

INVESTING IN OUR WORKFORCE

Talented employees are the County's most valuable assets and the County Manager's FY 2021 Proposed Budget recognizes that by including investments that will help attract and retain a high-quality workforce.

The Manager's proposal also provides funding for the next year of review of "benchmark job classes and benefits" as required by the Board adopted Total Compensation Philosophy. The review includes analysis of salary ranges, organizational structures, and updates to the Administrative Regulations associated with pay. The cost of implementing the Compensation Maintenance Plan for FY 2021 is estimated to be \$1.55 million annually, including both base salaries and benefits.

Compensation and Benefit Increases for FY 2021

Enhancements in the FY 2021 Proposed Budget include compensation and benefit increases for both public safety and general employees.

Public Safety Employees:

- **Compensation Increases for Police, Fire, and Sheriff's Office:** The proposed budget includes:
 - a one percent market payline adjustment (MPA) for employees hired on or before 6/23/2018;
 - five percent increase in both the minimum and maximum salaries of most positions and a 5.5 percent increase to the minimum salary for entry-level positions in the Sheriff's Office; and
 - a 5.5 percent merit increase, up to the range maximum, for sworn uniformed employees below the senior management level (MAPs) who meet performance expectations.
- **Continuation of Kelly Day Schedule Implementation for Fire:** FY 2021 is the third year of a four-year Kelly Day initiative that will provide for an extra day off per 28-day cycle, thus 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. This initiative will allow for an additional 9.0 FTEs each year. Once fully implemented, the 36 additional uniformed employees will enable a portion of each shift to have additional time off while still meeting minimum staffing needs.
- **Increase in Shift Differential Premium Pay:** Employees—primarily in public safety—who work the full evening or night shifts receive this hourly premium pay. The FY 2021 proposed budget includes an increase in these premiums:

- From \$0.75/hour to \$1.00/hour for employees who start work between 1:00 p.m. and 8:59 p.m.
 - From \$1.00/hour to \$1.30/hour for employees who start work between 9:00 p.m. and 4:59 a.m.
- **Increase Special Duty Assignment Premiums for Advanced Life Support Certifications:**
 - Intermediate Certification (EMT-I) will increase from \$0.87/hour to \$1.37/hour.
 - Paramedic Certification (EMT-P) will increase from \$1.73/hour to \$2.48/hour.

General Employees:

- **Merit Increases:** All general employees on the open range plan who meet performance expectations will receive a 3.25 percent increase up to the maximum of their grade range. The budget for employees on the Pay for Performance plan remains at 3.5 percent up to the maximum of their grade range.
- **Increase in Minimum and Maximum Salaries:** The minimum and maximum salaries will increase by five percent in FY 2021. We want to reward, retain, and fairly compensate our employees by ensuring that the maximum of our pay ranges remains competitive.

County Board:

- The Manager’s Proposed Budget includes funding to phase in Board member salary increases to meet the new Board salary maximums over a three-year period, with equal dollar increases per year. Effective at the start of FY 2021, there will be a 19 percent increase for Board members and a 17 percent increase for the Board chair.
- In June 2019, the [Arlington County Board set a new salary cap](#) for Board members that took effect January 1, 2020 and will remain the maximum cap for at least four years. The new cap is equal to the Individual Area Median Income for the Greater Washington Region, or \$89,851 for a Board member and \$95,734 for the Board chair. The June action only increased the possible cap, leaving any potential salary increases for budget deliberations.

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:**
 - **Costs:** The Manager’s proposal includes a 2.5-percent increase to the overall health and dental insurance budget, although the actual premium increases will vary by plan.
 - **Consumer Driven Health Plan:** As part of our commitment to offer more choices to employees, in FY 2021, the County will implement a Consumer-Driven Health Plan (CDHP) with a Health Savings Account (HSA)—a tax-advantaged savings plan for health expenses that is funded by both employee and County dollars. A CDHP has lower premiums, which offers a more affordable choice for employees. The CDHP does have a high deductible that the employee must meet before the insurance plan provides coverage, but that can be accomplished by using the HSA. In addition, unused HSA dollars roll forward for future use. Experience shows that employees use these spending account dollars wisely, often leading to decreased expenses for all. Our regional peers have already implemented a CDHP. We will conduct an extensive education campaign before implementation.

- **Work-Life Balance:**
 - Increase paid parental leave from four to six weeks;
 - Increase dependent care match from \$500 to \$1,000 annually;
 - Increase monthly transit subsidy for commuters from \$180 to the \$225 maximum;
 - Increase vacation leave accrual for new and recent (less than 3 years) hires from 13 to 16.25 days annually;
 - Addition of a floating holiday, which eligible employees can use at a time of their choice, and the elimination of Presidents Day as a holiday; and
 - Addition of Election Day as a holiday in FY 2021.