



# AHRS PERIODICAL

Office of Agency Human Resource Services

## Statewide Pay Action Summary Report April - June 2007

Pay Action	# Actions	# Pay Adjustments	Avg. % Adjustment
Promotions	522	513	14.87
Demotion – Voluntary	54	28	-11.29
Demotion – Disciplinary	7	7	-6.76
Demotion - Performance	1	1	-5
Role Change – Upward	234	193	9.58
Role Change – Lateral	86	29	6.98
Role Change – Downward	12	2	-4
Voluntary Transfer – Competitive	709	470	9.56
Vol. Transfer - Non-Competitive	258	24	7.93
Temporary Pay – All Reasons	199	199	8.29
End Temporary Pay	198	198	-7.82
Competitive Salary Offer	40	40	12.62
Reassignment within Band	68	-	-
Apply/Adjust Special Rate	104	104	3.31
Disciplinary Pay Action			
IBA – Change in Duties Increase	388	388	7.18
IBA – New KSAs/Competencies	506	506	7.47
IBA – Retention	634	634	6.29
IBA – Internal Alignment Increase	2218	2218	6.43
Bonus – Change in Duties	58	58	2.92
Bonus – Internal Alignment	13	13	2.54
Bonus – New KSAs/Comp.	378	378	1.60
Bonus – Retention	25	25	3.18
Bonus – Recognition, Monetary	2583	2583	.76
Bonus – Recognition Non-Monetary	122	122	.06
Bonus – Sign-On	51	51	3.06
Bonus – Recognition Leave	4483	-	-
Bonus – Referral	3	3	.97
Suggestion Award – Monetary	2	2	.78
Suggestion Award - Leave	1	-	-
Exceptional Retention Bonus Payout	30	30	5.89
Exceptional Retention Leave Award	8	-	-
Sign-On Leave	13	-	-
<b>Overall Approximate Totals</b>	<b>14,008</b>	<b>8819</b>	<b>3.24</b>

*There were 8,583 upward pay adjustments at an average of 5.56 %*

*There were 236 downward pay adjustments at an average of -6.97%*

*Note: In addition to the above, all state employees were granted 8 hours of Recognition Leave by Governor Kaine effective May 3, 2007.*

Workforce Planning and the Periodical's Pay Action Summary data may vary within the same reporting period based on the timing of data runs, agency retraction requests, and the manual review and extraction of erroneous PMIS entries.

## POLICY UPDATE

### Performance Planning and Evaluation Policy Modified

Policy 1.40, Performance Planning and Evaluation, was modified effective July 10, 2007 to allow Written Notice Forms, issued under Policy 1.60, Standards of Conduct, to be used in place of the Notice of Improvement Needed/Substandard Performance Form to support an overall rating of "Below Contributor". The Written Notice Form was also modified to include language that communicates this change to employees.

Policies and policy revisions are always implemented prospectively. *The modification to Policy 1.40 applies to Written Notices issued on or after July 10<sup>th</sup>.*

### Requiring Participation in the Employee Assistance Program

Policy 1.60, Standards of Conduct, states that:

*"Before the need for, or in addition to, corrective action, supervisors may refer employees to the employee assistance program, as appropriate. Referral to the employee assistance program shall not be considered a substitute for any disciplinary action imposed for the commission of an offense. Managers may suggest, but not require that an employee participate in the Employee Assistance Program."*

There may be times when an employee's decision not to seek assistance may put the employee or others at risk. In such situations it may be appropriate to require participation in the EAP or comparable program.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) advises that state agencies can require an employee to undergo counseling in certain cases. This ability was established in the Virginia Supreme Court case where a state agency required an employee to have a mental health evaluation as a condition of returning to work after the employee threatened a supervisor. The Supreme Court agreed that the agency had shown a particularized justification for the referral and that the mandated counseling was appropriate. Agencies should consult with their assigned Assistant Attorney General when considering the need to require that an employee seek assistance.

All health plans offered to state employees and their dependents have employee assistance programs (EAPs). Included are up to four sessions at no charge for such services as mental health, alcohol or drug abuse assessment, child or elder care, grief counseling and legal or financial services. If it is determined that additional services are needed, the employee may be referred for the services covered under her/his health care plan.

Employees who do not participate in the State health insurance program should check with their insurance providers for coverage of counseling services. They may also contact ValueOptions for referral to counseling services in their communities. Community counseling services are often provided on a sliding fee scale.

Contact information for Value Options:  
ValueOptions, Inc. Behavioral Health and Employee Assistance Program  
Member Services: 1-866-725-0602  
[www.achievesolutions.net/covacare](http://www.achievesolutions.net/covacare)

## Administering Preferential Hiring Rights

DHRM has received inquiries regarding the administration of preferential hiring rights for employees in a layoff status. It is important to ensure that “Blue Cards” granting preferential employment rights to employees in Leave Without Pay – Layoff status are issued correctly.

### **Example:**

Employee is an AOS III (pay band 3) who is notified on June 15<sup>th</sup> that his position will be abolished and that he will be laid off on July 9<sup>th</sup>. He receives an Interagency Placement Screening Form (Yellow Card). On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, his agency offers him an AOS II position (pay band 2) that does not require a reduction in salary or relocation. He accepts the demotion effective June 25<sup>th</sup>. Because he is never placed in Leave Without Pay – Layoff status, a Preferential Hiring Card (Blue Card) is not issued. Although he was demoted, he was “placed” and has no preferential employment rights with other agencies. He must still be offered any vacant AOS III position in his agency for which he is minimally qualified for up to twelve months from June 25<sup>th</sup>.

Applicants who wish to use their Yellow or Blue Cards for state jobs must designate on their applications in RMS that they have this option. (See article on new RMS Enhancements.) For applications not submitted through RMS, copies of the official Yellow or Blue Cards should be attached to the applications or forwarded via mail. It is important for recruitment staff to be mindful of checking for Yellow or Blue Card status when screening job applications. If the applicant who applies via RMS is called for an assessment of qualifications for a posted position, s/he should be required to produce the official Yellow or Blue Card at that time. A call to the respective HR office to confirm the validity of preferential employment rights status is prudent.

Employees who are pending layoff or are in layoff status are not required to use their Yellow/Blue Cards when applying for state jobs. They may choose to apply competitively.

Unless there are qualified internal candidates, there should be an assessment of whether the Yellow/Blue card applicant meets the MINIMUM qualifications needed for the job. This standard is substantially different from what managers would normally expect in a competitive hire. The HR office should emphasize this distinction to the hiring manager and should notify these candidates after such an assessment is made.

*Be sure to note guidance provided regarding employees in layoff status who elect to withdraw their retirement contributions.*

[http://www.dhrm.state.va.us/hrpolicy/policyguides/guide\\_withdrawretireacct.html](http://www.dhrm.state.va.us/hrpolicy/policyguides/guide_withdrawretireacct.html)

## Employee Transfers and Salary Verification

Employees frequently change jobs within and across agencies as part of their career progression plans. It is important that agencies verify the current pay band, role title, and salary of state applicants to ensure that what appears to be a transfer isn't actually a demotion.

There have been further instances of agencies offering salary increases to employees moving to positions in lower pay bands. These salary offers had to be corrected because employees may not be awarded a salary increase upon demotion. Employees who accept voluntary demotions may be offered salaries from the minimum of the new salary range *up to their current salaries*. Employees whose salaries exceed the maximum of the lower pay band may have their salaries frozen for six months. After six months salaries must be reduced to the maximum of the assigned salary range.

## Repayment of Leave Donations

The leave share policy includes a provision that requires repayment of donated leave in cases related to Workers Compensation or leave abuse situations. DHRM was recently asked if this provision should also apply to employees who receive court awarded damages, including lost wages, for non-work related injuries when the employee's absence was covered all or in part by the use of Leave Share.

DHRM, in consultation with the OAG, advised the agency that it would not be appropriate to seek repayment in these situations. The agency was advised to provide the documentation requested by the employee's attorney and the court regarding the absence, but to specify that, in this case, there were no lost wages.

## Standards of Conduct Policy Update

The Policy Committee's Publication Team has submitted its comments on the Development Team's proposed revisions to Policy 1.60, Standards of Conduct. A revised draft that incorporates the team's recommended improvements is being prepared for review by the Office of the Attorney General.

# EMPLOYMENT & CAREERS

## RMS Program Enhancements

### Time-to-Fill a Position

DHRM has received inquiries regarding how the time it takes to fill a position is counted in the RMS. The time is counted from the “**job open date**” until the position is manually “**designated as filled**” by agency human resources staff. The days continue to be counted for positions in “closed” status. The “Designate Position as Filled” feature in the RMS closes out the job posting and ends the time it takes to fill a position.

The time-to-fill dates cannot be changed in the RMS, so agencies are encouraged to designate a position as filled as soon as possible after a job offer is made and accepted. Time-to-Fill reports are sent to HR Directors on a quarterly basis.

### Identifying Applicants with Preferential Hiring Forms

On June 11, 2007 two columns were added to the View/Edit Posting screen to identify applicants with a preferential hiring status. This new functionality identifies applicants in layoff status with active Yellow and Blue Cards *prior* to the screening process.

Applications received prior to June 11<sup>th</sup> must still be reviewed by human resources staff to determine if applicants have a preferential hiring status. For those applications, the preferential hiring questions have been moved from the top of the application form to the section before the supplemental questions.

### Specific Questions Added to Each Job Posting

Since June 11, 2007, four specific, required questions have been automatically generated by the RMS each time an applicant applies for a job posting. The responses to these questions are displayed on the application in the Supplemental Questions section. These questions are required for a more timely identification in the recruitment process of applicants in layoff status and to collect data on media sources.

#### **Required Questions:**

1. Do you have an Interagency Placement Screening Form (Yellow Form) as issued under Policy 1.30 Layoff? (Commonwealth of Virginia Employees Only)
2. Do you have a Preferential Hiring Form (Blue Form) as issued under Policy 1.30 Layoff? (Commonwealth of Virginia Employees Only)
3. How did you hear about this opportunity?

Newspaper (name)  
VEC  
Agency Bulletin Board  
Radio/TV (name)

State Recruitment Management System (RMS)  
Other (please specify)

4. Please specify the media source (newspaper, radio/TV or Other) from question #3. If no response, type "N/A."

Please contact Pat Waller at [patricia.waller@dhrm.virginia.gov](mailto:patricia.waller@dhrm.virginia.gov) if you have any questions or comments about the RMS.

## Reference Checks

When checking references on applicants, discussions with the applicant's current and past supervisors will usually provide relevant and useful assessments of the applicant's demonstrated job performance. Agencies may want to confirm with the applicant that the supervisor(s) listed on their application or résumé is the same individual that actually hired them and completed their performance evaluations. Some applicants may interpret or misrepresent receiving instructions from a team leader or co-worker as supervision. While conducting employment/salary verification, it may be wise to confirm with the reference's human resource office that the supervisor listed on the application is or was, in fact, the applicant's supervisor.

## WORKFORCE PLANNING

### State Workforce Plan

The Commonwealth's Workforce Plan for 2007 is published on the DHRM web site. The most recent version reports much of its data as of January 1, 2007, but with the beginning of a new fiscal year and receipt of updated plans from the agencies, the plan will be subject to revisions. Accordingly, agencies may receive inquiries from DHRM about their updated plans.

All agency HR staff who have comments and suggestions about workforce planning have a standing invitation to discuss them with their agency's assigned DHRM Consultant.

### Agency Workforce Plans

DHRM Policy 1.90, Workforce Planning, states that plans should be updated at least annually and that a copy of updates should be provided to DHRM "as necessary." Several agencies have provided copies of their Workforce Plans for the Fiscal Year July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008.

Agency Workforce Plans should be considered living documents. They should be amended as often as is necessary to keep pace with an agency's strategic and operational plans. Policy 1.90 does not strictly prescribe a due date for submitting plans and updates to DHRM, but the practice has been to provide them around the beginning

of a fiscal year. When preparing plans and updates, agencies may wish to consider the following:

- Workforce planning is a strategic exercise. Its purpose is to assure that agencies will have the quantity and quality of staff, within allotted resources, to meet agency goals and objectives.
- Agencies are required to produce strategic plans, and their workforce plans should support their strategic plans.
- Strategic plans are tied to the Commonwealth's funding cycles: the biennium and the fiscal year. Agencies often begin planning for the coming fiscal year or biennium in August – 11 months before the new fiscal period begins. This budget process plus the need to make mid-year corrections in operational plans should remind HR staff that the Workforce Plan cannot be considered a static document.

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Our goal is to provide practical information that supports human resource objectives across the Commonwealth and to encourage innovative strategies in the management and delivery of agency services.

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Department of Human Resource Management  
Office of Agency Human Resource Services  
101 N. 14th Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219  
Phone: 804-225-2131 Fax: 804-371-7401