



September 29, 2019

Dear AWAAG members,

Since we understand it may not be possible for everyone to participate in the calls to learn and ask questions about our Tentative Agreement, we wanted to share some of the guiding principles of the agreement, the hopes for future bargaining, and a step-by-step guide to figure out how the negotiated compensation grid benefits you.

At the out-set, we want to emphasize that everyone will see an increase to their current salary. The purpose of the grid is to establish transparent and predictable annual increases. It is also intended to address salary disparities that have developed over time, creating a path to equity. It is also designed to allow people to reach the top of the grid quickly; that is more money in your pocket sooner and over a longer term. At this point in our young union, and in our first contract, adding more steps would have decreased the percentage of each step increase, which is currently 4%.

This grid lays the foundation for future negotiations. The hope is that in the years to come, we can push the grid higher, by increasing the monetary amounts of each step, increasing the percentage increase between each step, by adding steps, or negotiating in some other creative way.

We also know that some members have an interest in a form of compensation for what some might call “merit”. Because merit can be subject to accusations of bias and favoritism, we believe the union should have a voice in devising the metrics of any such merit-based system. But given the short timeframe to negotiate an agreement for inclusion in the Governor’s budget, collaborating with management on such a system in only one week—and without member input—was simply not feasible. That is why we reached a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with management, in which we both agree to explore metrics for appropriately compensating the unique skills and experience different attorneys bring to our office and its wide-ranging practice areas. Management has also retained the right to increase an employee's steps within their designated range to address recruitment and retention issues, with notice to the Union. **With these principles in mind, we have included a step-by-step instructional guide explaining how the grid works.**

We were ultimately able to accomplish more than we anticipated for this first agreement. In addition to the compensation package, we were able to negotiate additional Articles and MOUs. For example, we negotiated Articles on discipline and grievance procedures, which include principles of progressive discipline and provide a process for grieving both discipline and contract violations. While we were not able to negotiate case caps for dependency caseloads, the union will now have seats on the Juvenile Litigation Monitoring workgroup so that we can work collaboratively with management on identifying ways to measure and manage caseloads and on securing additional funding from the legislature.

As lawyers, we all know that in negotiations, there are always competing interests--both on opposite sides of the table and within the sides themselves. We, of course, were not able to accomplish all that we wanted in this agreement. But this is just the beginning of our union and our collective bargaining rights. This is only the first contract. We believe it is a solid foundation for future growth.

Please feel free to reach out to any of the members of the bargaining team if you have any questions!

In solidarity,

**AWAAG/WFSE Bargaining Team**

**Salary effective 7/1/2020 through  
6/30/2021**

First, figure out your annual base salary. If you receive the King Co 5% differential, back that out first.\*

Add 3% to reflect the general wage increase scheduled for July 1, 2020. This is your "base pay."

Now that you have your "base pay" figured out, just follow these steps to determine any additional pay:

1. Figure out what range applies to your job assignment (AAG, Managing AAG, or DSG)
2. Find the step in your assigned range that is closest to your "base pay" without going backwards
3. The closest step that provides an increase in your "base pay" is now your step placement on the grid
4. If your base pay exceeds Step 17 of your range, your base pay will remain the same for the year and you will receive a lump sum payment in the form of wages, effective 7/1/2020 in the amount of \$1,500.00
5. If your step number matches your law school graduation year, you will receive a one (1) step increase (4%) on the anniversary of your hire date with the AGO
6. If your step number is lower than the step that corresponds to your law school graduation year, you will receive a two (2) step increase (8%) on the anniversary of your hire date with the AGO
7. If your step number is greater than the step that corresponds to your law school graduation year, you will remain on that step and receive a lump sum payment in the form of wages, effective 7/1/2020 in the amount of \$2,500.00<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This amount was originally \$1,500, however, OFM later determined that enough funding was available to raise this lump sum to \$2,500. Members were informed of this in the Weekly Wednesday Union Update #4 on October 2, 2019.