



## *INVESTING IN OUR WORKFORCE*

The County Manager's FY 2023 Proposed Budget is structured to recognize the efforts of current employees and to retain and attract employees during a unique economic cycle. The current labor shortage requires the County to invest in a broader pay and benefits package to attract new talented staff while retaining the current staff who have continued their dedication to public service. A myriad of recruiting and training programs are underway to ensure that the levels of engaged and ready staff are onboard to deliver services to the residents of Arlington.

### **Additional Pay Enhancements in FY 2022**

With funding identified through the close-out process of FY 2021, the County Board included a 1% market pay adjustment for staff beginning in January 2022 and a one-time bonus for staff of \$725 gross for full-time employees. There were also several other one-time pay enhancements to select positions to attract and retain critical service functions through the pandemic. This included additional support to uniformed Sheriff deputies supplementing funding that was provided by the state and one-time bonuses to mental health emergency workers and police officers.

### **Compensation and Benefit Increases for FY 2023**

Enhancements in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget include compensation and benefit increases for both public safety and general employees.

#### **Compensation**

**Increase in Minimum and Maximum Salary Ranges:** The minimum and maximum of the salary ranges will increase by three percent in FY 2023. We want to reward, retain, and fairly compensate our employees by ensuring that our pay ranges remain competitive.

**Compensation Maintenance Plan:** 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 2023 is estimated to be \$0.8 million for administrative, parks programming, and library positions.

**Pay Compression:** An additional \$1.5 million is included in the FY 2023 Proposed Budget to address pay compression. This review will better align the pay of current employees with their qualifications and experience levels. In tight labor markets, new hires often command higher rates than incumbents and these dollars are meant to address such anomalies. This is a multi-year effort that will begin with job families that include classifications with range maximums below \$65,000.

**One-Time Bonus:** All full-time employees will receive a \$1,600 gross one-time bonus.

### Public Safety Employees

- **Merit Increases:** All uniformed personnel below MAP level who meet performance expectations will receive a 6.5 percent increase up to the maximum of their grade range.
- **Premium Pay:** Police officers will receive additional premium pay compensation for serving as Patrol Field Training Officers and those serving in the Civil Disturbance Unit and the SWAT team.
- **Public Safety Wellness Initiative:** Two positions were added to provide training, resources, and mental health services to all public safety staff while coordinating other wellness efforts that include fitness and nutrition, financial wellness, and mental wellness.
- **Fire Kelly Day:** FY 2023 will be the first full year of the Kelly Day, which increased staffing levels to allow the Fire department work week to shift to a 50-hour week schedule from a 56-hour week schedule. The Kelly Day will provide for an extra day off per 28-day cycle, reducing the number of hours worked per employee. The change in scheduling for hours worked will enhance the County's competitiveness to recruit and retain staff. The fully implemented staffing increase added 37 additional uniformed employees over the last few years and will now enable a portion of each shift to have additional time off while still meeting minimum staffing needs.

### General Employees

- **Merit Increases:** All general employees on the open range plan who meet performance expectations will receive a 4.25 percent increase up to the maximum of their grade range. The budget for employees on the Pay for Performance plan is 4.5 percent up to the maximum of their grade range.

### Benefits

Arlington County understands that a well-rounded total rewards package is critical to ensuring we recruit and retain the top talent in the region. We are committed to staying on the leading edge in our offerings for employees and providing benefits that support a healthy work-life balance.

- **Health & Dental Insurance:** There will be no premium increase for our self-insured health plan for FY 2023. Premiums for the Kaiser Permanente and dental plans will be determined in the coming months.

- **Retirement:** The County will meet its financial commitments for our defined benefit, defined contribution, and retiree medical plans.
- **Tuition Reimbursement:** There will be an increase in tuition reimbursement limits from \$2,200 to \$2,500.

### **Collective Bargaining**

In July 2022, the County Board [adopted an ordinance](#) authorizing collective bargaining for Arlington County employees. Collective Bargaining should expand collaboration between management and employees, improve the workplace environment, and contribute to the County's mission of providing excellent services to our community. It also offers employees the choice to collectively and more formally organize employee views through representation. With interested labor groups, the County is currently formalizing bargaining unit certification and election procedures and anticipates that at least two units will be recognized (Police and Fire) pending election results. Negotiations would begin shortly thereafter, with the impact of any collective bargaining agreement to be included in the FY 2024 budget process.

To implement the collective bargaining ordinance, additional funding and two positions were included in the FY 2022 budget, including the establishment of the neutral Labor Relations Administrator contract, the Chief Labor Relations Officer position in the County Manager's Office (CMO) and a position in Human Resources to provide consultation and technical guidance during bargaining. Building on these prior investments, the Proposed Budget includes an additional attorney and paralegal in the County Attorney's Office and one additional staff in Human Resources for compensation modeling.