

TITLE Compensation Policy	APPROVAL DATE: 12/5/2025
DEPARTMENT CUSTODIAN Human Resources	DATES REVISED:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Compensation Policy is to establish a structured, equitable, and transparent framework for compensating all employees of Douglas County Government. This policy supports the County’s mission to serve the public effectively by attracting, retaining, and rewarding a skilled and dedicated workforce.

The Board of County Commissioners recognizes that the County’s success is achieved through the commitment and professionalism of its employees, whose contributions are essential to delivering high-quality services to the community.

DEPARTMENT(S)

AFFECTED: This policy applies to all County employees.

POLICY:

In accordance with the Douglas County Board Policy Manual, Section 3.2.3, with respect to employment, compensation and benefits to employees, the County Manager shall not establish compensation and benefits that deviate materially from the regional or professional market for the skills employed unless approved by the Board. As such, Douglas County Government’s compensation practices are guided by the following principles:

- **Equity:** Ensure pay is fair and consistent across similar roles and responsibilities.
- **Transparency:** Maintain open communication regarding pay structures and decision-making processes.
- **Market Competitiveness:** Align compensation with comparable Denver Metro/Front Range public sector organizations via the Colorado Public Employers Compensation data (CPEC) and private sector survey data.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Manage taxpayer resources prudently and responsibly.
- **Performance Recognition:** Reward employees for individual contributions and performance through the annual merit cycle.
- **Legal Compliance:** Adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local compensation laws and regulations.

A. Compensation Philosophy:

Douglas County Government is committed to maintaining a compensation system that is:

- Externally Competitive: Benchmarked against other counties, municipalities, public-sector entities and where appropriate private sector entities within the Denver/Front Range region to ensure market competitiveness.
- Internally Equitable: Based on job content, responsibilities, required qualifications, and demonstrated performance.
- Transparent and Consistent: Employees will have access to salary schedules and will understand how pay decisions are made and administered.

B. Compensation Structure:

Job Classification System: Each position is classified based on the essential duties, responsibilities, required education and experience, and the level of supervision. Roles are grouped into job families and assigned to pay grades to ensure internal equity and consistency across departments.

Salary Ranges: Douglas County maintains defined salary ranges for each classification. These ranges are reviewed annually and may be adjusted based on market analysis and survey data; and County budget capacity and fiscal priorities.

Base Pay: Base salaries are determined by the assigned pay grade for each position. Initial placement within the range considers the employee's qualifications, experience, and internal equity. Department Directors/Elected Officials shall collaborate with Human Resources to develop an equitable and market competitive salary offer for new hires, promotions and other position movement:

- Initial salary offers above the midpoint of the pay grade require Director of Human Resources approval.
- Initial salary offers more than 10% higher than the previous or current incumbent's pay requires Director of Human Resources approval.
- Initial salary offers above 1.05 compa-ratio require County Manager approval.

Pay Adjustments: Employee pay may be adjusted under the following circumstances:

- Merit Increases: Based on documented performance evaluations. Annual merit funding is approved by the Board of County Commissioners. Once approved, Department Directors/Elected Officials determine the distribution of individual merit increases.

Temporary employees are not eligible for merit pay. A memo on the merit process is distributed in December each year.

- **Promotions:** Employees may apply internally for promotional opportunities. Department Directors/Elected Officials shall collaborate with Human Resources to determine an appropriate salary recommendation. Typically, promotional increases range from 3% to 7%. Any increase exceeding 7% or surpassing the midpoint of the pay range requires Director of Human Resources approval and may also require County Manager approval.
- **Career Progression:** Career progressions may be established for specific positions and must be approved by the Director of Human Resources. These progressions outline defined milestones and/or criteria that must be met to advance to the next level, generally along with associated pay increases.
- **Demotions:** Voluntary or involuntary movement to a lower pay grade shall generally result in a salary reduction in consultation and agreed upon with the Director of Human Resources.
- **Reclassifications:** Positions may be reevaluated and assigned to a new classification and pay grade based on significant changes in duties or responsibilities. Salary adjustments may occur depending on the reclassification outcome.
- **Equity Adjustments:** The Human Resources Department conducts annual pay equity reviews to identify and address potential pay disparities. Department Directors/Elected Officials may also submit an equity review request at any time if they believe an inequity exists for an individual employee or group. Human Resources will review the request and make a determination based on data and established criteria.

Requests for the above must be requested by the Department through Human Resources. Requests are generally processed in the order they are received. The Human Resources Department reserves 45 days from the date of receipt of the request to complete the review. The County Manager, or designee, has final approval on any request related to budget impacts. Approved changes will generally become effective at the beginning of the pay period in which they are approved. Please note that the last quarter of each year is subject to a processing hold for promotional reclassifications (vacant positions excluded) and equity tickets. Submissions will be accepted, but processing and effective dates will be deferred to the first pay period of the next year.

Overtime and Compensatory Time: Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime but may receive other forms of recognition for extraordinary effort at the discretion of the Department Director/Elected Official.

C. Benefits and Additional Compensation:

Employee Benefits: Douglas County provides a comprehensive and competitive benefits package designed to support employee well-being and retention. A listing of available benefits may be located:

- In the Employee Handbook <https://www.douglas.co.us/board-county-commissioners/transparency/policies/>. AND
- Benefit information is also available on the DCNet Human Resources Benefits Page.

D. Compliance and Legal Considerations:

Douglas County Government complies with all relevant compensation and employment laws. The County is committed to conducting regular pay equity audits and correcting disparities where they are identified.

E. Roles and Responsibilities:

Human Resources Department: Administers this policy, conducts market analyses, reviews and approves pay actions requiring Director of Human Resources authorization, and ensures compliance with applicable laws and County standards.

Department Directors and Elected Officials: Partner with Human Resources to ensure fair and equitable pay practices, provide performance feedback, and make compensation recommendations consistent with this policy.

Employees: Are expected to understand this policy, engage in the performance review process, and direct any compensation-related questions to their supervisor and/or Human Resources.

Related policies may be located on the '[Administrative Policies](#)' page on the Douglas County website.