

INVESTING IN OUR WORKFORCE

Arlington County employees are the foundation of our success as a local government, providing excellent service to our residents, visitors, and businesses. Throughout the past year, our employees have also proven themselves to be resilient, innovative, and strategic, as we have all had to change the way we interact and provide services. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the County Manager and County Board made the very difficult decision to suspend pay increases for FY 2021 due to the economic uncertainty of the County's revenue. As the pandemic's impacts on the County's health, safety, and finances continue, once again, the budget does not include a recommendation for a merit pay increase for FY 2022. However, as noted earlier, if additional federal or state funding is received, the County Manager will recommend across-the-board pay raises for staff.

However, the FY 2022 Proposed Budget includes several recommendations that will help reward our employees.

Compensation and Benefit Increases for FY 2022

Proposed enhancements include a one-time bonus for permanent full-time and part-time employees and benefit changes, listed below, for both public safety and general employees.

- **Fire Staffing/Kelly Day Schedule Implementation:** FY 2022 is the fourth and final year of increasing staffing levels to implement the Kelly Day initiative. By the end of FY 2022, it is anticipated that the fire department work week will shift to the 50 hour per week schedule. Kelly Day will provide for an extra day off per 28-day cycle, reducing the number of hours worked per employee. Arlington firefighters work more hours than most other jurisdictions, and this will enhance the County's competitiveness and ability to recruit and retain staff. By the conclusion of FY 2022, the 37 additional uniformed employees will enable a portion of each shift to have additional time off while still meeting minimum staffing needs.
- **Job Family Studies:** The Compensation Maintenance Plan focuses on pay competitiveness and includes benchmark reviews of salary ranges, reviews of organizational structures, and may include updates to the Administrative Regulations associated with pay. The cost of implementing the Compensation Maintenance Plan for FY 2022 is estimated to be \$1.4 million. Jobs classes expected to be studied in FY 2022 include construction, engineering, and permits-related jobs, as well as economic development positions.
- **Lowest Base Pay Rate/Living Wage:** The lowest base pay rate earned for all permanent and temporary employees, excluding student assistants and summer recreation assistants, will increase from \$15 per hour to \$17 per hour. This will assist about 50 current County staff.

- **Health and Dental Insurance:** There will be no premium increase for our Cigna health and Delta Dental plans for FY 2022. Premiums for the Kaiser Permanente plan will be determined in the coming months.
- **Pension:** Continued fully funding the actuarially determined amounts for the County's pension plan and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) trust.
- **Paid Parental Leave:** The amount of paid parental leave will increase from six to eight weeks.
- **Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account:** The County maximum reimbursement to employees will increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500 annually for full-time employees.
- **Live Where You Work Grants:** The program budget will increase, allowing for higher rental and ownership grant amounts. The program will also transition from a uniform amount for each employee to providing a greater benefit to those who earn less. Those employees who make 80% of Area Median Income or less will receive a 5% one-time payment towards a home purchase. In addition, renters at 80% of AMI or less will receive double the one-time rental payment of others.
- **Tuition Reimbursement:** The maximum per employee per year will increase from \$1,900 to \$2,200.
- **Volunteer Leave:** Volunteer leave will increase from eight to 16 hours, allowing employees to use 50 percent of their volunteer hours for service outside Arlington County.
- **Additional Holiday:** Juneteenth will be added as a paid holiday.
- **Extension of "Use By" Date:** Extend the "use by" date for all accrued vacation leave through the end of calendar year 2021.