

GASTON COUNTY PAY PLAN

FY 2020-2021

PREFACE

The policies, procedures, classifications, and pay rates as identified within the Gaston County Pay Plan apply to all county departments and agencies, except as noted.

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Fiscal Year: July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

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SECTION I: COMPENSATION POLICY

The primary objective of the compensation policy of Gaston County is to ensure that wages and salaries paid to its employees are externally competitive, internally equitable, and linked to the organization's goals and objectives. The level of pay is based on the County's financial ability to pay, its fiscal policy, and local prevailing rates. Gaston County is required to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act. County policies are intended as a supplement or an enhancement of F.L.S.A. and should contradiction occur; the F.L.S.A. will take precedence over County policy.

A. PAY PLAN

The Gaston County Pay Plan includes an alphabetical list of classifications, salary ranges assigned to the classifications; and rules and procedures for salary administration.

B. COVERAGE

All employees, regardless of budget status, are covered by the Pay Plan Provisions and Pay Administration Procedures and are deemed to be employed under merit principles. However, certain employee pay rates are set by the separate actions of the Board of County Commissioners, State of North Carolina, or otherwise provided in absence of the pay schedule. Those classifications and/or positions that are covered under the County Pay Plan but are exempt from the pay administration procedures are as follows:

There are none at this time.

C. COMPENSATION**1. Calculation**

All salary ranges represent the minimum and maximum base compensation for a given classification. Official payroll computations for non-exempt employees are based on an hourly rate (calculated to four decimal places). Exempt employees are paid on a salary basis.

2. Pay Periods

All employees are paid on a biweekly basis representing twenty-six (26) pay periods in a calendar year.

3. Time Keeping

All non-exempt employees must complete a time sheet for each pay period that indicates total hours worked and any variations or exceptions to their regularly scheduled work week for each pay period. Exempt employees complete time sheets only when there is an exception to their regular salary; as an example, when taking annual leave, sick leave, or when a paid holiday occurs in the pay period. All time sheets must be signed by the employee and approved by the appropriate level of supervisor or manager or director. The timesheets are to be turned into the Finance Department.

D. WORK WEEK HOURS

All Salary Ranges in the Pay Plan are established on the basis of a forty (40) hour work week, unless otherwise noted. The majority of classifications in the County service are assigned to a forty (40) hour work week and this is considered their regular working hours. Classifications designated as "exempt" under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are required to work varying schedules as necessary to accomplish the required work. The majority of these positions will work a forty (40) hour work week, but if more than forty (40) hours are required, overtime compensation provisions shall not apply.

For the period of July 1, 2020 until June 30, 2021 the work week for all County employees shall be from 12:01 A.M. Saturday to 12:00 P.M. (midnight) the following Friday. The work week as defined shall be the basis for determining overtime compensation, except for those employees engaged in law enforcement activities that may be assigned other work schedules authorized under the FLSA.

E. PAY STATUS

Pay status shall be defined as that period of time when the employee is actually working, when they are utilizing annual leave, sick leave, or other authorized paid leave. An employee in non-pay status shall not earn or accrue any leave, retirement credits, or other benefits with the exception of employees on authorized leave without pay under the provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act, who will continue to receive medical insurance benefits. To be in pay status, the employee must have actually worked or been on authorized paid leave. An employee occupying an allocated permanent full-time position shall be in pay status and accrue all eligible benefits. An employee occupying an allocated permanent part-time position shall be in pay status and accrue eligible benefits on a prorated basis depending on the actual hours worked. An employee is not in pay status after their last day of work when separated because of resignation, retirement, death, dismissal, reduction in force, or when beginning an approved leave of absence without pay.

All requests for leave without pay are submitted to, and must be approved by the employee's department director.

F. OVERTIME COMPENSATION

For all non-exempt employees, the calculation of overtime hours worked, or portions of hours worked, shall be in accordance with prevailing Fair Labor Standards Act requirements. All non-exempt employees serving in eligible positions will receive one and one-half times their regular hourly rate of compensation for work performed in excess of the standard work week or work period as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Gaston County's Comp time policy provides that any non-exempt employee may request the substitution of time and one-half off for hours of overtime worked by signing and submitting an agreement to voluntarily do so. Once the agreement is accepted, the employee is locked into the agreement for at least thirteen (13) pay periods and a maximum of 160 overtime hours at time-and-one-half for a total of 240 hours. For the purpose of defining and computing overtime, **authorized or unauthorized absences from duty shall not be considered as time worked**. Actual time worked, including actual time spent on jury duty, is considered as time worked.

The work week as defined in section D shall be the basis for determining overtime compensation, except for those employees engaged in law enforcement. Employees engaged in law enforcement activities may be assigned other work schedules authorized by the Fair Labor Standards Act. The rules for computing a law enforcement employee's overtime compensation are the same as those applied to all other non-exempt employees except that the term **work period** should be substituted for the term **work week**.

SECTION II: GENERAL SALARY ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES**A. ORIGINAL APPOINTMENT**

Original appointment shall be defined as the first appointment to the County service, regardless of employment status (full-time, part-time, seasonal, temporary, etc.).

The entrance salary or hourly rate for new employees shall be at the minimum of the salary range for the position's classification, with the following exceptions:

- 1. Appointment Above Minimum:** In certain circumstances, and based upon the County's needs and the applicant's qualifications for a position, the recruitment and employment of individuals may require initial rates of pay to be above the minimum of a salary range. All salary offers above the minimum shall be approved by the Human Resources Department.
- 2. Appointment Below Minimum:** An exception to the appointment at the minimum of the salary range is provided to recognize approved trainee programs in selected classifications. Salary increases necessary to advance the trainee to the minimum of the salary range shall be based on a defined performance and training or certification criteria and/or specific time intervals. Pay increases may be granted at specific time intervals based on satisfactory completion of specified training requirements, however, there will be no permanent employee evaluation date established during the trainee period. An employee may not remain on a trainee appointment beyond the time they meet the specific requirements for the class. After the employee has successfully completed all educational and experience requirements for the class they shall either be given permanent status in the position and a new employee performance evaluation date is established; or shall be terminated. All trainee programs and appointments must have the prior approval of the Director of the Human Resource Department. Under no other circumstances shall an employee's salary fall below the minimum of the range for the employee's job class.

While in training status, an employee's base rate may be advanced due to 1) the successful completion of a major portion or all of the required training according to specified time intervals, and/or 2) general wage adjustments (i.e. COLA) as authorized by the Board of County Commissioners. However, while in training status, an employee's base rate shall not be advanced to the minimum of the salary range for the class (except as provided in Sec. II, B, Promotion). When an employee completes a trainee program, the employee is advanced to the minimum of the new salary range.

B. PROMOTION

Promotion shall be defined as an advancement from one position to another with a higher salary grade.

Trainee: Promotions which require the employee to work as a trainee, because they do not yet fully meet the minimum qualifications for the position, shall result in placement in the trainee progression according to the employee's educational and training qualifications. The employee is not considered promoted until the training period is completed even though there may be a salary change when entering the trainee progression and during the training period. **Once the training period is completed, the employee's salary is advanced according to the pre-defined promotion plan or as determined by the Human Resources Director and the Department Director.**

Employees accepting a Promotion will have to serve a new probationary period with the exception of employees who are promoted from a non-law enforcement position to the position requiring law enforcement certification, which requires a one-year probationary period, which only covers due process and not benefits.

C. RECLASSIFICATION

A reclassification is a personnel action which may increase, decrease, or otherwise change a position's salary range, classification title, and/or duties and responsibilities. This action may be the result of changes in the actual job responsibilities and duties assigned as required by management, a budgetary reduction in force, new or eliminated services or functions through reorganization, or other factors.

When the salary range of a position is changed due to an increase or decrease in duties and responsibilities, the incumbent's pay rate will increase or decrease an amount determined by the Human Resources Department. The employee retains their permanent status.

D. DEMOTION

Demotion is the appointment of an employee to a new position with decreased responsibility and pay. The employees' new pay rate will be determined by the Human Resources Department.

E. TRANSFER

A transfer is defined as the lateral movement of an employee from one position, in a given classification and salary range, to another position in the same or similar classification and salary range. The transfer may be within a department (intra-departmental) or between departments (interdepartmental). In all transfers the employee's range, permanent status, performance evaluation date, and benefits remain the same.

In situations where an employee is newly appointed to the county service, but is coming from another city, county, or other State Retirement System agency, the employee's sick leave balance will be transferred from that agency to Gaston County upon receipt of a written certification of sick leave balance from the previous employer. For sick leave to be transferred, the new employee must be considered as a transfer by the State Retirement System. If the new employee has elected to withdraw their retirement contributions prior to employment with Gaston County, then the transfer of sick leave balances is prohibited. Accumulated annual leave and length of service credit for longevity pay is not transferable from other cities, counties, or State of North Carolina agencies.

F. SALARY ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pay for Performance

Salary advancement within a job classification's salary range shall be based solely on the basis of merit and not the passage of time. Permanent employees (both full-time and part-time employees working a regularly recurring schedule in a position) are eligible for a merit increase regardless of the number of hours worked.

The performance evaluation date is established as October 1st through December 15th.

An employee's salary cannot be raised by merit or market adjustments to exceed the maximum salary rate for the salary range assigned to the employee's job class. In those circumstances, employees will receive a lump sum payment in lieu of a base pay increase.

2. Pay Plan Adjustments

All increases in an employee's pay shall be based on performance. However, as part of the County's Performance Management System, external wage and salary surveys will be conducted periodically to ensure the competitiveness of the County's salary structure. Based upon these wage and salary surveys, the County's ability to pay, and County pay policy, a general adjustment in employee wages and salaries and/or an adjustment in salary ranges may be authorized by the Board of County Commissioners. An employee's pay rate may be affected by a change in salary ranges in the Pay Plan.

When pay adjustments are recommended to and approved by the Board of County Commissioners, each eligible employee's pay rate shall be advanced by an amount as determined by the Board. However, if the employee's pay rate remains equal to or is greater than the new adjusted maximum rate of their salary range, they will receive a lump sum payment equal to the approved percentage based on their regular base pay. An employee's employment status or performance evaluation date is not affected by a pay scale adjustment.

The maximum pay rate for a given salary range is the maximum rate of pay which can be allocated to an employee, excluding income authorizations. Once the employee reaches the maximum rate in their respective salary range, additional increases in the rate is based only on pay scale adjustments to the salary range for the classification.

G. ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION / INCOME AUTHORIZATIONS

1. Lead Worker

Lead Worker is defined as an income authorization for an employee in a particular position in an organization for the performance of limited supervisory related duties not normally associated with the position's classification. A Lead Worker generally performs the same or similar tasks as other employees in a given job classification. **Lead Worker authorization is applicable only to job classifications which are classified as non-supervisory.** Those positions and/or employees designated as Lead Worker shall receive a three (3%) percent income authorization added to their regular earnings. However, the pay rate paid to the employee will not change.

Requests for the assignment of Lead Worker are processed as a Personnel Action and are authorized through an Income Authorization. Similarly, pay for Lead Worker ends with the deletion of these duties. **Only those employees classified as Non-Exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act are eligible for this allowance.**

2. Field Training Officer

Field Training Officer (FTO) pay is defined as an income authorization for certain employees in the public safety classifications only. The income authorization is not permanent and is based on the length of assignment as a trainer. Employees assigned to this function serve as on-the-job trainers of probationary public safety (Trainees). Those employees designated as FTO's shall receive a five (5%) percent income authorization added to their regular earnings. The employee's pay rate will not change.

Requests for the assignment of FTO are processed as a Personnel Action and are authorized through an Income Authorization. Similarly, pay for FTO ends with the deletion of these duties.

3. Longevity

In addition, other compensation for longevity of service will be provided to those full-time and permanent part time County employees who: 1) were employed prior to October 24, 2002 (per BOC Resolution 2002-337); 2) have at least eight (8) years of continuous uninterrupted service and; 3) are employed by Gaston County on the last payday of the fiscal year. Longevity pay will be issued to eligible employees following the adoption of the annual budget. **Board resolution 2002-337 terminated Longevity pay for all employees hired after 10/24/2002. Employees who were eligible for longevity but who terminated employment with Gaston County for any reason and then were re-hired after 10/24/2002 will not be eligible for Longevity.**

Years of Service	Percentage of Actual Salary
At least eight but less than eleven	1.50
At least eleven but less than fourteen	2.50
At least fourteen but less than seventeen	3.50
At least seventeen but less than twenty	4.50
Twenty or more years	5.00

4. Certification Pay

Employees in certain classifications, as designated by the Department of Human Resources and approved by the County Manager, are eligible for additional compensation based on attaining and maintaining a specific level of certification related to their job classification. The actual amount of compensation is determined by the Department of Human Resources on the basis of the classification and is paid annually in a lump sum on the anniversary of the employee's certification date. If an employee is promoted or demoted to a classification not authorized certification pay, the additional income authorization shall cease as of the date of the classification change.

5. Travel Expenses

All employees are eligible to receive a specified mileage allowance when using a private vehicle for official business and reimbursement of travel related expenses. Specific guidelines are set forth in the County Travel Policy. In addition, new professional level employees may receive reimbursement for relocation expenses upon the approval of the County Manager as authorized by the Board of County Commissioners Resolution #89-99, effective May 1, 1989.

6. Tool Allowance

Employees in classifications designated as trades or maintenance categories, and who are required by their department or the County to provide their own hand and/or power tools, are eligible for an income authorization for an annual tool allowance of \$1,040.00, which is paid on a biweekly basis (\$40.00 for twenty six pay periods). The required list of tools is determined and maintained by the employee's department and approved by the County Manager. Tool allowances are treated as income authorizations and are not considered part of the employee's base rate. Employees receiving tool allowances are responsible for replacing any lost, stolen, or damaged tools at their own expense. **Only those employees classified as Non-Exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act are eligible for this allowance.**

7. K-9 Allowance

Employees in the Police Officer and/or Police Supervisor classifications that are trained and assigned the responsibility for caring, handling, and operating with a department canine animal shall receive an additional five (5%) income authorization added to their regular earnings for such an assignment. This income is not permanent and is based on the length of assignment as a K-9 officer. This income authorization is to comply with existing Federal Fair Labor Standards Act requirements. The hourly rate paid to the employee will not change.

Requests for the assignment of K-9 are processed as a Personnel Action and are authorized through an Income Authorization. Similarly, pay for K-9 ends with the deletion of these duties.

8. Acting Status

Employees, who are temporarily promoted to a position of a higher salary range and meet minimum qualifications for the position, will receive a 20% income authorization added to their regular earnings, or an amount which equals the minimum of the new salary range (whichever is higher). At no time shall the Acting Status pay exceed the actual pay of the position being filled at the time the position became vacant. This income is not permanent and is based on the length of assignment in the Acting Status capacity. Should the employee be permanently appointed to the position, the Acting Status income will be incorporated into the new pay rate when assigned a salary range.

Requests for the assignment of Acting Status are processed as a Personnel Action and are authorized through an Income Authorization. Similarly, pay for Acting Status ends with the deletion of these duties.

9. Lateral Transfer

Any law enforcement officer, hired after the effective date of this policy with at least two years of law enforcement experience will receive lateral entry incentive pay equal to \$3000.00. This incentive will be payable in two installments: \$1500.00 upon completion of Field Training and \$1500.00 upon completion of one year of independent service.

SECTION III: SALARY ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES

A. WAGE SCALE ADJUSTMENT

On June 9, 2020, the Gaston County Board of Commissioners passed the budget for fiscal year 2019-2020. The budget contains a 1.5% Salary Adjustment to be applied as Merit in January 2021. All employees are at a minimum of Salary Range 99 above \$7.25, in compliance with federal minimum wage requirements. Seasonal and part-time employees are paid at a flat rate at or above minimum wage.

B. SALARY RANGE ADJUSTMENT

The Board of Commissioners did not authorize continuation of the step rates adopted with the fiscal year 13-14 budget. Eligibility is defined as employees working in a permanent full-time or permanent part-time capacity (full-time and part-time employees working a regularly recurring schedule). All permanent employees currently are on uniform ranges within their classification.

The 2020-2021 Pay Plan includes 42 pay ranges (salary range 99 thru 140)
 Range 99-119-55% Range Spread; Range 120-134-60% Range Spread; Range 135-140-65% Range Spread
 Grade progression: 103-110, 4%; 111-119, 5%; 121-140-7%

C. PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

All employee evaluations must be completed on an official Gaston County Employee Evaluation Form. The employee's Performance Evaluation is an integral part of the County's Performance Management System and is required as a means of identifying and planning of individual goals and objectives and standards as well as a means of evaluating how well the employee and organization achieved or exceeded them. The Performance Evaluation scores for FY20-21 are as follows:

Performance Evaluation Score Performance Determination

- 1-----Consistently Does not Meet Performance Expectations
- 2-----Periodically Meets Performance Expectations
- 3-----Successfully Meets Performance Expectations
- 4-----Periodically Exceeds Performance Expectations
- 5-----Consistently Exceeds Performance Expectations

