

Pay Policies and Practices Recommendations

Baker Tilly is supporting Weber County in a focused effort to update and align its compensation structure and policies to ensure internal equity, market competitiveness, and alignment with County values. This effort included a full, 5-phase compensation study with title and classification review, market study, and pay plan development. This project also includes a review of the County's current compensation policies and practices, along with Baker Tilly's recommendations to align these policies and practices with the updated pay plans to promote consistent application.

Proposed Pay Plans

Most pay policies describe how employees advance through their salary range or promote into new grades, with the intention of providing fair and consistent application to all employees. In developing the County's pay plans, the following parameters were considered in order to tailor them as much as possible to the positions assigned to them.

- Number of Grades – the number of grades a pay plan will have may be determined by the number of positions that will be assigned to it and how movement from each grade (usually through promotion) is administered, as well as the overlap in nature and level of work that needs to be distinguished throughout. For example, if promotions are few but significant, this would be achieved by fewer grades whereas many smaller promotions would be achieved by more grades.
- Range Spreads – the distance between the minimum and the maximum for each pay range. As a best practice, pay ranges should be tailored to the size of the job or the learning curve of the job. For example, hiring a new employee at or around the starting minimum, that employee would receive general salary increases each year, advancing them through their range. Where the midpoint represents the market value and should be at or near the midpoint of their range, consistent with becoming fully able to perform the whole job. Therefore, the distance from the minimum to the midpoint should correspond with the learning curve of the position. Most often, the distance from minimum to midpoint is equal to the distance from midpoint to maximum. However, some organizations will establish their market position (above, below, or at market) at a different threshold within the range spread.
- Midpoint Differentials – the distance between each grade at the midpoint. The percentage between each grade will determine the amount of overlap that exists throughout the pay plan. If there is too much overlap in grades, pay ranges will not incentivize employees to move into bigger roles and take on more responsibilities. If there is too much separation between grades, there may be other issues with the pay range, such as minimums that are not competitive, restrictive maximums, or create a financial barrier to providing promotions.

Baker Tilly developed three new pay plans for Weber County: an open-range pay plan for General employees, an open-range pay plan for Sheriff/sworn positions, and an open-range pay plan for 911 Dispatch employees. Grade assignments were established for positions using a consistent methodology based on job evaluation (using existing and updated job descriptions) and adjusted, as necessary, to account for

external equity (market average midpoints), existing equity (current midpoints), career progressions, supervisor-subordinate separation, grade compression, etc. Preliminary results and recommendations were reviewed with the County's project team, Department heads, and Commissioners, and then finalized.

Pay Policies and Practices

Current State Review of Compensation Policies and Practices - This review included an analysis of base pay decisions, pay range structures, and specific career progression plans for the Library and Health Departments, and provides a baseline understanding of Weber County's compensation framework and areas in need of alignment.

Recommended Pay Practices - Updating your classification and compensation structure may impact existing pay policies and practices. Therefore, in reviewing the County's current pay policies and practices, Baker Tilly also provides recommendations to better align these policies and practices with the updated pay plans to support consistent application. These recommendations include the following:

- Establish a Structured Pay Range Maintenance Process – Implement a regular schedule for reviewing and adjusting salary ranges based on market data and economic indicators, including cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). Ensure that all pay plans are reviewed consistently and adjusted to maintain external competitiveness and internal alignment.
- Clarify Pay Setting and Advancement Criteria – Establish standardized, county-wide guidance for setting starting salaries, processing promotions, and administering in-range salary adjustments.
- Enhance Oversight of Supplemental Pay Practices – Strengthen internal equity and transparency by creating formal procedures for acting assignments and bonus awards. This may include setting recommended pay thresholds and documenting justification requirements to monitor consistency and avoid pay compression or favoritism.
- Formalize Career Ladders and Progressions – Standardize and document career progression pathways and eligibility across departments, ensuring they are linked to clearly defined competencies, performance standards, and pay structures. Incorporate consistent advancement criteria and align departmental ladders with the County's overall classification and compensation system to ensure equitable treatment of employees in similar roles.

Current State Review of Compensation Policies and Practices

A detailed review of existing compensation-related policies and practices was conducted to assess how compensation is currently structured and administered. Compensation policy documents were evaluated for consistency and clarity, and gaps were identified in definitions, equity procedures, and pay progression processes.

Please note Baker Tilly's recommendations on pay policies are based on our staff's nonlegal interpretation of best practices outlined by World at Work and the Society for Human Resources Management. It is important to note that Baker Tilly is not engaged in the practice of law and cannot provide legal guidance on such matters. Therefore, we highly recommend clients obtain a separate legal review of all policy recommendations in relation to compliance with relevant laws and regulations from a qualified labor attorney.

Pay Range Administration and Maintenance- Structure + Positions

Weber County's policies outline the responsibilities for administering its pay plans and maintaining uniform and equitable salary ranges. These policies identify the role of the Human Resources Director and County Commission in developing and maintaining the pay structure, as well as the factors considered when establishing salary ranges.

– Pay Plan Administration and Maintenance Responsibilities

- *Policy:* "The Director of Human Resources, in conjunction with the County Commission, shall be responsible for the development and maintenance of a uniform and equitable pay plan which shall consist, for each class of positions, of minimum and maximum rates of pay."
- (Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, page 1)
- *Policy Summary:* Department heads, division directors, and elected officials are responsible for coordinating with Human Resources on all pay changes and notifying employees of final decisions. HR may conduct salary surveys upon request, develop preliminary recommendations, and present them to the County Commission for approval. Once approved, HR reviews and authorizes the changes, and departments implement them based on budget and policy. All pay decisions must consider the established pay range, internal equity, and market competitiveness, and may not exceed the maximum of the grade. Full policy language can be found in Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, page 1.
- *Policy:* "For Health Department employees, "The Health Officer recognizes that there is a need for consistency with all human resources policies. Promotion opportunities and career ladder positions are defined through established job descriptions in Environmental Health, Health Promotion, Nursing, and WIC divisions. Division Directors will ensure that employees hired in these areas are given equal opportunities to advance in their field of employment."
- (Health Department Career Ladders, page 1)
- *Analysis and Recommendation:* Weber County's pay administration, assigns the County Commission and Human Resources Director joint responsibility for maintaining a consistent pay plan with set minimum and maximum rates per classification. The policy

incorporates key compensation factors, including internal equity, labor market competitiveness, and fiscal constraints. Even though this framework promotes consistency and fiscal oversight, the multi-layered process can prevent responsiveness to market shifts in competitive fields. However, the current policies lack essential elements that would support a sustained, data-driven, and transparent pay structure. There is no formal review cycle or methodology for conducting market comparisons or a cost-of-living study, and there is a lack of differentiation between structure-wide adjustments and individual pay actions, which can lead to overreliance on promotions or equity increases to correct structural misalignment. Internal equity is referenced but not defined, and no clear procedures are given for equity reviews, maintaining records, or notifying employees when salary ranges are adjusted. Further, department-level policies (such as those in the Health Department) do not explicitly relate to the County's broader compensation structure, increasing the risk of inconsistency across the organization. To address these gaps, Baker Tilly recommends the following:

- Establish a formal review schedule of all pay structures in coordination with the budget and/or performance cycle. This process should include a consistent methodology for identifying peer organizations, collecting and analyzing data, and applying market and cost-of-living adjustments. An official cycle will allow change to be proactive and data-driven, rather than reactive to turnover, recruitment issues, or ad hoc requests.
- Policies need to clearly differentiate between structural changes (such as market adjustments or cost-of-living adjustments across all grades) and individual compensation actions (promotions, equity adjustments, or in-grade promotions). This prevents excessive use of promotions or equity increases as a means of remedying misalignment at the system level, ensures equitable treatment for all staff, and conveys clarity in how the County maintains competitiveness without excessive expense.
- All departmental pay practices should be reviewed and aligned with the County's centralized pay policies. Any departures that are department-specific must be documented, reviewed on a regular basis for consistency, and formally approved by Human Resources. This promotes equity throughout the organization and informs employees clearly and consistently about how pay decisions are made.

– **Salary Range Criteria**

- *Policy:* "Salary ranges shall be linked directly to the position classification plan and shall be determined with due regard to the following considerations:
 - a. Pay ranges in other classes
 - b. Range of pay for similar employment
 - c. Cost-of-living considerations
 - d. Other benefits received by employees
 - e. The financial policy and economic conditions of the County"
- (Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, page 1)
- *Analysis and Recommendations:* The "Salary Range Criteria" article introduces a broad framework for how pay ranges are to be developed and maintained, tying them to the position classification plan and incorporating such fundamentals as market comparison, cost of living, and fiscal policy. Together and separately, they both set up internal alignment (modifying ranges within

classes) and external competitiveness (studying market rates and cost-of-living). But the criteria are written at a high level without specific methods or measurable standards, which can result in uneven implementation. The policy does not say how market comparisons are to be conducted, what "similar employment" is, how cost-of-living considerations are to be quantified, or how they would be weighed in a determination. Also, with no documented process to apply these standards in range adjustments, transparency and accountability in the upkeep of the pay structure are limited. Baker Tilly recommends developing a consistent methodology and review process for applying the "Salary Range Criteria", documenting each measure to have an open and transparent method for determining salary ranges for classifications. This can be done through the application of the SAFE system to review new positions and compare them with a designated market comparison source and methodology. This will improve consistency, transparency, and accountability for maintaining the County's pay structure.

– **Classification**

- *Policy:* "When a new position is created, the supervisor shall send to the Human Resources Department a request for classification of the position with a description of the applicable duties and responsibilities to be assigned to the position. The Director of Human Resources will classify the position through established methods that include reviewing market conditions, similar complexity of duties performed as well as knowledge, skills and abilities to determine the appropriate job title, pay grade, minimum qualifications, FLSA status and other requirements."

– (Weber County Human Resources Policy 2-200: Classifications, page 2)

- *Recommendations:* While Weber County has an established formal policy for the classification of positions, it lacks the structure and detail required to ensure equitable classification into specific pay plans (General, Sheriff/sworn, or 911 Dispatch). This policy should reflect the structured, data-driven approach used in the recent classification and compensation study, which balanced external equity through market average midpoints and internal equity through SAFE job evaluation scores. To ensure internal equity, the County should develop a process for standard titling of jobs, particularly new classes, so that the departments are cohesive and employees and management are clear regarding the titles. Also, the County should have a formal and explicit procedure for creating new classes, like the criteria to be used for assessment, an approval mechanism, and implementation in the existing pay structure. Incorporating these items in the overall pay policy will promote equity, consistency, and compliance with best practice.

– **Reclassification**

- *Policy:* Employees or supervisors may request reclassification when duties change substantially, with updated job descriptions submitted to HR for review. HR approves changes if warranted and ensures the employee meets minimum qualifications. Approved reclassifications take effect the first pay period after submission, with employees placed in the same step of the new grade. Salaries above the maximum of a lower grade are redlined until the range catches up. Full policy language can be found in Weber County Human Resources Policy 2-200: Classifications, pages 2-3.

- *Recommendation:* The County's reclassification policy provides a structured process to review and adjust positions when duties change significantly, ensuring employees remain appropriately classified and compensated. The requirement for supervisor review of job descriptions and HR certification of minimum qualifications adds accountability and consistency. However, the policy could be strengthened by more clearly defining what constitutes a "substantial" change in duties to avoid inconsistent application, and by outlining criteria for budgetary approval to improve transparency. Establishing formal timelines for review and clarifying communication standards would further support equity and defensibility in reclassification decisions.

– **Career Ladders/ Progression**

- *Policy Summary:* Weber County has implemented structured career progression systems for both Library and Health Department employees, which reflect a commitment to internal mobility and employee development within these specialized industries. The Library's system ties progression to consistent above-standard performance, supervisor recommendation, and assumption of additional responsibilities. While this structure promotes performance-based advancement, the criteria for movement are somewhat discretionary and rely heavily on supervisor judgment and budget availability. The policy document also notes how difficult it is to advance through all three levels due to both the required skillset for advancement and budgetary limitations. Similarly, the Health Department provides defined promotional pathways within specific divisions. Advancement criteria are specific to each pathway and are contingent on meeting job description requirements, performance appraisal thresholds, and obtaining relevant credentials and certifications. However, these ladders are referenced in general terms and lack countywide standardization in how progression opportunities are communicated, evaluated, and aligned with compensation.
- *Analysis and Recommendations:* Overall, both systems offer a strong foundation for employee growth, but they would benefit from greater clarity, consistency, and integration with the County's broader compensation framework. To achieve this improvement, Baker Tilly recommends the following:
 - Standardize career ladder documentation by developing clear, written descriptions of career paths in both the Library and Health Department, including required competencies, experience, certifications, and performance expectations at each level.
 - Formalize criteria for creating specific career ladders with associated compensation practices and make sure they align equitably with other career ladders and the general pay policy. This helps ensure greater equity across work units.
 - Increase transparency and communication by publishing career ladder pathways and advancement requirements for employees to access and incorporate into career conversations and performance evaluations.
 - Ensure all department-specific career ladders align with Weber County's overarching pay structure, internal equity guidelines, and performance management processes.

Pay Adjustments: Structure + People

Weber County's pay plan documents include information on when and how pay adjustments are determined. Our analysis follows below.

– **Adjustments to Pay Structure/Cost of Living Adjustments**

- *Policy:* “Upon request, the Human Resources Department may obtain a salary survey of positions in the surrounding area. The Human Resources Director shall then develop preliminary salary recommendations and present them to the County Commission.”
- (Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, page 1)

- *Analysis & Recommendations:* While Weber County’s general pay policy references external market conditions, it lacks a formal process for evaluating market data or implementing market-based or cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). Without defined policy language, pay structure updates may be irregular or reactive, limiting the County’s ability to stay competitive and align employee pay with inflation or regional trends. Baker Tilly recommends establishing a consistent review cycle, identifying comparable organizations, and defining the criteria for when adjustments are warranted. For example, an annual market evaluation with corresponding pay structure updates, when financially feasible, would help ensure salaries remain competitive. Adjustments should be categorized as either market-based (cost of labor, CPI) or general wage increases to improve clarity. Employees benefit from transparency in understanding how their compensation may change over time, which in turn promotes good retention.
- Define Market Adjustment Criteria: Clearly articulate the criteria and methodology for determining market adjustments. Incorporate regular compensation studies and external benchmarking to ensure the County’s pay remains competitive.
- Define Market Adjustment Process: Conduct regular market studies and apply annual adjustments to pay structures, particularly the midpoints, to maintain competitiveness. Starting pay and range minimums should not fall behind market trends. Applying a consistent percentage to all salaries within each plan is typical, and adjustments may differ by pay plan. These changes should always be contingent on financial feasibility and County Commission approval.
- Communicating Market Adjustments: Communicating how and when pay structures will be adjusted is crucial for maintaining transparency, fairness, and employee satisfaction within local government organizations. The County should continue to state that any market adjustments are dependent on financial ability and County Commission approval.
- General Increases: Conduct annual reviews for cost-of-living adjustments (COLA). These should apply uniformly to all pay plans, subject to budget availability and Commission approval. To remain competitive in the labor market, COLA adjustments should be based on economic indicators and data such as:
 - Consumer Price Index (CPI) – Mountain West or Western Region
 - Public sector peer salary trends
 - Compensation survey data from regional labor markets
 - Internal data on recruitment, retention, and compression
- **Determining Employee Salary Within the Range**
 - Weber County should adopt a clear and structured policy to determine employee placement within the pay range based on demonstrated proficiency, performance, and experience. Tie movement through the range to regular performance evaluations and measurable performance criteria, ensuring that pay increases are linked to documented accomplishments and progress. For example:

- Minimum to 25th Percentile (Entry Phase)- Employees are new to the position or organization and meet the minimum qualifications for the role and require close supervision and support. Compensation at this level reflects minimal prior experience and the initial developmental phase in their role.
- 25th Percentile to Midpoint (Approaching Proficiency Phase)- Employees demonstrate partial proficiency and are on track to achieve competency. They may need some supervision and guidance, but are gaining independence in their work.
- Proficient (Middle of the Range)- Employees have achieved full proficiency in their role, performing job responsibilities independently and consistently meeting expectations. They demonstrate strong technical, behavioral, and interpersonal skills with minimal supervision.
- 75th Percentile (Advanced Phase)- Employees consistently exceed job expectations, demonstrating expertise, leadership, and significant contributions beyond the job's standard requirements. They often act as mentors or team leaders, supporting colleagues, and showing readiness for additional responsibilities.
- Expert (Top of the Range)- Employees at this level demonstrate unparalleled expertise, tenure, and consistent exceptional performance. They often serve as organizational leaders or subject-matter experts and contribute significantly beyond their job's requirements.

This structured approach simplifies salary determinations while aligning employee compensation with their demonstrated proficiency and contributions. It motivates employees to improve their skills and performance while ensuring consistency and equity across the organization. Baker Tilly recommends clearly communicating these levels and their corresponding criteria to employees and managers to foster understanding of how salary adjustments and placement decisions are made.

– **Regular Equity Reviews to Prevent Pay Compression**

- *Policy:* Weber County policies do not currently outline a process for equity reviews or preventing pay compression.
- *Recommendations:* Baker Tilly recommends that the County conduct an annual internal pay equity review to assess whether pay for more tenured employees has remained competitive relative to new hires and newly promoted employees. This review should focus on ensuring that internal equity is maintained in all pay plans and across employees across all departments. This review should involve comparing salaries within the same grade and role and accounting for market conditions and individual tenure. Baker Tilly recommends the County establish clear guidelines to adjust pay for longer-tenured employees to avoid compression issues. For example, if a newly hired or newly promoted employee is brought in at a higher or similar salary as an existing employee with greater tenure, the existing employee's salary should be adjusted accordingly to maintain internal pay equity. Equity adjustments should occur alongside annual market reviews, ensuring long-term employees are adequately compensated for their experience and contributions and receive equity adjustments reflective of both market conditions and tenure.

Pay upon Hire, Promotion, and Reassignment - People only

Weber County's pay plan documents include information on when and how salaries are determined for new employees and current employees changing pay bands. Our analysis of the existing policies follows.

– **Starting Wage or Salary**

- *Policy:* “All new employee pay or changes in current employee pay shall be evaluated based on the pay range, internal pay equity, and a competitive external market rate. Base pay shall not exceed the maximum of the grade.”
– (Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, page 1)
- *Policy:* “It is standard practice for all new hires to enter the library system at a Level I. New hires with exceptional experience or skills are placed on the Level I pay-band with an adjustment in salary range steps made to recognize their relevant experience: usually one step for every two years of relevant experience.”
– (Library Horizontal Advancement, page 1)
- *Policy:* “New employees to the health department will be placed on a (6) month probation. At the end of a successful probationary period, no subsequent increase outside of an annual Pay-For-Performance increase shall be given.”
– (Health Department Career Ladders, page 1)
- *Analysis and Recommendations:* While Weber County’s current policies reference key pay principles such as internal equity, market competitiveness, and defined pay ranges, they stop short of providing detailed or standardized guidance for determining how starting salaries should be set. This creates room for inconsistent application across departments and may inadvertently lead to internal inequities, particularly if new hires are brought in at higher salaries than existing employees with comparable experience or qualifications. Baker Tilly recommends the County establish clear written criteria and guidance for determining appropriate starting salaries for General and Health Department employees, ensuring alignment with internal equity and the employee’s expected learning curve. Additionally, the Health Department’s practice of placing new hires on a six-month probationary period and prohibiting post-probation increases (outside of Pay-for-Performance) could create misalignment if starting pay is not accurately calibrated up front. This could result in retention challenges or pay compression among similarly situated staff. For Library employees, clarify the criteria for Level I employees to achieve a higher range penetration for their relevant experience. This will support consistent and defensible salary placement across the organization.

– **Promotions**

- *Policy:* For Library employees advancing from Level I to Level II: “A one pay-band salary adjustment accompanies this advancement. In the case of an employee who has both performed above standard for two years in a row, and has taken on additional responsibilities, one or more salary steps may also be awarded.”
– (Library Horizontal Advancement, page 1)
- *Policy:* For Library employees advancing from Level II to Level III: “A one pay-band salary adjustment accompanies this advancement and, depending on the value to the organization of the extra responsibilities assigned to the position, one or more salary steps may also be awarded. Budget authority must also be available to facilitate the change.”
– Library Horizontal Advancement, page 1)
- *Policy:* For Health Department employees, “Promotional moves require the employee meet the minimum requirements of applicable Weber County job descriptions and that the employee score 3.0 or higher on prior employee performance appraisals. Promotions

will follow the Payroll Band/Grade Listing maintained by Weber County Human Resources. The employee will be raised to the Band/Grade of the new position and their wage increased by six and a half percent (6.5%). Promotions can only be given upon completion of the requirements in the job description and will be deferred if the performance expectations are not met.”

- (Health Department Career Ladders, page 1)
- *Analysis and Recommendations:* Weber County's current promotional policies for Library and Health Department employees demonstrate a structured approach to internal mobility, tying advancement to performance, increased responsibility, and defined pay increases. This approach offers greater objectivity and predictability, which helps manage expectations for both employees and supervisors. In contrast, no promotional policy exists for General employees outside of what is implied through ad hoc salary adjustments or job reclassifications. This lack of structure may lead to inconsistent practices across departments, potential internal equity concerns, and employee perceptions of favoritism or unpredictability in promotional outcomes. Baker Tilly recommends Weber County develop and adopt a county-wide promotional policy for General employees that complements the structured approaches in place for the Library and Health Departments while ensuring equitable and consistent treatment across the varied departments of General employees. A successful policy would ensure there is pay parity between employees within the same career progression, and that an employee receives a reasonable and equitable increase when promoted above other employees within the same progression. Specifically, the policy should include:
 - A clear definition of a promotion (movement to a higher-level position with greater responsibility and a higher grade or pay band).
 - Upon promotion, employees should move to the minimum of the new pay grade for the position or receive a set percentage increase from their existing salary, whichever is greater. The policy should also establish a maximum that no employee should be promoted beyond the midpoint of the new range, as the midpoint reflects when an employee is fully proficient in the role.
 - Eligibility criteria, such as meeting minimum job qualifications and receiving a satisfactory or higher performance rating (e.g., 3.0+), consistent with Health Department expectations.
 - Budget availability clause to ensure fiscal sustainability, paired with a process for deferred promotions if necessary.
 - Clear documentation and approval requirements, including internal equity checks before finalizing promotional pay.
- **Reassignment/ Transfer**
 - *Policy:* Weber County does not currently have a policy regarding the reassignment or transfer of employees to different classifications.
 - *Recommendation:* Baker Tilly recommends developing written policies for both reassignment and reclassification. Reassignment occurs when an employee is moved to a different position at the same classification level, typically to meet operational needs, accommodate organizational restructuring, or address performance or fit issues without disciplinary intent. Employees reassigned to a role of equivalent classification and pay grade will maintain their current salary and benefits, with no loss in status or seniority. If the reassignment results in materially different work schedules, duties, or work locations, the County will provide reasonable notice and, when feasible, consult with the employee prior to the move. Reassignments to lower classifications, if necessary, may result in

salary adjustments to align with the new pay grade, with consideration given to internal equity, employee tenure, and market competitiveness.

– **In-Range Salary Adjustments**

- *Policy:* “Salary Adjustments: A salary adjustment may be made for special conditions relating to an employee’s education, experience and an evaluation of the employee’s overall situation. Requests and justifications shall be written and submitted to the Director of Human Resources. Technical adjustments shall not affect an employee’s eligibility for a merit increase. Adjustments shall not exceed the salary range established for the position.”
 - (Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, page 2)
- *Policy:* “Extra Meritorious Increases: An increase granted to a merit employee for exceptional employee work performance, an increase in duties, or to correct an inequity in pay, shall not consist of more than five percent. This increase shall be requested in writing by the department head to the Director of Human Resources and the County Commission. Extra meritorious increases will only be granted with approval of at least two Commissioners and the Human Resources Director.”
 - (Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, page 2)
- *Policy:* In-grade advancement allows for a pay increase within the same grade when an employee demonstrates new, job-related skills or competencies. Advancements must be pre-approved through a formal plan outlining how the employee will achieve higher-level capabilities and how these support department goals. Plans must be approved by both the department head and HR Director and include the employee’s current job description. Employees must have completed probation and received a minimum 3.0 on their most recent performance appraisal. Eligibility is based on demonstrated growth through complex work or relevant certifications. Education or credentials unrelated to the job do not qualify. Full policy language can be found in Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, pages 3-4.
- *Analysis & Recommendations:* Weber County’s General pay policy outlines several mechanisms for in-range salary adjustments, including salary adjustments for special conditions, extra meritorious increases, and formal in-grade advancements. These tools are valuable for recognizing growth, retaining skilled staff, and addressing internal equity, but the overall framework could be strengthened with clearer guidelines, broader consistency, and expanded application across all departments. The general salary adjustment policy allows for pay increases based on education, experience, and the employee’s overall situation, but it does not define what constitutes a “special condition” or provide a consistent standard for how such requests should be evaluated. Without formal criteria or benchmarks, these adjustments may be inconsistently applied, difficult to defend, and vulnerable to perceived inequities. The extra meritorious increase policy provides a maximum of 5% for exceptional performance, increased duties, or inequity correction, with approval required from two County Commissioners and the Human Resources Director. While this oversight ensures fiscal responsibility, the policy lacks clarity on what qualifies as “exceptional,” and the multi-level approval process may discourage departments from using this tool, particularly for more moderate but still important equity corrections. The

in-grade advancement program is the most structured of the three tools and is a clear strength of the policy. It requires a formal plan, demonstrated development of new job-related skills or proficiencies, and an overall performance score of 3.0 or higher. However, it places a relatively high administrative burden on departments and employees in requiring the development of a structured plan, and by design, excludes adjustments based on tenure or general performance retroactive to the recognition for the need to increase an employee's pay.

- Another key gap is a lack of a defined pathway for employees to move through their pay bands over time. In an open pay plan without a step system, employees may perceive advancement as dependent only on COLAs, promotions, or infrequent in-range actions. This creates concerns about retention, equity with new hires, and long-term career value. Establishing tenure- and performance-based range progression would provide predictability, align with best practices, and help ensure senior-level employees remain competitively compensated.
- Notably, there is no policy language addressing in-range salary adjustments for Library or Health Department employees. This gap creates misalignment across the County and may limit those departments' ability to reward growth or correct pay disparities without reclassifying positions or relying on ad hoc merit increases. Baker Tilly recommends that the County modernize and formalize its in-range salary adjustment framework with the following actions:
 - Define "special conditions" under which salary adjustments are appropriate (e.g., critical certifications, evolving job scope, cross-functional duties).
 - Differentiate between equity adjustments and performance-based increases, each with tailored criteria and thresholds.
 - Clarify eligibility for in-range adjustments for Library and Health Department employees, ensuring equitable access to salary growth opportunities for employees across departments. Create department-specific standards, if needed.
 - Consider creating tiers of extra meritorious increases (e.g., up to 3% with HR approval, 3–5% requiring County Commission approval) to encourage responsible but flexible application.
 - Adding guidance on tenure- and performance-based range progression to provide predictable advancement, especially for Safety employees (e.g., employees with 5 years of service in their class with satisfactory performance are expected to be at range midpoint and should advance through the range on an appropriate annual basis)

Supplemental Pay:

Weber County's supplemental pay policies provide flexibility in compensating employees beyond base salary through acting assignment pay and bonus awards. Our analysis of the existing policies follows.

– Annual Pay for Performance Adjustments

- *Policy Summary:* The County may approve funding each year for performance-based pay increases tied to annual appraisal results. Employees must have a completed performance plan and score to be eligible. Department heads and elected officials determine

individual increases within approved funding. Employees at the top of their pay range receive a lump-sum payment instead of a base increase. Those promoted, transferred, or reassigned remain eligible based on timing and departmental discretion, while new and rehired employees become eligible after completing probation, with increases prorated accordingly. Full policy language can be found in Weber County Human Resources Policy 6-200: Performance Management, pages 3-4.

- *Analysis and Recommendations:* Weber County's Performance Management Policy establishes a structured, transparent framework for evaluating employee performance and linking it to pay outcomes. The policy supports the County's compensation philosophy of rewarding high performance and aligning pay decisions with measurable results, and annual pay for performance (PFP) adjustments are contingent upon funding approval by the County Commission and completion of a performance appraisal in the HRIS system. The policy appropriately ties financial recognition to documented performance, promoting accountability and fairness. However, while the framework is well-defined administratively, it does not specify how performance ratings translate to pay adjustments (e.g., percentage ranges or merit matrices), leaving room for inconsistency across departments and limited predictability for employees. The discretionary nature of increases—subject to available funding and departmental approval—can also create disparities in application if not centrally coordinated. Additionally, employees at the top of their range only receive a lump-sum payment, which may reduce long-term retention incentives for high performers. Baker Tilly recommends the following to help clarify and enhance the existing policy:
 - Establish standardized merit increase guidelines that tie performance ratings to defined percentage ranges or dollar amounts, ensuring equitable application across departments while maintaining flexibility for budget dynamics.
 - Require HR oversight of departmental PFP distributions to monitor equity and consistency.
 - Formalize the process for communicating annual funding decisions and criteria to employees to increase transparency and reinforce trust in the system.
 - Review options for recurring recognition or non-base incentives for employees at range maximums to sustain engagement and retention.

– **Acting Assignment**

- *Policy Summary:* With HR Director approval, a merit employee may temporarily assume a higher-paid role through an “acting in” assignment. The assignment must be documented in writing and include details such as the position title, effective date, duration (typically no more than six months), duties, and acting pay. Assignments cannot be made retroactively beyond 30 days, and extensions require additional approval. Acting pay must be at least the minimum of the higher grade and should reflect internal equity and market conditions. The employee retains their original job code and grade, and pay reverts once the assignment ends—unless the employee qualifies for a separate advancement. Employees must meet the minimum qualifications of the higher-level role. Full policy language can be found in Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-200: Pay Practices, pages 2-3.
- *Analysis and Recommendations:* Weber County's current policy on Acting In Assignments offers a sound procedural foundation. The policy appropriately sets expectations for documentation, approval authority, time limits, and minimum qualifications.

Importantly, it also requires that pay be adjusted to at least the minimum of the higher grade, preserving compensation alignment with the duties performed. Baker Tilly recommends the following to help clarify and enhance the existing policy:

- Establish a recommended pay increase range for acting assignments (e.g., 5-15%) or define a consistent methodology to otherwise ensure consistency. Defining a maximum can help ensure an employee does not receive a decrease in pay if they promote permanently into that position or create inequities in their new pay band if they permanently maintain a pay rate that is too high upon promotion.
- Require a comparative analysis of similar roles and current incumbents within the higher grade before setting acting pay, and require HR review and approval of acting pay to ensure internal equity is maintained across the organization.
- Emphasize that acting assignments should only be used when a higher-level position is vacant and temporarily unfilled, and clarify that the employee must take on 100% of the duties of the higher-level position in order to be eligible for the pay differential.

– **Overtime**

- *Policy Summary:* Weber County follows the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and requires Department Directors and supervisors to ensure compliance. Non-exempt employees are paid time and a half for hours worked over 40 in a week (or over 80 hours per pay period for law enforcement and correctional personnel). Paid leave does not count toward hours worked. Overtime must be approved in advance, except for public safety emergencies, and departments are responsible for accurate timekeeping. The County discourages overtime and encourages the use of compensatory time (accrued at 1.5 hours per overtime hour) when agreed to in advance by both the employee and supervisor. Comp time use must be approved and taken within a reasonable time unless it would disrupt operations. Employees may accrue up to 240 hours unless a higher cap is authorized by the Commission. Upon termination, any unused comp time is paid out, and all hours worked or on leave must be recorded in 15-minute increments on official timesheets. Full policy language can be found in Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-100: Payroll Practices, pages 2-4.
- *Analysis and Recommendation:* Weber County's overtime and compensatory time policy reflects a strong commitment to compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), offering clear definitions for overtime eligibility, approval requirements, comp time accrual, and payout procedures. It appropriately differentiates between general and public safety employees and includes mechanisms to limit budgetary impact. While it is a comprehensive policy, it could be improved by clarifying how departments should equitably assign overtime opportunities that help minimize budgetary impact without perpetuating a culture where employees rack up compensatory time instead of opting for paid cash. Additionally, the County would benefit from requiring periodic reviews of compensatory time balances and ensuring all non-exempt employees receive and acknowledge the policy upon hire or reclassification.

– **On-call Time**

- *Policy Summary:* Employees may be assigned on-call duty at management's discretion and are compensated at one hour of pay for every 12 hours on-call. To qualify, the employee must be available to respond to calls but still able to attend to personal matters;

on-call time is not allowed while on leave or otherwise unavailable. On-call status must be designated in writing by a supervisor—merely carrying a cell phone is not sufficient. Employees must accurately record both on-call hours and any hours worked, and may not report both for the same time period. Total reported hours—including work, leave, and on-call—cannot exceed 24 in a single day. Full policy language can be found in Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-100: Payroll Practices, page 4.

- *Analysis and Recommendation:* Weber County's on-call policy establishes a clear framework for compensating employees who are directed to remain available for duty outside of regular working hours. The policy appropriately distinguishes on-call time from actual hours worked and defines eligibility requirements, compensation rates, and documentation procedures. Requiring written designation of on-call status ensures accountability and helps manage expectations. However, the policy could be strengthened by clarifying how on-call assignments are communicated, scheduled, and rotated to ensure equitable distribution among eligible staff. Additionally, the fixed compensation rate of one hour per 12 hours may warrant periodic review to ensure it remains competitive and aligned with industry norms. Baker Tilly recommends the County take the following steps to strengthen the policy:
- Define expectations for how on-call rotations will be scheduled, including advance notice requirements and how departments should distribute assignments fairly among qualified staff (e.g., rotating calendar or voluntary sign-up systems).
- Clarify the process for designating on-call status, including a standardized form or template for written supervisor designation that can be retained for audit purposes.
- Establish oversight protocols, requiring departments to review and submit on-call assignment logs to Human Resources or payroll on a recurring basis (e.g., monthly or quarterly) to ensure compliance with policy and equity among employees.
- Require periodic review of the compensation rate, such as every two to three years, to ensure that the one-hour-per-12-hours formula remains competitive with peer agencies and reflective of the County's operational needs.

– **Stand-by Time**

- *Policy:* "Weber County shall pay an employee restricted to stand-by at a specified location ready for work full-time or overtime, as appropriate. Management shall pay an employee for stand-by time if required to stand by the post ready for duty, even during lunch periods, equipment breakdowns, or other temporary work shutdowns."
- (Weber County Human Resources Policy 5-100: Payroll Practices, page 4)
- *Analysis and Recommendation:* Weber County's stand-by policy provides appropriate compensation for employees who are required to remain at a designated location, ready for immediate duty. The policy correctly distinguishes stand-by time from on-call time and acknowledges that employees are entitled to compensation when their movement is restricted, including during temporary work stoppages such as lunch periods or equipment failures. While the intent aligns with FLSA guidance, the policy would benefit from additional clarity on when and how stand-by time is designated, how it should be recorded, and how it differs operationally and procedurally from on-call status. Baker Tilly recommends the County take the following steps to strengthen the policy:
- Define criteria for stand-by assignments, such as what constitutes a "specified location," whether the employee is permitted to engage in personal activities, and the minimum duration of a stand-by period.

- Clarify supervisory responsibilities, requiring that all stand-by assignments be designated in writing by a department head or supervisor, similar to the process used for on-call status.
- Establish timekeeping procedures, instructing employees to record stand-by time separately from regular hours and on-call hours, with clear guidance on when and how to enter this time on official payroll records.
- Differentiate stand-by from on-call status in the County's personnel manual or compensation policy by outlining a comparison table or side-by-side definitions to avoid confusion and ensure consistent application across departments.

– **Lateral Sign-On Bonus**

- *Policy:* “The Weber County Sheriffs Office has approved a sign on bonus for lateral hires in both Corrections and Law Enforcement. To be eligible, the newly hired Deputy must have been working at a Law Enforcement agency when hired, unless otherwise approved by the Sheriff. End of probation bonus will be given once a PFP has been completed by the supervisor.”
- (Weber County Sheriff's Office Lateral Hire Sign On Bonus)
- *Analysis and Recommendation:* The Weber County Sheriff's Office offers a sign-on bonus to attract experienced lateral hires in Corrections and Law Enforcement. Eligible new hires currently employed at another law enforcement agency receive \$2,000 six weeks after hire and an additional \$2,000 following successful completion of probation, contingent on a completed performance plan. This policy provides a competitive recruitment incentive in a difficult labor market, particularly for law enforcement roles where lateral movement can reduce training costs and fill vacancies more quickly. To strengthen transparency and consistency, Weber County should formalize this policy within the County's broader pay and hiring framework. The County could:
 - Require that all sign-on bonus programs receive HR and Commission approval prior to implementation, with documentation of recruitment needs and market justification.
 - Specify that bonuses are tied to hard-to-fill classifications or verified recruitment challenges and define parameters for bonus amounts and funding.
 - Incorporate the program into the County's overall pay practices as a recruitment incentive, with consistent language regarding timing of payments, tax treatment, and repayment if the employee leaves within a defined period (e.g., 12 months).