

Brazos County Human Resources

Interim Compensation Administration Guidelines

(Effective through implementation of the new classification and compensation structure)

Purpose

As Brazos County transitions to a new classification and compensation structure, these interim guidelines are established to ensure that compensation decisions are made to:

- Support market alignment identified in the Compensation & Benefits Study
- Promote internal equity across departments
- Do not create additional misalignment or compression prior to full implementation

These guidelines are temporary and will remain in effect until the new structure is implemented.

Pay Increases, Reclassifications, Promotions, Filling Vacant Positions

Guiding Principles

All compensation actions during this transition period will be evaluated based on the following:

- Market Alignment: Priority will be given to employees currently compensated below market.
- Internal Equity: Actions should not create or worsen pay inequities within or across departments.
- Future Alignment: Decisions should align, to the extent possible, with the proposed classification and compensation structure.

General Guidance

1. Employees Below Market:

- May be considered for pay increases toward market alignment.
- Increases should not exceed the anticipated market midpoint.
- Priority group for FY '27 adjustments.

2. Employees At or Above Market:

- Pay increases are generally discouraged during the interim period.
- Requests that would move an employee further above market will require strong written justification as well as review and approval by HR.
- In most cases, adjustments should be deferred until implementation.

3. Reclassifications / Changes in Duties:

- Must reflect substantial and documented changes in job responsibilities. Title changes alone are not sufficient justification.
- Will require review and approval by HR.
- Where possible, positions will be evaluated against the proposed classification structure.

4. Promotions to Higher-Level Positions

- Employees who are selected for and promoted into a position assigned to a higher pay grade may receive a promotional salary increase to recognize the additional duties, responsibilities, and accountability associated with the new position.

When an employee's current salary already exceeds the midpoint of the proposed pay grade for the new position, HR may recommend a promotional increase of up to 3%, provided sufficient funding is available or with budget amendment approval. The promotional increase is intended to recognize the advancement to a higher-level position and does not guarantee alignment to any specific point within the pay range.

5. Vacant Position Review and Refill Authorization

As part of the Fiscal Year 2027 budget process and implementation of the Compensation and Benefits Study, funding associated with budgeted positions vacant for six (6) months or longer may be removed from departmental budgets and returned to the General Fund, unless otherwise authorized by Commissioners Court. These funds may be used to offset costs associated with market adjustments for positions identified as below market.

Before recruiting for or filling a budgeted position that has remained vacant for six (6) months or longer, Department Heads operating under Commissioners Court authority shall obtain Commissioners Court approval by submitting an Intent to Fill request through the regular agenda process. The request shall include:

- Position title and classification
- Department and division, if applicable
- Date the position became vacant
- Current budgeted salary or salary range
- Compensation and Benefits Study classification and approved pay range
- Summary of duties and operational need
- How duties have been managed during the vacancy
- Operational impact if the position remains vacant
- Justification for retaining the position in its current form
- Confirmation of review by Human Resources and the Budget Office

A position vacant for six (6) months or longer may indicate that the position should be reevaluated based on current operational needs, workforce priorities, fiscal constraints, or opportunities for restructuring or alternative service delivery. This review ensures that staffing and funding decisions align with the County's strategic and financial objectives.

Approval of an Intent to Fill request authorizes the Department Head to proceed with recruitment and, when applicable, restores funding in accordance with County budget and hiring procedures.

Commissioners Court may authorize exceptions when operational, public safety, statutory, or other compelling business needs justify expedited action.

Prohibited / Restricted Actions

The following actions are strongly discouraged during the interim period:

- Increasing pay for employees already above market without documented justification.
- Title changes without corresponding duty changes.
- Adjustments that create known internal inequities.
- Use of budget availability as the sole justification for pay increases.

New Hire Job Offer Guidelines

Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish a consistent, equitable, and market-based approach for determining starting salaries for newly hired employees. These guidelines are intended to support recruitment efforts while maintaining internal equity, preserving the integrity of the County's compensation structure, and ensuring responsible stewardship of public funds.

General Guidelines

1. All newly hired employees shall be paid within the established salary range assigned to the position.
2. Candidates who possess only the minimum qualifications required for the position should generally be hired near the minimum of the pay range.
3. Additional education, experience, certifications, licenses, and other job-related qualifications that exceed the minimum requirements of the position may justify placement further into the pay range.
4. Human Resources shall review all proposed starting salaries to ensure consistency with these guidelines and to evaluate potential internal equity and salary compression concerns.

5. New hire salaries should generally not exceed the salaries of current employees performing substantially similar work with comparable qualifications, experience, and performance history.
6. Departments should not make salary commitments to candidates prior to receiving Human Resources approval.
7. Starting salaries should generally not exceed the midpoint of the assigned pay range.
8. Placement above the midpoint is intended to be rare and reserved for exceptional circumstances involving highly qualified candidates, difficult-to-fill positions, critical operational needs, or extraordinary market conditions.
9. Any proposed starting salary above the midpoint of the assigned pay range shall require:
 - Written justification from the Department Head or Elected Official;
 - Review and recommendation by Human Resources;
 - and
 - Department Heads are required to attain approval from Commissioners Court prior to extending an offer of employment above midpoint.

Hiring Placement Matrix

The following matrix may be used to evaluate qualifications that exceed the minimum requirements of the position.

Possession of additional education, experience, certifications, or licenses does not automatically warrant additional compensation. Such qualifications may be considered only when they exceed the minimum requirements of the position and are determined by Human Resources to be directly relevant to the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Relevant Education Above Minimum Requirements

Qualification	Points
Relevant Associate Degree	1
Relevant Bachelor's Degree	2
Relevant Master's Degree	3
Relevant Doctorate	4

Relevant education is coursework, a degree, or formal training that directly supports the knowledge, skills, abilities, or competencies required to perform the essential functions of the position.

Human Resources shall determine whether education is considered relevant based on the position's job description, minimum qualifications, and operational requirements.

Examples

Position	Relevant Degree	Not Typically Relevant
Administrative Secretary	Business Administration, Public Administration, Office Administration	Education, Biology, Engineering
HR Analyst	Human Resources, Business, Public Administration	Nursing, Agriculture
Accountant	Accounting, Finance	Criminal Justice, Education
IT Systems Administrator	Computer Science, MIS, Cybersecurity	English, History
Juvenile Probation Officer	Criminal Justice, Psychology, Social Work	Accounting, Engineering

Relevant Experience Beyond Minimum Requirements

Additional Relevant Experience	Points
1-2 years	1
3-5 years	2
6-9 years	3
10-14 years	4
15+ years	5

Relevant experience is prior work experience that demonstrates the knowledge, skills, abilities, or competencies necessary to perform the duties of the position.

Experience that is unrelated to the duties and responsibilities of the position shall not be considered for salary placement purposes.

Licenses / Certifications Above Minimum Requirements

Qualification	Points
One preferred certification/license	1
Two or more preferred certifications/licenses	2
Advanced or specialized certification	3

Recruitment Factors (HR Determination)

Factor	Points
Difficult-to-fill position (6+ months posted & vacant)	1
Exceptional market scarcity	1

Salary Placement Recommendations

Total Points	Maximum Range Penetration
0 – 1	Up to 10%
2 – 3	Up to 15%
4 – 5	Up to 25%
6 – 7	Up to 35%
8 – 9	Up to 50%
10 – 11	Up to 65%
12+	Up to 75%

The hiring manager, Department Head, or Elected Official may recommend a starting salary within the applicable range penetration guideline. Human Resources shall review all recommendations for consistency, internal equity, budgetary compliance, and alignment with County compensation practices.

Exceptions

Nothing in these guidelines creates an entitlement to a specific starting salary or range placement. The County reserves the right to consider unique circumstances, labor market conditions, internal equity concerns, budget limitations, and operational needs when determining final compensation offers.

Human Resources may recommend deviations from these guidelines when necessary to support the County's recruitment and retention objectives, subject to any required approvals.

Administration

- HR will partner with departments to evaluate requests and provide guidance.
- These guidelines may be updated as needed during the transition period.
- These guidelines are effective immediately and will remain in place until the implementation of the new classification and compensation structure (anticipated FY '28).