

Pay Study implementation adjusts Pay Plan grades & steps

New pay rates impact pension contribution & optional Life.

As part of the Fiscal Year 2022 budget adoption process earlier this year, Levy Court included funding to fully implement the Classification, Compensation & Benefits Study completed in March 2020 by the professional consulting firm – Management Advisory Group (MAG) International of Fairfax, VA & Spartanburg, SC. The final study report was originally scheduled to be presented to Commissioners on March 17, 2020 – within days of Gov. John Carey’s pandemic state of emergency declaration, and ultimately was heard the following November.

The Classification, Compensation & Benefits Study was the result of the personal efforts of many Kent County employees attending informational meetings and completing Job Position Questionnaires (JPQ), supervisors reviewing the JPQs for accuracy, and several entities in our employment market area responding to a lengthy survey regarding employee compensation for numerous comparable positions and employee benefits.



Shortly before the originally scheduled presentation, the MAG report was posted on the Kent County website on the Employee Portal under the Resources tab and remains available: <https://www.co.kent.de.us/media/982614/2020KentCountyDEcompclassStudyMAG032020.pdf>

In order to maintain competitive employee wages and benefits in the central Delaware market, the Levy Court has regularly authorized an update of the County’s compensation and classification plan every few years. The initial pay study with its major departmental reorganization and step system components was effective in 2000, then updated in 2003, 2006, and 2015 (economic factors sidelined a study in 2009). Levy Court authorized the 2020 study in October 2019 following solicitation of vendors via a public Request for Proposals.

The study compared the job responsibilities of employees in various Kent County positions, the compensation of the Kent County position, and overall Kent County employee benefits with similar jurisdictions in the marketplace such as the State of Delaware, Sussex County, Wilmington, Dover, Newark, Middletown, Queen Anne County, MD, etc.

The data collected from the JPQs was analyzed by the consultant to determine if Kent County has correctly classified the position into a grade containing similar skill/responsibilities/education/training levels. Once that was determined, the pay ranges were developed from the information submitted by the responding governments and a minimum and maximum rate for each grade was calculated with appropriate differences between pay grades. The consultant then calculated the overall cost of any recommended adjustments for budget consideration.

Since the FY22 budget was adopted in late April, the consultant has worked to update the 2020 report to incorporate various personnel changes, promotions, and transfers authorized by department heads as well as several reclassifications and new positions approved by Levy Court since the original report. Other adjustments involved the cost of living adjustment awarded last July and the

step increase implemented on January 3 as well as the new 2% COLA for July 1, 2021 and the appropriate step increase effective the same day.

The pay study implementation approved by Levy Court includes new pay grade numbering starting at 2100 and ending at 2138 (which is notably different from the former pay plan design), new position classification (placement) based upon the study’s market survey results, wider pay ranges (20 Steps A-T with ½ steps identified as +), and several title changes. The new pay grades & rates and associated position titles will be posted on the Employee Portal as soon as the tables are completed. The consultant is currently drafting new position descriptions for every employee and vacancy. Once completed, they will be reviewed/approved by the various department heads and Levy Court and then distributed to each employee for acknowledgement – most likely in August.

HR/Payroll, Finance, and I.T. staff have worked tirelessly to implement the new grade and step system as of July 1, but due to the July 4th holiday, premium pay calculations for overtime worked the week of June 27-July 3 and normally paid on July 9 will instead be calculated and included in the following pay check dated July 23. As with any major pay plan adjustment impacting every position in the payroll system, complications or errors can occur. Please be patient with us.

As a result of the COLA, eligible step increase, and new pay plan placement, employees will certainly see an increase in their pension deduction. Employees hired before 12/20/10 contribute one percent of annual salary toward the County’s pension plan under the IRS pick-up provision. Employees hired after 12/20/10 but before 01/01/20 pay three percent of annual salary after the first \$6,000 and employees hired after 01/01/20 pay five percent of annual salary after the first \$6,000 under IRS pick-up. Contributions are made on a pay period basis (26 pays per year).

In addition employees with optional voluntary life insurance through Sun Life will experience an increase in the premium deduction due to the pay raise, any five year age bracket change, and a small increase in the monthly premium charged by the insurance company. The monthly premium is deducted one half each pay check.

Employees turning 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65 or 70 after June 30, 2020 and before July 1, 2021 go up to the next age bracket rate. Those with birthdays after July 1, get the rest of the fiscal year at the old rate. Spouse coverage also moves to the higher age rate as the primary insured and ends when the dependents turns 65. Children coverage continues until age 26 – please inform the Personnel Office when the spouse or youngest of your children is no longer eligible due to age in order to stop deductions. Children (1 or more) coverage is \$10,000 a flat \$2 per month.

The following rate chart, which changes for the first time in several years, can be used to calculate the new monthly premium by multiplying the level of coverage (½, 1, 2 or 3) with annual salary, rounding up to the nearest \$1,000, dividing by 1,000 and multiplying by the age rate:

FY2022 Supplemental Life Insurance Rates - SunLife

AGE	<30	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+
<i>Rate</i>	\$0.077	\$0.099	\$0.121	\$0.187	\$0.286	\$0.462	\$0.737	\$0.957	\$1.617	\$2.431

Your patience is appreciated. If you have questions, please contact the Human Resources Office.

(Posted 06/24/21)