

# Livingston County Michigan Human Resources Policy Manual

<b>Section:</b>	<b>Compensation</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Merit Steps</b>

## A. POLICY

### 1. PURPOSE:

To establish policy and procedure regarding merit increases which can adjust employees' wages beyond the market maximum. Will develop and maintain a clear structure of job responsibility and work activity to ensure employees are aware of expectations for their position and determine eligibility requirements for merit adjustment steps. Will identify criteria by which employee's performance will be evaluated.

### 2. POLICY STATEMENT:

Job descriptions will identify criteria (eligibility requirements) that need to be attained prior to employees becoming eligible for merit increase steps. Before authorizing a merit increase, the Elected Official/Department Head/County Administrator will adopt criteria to support a merit step increase. Criteria for supervisory employees, at a minimum, will include:

- Developed specific efficiencies in the performance of duties.
- Exceeds performance objectives for the position.
- Demonstrates on-going skill development through readings, journals, formal education, attendance at seminars and conferences, etc.
- Initiates constructive ideas with supervisor for unit/position performance.
- Administers and monitors department budget within specifications outlined by the Board of Commissioners where total expenditures not exceed authorized budgetary amounts.
- Coordinates the activities of the department and its members forming a cohesive and effective team that can focus on accomplishing the organizations mission and purpose in an exemplary manner.
- Provides outstanding direction to the organization by setting an example of the conduct and work ethic expected of all employees.

Criteria for non-supervisory employees, at a minimum will include:

- Developed specific efficiencies in the performance of duties.
- Exceeds performance objectives for the position.
- Assumes constructive leadership role with co-workers.
- Assists in providing training to other staff, share skills with other staff.
- Functions willingly as a training consultant/resource to colleagues.
- Demonstrates on-going skill development through readings, journals, formal education, attendance at seminars and conferences, etc.
- Initiates constructive ideas with supervisor for unit/position performance.

The employee must have been employed by the County for one year immediately preceding the effective date of the merit salary increase. One year must have elapsed since the employee's last step salary adjustment.

The total amount of a merit award cannot exceed the annual budget allocation. Merit awards are subject to availability of funds. The new base salary of any employee may not exceed the maximum of the range for that classification.

The determination to award a merit step in no way affects an employee's at will employment relationship with the County. An employee is not guaranteed employment or compensation for a specified period of time. An employee or the County can terminate this at will relationship at any time.

3. APPLICABILITY:

Applies to all non-union employees excluding temporary, interns and elected officials.

4. DEFINITIONS:

Merit Increases – Salary advancement within a salary range to Step 7 or Step 8 based on meritorious performance. Meritorious job performance is defined as a consistently high level of job performance over a sustained period of time or the successful completion of a significant assigned project that had a major impact on the department or the County.

Cost of Living Adjustments – This is an across-the-board salary adjustment based on economic/market changes to the general level of wages to County employees to the pay structure. This adjustment is granted to every employee whose current rate of pay is at or below the salary range maximum of their assigned pay grade.

Step Increases – indicated on the Livingston County Salary progression plan and are not automatic. Generally, employees receive a one-step pay increase on their anniversary date after each year of employment.

Senior management employees are identified as:

911 Director  
Airport Manager  
Animal Control Director  
Building Official  
Building Services Director  
Community Corrections Manager  
EMS/Ambulance Director  
Equalization Director  
Finance Officer  
Health Director  
Human Resources Director  
IT Director  
Job Training Services Director  
Labor Relations Manager  
LETS Director  
Planning Director  
Veterans Affairs

5. REFERENCE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY:

6. SEE ALSO:

Policy: Position (Job) Description  
Policy: Compensation/Classification Administrative Guidelines  
Form: Merit Step Evaluation/Recommendation  
Form: Merit Step Evaluation/Recommendation for Supervisors & Senior Management Employees  
Form: Personnel Action Request

7. SUPERSEDES:

8. APPROVED BY:

Personnel Committee 11/2/05  
Finance Committee 11/10/05  
Livingston Board of Commissioners: 11/21/05

9. RESOLUTION: No. 1105-437 (11/21/05)

10. REVIEW HISTORY:

**B. PROCEDURE**

Human Resources with the aid and assistance of supervisors and employees will be responsible for preparing and maintaining thorough position descriptions on all employees.

Each employee shall receive a written position description at time of hire and at every change thereafter. Each employee will review, sign and date their position description. Criteria for granting merit increase steps will be identified in each position description. Copies of the description will be kept in individual personnel files.

All position descriptions will be reviewed regularly by the immediate supervisor along with Human Resources to determine their continued accuracy, completeness, relevance and compliance with applicable laws. Position descriptions may be revised or altered at the sole discretion of Livingston County or appropriate elected official in conjunction with the Board of Commissioners as a means of operational efficiency and the changing nature of conducting business.

Merit increases may be initiated by the Elected Official/Department Head/County Administrator or the employee. The employee may petition their superior for a merit increase through a written narrative request. This request must be dated and signed by the employee. The employee may use the merit step evaluation form as a guideline for content to be included in the narrative submitted; however, the employee should feel free and is encouraged to include all relevant detail that would be considered favorably in awarding a merit step.

Effective 10/10/05, requests for merit increases must be accompanied with a completed Merit Step Evaluation/Recommendation Form or the Merit Step Evaluation Recommendation Form for Supervisory and Senior Management Staff Form along with a Personnel Action Form requesting the merit step.

If their performance does not warrant a merit adjustment, in the discretion of the elected official, department head, or county administrator their rate will be frozen until sufficient justification is documented. Merit adjustments may be granted by the elected official, department head or county administrator any time during the calendar year, generally on the employee's anniversary date. However, retro-activity will not usually be awarded.

Merit increases are not guaranteed and are based on meritorious performance. Meritorious job performance is defined as a consistently high level of job performance over a sustained period of time or the successful completion of a significant assigned project that had a major impact on the department or the County.

Effective 10/10/06, merit increases will not be awarded unless evidence of additional criteria has been identified and communicated to the employee. Additional criteria should be specific to the position being evaluated and go beyond the general expectations for the classifications. The Elected Official/Department Head/County Administrator will complete a recommendation to support the merit award using the Merit Step Evaluation/Recommendation Form or the Merit Step Evaluation Recommendation Form for Supervisory Staff along with a Personnel Action Form.

If the merit step is denied, by the elected official, department head, or county administrator, the employee may reapply once additional criteria for eligibility are met. All requests for merit increases will be reviewed by Human Resources to ensure compliance with Board policy.

Senior Management Step Increases

Senior management employees will be evaluated once a year, generally on their anniversary date. The County Administrator will evaluate the employees on their productivity, reliability, initiative, attitude, accuracy, judgment and learning ability. Annual step increases will not occur automatically without evidence that this occurred.