

REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Policy Type	Human Resources
Policy Title	Employee Compensation Policy 400.2
Policy Number	400.2
Date Adopted	September 9, 2004
Date Amended	September 13, 2012 January 10, 2019 November 9, 2023 July 11, 2024 November 13, 2025

EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION POLICY

It is the intent of the Authority to provide employee compensation (pay and benefits) that is fair and equitable and that is comparable, based upon an employee's experience, skills and performance consistent with established job descriptions, and with that of similar water and public entities regionally. As a small, professional, management-focused organization, it is the intent of the Authority to provide employee compensation at or above the labor market for the industry and the geographic area. The compensation practices of the Authority will be competitive within the industry and geographical area to attract the most qualified candidates and to minimize turnover of its employees.

The Executive Director will have the authority to set and change employee base rate of pay in accordance with the intent of this Policy and within the budgetary guidelines approved by the Board of Directors. As part of the annual budget review process, the Executive Director will be responsible for preparing and presenting a labor budget to the Board of Directors in accordance with this Policy. The Board of Directors will consider, amend as required, and approve the annual labor budget for the Authority. Once the labor budget has been approved, the Executive Director may determine in his or her discretion how to apply any approved increase to each employee's existing base rate of pay. Changes to employee benefits will generally require Board action to approve changes to the Employee Handbook and other policies.

The specific terms of this Policy apply to staff only, except as specified in Section IV, below. All aspects of the Executive Director's compensation are subject to Board approval of an employment contract.

I. Pay Ranges

It is the Authority's Policy to provide a program for advancement of its employees within

the pay range of their position using a merit-based system based on objective regular goal setting and performance evaluations. Employees will typically advance within their pay range annually, subject to the discretion of the Executive Director, based on evaluation of the employee's performance and growth in responsibility and/or expertise in performing the work of the position. The Executive Director may move an employee to a higher-level classification or provide a merit-based salary increase, predicated upon performance, experience and documented needs of the organization.

All classification pay ranges shall typically be established with a 20% range between the minimum and maximum of the range. Except as provided below, steps will be established within each range to provide guidelines for use in annual budgeting. For executive-level positions (currently the Executive Director, Managers of Technical Services, Strategic Affairs, and Government Relations), there will be no steps established within the positions' ranges.

All rank-and-file and executive-level positions shall be eligible for a merit-based salary increase up to no more than 12% per year (equivalent of three steps), as movement through their salary range provided all merit-based salary increases can be covered by the approved budget for the current year. Any increase above 12% for rank-and-file positions must be recommended by the Executive Director and then be ratified by the Board of Directors for exemplary performance or in recognition of unusual circumstances. Any increase above 12% along the salary range for executive-level positions, including the Executive Director, shall be recommended by the Executive Committee and then ratified by the Board of Directors for exemplary performance or in recognition of unusual circumstances. In all cases, a staff report supporting the request for Board approval of an increase above 12% shall describe the nature of the exemplary performance or unusual circumstances.

The Executive Director shall recommend pay ranges for all employment classifications with the Authority, with the exception of the Executive Director position. All changes to the pay scales are subject to review and approval by the Board of Directors.

Any salary increases provided as movement through an employee's approved pay range shall be effective on the first day of the first pay period after the increase was approved

II. Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

The Executive Director will consider the United States Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI) for All Western Small Cities (population under 2.5 million) for the 12 months ending in November of each year in developing the proposed budget for the Authority¹. If the Board approves a budget that includes funding for a cost of living adjustment (COLA), the Executive Director will have the discretion to apply a COLA to all staff salaries, regardless of position within a salary range in the fiscal year for which the budget is adopted.

To avoid penalizing employees at or near the top of the salary range, and to ensure pay ranges remain comparable to the market between compensation surveys, the November CPI will be applied annually in January at an effective date as determined by the Board of Directors in conjunction with the beginning of a payroll period.

Effective July 1, 2024, the Authority will consider CPI data from the 12 months ending in March, with any approved COLA increase becoming effective the first day of the first pay period beginning in July.

III. Compensation Survey

The Executive Committee will generally direct staff to conduct a compensation survey at least every five years to ensure that the total compensation offered by the Authority (base rate of pay and benefits) is consistent with this Policy; provided, however that a compensation survey may be commissioned at any time if directed by the Executive Committee or if recommended by the Executive Director and approved by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may also use its discretion to waive or vary the five-year commitment.

Before initiating the survey, staff will brief the Executive Committee and solicit feedback on the scope of the compensation survey, including comparable agencies/organizations to be surveyed and data elements to be collected prior to commencing the survey. Survey organizations should be selected to provide a representative sampling of 1) local water agencies, 2) water-related associations located in the Sacramento region, 3) regional planning organizations within the Sacramento region, and 4) regional membership organizations in the region.

The Executive Director will use the results of the survey to propose modifications to base rate of pay and/or benefits necessary to achieve the intent of this policy. Proposed pay ranges should include consideration of such things as 1) the mean, median and 62.5th percentile of the

compensation data, 2) the comparability of surveyed classifications to RWA job classifications, and 3) RWA experience recruiting and retaining staff in each classification.

IV. Executive Director Compensation

The Board of Directors will establish an Executive Director pay range. The pay range shall be established with the same 20% range between the minimum and maximum of the range as is applied to other staff pay ranges under Section I. There will be no steps established within the range. The Board of Directors shall update the Executive Director pay range annually by the amount of any COLA applied to all staff salaries under Section II.

The Board of Directors shall determine Executive Director compensation within the

established Executive Director pay range and such compensation will be subject to approval of an employment contract by the Board of Directors, with a maximum change of up to 12% annually, consistent with the maximum salary movement of all executive-level positions as described in Section 1. Any annual increase above 12% for the Executive Director must be approved by the Board of Directors for exemplary performance or unusual circumstances. The Executive Committee may direct staff to conduct a survey of executive compensation to guide negotiation of the Executive Director employment contract. The conduct, timing, and scope of such a survey will be at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee.

V. Transparency²

To maintain transparency in local agency compensation, the RWA website shall maintain an "Employee Compensation" page that states the current RWA Executive Director's monthly salary.

² Resolution 2024-04 directs the RWA to include this item on the RWA's Website.