into the position will be placed in the new, lower grade.

Pay Policy for Per Diem Employees, ~~Effective January 1, 2013~~ Updated August 8, 2023

Per Diem Employees are those employed on an as needed basis and do not meet the definition of a "Regular Part-Time Employee." Per Diem employees shall include, but are not limited to Per Diem deputies, corrections officers, dispatchers, and other corrections staff. ~~These Per Diem positions do not have unique job descriptions, but due to the part-time nature of the position, do not perform the full range of duties included in the regular job descriptions.~~ The rate of pay for these Per Diem Employees will follow the Position Classification Policies "Value of Prior Related Experience" ~~be \$0.50/hour below the minimum of the respective salary range for the position.~~ If a cost-of-living increase is approved for Knox County, the pay rate for Per Diem Employees will be recalculated based on the new salary range minimum. These employees are not eligible for step increases.

Per Diem employees including deputies, corrections officers, dispatchers and other corrections staff may also receive additional hourly wages based on business needs and current market wages within the State of Maine to continue to provide staffing for our public safety departments to ensure the safety of our citizens. Any wage changes to the language above would be approved by the County Administrator, and Sheriff if it pertains to Corrections or Law Enforcement.

The positions of Per Diem Airport Security Deputy and Per Diem Civil Process Deputy have unique job descriptions. For these two positions, employees will be paid at Step One (vs. \$0.50 lower than Step One), and are not eligible for step increases in the future.

An employee in the position of Per Diem Airport Maintenance Worker, due to the special license required in the position, will be placed on the proper step at the time of hire based on closely related prior work experience, as per the calculation in this policy. The employee will be entitled to a future Step increase the January 1st following completion of 1000 hours (even if this takes several years due to the part time, on call nature of this position). Subsequent Step increases will be the January 1st following completion of 2000 hours, etc.

Per Diem deputies, and corrections officers, as well as Per Diem airport security deputies, are limited to no more than 1,040 hours worked yearly, as mandated by M.R.S.A. 30-A, Section 386; if an employee in these classifications exceeds 1,040 hours in a year, the employee must have full-time certification from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy, and will receive the full-time pay rate.

Questions:

Questions about this Policy should be directed to the County's Human Resources Representative or the County Administrator.