

**YAKIMA COUNTY
CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION POLICY
POLICY NO. HR-001**

I. PURPOSE

It is the philosophy of Yakima County to support recruitment and motivation of well qualified, productive employees and to encourage and recognize activities that make a positive difference in the lives of Yakima County residents. The County therefore desires to recruit and retain individuals who demonstrate initiative, high ethical standards, team orientation and a willingness to accept responsibility for performance. The County recognizes that motivation is critical to the success of employees in achieving its overall mission, goals and objectives. Appropriate developmental and advancement opportunities, recognition for above standard performance and support for employee initiative and creative problems solving will motivate employees toward achievement of County goals.

To support this philosophy Yakima County brings together the elements of timing, public and employee relations, planning, organization and legal concerns in the complex set of management tools which comprise the Yakima County Classification and Compensation System. These management tools include a classification structure which defines the body of work performed, a compensation structure which provides fair and equitable compensation for that work and administrative policies and procedures.

This policy supersedes all previous Classification and Compensation (08/01/99, 01/01/02, 11/21/11, and 01/01/12), Exempt Compensation and Performance Appraisal (01/01/01), Performance Appraisal and Merit (05/04/99), and Step Placement for Voluntary Demotions (02/07/00) policies and/or procedures. Provisions of negotiated labor contracts which conflict with this policy take precedence over this policy to the extent applicable.

II. COMPENSATION

A. STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the policy of Yakima County to establish a compensation system that will allow the County to effectively compete for qualified personnel and to ensure that salaries are equitable and commensurate with the duties performed by each employee.

A salary schedule (pay plan) shall be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and shall apply to all employees, excluding Department Heads who report directly to the Board of County Commissioners, the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, and the Court Administrator. Copies of the salary schedule (pay plan) are available in the Human Resources Department.

As individual positions are studied through the Decision Band Method (DBM) of job evaluation, they will be allocated to classifications within the DBM classification structure and placed in the DBM Pay Plan.

B. DECISION BAND METHOD PAY PLANS

1. ***Philosophy:*** Based upon the Decision Band Method of job evaluation, the Yakima County Compensation Structure shall reflect both internal equity and external parity with the labor markets in which the County must compete. Compensation structure recommendations shall include consideration of the salary range structure as well as all other compensation received by employees. The compensation structure shall consist of a *Base Salary Pay Plan* as well as additional “shadow” *Market Parity* pay ranges for classifications which meet the criteria below.
2. ***Base Salary Pay Plan Ranges:*** All classifications shall have a base salary range which may be modified periodically by the Board of County Commissioners based on labor market data and the County’s economic position. The base salary pay plan structure shall reflect the relative internal value relationship of classes as established in the classification structure through the Decision Band Method (DBM) of job evaluation. Base salary ranges shall also reflect the comparable labor market as shown on market trend lines statistically determined from salary survey information. Each base salary range will be divided into 14 data points.
3. ***Salary Survey Methodology:*** The Board of County Commissioners may periodically decide to update labor market data for their use in establishing base salary ranges for classifications within the DBM classification system. When appropriate, updated labor market data shall be obtained by surveying the County’s comparable labor market. The Salary Survey will consist of: a Benchmark Job Analysis, a determination of the County’s Labor Market; and a Salary Survey Analysis Methodology to analyze Survey data.
 - 3.1. ***Benchmark Job Analysis:*** Benchmark classifications are those County jobs that are likely to have similar characteristics with other organizations and are standards against which the pay of other jobs can be compared. Benchmarks utilized for the Salary Survey will be selected using the following guidelines:
 - 3.1.1. Benchmarks should be selected from throughout the DBM structure such that all Bands, Grades, and Subgrades are represented.
 - 3.1.2. Benchmarks should include a minimum of three representative job classifications within each Band, Grade, and Subgrade,
 - 3.1.3. Benchmarks should be fairly accurate representations of all job classifications within each Band, Grade, and Subgrade,
 - 3.1.4. Benchmarks should be readily recognizable by survey participants and should be typical jobs that would exist in the organizations to be surveyed, and
 - 3.1.5. Benchmarks should include job classifications that contain a number of employees.

Labor Market: The determination of the County’s labor market(s) is a critical step in obtaining relevant compensation comparables. Yakima County has selected the following counties as comparables;

Benton County
Grant County
Kitsap County
Spokane County
Thurston County
Whatcom County

4. ***Salary Survey Analysis Methodology:*** Survey information obtained as a result of the Salary Survey for DBM levels A11, A12, A13, B21, B22, B23, B24/B51, B25/B32, C41, C42, C43, C44/C51, and C45/C52 will be compiled and analyzed in accordance with the following methodology:
 - 4.1. An Adjusted Salary for each participant’s reported benchmark will be calculated by normalizing the reported wages to an annual salary comprised of a 40 hour work week, a 173.3 hour work month, and a 2,080 hour work year.
 - 4.2. A Minimum and Maximum Adjusted Salary will be calculated as follows for each benchmark reported by all respondents.
 - 4.2.1. The Minimum Adjusted Salary will be the respondent’s lowest reported Adjusted Salary for the benchmark.
 - 4.2.2. The Maximum Adjusted Salary will be the respondent’s highest reported Adjusted Salary for the benchmark.
 - 4.3. The Minimum and Maximum Adjusted Salaries will be standardized to the Yakima County labor market by multiplying each Adjusted Salary by a Salary Cost of Living Index (SCOLI) factor to obtain a SCOLI Minimum Salary, a SCOLI Midpoint Salary, and a SCOLI Maximum Salary.
 - 4.3.1. The Salary.com website will be used to obtain SCOLI information. The SCOLI factor for each survey participant will be calculated using the Salary Survey participant’s closest city as the “Current Location” and the City of Yakima as the “New Location” on the Cost of Living calculator.
 - 4.3.2. The SCOLI factor will be set at 100% for participants within the local labor market. The SCOLI factor for participants outside the local labor market will be calculated as a ratio of the participant’s SCOLI divided by Yakima County’s SCOLI, not to exceed 100%.

- 4.4. The medians (50th percentiles) of the SCOLI Minimum and SCOLI Maximum Salaries will be calculated for each benchmark.
 - 4.4.1. The SCOLI Minimum Median for each benchmark will be the median value of the SCOLI Minimums reported by all respondents for the benchmark.
 - 4.4.2. The SCOLI Maximum Median for each benchmark will be the median value of the SCOLI Maximums reported by all respondents for the benchmark.
- 4.5. The County Low Salary and the County High Salary for each benchmark will be calculated using the current County Base Pay Plan.
 - 4.5.1. The County Low Salary is the lowest County Salary for the benchmark.
 - 4.5.2. The County High Salary is the highest County Salary for the benchmark.
- 4.6. Trend lines for the Market Low and the Market High will be calculated using linear regression. Each trend line will be expressed in terms of a linear equation $y = mx + b$ where y returns the Market Salary Values, m is the slope of the trend line, x is the current base salary for the Band, Grade and Subgrade, and b is the constant value where the trend line crosses the y axis at $x = 0$.
 - 4.6.1. The Market Low Trend Line regression analysis will use the County Low Salary values as the “X” values and the SCOLI Minimum Salaries as the “Y” values for each benchmark. The Market Low value for each benchmark will be determined by intersecting the benchmark’s County Low Salary with the trend line.
 - 4.6.2. The Market High Trend Line regression analysis will use the County High Salary values as the “X” values and the SCOLI High Salaries as the “Y” values for each benchmark. The Market High value for each benchmark will be determined by intersecting the benchmark’s County High Salary with the trend line.
5. **Salary Range Structure:** The Yakima County salary range structure shall provide sufficient breadth to recognize increased value to the County. Salary range spans are calculated using the SCOLI Low Salary and SCOLI High Salary for DBM levels A11, A12, A13, B21, B22, B23, B24/B51, B25/B32, C41, C42, C43, C44/C51, and C45/C52 determined as part of the Salary Survey Analysis Methodology as follows:
 - 5.1. The Market Entry Salary and the Market Maximum Salary will be determined for each Band, Grade, and Subgrade using the Market Low Trend Line and Market High Trend Line respectively.
 - 5.1.1. For DBM A11, A12, and A13 the Market Entry Salary will be equal to 95% of the Market Low Trend Line value; and the Market Maximum Salary will be equal to the Market High Trend Line value.

- 5.1.2. For DBM B21, B22, and B23; the Market Entry Salary will be equal to 97.5% of the Market Low Trend Line value and the Market Maximum Salary will be equal to the Market High Trend Line value.
 - 5.1.3. For DBM B24, B25, C41, C42, C43, C44/C51, AND C45/C52; the Market Entry Salary will be equal to the Market Low Trend Line value and the Maximum Salary will be equal to the Market High Trend Line value.
 - 5.1.4. For DBM D61, D62, D63, D64, E81 and E82; the Market Entry Salary will be calculated using the equation for the Market Low Trend Line where the “x” value is the County Low Salary for the Band, Grade and Subgrade. The Maximum Salary will be calculated using the equation for the Market High Trend Line where the “x” value is the County High Salary for the Band, Grade and Subgrade.
- 5.2. The Range for each Band, Grade, and Subgrade will be calculated by dividing the difference between the Market Maximum Salary and the Market Entry Salary by the Market Entry Salary – ((Market Maximum Salary – Market Entry Salary) / Market Entry Salary).
6. **Pay Table Structure:** The range for each Band, Grade, and Subgrade will be divided into 14 data points. The percent change between adjacent data points will be equal.
- 6.1. The percent change between data points within the Range will be calculated by adding one to the Range and raising the sum to the 1/13th power.
 - 6.2. The first data point will represent the Market Entry Salary; the second data point will be equal to the first data point multiplied by the percent change between data points; the third data point will be equal to the second data point times the percent change between data points; and so forth until fourteen points have been calculated. The fourteenth data point will represent the Maximum Salary.
7. **Market Parity Pay Ranges:** The Board of County Commissioners may establish a market premium for specific classes when there is a situation where the market compensation level is not consistent with the established salary range resulting from the formal job evaluation process used to establish internal equity within Yakima County classifications. The Board of County Commissioners will establish the County’s target market compensation position relative to other comparable agencies.
- 7.1. If the market compensation study determines that the base salary range for a class is 10% or more below Yakima County’s target market position for the year, then a market premium amount may be established that approximates the difference between the target market compensation position level and the job rate for the classification. The market premium amount will be added to the entire salary range for the classification. The base salary range for the classification will remain unchanged.

7.2. Job classifications with market premiums added to the base salary range will continue to be included in all comprehensive surveys of Decision Band Method classifications within the occupational group until such time as the base salary range for the classification is within 10% of the target market level for the classification. The market premium amounts for a classification may change up or down based upon the data received from the market compensation study for the classification. Should the market premium amount fall to less than 10% below the target market compensation position of the County, then the market premium will be eliminated and the salary for the individual position will be the individual's current increment in the base salary grade for the job classification.

8. ***Establishment of Compensation:*** Compensation to employees includes consideration of the salary range structure as well as all other economic benefits received. The Board of County Commissioners, based on the County's economic position and the County's labor market, may choose to implement compensation increases to employees by way of salary increases and/or increases to economic benefits. At such times that the Board decides to grant employee salary increases, the Board may choose to:

8.1. Revise a Pay Range by applying all or part of a market adjustment identified by the Salary Survey Methodology to the Salary Range Structure and Pay Table Structure.

8.2. Revise a Pay Range by applying all or part of a market adjustment AND approve the movement of employees up one increment in a Pay Range.

8.3. Changes to the above established compensation recommendations require review and approved by the Board of County Commissioners.

C. MAINTENANCE OF THE PAY PLANS

The Human Resources Department shall be responsible for the continuous maintenance and administration of the Yakima County Compensation Plan. This will include a periodic review and analysis of rates of pay for similar positions in comparable labor markets, organizations, cost-of-living factors, budgetary considerations, and other related factors. On the basis of this information, the Director of Human Resources shall recommend to the Board of County Commissioners changes to keep the plan current, uniform and equitable. Such changes shall be approved by the Board of County Commissioners and shall then be included in the annual budget.

The Yakima County Compensation System shall include a Decision Band Method Pay Plan for classes included in the Decision Band Method Classification System, as well as Pay Plans according to provisions of bargaining agreements for other employee groups.

III. YAKIMA COUNTY CLASSIFICATION STRUCTURE

A. PHILOSOPHY

The Yakima County Classification Structure will reflect meaningful and measurable differences in the levels of work within each occupational group. The classification structure will facilitate internal equity. The classification will designate different levels and categories of work according to the Decision Band Method of job evaluation. The classification structure will be periodically reviewed to ensure that it meets current needs of operating departments and also that it is sufficiently flexible to adapt to changing environments. The County will create new classes and redefine class responsibilities as needed to ensure responsiveness to organizational and environmental change.

Revision of class specifications and position descriptions within the classification plan shall be made as often as is necessary to provide current information on positions and classes. Position descriptions and class specifications do not constitute an employment agreement between the County and employee, and are subject to change as the needs of the County and the requirements of the job change. Examples of duties listed in the class specification are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work performed. Omissions of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similarly related or a logical assignment to the position.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. *Human Resources Department:*** It shall be the duty of the Human Resources Department to work with the Personnel Committee and Department Heads and Elected Officials to examine the duties of positions, to allocate them to existing or newly created classes, to periodically review the entire classification plan and to recommend modifications to reflect current accepted classification practices, changes in responsibilities of existing positions, and compliance with new laws and regulations. The Human Resources Department will respond to departmental requests for revision of class specifications or development of new class specifications to meet on-going operational requirements of Yakima County. The Human Resources Department shall prepare recommendations for the Board of County Commissioners regarding position reclassification after Decision Band Methodology position review. The Human Resources Department shall assist the Department Head/Elected Official in scheduling any appeal of denied position reclassification requests with the Personnel Committee.
- 2. *Department Head/Elected Officials:*** Class specifications will be reviewed by operating departments on an annual basis to ensure that they meet current needs. Department Heads and Elected Officials shall submit a written recommendation to the Human Resources Department when a new position is requested or the duties of a position are substantially changed, including justification for reclassification and emphasizing changes in position responsibilities, requirements or decision making level.

3. **Personnel Committee:** The Personnel Committee reviews Classification and Compensation System policy administration issues, makes related recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners and serves as the reclassification appeal board.

C. BROAD CLASSES

The Yakima County Classification Structure shall generally consist of broad classes that reflect the essential duties and responsibilities performed by incumbents in each class and will include a limited number of narrow classes where appropriate. The classification structure shall provide for career advancement/progression within occupational groups where feasible.

D. CLASS SPECIFICATIONS

The Human Resources Department shall maintain class specifications which shall include: Class Title, Class Code, Department, Overtime Status, Reporting Structure, Effective Date, Essential Duties (reflecting current typical duties performed), Minimum Qualifications, and Special Requirements. The class specification shall serve as the basis for recruitment of vacant positions. Copies of class specifications are available in the Human Resources Department.

The Human Resources Department shall maintain documentation regarding specific position descriptions. These provide a basis for customizing recruitment announcements, performance management and appraisal, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. NEW EMPLOYEE HIRING

New employees will generally be paid the entry salary rate in the appropriate salary range. Appointment at a level above the entry rate is subject to approval of the Board of County Commissioners. Justification for hire above the entry rate must accompany hiring documentation.

B. PROMOTION PAY RATE

An employee promoted to a position in a higher pay grade shall have his/her salary established within the range of the new assigned pay grade as follows:

1. Pay will be set at the entry rate in the appropriate salary range for the new position; or
2. If the entry rate does not provide at least a 5% increase, pay will be set at the increment level in the higher pay grade that provides at least a 5% increase above the employee's current salary.

C. DEMOTION PAY RATE

1. An employee who is demoted as a disciplinary action shall be placed at the same increment level in the lower classification pay range as currently held in the position from which

demoted. Approval for placement at a higher increment level shall require approval of the Board of County Commissioners.

2. An employee who accepts an involuntary demotion for non-disciplinary reasons shall be placed in the increment level that is closest to, but not greater than, the pay rate in the class from which demoted.
3. An employee who voluntarily requests a demotion to or applies for position in a lower classification shall be placed in the compensation system at the same increment level in the lower classification pay range as currently held in the position in the higher classification pay range. Approval for placement at a higher increment level shall require approval of the Board of County Commissioners.
4. There shall be no increase in salary level as a result of a voluntary demotion.

D. RECLASSIFICATION

The employee or Department Head may submit to the Human Resources Department a request for reclassification. Human Resources shall ensure that the employee is notified of timelines according to bargaining agreements. As the first step in the review, the employee will be asked to complete and return a position description questionnaire. Human Resources will conduct a position review according to the Decision Band Method. A report of determinations shall be given to the Personnel Committee which may accept, modify, or reject the HR Department determination. The Personnel Committee shall submit a formal classification recommendation to the Human Resources and Budget Directors for consideration prior to approval by the Board of County Commissioners. The Department Head/Elected Official may appeal the recommendation to the Personnel Committee in person, before it is submitted to the Board of County Commissioners.

E. RECLASSIFICATION PAY RATE

1. An employee who is advanced to a higher pay range through reclassification shall have his/her salary set to the lowest increment level within the new pay range that provides at least a 5% increase in pay.
2. An employee in a position reclassified to a classification in the same pay range shall receive no increase in pay.
2. An employee in a position reclassified to a lower level shall be placed in the closest increment level in the lower pay range with no increase in pay, or Y-rated if the employee's current pay is above the maximum rate of the new pay range.
3. *Pay Rates Exceeding Range Maximum (Y-Rating)*: "Y-rated" means an individual's compensation will remain frozen until the base salary range of the position catches up to the individual's frozen salary. If a position is reclassified for reasons other than a significant change in duties and responsibilities and the salary for the incumbent exceeds the maximum

rate of the base salary grade for the classification, the individual will be Y-rated and will not experience a reduction in pay.

F. ANNIVERSARY DATES

1. Hire Date: date of the individual's most recent employment with the County.
2. Original Hire Date: date of the individual originally entered employment with the County.
3. Continuous Service Date: date used to determine length of service calculations for:
 - a. Time Off Accruals
 - b. Benefit Elections
4. Current Position Date: date individual entered into current position.
5. Seniority Date: date used for Longevity calculations
6. Union Seniority Date: date to track seniority within each collective bargaining unit.
7. Increment Advancement: Frequency of increment advancements shall be according to the provisions of the applicable Pay Plan as approved and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and/or relevant collective bargaining agreements. Increment advancement, when adopted by resolution of the Board of County Commissioners, shall occur on April 1st.
8. A regular employee who is promoted will have his/her Current Position Date changed to the effective date of the promotion.
9. A regular employee who is voluntarily demoted shall have his/her Current Position Date adjusted.
10. A regular employee who accepts a lateral transfer or position in the same classification pay range shall have his/her Current Position Date changed. The employee shall not receive an increase in pay.
11. A regular employee who returns from a leave of absence without pay which was for a period in excess of one half of his/her regularly scheduled payroll period hours will have his/her Continuous Service Date, Seniority Date, and Union Seniority Date adjusted by the length of time the employee was on leave without pay.
12. There will be no change in an employee's salary when the position is reallocated to a classification in the same pay range.

c. OUT-OF-CLASS PAY

There are circumstances in which an employee receives compensation for the performance of duties in a higher classification than he/she normally performs. The provisions herein apply to all

employees of the County unless existing labor contracts specifically provide for a different out-of-class procedure.

Compensation for working out of classification is provided as monetary recognition to an employee for the assumption and performance of duties normally performed by an employee of a higher classification. The assumption and performance of the duties of the higher classification must encompass a range of responsibilities of the higher classification not included in the current classification. The employee must meet the minimum education and experience requirements of the higher classification. The classification must be one identified in use within the department or division.

Out-of-class compensation shall not apply to temporary assignments made pursuant to mutual agreement between the employee and his or her supervisor for the purpose of providing training for a mutually agreed upon period of time. Out-of-class compensation shall not apply for coverage of a work station for a short period of time due to another employee's absence, unless specifically provided for in a collective bargaining agreement. A short period of time is defined as under 30 consecutive days. Out-of-class compensation shall begin the first day of the following pay period in which approval notification is received.

Out-of-class compensation is paid for hours worked in the higher classification. When the out-of-class assignment is for less than a 30 day period, other miscellaneous hours such as sick or PTO leave and holiday pay are calculated at the employee's regular base rate.

Employees approved to work out-of-class over 30 days are to be paid the higher rate for the approved period. In this instance, other miscellaneous hours are calculated at the out-of class rate. Approval to pay out-of-class for a period over thirty (30) days must be granted by the Board of County Commissioners.

Out-of-class compensation will be calculated using the following methodology:

- 1 Pay Grade Change: Employee will be compensated at 7.5% increase above the current rate of pay in the employee's regular pay range
- 2 Pay Grade Change: Employee will be compensated at 15.0% increase above the current rate of pay in the employee's regular pay range
- 3 Pay Grade Change or higher: Employee will be compensated at 20.0% increase above the current rate of pay in the employee's regular pay range

Incumbents placed in Out-of-class assignments foreseen to exceed 6 months require the employee's current position to be evaluated for reclassification.

When the temporary assignment is completed, the employee's salary will be readjusted to its previous level at the increment where it would have been, including general salary adjustment and within range increases, if the out-of-class pay had not been made. The adjustment to the previous level shall be made the first day of the following pay period in which the assignment is

terminated. The employee's hire date and continuous service date will remain unchanged throughout the temporary assignment.

Salary placement for interim appointments to management positions shall be as determined by the Board of County Commissioners.

d. REORGANIZATIONS

“Reorganization” means a redistribution of duties and responsibilities among two or more positions within a work unit which impacts the classification of the positions. The redistribution may involve the assignment of new duties to a position, the removal of duties from a position, or the exchange of duties among multiple positions.

When a department initiates a reorganization, Human Resources shall assist by conducting a timely and comprehensive study, identifying and analyzing union issues, effect on employees, fiscal impact, and effect on the Classification and Compensation System. Study recommendations shall be presented in a staff report to the Personnel Committee and Department Head/Elected Official based upon policy, legal and contractual obligations and best business practice. The Personnel Committee shall recommend reorganization changes to the Board of County Commissioners.

e. MARKET FLUCTUATION FLEXIBILITY:

Since the potential for market fluctuation must be considered in classifications with a market premium pay range, alternate plans for these classes may be developed; however, such plans must maintain the basic principles of the policy outlined herein and be approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Under this provision, the following shall apply to the Attorney classifications:

- For hiring and promotional placement, positions in the Attorney I, II, III, and IV classifications shall be considered in combination, and they may be filled in any class.
- The Attorney classification pay plan shall be divided into four job classifications based on labor market data. The Attorney classification levels are:
 - Attorney I: Increment 1 through Increment 4
 - Attorney II: Increment 1 through Increment 8
 - Attorney III: Increment 1 through Increment 8
 - Attorney IV: Increment 1 through Increment 11
- The Department Head/Elected Official shall determine the initial hiring classification and increment level in the combined attorney classification series based on an assessment of the individual's skill level, experience and academic credentials. Individuals must meet established class minimum qualifications. The hiring increment may be up to the top increment of the applicable pay range. Funding for the hiring placement must be absorbed within existing department budget authority and shall not constitute justification for future additional resource allocations.

- Movement between classifications, or from one increment to another increment within a classification pay range is considered a promotion, and shall be allowed by written recommendation of the Department Head/Elected Official based on skill assessment, performance evaluations and established class minimum qualifications. The promotion increment may be up to two increments within the applicable pay range or, in the case of a reclassification, to the lowest increment level within the new pay range that provides at least a 5% increase in pay. The employee's increment date shall be changed in accordance with this policy, to reflect the effective date of the promotion or reclassification. Promotions shall be limited to one promotion in any 12 calendar month period. Funding for the advancement must be absorbed within existing department budget authority and shall not constitute justification for future additional resource allocations.

- Recommendations for movement between attorney classes or increments shall include, but not be limited to the following skill-based factors:
 - professional growth and development on the job;
 - accumulated experience and skill;
 - experience in two or more major areas of operation;
 - qualified by experience/professional standards for matters of greater gravity or consequences to parties;
 - significant trial experience and/or expertise, with special recognition of jury trial experience;
 - assignment of matters of greater gravity and consequences to parties.
 - assigned lead status in area of operation; and/or
 - assigned formal supervisory or administrative duties.

Adopted Copy Available at
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