State Employee Salary Increase Details and FAQ Answers

Last Friday when the Virginia General Assembly approved the amended budget, it included many positive changes for active state employee compensation packages as well as retiree benefits. We announced them in the last issue of the eNews Special Legislative Report and got a boatload of questions in return.

That's to be expected, because the natural questions when reading these reports are, "does this apply to me, my coworkers, or those who report to me?"

As a result, we've answered lots of emails. Following, you'll find more Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) details.

The approved Budget Bill (HB 1400) that has gone to the Governor for his signature, and includes:

- **A 2 percent across the board salary increase for active employees** in August 2015. **FAQ:** This will be calculated prior to any other increase for which the employee may qualify. Employee must have a rating of at least Contributor and part-timers are eligible at the Agency's discretion and budgetary availability.

- **A $65 per year of continuous service compression raise** for active State employees with five to 30 years of service, plus **an $80 per year increase for State Police Officers.** **FAQ:** If you left state employment, then returned; your most recent hiring date serves as your starting date for the compression raise. It is for CONTINUOUS employment (because compression increases are meant to help equalize pay differences between new employees hired at today's more competitive market salaries with those of longer-term employees hired at less competitive pay.)

- An additional **2 percent salary increase** for **19 high turnover state job classifications.** **FAQ:** As defined in the amendment, these are: Law Enforcement Officer I; Direct Service Associate I; Direct Service Associate II; Direct Service Associate III; Housekeeping and/or Apparel Worker I; Probation Officer Assistant; Emergency Coordinator I; Emergency Coordinator II; Registered Nurse I; Registered Nurse II; Nurse Practitioner I/Physician's Assistant; Licensed Practical Nurse; Therapy Assistant/Therapist I; Therapist II; Compliance/Safety Officer II; District Court Deputy Clerk, Grade 6; District Court Deputy Clerk, Grade 7; and District Court Deputy Clerk, Grade 8.

- **A $1,000 per year increase** for correctional officers and correctional officer seniors. **FAQ:** $1,000 salary increase for all correctional officers and all correctional officers senior who are employed at Department of Corrections facilities statewide, effective August 10. Some other closely related job titles are included, check with HR.

- **A 2.5 percent salary increase for university and college faculty.** **FAQ:** Classified employees at the Commonwealth’s higher education institutions
receive the raises for all State employees (2 percent plus compression); this additional 2.5 percent is at the university's discretion and will be the average increase given to faculty and administrative faculty at the state community colleges and four-year colleges and universities.

- An increase in the VRS employer contribution to reach 90 percent of the actuarially established rates
- A rollback of proposed increases in the State Health Insurance Fund deductibles and co-payments, restoration of HIF interest earnings, and restoration of long-term care tax credits

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