

PROPOSED KENT COUNTY LEVY COURT POLICY AMENDMENT P20-01

INTRODUCED BY: Commissioner Allan F. Angel

ADOPTION DATE: February 18, 2020

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon Adoption

§ 2-15 Higher education and certification rating system.

[Adopted 6-22-2004 (P-80B)]

This Policy establishes a rating system for the award of pay increases to eligible employees for achieving an advanced educational degree or job-related professional certification under the provisions contained in the Kent County Code.

A. In order to be eligible for the award of a pay increase under this Policy, an employee must request and receive approval in writing from his/her department head and the Personnel Director, **or the County Administrator** before embarking on a course of study or training.

B. County employees earning a Master's Degree or Doctorate Degree or the following professional licenses in a state-regulated profession, Certified Public Accountant, Professional Engineer, or Physician's Assistant, shall be eligible for a five-percent base salary increase; provided, however, the degree or license must be in the employee's current field of employment.

C. County employees earning a Bachelor's Degree in their current field of employment shall be eligible for a four-percent base salary increase.

D. County employees earning an Associate's Degree in their field of employment or a Master's or Bachelor's Degree in a related field of employment, **or a professional certification** as a Certified Building Official (CBO), Associate of Risk Management (ARM), ICMA-Certified Professional, IPMA-HR Certified Professional, Certified Government Benefits Administrator (CGBA), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Certified Arborist, Fundamentals of Engineering (FE/EIT), American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), or **specific professional certification as determined and approved in advance by the Personnel Director and County Administrator based upon overall benefit to/needs of the County and the employee, in consultation with the Department Head,** shall be eligible for a 2% base salary increase. The Associate's Degree or certification must be in the employee's current field of employment.

E. County employees earning 15 training credits within a three-year period (may be combination of in-house and outside programs, but available to hourly classified employees only) shall be eligible for a one-percent base salary increase **as determined and approved in advance by the Personnel Director and County Administrator, in consultation with the Department Head.** Any pay increase under this section shall be limited to one per twenty-four-month period (rolling year basis) from date of award. Excess training credits earned during the twenty-four-month period do not carry over.

F. Documentation sufficient to prove achievement of a degree, certification, training credits or designation shall be submitted to the Personnel Director for consideration, ~~along with certification of prior approval from the employee's department head.~~

G. For the purposes of this Policy, "current field of employment" shall directly relate to the employee's current position (i.e., paramedic and nursing degree, personnel technician and human resources degree, etc.); "related field of employment" shall closely relate to the employee's current position (i.e., paramedic and degree in public administration, etc.); educational "degree(s)" must be awarded by an accredited college or university verified through the Delaware Department of Education; "training credits" shall mean the assigned Continuing Education Units (CEU's) or one hour of actual contact training time equals one-tenth CEU, unless given a different value by the Personnel Director.

H. Any **non-retroactive** pay increase permitted under the rating system shall be effective upon approval of the Personnel Director, based on the submission date, but shall not include the following: any degrees or certifications earned before **January 1, 2017** [~~July 1, 1999~~], or hire date; certification required in the position description or specific training for the employee's current position, including new procedures; **or any National, State, County, professional, or similar accreditation required license, certification, or training**; or credits earned as part of a continuing education requirement for any previously earned or awarded certification/designation. Such pay increases may exceed the pay plan maximum for salaries, but no employee shall be compensated for earning more than one educational degree per level (i.e., Associates, Bachelors, or Masters) or a lower degree awarded without significant additional coursework.

I. Any employee receiving a pay increase for achieving a certification/designation with continuing education requirements shall annually confirm that said certification/designation remains valid. Any employee failing to report such status or failing to retain/maintain any certification for which a pay increase was previously awarded shall have his or her current salary reduced by the same percentage pay increase previously awarded retroactive to the date of loss of certification or standing.

J. The Personnel Director shall develop appropriate forms and guidelines and shall be responsible for the administration of this program. The Personnel Director shall make an annual report to Levy Court regarding participants, degrees/certifications earned, and program costs. Any disagreement between the Personnel Director and department head on an employee's eligibility or percentage raise to be awarded shall be resolved with finality by **the County Administrator** ~~a consensus determination of the remaining County Department Directors.~~