



FY 2025 - 2026

Pinal County Employee Compensation Plan

Purpose:

To establish guidelines for I) Across-the-Board pay increases, and II) Discretionary Performance, Market, Equity Adjustments, Premium Pay, and One-Time Awards necessary to: encourage critical recruitment and retention; be responsive to current inflationary challenges and the exceptionally tight labor market; promote internal equity based upon relevant qualifications and performance; and maintain consistency in the County's market position among comparators so that the County continues to have the engaged, professional workforce needed to provide quality services to its residents.

Statement of Policy:

The basis for this Plan is established in Pinal County Policy and Procedure, 4.20, Wage and Salary Administration, 4.25, Evaluation and Compensation Plan, and 4.28, Compensation Plan Maintenance.

Scope:

This Plan applies to all Pinal County Elected Offices, appointed departments, and special districts, as well as, the Superior Court of Arizona in Pinal County. Excluded from the Plan are all elected officials and salaried officials whose compensation is set by statute. Also excluded are Pinal County Sheriff's Office deputy and detention personnel covered under a separate Board of Supervisors' authorized step plan. Chief Deputies of elected officials are eligible to receive the across-the-board increase with the concurrence of the elected official.

I. Across-the-Board Increase (ATB)

In accordance with Policy 4.25, across-the-board increases shall be distributed equally among eligible employees.

A. Employee Eligibility Criteria

For purposes of this FY 2025 – 2026 Plan only, the following eligibility criteria applies and supersedes Policy 4.25.

1. Be a full or part-time employee as of June 30, 2025.
2. Meet minimum performance standards (successful/proficient or above) as documented on a current performance evaluation completed and submitted to Human Resources by August 31, 2025.
3. Employees with less than one year of continuous service as of June 30, 2025, shall be eligible once they have successfully completed their initial probationary period or six (6) months of continuous employment if the employee is in a position which is not covered by a Merit System. In either case, an evaluation covering the applicable period with a rating of 2 or 3 or equivalent must be completed and on file with County Human Resources before an ATB increase will be processed.
4. Employees meeting or exceeding minimum performance standards who have been promoted or voluntarily demoted and who do not have an evaluation on file covering the current position held will be eligible for the ATB increase. However, an evaluation for the currently held position should be completed and submitted to County Human Resources by August 31, 2025, or at the end of the promotional probationary period, whichever is later.
5. Departments with employees on approved leave who do not have the required performance evaluations on file with County Human Resources should contact County Human Resources for guidance.
6. Employees who were promoted, transferred, or voluntarily demoted are eligible as long as they meet all other criteria.
7. Employees on Terminal Leave (Pinal County Policy and Procedure, 7.34, Separation Payout and Terminal Leave) are not eligible.
8. Employees who terminate employment before their pay increases are processed through the payroll system are not eligible.

B. Performance Evaluations

Performance evaluations shall be completed for all employees as outlined in Policy 4.25.

C. Funding

The Board of Supervisors has authorized a three (3) percent across-the board increase for eligible employees. Department budgets have been or will be adjusted as necessary to cover regular salaries and associated employee related expenses to cover the costs of the Plan.

D. Effective Date

1. The effective date for the implementation of the ATB increase for eligible employees is September 14, 2025.
2. Increases for employees who will become eligible on or after September 14, 2025, will be at the beginning of the first pay period after they become eligible.

E. Implementation

1. Departments will be provided spreadsheets by County Human Resources and are expected to verify that all eligible employees are included and that employee information is correct.
2. Increases will be applied to the base pay unless doing so would cause the employee's salary to exceed the maximum of the market range for their position grade. Any salary adjustment above the maximum of the range for the grade shall be given as a one-time lump sum.
 - a. Part-time employees shall be considered at the maximum of the range for their position if their current hourly rate multiplied by 2080 hours meets or exceeds the maximum of the range.
3. Employees who become eligible for an increase on or after September 14, 2025, shall be processed once notification has been sent to County Human Resources documenting the employee has successfully completed their initial probation, or six months of employment if not covered by a Merit System, to include a performance evaluation demonstrating the employee meets performance eligibility standards, i.e., a rating of 2 or 3 or equivalent.

II. Discretionary Performance, Market, Equity Adjustments, Premium Pay, and One-Time Awards (Critical Recruitment and Retention)

When necessary to attract, hire, and/or, retain employees identified as critical to the successful achievement of strategic goals and priorities, additional salary, one-time performance, premium pay, or critical retention awards, and/or market adjustments may be authorized according to the guidelines detailed in this Plan.

For difficult to fill positions, one-time sign-on awards or retention milestone awards, etc., may also be considered to promote market competitiveness and retention. Additionally, "employee recruiter" incentives may be authorized to promote global employee engagement and individual employee investment in the County's efforts to connect quality applicants with employment opportunities and enhance a county-wide high performing, retention focused culture.

This limited discretion, enables the County Manager and Elected Officials to:

1. Resolve critical recruitment and retention issues that require agility in order to be responsive in a timely, productive, and cost-effective way.
2. Implement pay grade changes and market and equity adjustments necessary to encourage recruitment and retention and maintain consistency in the County's market position.
3. Address internal pay equity issues based upon relevant qualifications and/or performance.
4. Reward high performers when supported by documented evidence which distinguishes the employee from his/her peers for having contributed to a program or practice which has had a significant, quantifiable, positive impact on the operations of the County, department, or community.

A. Criteria for Consideration: Performance, Market and Equity Adjustments

For consideration to be given to a discretionary performance, retention, and/or, equity adjustments, appointing authorities shall provide documentation clearly establishing each of the required elements below:

1. Identify the *critical* recruitment or retention issue. Detail why the compensation adjustment is required. For example:
 - a. A high performing employee, as documented in his/her personnel file, holding a key professional level position has been offered a higher salary for an equal or lesser position with a comparator and the cost for a replacement exceeds the cost of retention, and/or, the market data and position recruitment experience indicates a qualified replacement is unlikely, and, the loss of experience and skills will have a substantial impact on the quality of services provided.
 - b. A critical position is posted for recruitment and all available, reasonable recruitment and marketing efforts have resulted in no or insufficiently qualified applicants.
 - c. The turnover rate for the position consistently exceeds 10 or more percent (excluding trainee, entry level positions, and/or promotions) and exit interviews substantiate compensation is the primary contributing factor.
 - d. A high performing employee has distinguished himself/herself by making a significant, quantifiable contribution to the department or County beyond that which would be expected of the role. The justification for this award should be fully supported and fully documented in the employee's performance evaluation. If necessary, a separate detailed statement

outlining their contributions to the department or County shall be submitted to support the award.

2. Establish an objective business case for the change proposed, to include:
 - a. Data and analysis which shows how the failure to address the critical need will have a significant negative impact on the department's ability to provide mandated or essential services.
 - b. Data and analysis which demonstrates how the proposed compensation adjustment will enable the department to better meet the County's and/or customers' current and emerging needs in a productive and cost-effective way.
 - c. Information which indicates why the compensation adjustment is more important than other financial and/or resource priorities.
3. Determine the funding.
 - a. Does the department have sufficient current and ongoing budget capacity to fund the increase(s)?
 - b. If additional budget capacity is required, why is this compensation adjustment more important than other financial and/or resource priorities?
4. Determine the impact.
 - a. Will the compensation adjustment have a positive (or negative) impact on other employees, departments, mandates, or services?

B. Criteria for Consideration: One-Time Recruitment Incentives

For consideration to be given for one-time sign-on awards, employee based recruitment incentives, etc., appointing authorities shall:

1. Identify the critical recruitment issue. Detail why the recruitment incentive is recommended.
2. Establish the criteria for award eligibility, for example, for an employee recruiter or sign-on award, the percent to be awarded the employee recruiter and/or the new hire upon employment, and/or, the percent to be awarded the employee recruiter and the new hire upon successful completion of one year of employment.
3. Establish any exclusion to eligibility, i.e., may not hold a lead, supervisory, or above role in the department employing the new hire.

4. Set the time frame for the incentive award.
5. Identify the budget capacity to consistently and equitably fund the incentive award through the time frame established.

C. Criteria for Consideration: Premium Pay

Premium Pay is additional pay, above base pay, provided to employees on a temporary basis for performing necessary and critical duties beyond the scope of their job classification and/or for performing duties under special conditions or circumstances. Premium Pay is not required, is discretionary, and is allowed at the direction of the Appointing Authority with approval from the County Manager. When applied, the same premium pay rates must be used for all similarly-situated employees and may only be used for actual time worked. An example of Premium Pay is Elections Day Poll Worker Pay.

For consideration to be given for Premium Pay, appointing authorities shall:

1. Identify the critical business need for the non-standard duties to be performed or the special conditions required.
2. Demonstrate how the duties or the conditions in which the duties are performed are beyond what would normally be expected of the employee in their role.

Job classifications include a statement indicating “other duties as assigned” given all possible duties and responsibilities consistent with a position cannot always be anticipated nor described. Therefore, it is important for Appointing Authorities to distinguish between other duties as assigned and duties warranting consideration for premium pay.

3. Explain how the need cannot be or is not best met through other authorized temporary pay Rules or policies, i.e., Job Detail Assignment or Management Assignment Pay.
4. Work with County Human Resources to establish a rate consistent with pay practices for special assignments and/or market factors.
5. Confirm funding for the premium pay is available through the department’s budget appropriation.

D. ATB increases and Market Adjustments for Chief Deputies and Board of Supervisors’ Staff and Direct Reports.

This Plan authorizes the County Manager to implement the Board of Supervisor approved ATB increase for all eligible employees to include Chief Deputies of Elected Officials and Board of Supervisors’ staff and direct reports without further review by the Board of Supervisors.

Market based adjustments, if applicable, consistent with the Board of Supervisor approved Pinal County Policy 4.28, Compensation Plan Maintenance, may also be

applied to Chief Deputies of Elected Officials and direct reports to the Board of Supervisors. The authority granted the County Manager to implement market adjustments impacting upon Chief Deputies and Board of Supervisor direct reports shall be agreed upon by the elected official and shall not exceed placement at the midpoint of any newly applied pay grade consistent with Board of Supervisor action on February 15, 2023. Direct reports to the Board of Supervisors, as a body, shall be compensated in a consistent manner subject to review by the Chairman of the Board. Placement above the midpoint shall require approval by the Board of Supervisors.

E. Responsibilities and Approval Authority

Elected officials and department directors shall submit completed requests for discretionary increases, premium pay, or one-time recruitment or retention incentive strategies through the County Human Resources Department and Office of Budget and Finance to the County Manager for consideration and approval.

The County Human Resources Department shall provide and/or verify the following information as applicable: performance, market, recruitment, equity, and turnover data.

The Office of Budget and Finance shall verify current and recurring funding.

The County Manager shall collaborate with the elected official when making a determination for approval. At any point in the process, and at the discretion of the County Manager and/or the elected official, the request may be brought to the Board of Supervisors for consideration.

Approval for requests made by appointed departments shall be determined at the sole discretion of the County Manager.

Unless otherwise stated, any additional discretionary salary adjustments, performance based adjustments, or onetime retention awards that may impact upon the Board of Supervisors' staff and/or direct reports, e.g., County Manager, Clerk of the Board, District Administrators, or that may impact upon Chief Deputies of Elected Officials, must be brought to the Board of Supervisors for consideration and approval.

F. Funding

In the FY 2025-2026 budget, the Board of Supervisors set aside funds to be used for critical compensation, performance, and market based adjustments as needed during the year.

Compensation adjustments authorized by this Plan shall first be funded within the department's authorized budget, if possible.

If insufficient funding exists in the department, department budgets will be adjusted as necessary to cover regular salaries and associated employee related expenses for ATB or market based pay increases authorized in accordance with this Plan.

The total amount of the Plan shall not exceed the departments' ability to fund authorized adjustments in combination with funds set aside for this purpose in the Board of Supervisors' approved FY2025 - 2026 budget without prior Board authorization.

G. Effective Date

Approved changes to salaries and/or position funding necessary to address critical recruitment and retention of employees shall be effective the first pay period following approval and implementation.

Variations:

Variations to this Plan which do not change its purpose or intent may be made with the approval of the County Manager.