
ARTICLE VII

PAY AND BENEFITS

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

Contents

Section 1. Pay Periods.....	2
Section 2. Holiday Bonus Pay	2
Section 3. Benefits Program	2
Section 4. Health Insurance	3
Section 5. Retirement Benefits	5
Section 6. Unemployment Insurance	6
Section 7. Social Security	7
Section 8. Women’s Health and Cancer Rights Act	7
Section 9. Workers’ Compensation	7
Section 10. Life Insurance	9
Section 11. Voluntary Benefits	9
Section 12. Time Off for Special Events	9

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

Section 1. Pay Periods

All Northampton County employees shall be paid on the 15th and 30th of each month for services. If the payday falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or County-observed holiday, employees will typically be paid on the last workday before the Saturday, Sunday or County-observed holiday.

Section 2. Holiday Bonus Pay

During the budget sessions each year, the Northampton County Board of Commissioners may review funding and determine if a Holiday Bonus will be granted during the upcoming fiscal year.

When approved, Holiday Bonus pay will be distributed to PERMANENT employees typically during the month of December, but is not required and is a generous courtesy of the Board of Commissioners.

Section 3. Benefits Program

The Benefits Program is designed to provide financial protection for employees and their families and thereby enhance the County's ability to attract qualified, loyal employees who will provide positive and effective work performance.

A number of approved payroll deduction plans are also available which provides employees with increased available income and an enhanced ability to save for retirement. Each employee is encouraged to make responsible decisions regarding both present needs and future financial stability.

It is the discretion of the County to determine whether to allow the addition of a benefit or service and to provide for payroll deduction. In determining whether to allow for a payroll deduction, factors which will be considered include the performance, reputation and financial responsibility of the organization requesting the service, whether the administration of the program would become burdensome for the County to administer and whether there is sufficient interest by a reasonable number of employees.

Employees will be notified at the time of benefit additions, deletions and revisions. The following is a list of benefits offered by Northampton County which are required by law:

- a) Workers' Compensation
- b) Unemployment Compensation
- c) Social Security
- d) Retirement, if the employee has worked the required number of hours

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

Section 4. Health Insurance

Subject to the annual budgetary process and appropriations, the County shall provide hospitalization insurance in an amount equivalent to the County's portion of the premium for a single employee's coverage for all permanent, career status, trainee and probationary employees. Active employees who are working or on paid leave for one-half or more of the regularly scheduled workdays in a month, shall be eligible for group hospitalization insurance.

Part-time employees must occupy a permanent part-time position and must work at least thirty (30) hours or more each week to become eligible for health insurance coverage. Any qualified employee wishing to have additional hospitalization in the form of other *family-type coverage* may do so at their expense and have it payroll deducted.

All new, full-time employees shall **become eligible** for hospitalization insurance coverage on the first day of the month following thirty (30) days of employment (*when hired on the first*).

If an employee is on *leave without pay*, that employee can remain covered under the County's group hospitalization plan and **MUST PAY his/her portion of the insurance premium to the County Finance Office prior to the first working day of the month.**

If a **TERMINATION DATE** is on or before the *15th* of the month, the health insurance coverage will end in the month the termination occurs. However, if the date is on or beyond the *16th* of the month, the insurance coverage will end on the last day of the following month. (February stands the same as the other months of the calendar year).

A. Hospitalization – Insurance Coverage for Retirees

Definitions:

Aggregate Service for retirement purposes refers to total length of service under which the employee pays retirement contributions into the North Carolina State/Local Government Employees Retirement System.

Creditable Service means years of service while actively participating in the North Carolina Retirement System.

The County shall provide hospitalization insurance in an amount equal to a single employee's coverage for employees, who upon retirement from the County with a minimum of thirty (30) years aggregate service, with a minimum of twenty (20) years with Northampton County Local Government.

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

Northampton County will pay the total cost of continued health insurance for the retiring employee up to the time the employee becomes eligible for Medicare, at which time the County will pay the premiums for the standard Medicare supplement policy as provided by the County.

B. Hospitalization – Insurance Coverage for Retirees (Hired on or after 7/1/13)

For employees hired on or after July 1, 2013 and forward, Northampton County will pay 50% of the total cost of continued individual health insurance up to a maximum of \$350.00 monthly for the retiring employee until such time as the employee becomes eligible for Medicare. The County will not pay for a Medicare supplemental policy.

C. Hospitalization – Insurance Coverage for Early Retirees

Upon early retirement, an employee at the age of 60, with a minimum of twenty (20) years of creditable service, with Northampton County Local Government, may receive health insurance coverage.

The County will pay the total cost of continued health insurance for the early retiring employee up to the time the employee becomes eligible for Medicare, at which time the County will pay the premiums for the standard Medicare supplement policy as provided by the County.

D. Hospitalization – Insurance Coverage for Early Retirees (Hired on or after 7/1/13)

For employees hired as of July 1, 2013 and forward, Northampton County will pay 50% of the total cost of continued individual health insurance up to a maximum of \$350.00 monthly for the early retiring employee until such time as the employee becomes eligible for Medicare. The County will not pay for a Medicare supplemental policy.

E. Hospitalization – Insurance Coverage for Disability Retirees

If an employee becomes disabled and the following conditions are met; the County will continue the cost of health insurance, as provided by Northampton County, for a period **not** to exceed one (1) year or until the employee becomes eligible for Social Security disability (whichever comes first), based on the following.

Years of Service:

20-21 years – 75%

22-23 years – 80%

24-25 years – 85%

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

26-27 years – 90%

28-29 years – 95%

1. The employee must have twenty (20) years of aggregate service, of which ten (10) of the twenty (20) years must be with Northampton County Local Government.
2. The employee must apply for disability retirement with the Human Resources Department and provide verification of disability status as required by the State Retirement Medical Board.

Twenty years of service (Less than age 60): The County will continue the cost of health insurance, as provided by Northampton County, for a period **not** to exceed one (1) year.

Twenty years of service (Age 60 & over): The County will pay the total cost of continued health insurance for the disabled retiring employee up to the time the employee becomes eligible for Medicare, the County will then pay for the standard Medicare supplement policy as provided by the County.

F. Hospitalization –Insurance Coverage for Disability Retirees (Hired on or after 7/1/13)

The employee must have twenty (20) years of aggregate service, of which ten (10) of the twenty (20) years must be with Northampton County Local Government.

The employee must apply for disability retirement with the Human Resources Department and provide verification of disability status as required by the State Retirement Medical Board.

Twenty years of service (Less than age 60): For employees hired on or after July 1, 2013, Northampton County will pay 50% of the total cost of continued individual health insurance up to a maximum of \$350.00 monthly for a period **not** to exceed one (1) year. The County will **not** pay for a Medicare supplemental policy.

Twenty years of service (Age 60 & over): For employees hired on or after July 1, 2013, Northampton County will pay 50% of the total cost of continued individual health insurance up to a maximum of \$350.00 monthly for the retiring employee until such time as the employee becomes eligible for Medicare. The County will **not** pay for a Medicare supplemental policy.

Section 5. Retirement Benefits

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

The County provides a retirement program for employees through the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System and the Law Enforcement Officers' Benefits and Retirement Fund. Upon employment, a new employee shall be required to join the County retirement plan as long as the employee works a total of 1000 hours per year.

There shall be no mandatory retirement age imposed on employees *except* in positions where a bona fide occupational qualification exists in compliance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act Amendment.

A. Employee Retirement with Full Benefits

Employees meeting the following criteria shall be eligible for retirement with full County benefits.

Upon retirement with a minimum of thirty (30) years creditable service, with a minimum of twenty (20) years in Northampton County Local Government, the County will pay the total cost of continued health insurance for the retiring employee up to the time the employee is eligible for Medicare, the County will then pay for a supplement policy as provided by the County.

Sick leave earned monthly under a duly adopted policy and for which an employee would receive full salary if he/she were absent from work on account of sickness, counts as creditable service.

One (1) month of credit is allowed, at no cost to the employee, for each 20 days of the unused sick leave when the employee retires. One (1) more month is allowed for any part of 20 days left over, provided the remaining portion is at least one (1) hour.

Sick leave is used to increase an employee's creditable service but sick leave cannot be used to meet the minimum qualifications for a disability retirement benefit or a deferred benefit.

The employee may use his/her sick leave to complete thirty (30) years of service, regardless of age; 25 years of service after age 60; 20 years of service after age 50; and 5 years of service after age 60. The employer will certify the amount of sick leave the employee has on his/her retirement application.

Section 6. Unemployment Insurance

In accordance with the North Carolina General Statutes, local County employees are covered by unemployment insurance. County employees who are reduced in force or released from County service may apply for unemployment insurance compensation through the Division of Employment Security (DES).

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

The DES will determine the employee's eligibility for benefits based upon the facts surrounding the separation or termination.

All requests received from the DES are completed by the Finance Officer, based upon information provided by the Department Head.

Section 7. Social Security

The Federal Social Security Program provides benefits for eligible wage earners. The funds necessary for the program are collected both from the employees and from the County. Under the law, the County is required to deduct the worker's share from his paycheck, match that amount, and pay the total into the Federal Treasury. The Federal Government pays benefits to the employee or his heirs.

Section 8. Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act

Federal law requires that all plan participants be notified annually of their rights under the "Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act".

The law requires that all group health plans that provide coverage for a surgically removed breast must also:

- a) Provide coverage for reconstruction of the surgically removed breast;
- b) Provide coverage for surgery and reconstruction of the other breasts to produce a symmetrical appearance;
- c) Provide coverage for prostheses and any physical complications that may occur in any stage of a mastectomy, including lymphedemas (swelling associated with the removal of lymph nodes.)

Coverage for breast reconstruction and any related services will be subject to any Plan deductible and covered percentage amounts that apply to other covered medical benefits of the Plan.

Section 9. Workers' Compensation

Northampton County Local Government provides Workers' Compensation for those employees and volunteers who may be hurt or injured on the job. Employees are required to

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

report any work related accident or illness immediately to their Supervisor. Failure to do so may result in the denial of Workers' Compensation benefits.

All work related injuries shall be reported to the Human Resources Department as noted below in office procedures. In addition, the County's Safety Officer must be informed of all accidents, and the Human Resources Department will be responsible for the submission of the Incident Report to the Safety Officer.

1. Absent from Work

An employee who must be absent from work due to a work-related injury is **REQUIRED** to use any available leave time for the first seven (7) days of his/her absence. Workers' Compensation benefits will begin **AFTER** seven (7) days on accepted claims.

2. Salary/Wages

After the first (7) seven days, employees will no longer receive "compensation" from the County (no 15th/30th payroll check(s) **while being paid by** Workers' Compensation).

The employee will **not** receive credit in the Local Government Employees Retirement System while paid through Workers' Compensation.

The Workers' Compensation benefit is considered a paid leave and is dispersed by the Workers' Compensation Claims Administrator which **pays two-thirds (2/3)** of the employee's regular wage.

Employees on **Workers' Compensation leave** are expected to comply with all medical treatment provided by the specified Workers' Compensation physician, and are expected to accept any medically approved "*light duty*" assignment offered to them.

The County will address any failure to comply by filing the appropriate motions for compliance and/or to terminate benefits with the North Carolina Industrial Commission.

A. Office Procedures (Medical Situations)

For office procedures pertaining to on-the-job injuries, please contact Human Resources.

Below is a summary of procedures to be utilized reporting all routine and **URGENT** medical situations.

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

1. Routine Incidents during Work Hours (8:30 am to 5:00 pm)

If an employee is injured on the job or while performing job related duties on or off site, the following steps MUST be utilized.

- a) Employee shall IMMEDIATELY notify Supervisor.
- b) Supervisor shall contact the Human Resources Department immediately.
- c) FAX the incident report form to the Human Resources Department and forward the final report within **TWO** (2) days of the incident.
- d) If “non-urgent” medical attention is needed, the Human Resources Department will make the arrangements with the employee and the physician’s office. (Prior authorization is required from the Human Resource Department).
- e) **DO NOT** send the employee to the doctor or call the physician’s office directly.
- f) If “**urgent**” care is needed, the employee can be sent to the hospital or taken by EMS. Contact the Human Resources Department and fax the incident report.

Section 10. Life Insurance

Northampton County offers various Life Insurance plans as addressed below.

1. \$20,000 term life coverage for Department Heads and \$15,000 for other full-time employees paid in full by the County.

Section 11. Voluntary Benefits

Northampton County employees may also enroll for various voluntary benefits where the full insurance premium is the responsibility of the employee. These benefits include but **not** limited to Vision, Dental, Short and Long-term Disability, other Life insurances and AFLAC products.

Section 12. Time Off for Special Events

Northampton County Board of Commissioners may approve specified periods of time, during work hours, for employees to participate in special events to include wellness fairs, employee appreciation days, etc. All employees are encouraged to attend and to participate in the scheduled events.

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

Section 13. Performance Evaluations/Merit Policy

On an **annual basis**, all full-time Northampton County Local Government employees will be evaluated as to their performance during the last year. It is the policy of Northampton County to award all full-time employees a merit (one-step) increase every two (2) years that has exceeded expectations in some areas or sometimes or consistently meets expectations of assigned duties. In order for an employee to be eligible for a merit increase, the overall review rating shall be “Exceed Expectations in Some Areas or Some Times” or “Consistently Exceeds Expectations”.

While conversations between supervisors and employees about performance and development should be frequent, this performance evaluation system ensures that a more formal, summary discussion takes place at least once a year. These discussions give supervisors and employees an opportunity to reflect on what the employee achieved compared to what was expected and how the employee is performing overall.

All performance appraisals will be processed on the County’s Performance Evaluation form within the required timeframe for payroll or other administrative functions. Typically, one (1) month prior to the employee’s employment anniversary date, the Department Head will be advised in writing by the Human Resources Department that the employee is due a performance appraisal (annual or merit).

A. Evaluation Criteria (Ratings)

1. ***Consistently Exceeds Expectations (CE) (5pts)***: An employee, whose performance is progressive, takes on more than expected and successfully completed, requires little or no guidance, and accepts responsibility.
 - a. Extraordinary: Marvelous, remarkable, superlative, surprising, wonderful
 - b. Exceptional: Great, incomparable, matchless, notable, noteworthy, unequaled, unique, unmatched, unsurpassed, significant, special, striking
 - c. Excellent: Admirable, brilliant, first-rate
 - d. Outstanding: Remarkable, significant, terrific

2. ***Exceeds Expectations in Some Areas or Some Times (E) (4 pts)***: An employee whose performance displays initiative, seeks job growth, requires little guidance, and occasionally takes on more than expected and completes.
 - a. Exemplary: Creditable, laudable, praiseworthy
 - b. Superior: Accomplished, commendable, consummate, expert, high quality, skilled
 - c. Very good: Highly regarded, impressive, valuable, worthy
 - d. More than adequate: Fine, more than sufficient, more than ample

3. ***Meets Expectations (ME) (3 pts)***: An employee whose performance demonstrates acceptable performance, does a good job, meets job requirements, requires some guidance, completes assigned projects, and performs the minimum requirements.

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

- a. Good: Decent, good quality, respectable, skillful
 - b. Satisfactory: Appropriate, apt, fitting, proper
 - c. Acceptable: Good enough, okay, up to standard
 - d. Adequate: Allowable, passable, reasonable, tolerable
4. ***Does Not Meet Some Expectations (DE) (2 pts)***: An employee whose performance falls below minimal performance, does not consistently demonstrate ability to perform at expected levels, requires specific guidance, and shows potential for improvement.
- a. Fair: Barely, adequate
 - b. Poor: Inferior, meager, weak
 - c. Less than adequate: Inadequate, insufficient, paltry, scant
5. ***Consistently Falls Below Expectations (CF) (1 pts)***: An employee whose performance has not responded to previous efforts for improvement, does not demonstrate ability to perform at expected levels, requires significant improvement, requires substantial guidance, and performance is expected to improve.
- a. Unsatisfactory: beneath standard, inferior, low-grade, mediocre, poor quality, second rate, substandard
 - b. Undependable: Devious, not to be trusted, unstable, untrustworthy
 - c. Unreliable: Changeable, erratic, fickle, not to be relied upon, unpredictable, variable
 - d. Unacceptable: Insufficient, intolerable, objectionable

B. Review Procedures

On an annual basis, all full-time Northampton County Local Government employees will be evaluated as to their performance during the last year. It is the policy of Northampton County to award all full-time employees a merit increase every two (2) years that has exceeded expectations in some areas or sometimes or consistently meets expectations of assigned duties. On the employee's anniversary date, supervisors are required to conduct a performance evaluation of each full-time employee utilizing the Performance Appraisal Form.

- a. Supervisor will schedule a review meeting and provide Areas of Discussion for Employee (Page 2) and Individual Goals Forms (Page 3) to employees for completion and return to supervisor prior to evaluation meeting.
- b. Supervisor will utilize the Completed Areas of Discussion Form, Individual Employee Goals Form, and Job Description to set smart goals for the upcoming year using the Established Measurable Goals Form (Page 4).

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

- c. Supervisor will complete the Employee Performance Evaluation Form (Page 5) by reviewing smart goals set the previous year.
- d. Supervisor and employee will discuss the evaluation and sign the form.
- e. Department Heads will send entire evaluation packet including job description to HR for County Manager's approval.

Where there is an intermediate supervisor between the employee and the Department Head, the Department Head should do the evaluation in collaboration with the supervisor. This may consist of joint discussions or having the supervisor provide the Department Head with written input for the Department Head's approval. When the appraisal (annual or merit) has been completed, signed and dated by the Department Head, the Department Head will hold counsel with the employee. Where an intermediate supervisor exists, it is recommended that the supervisor be present during the review.

At the conclusion of this meeting, the employee will be asked to sign and date the performance appraisal to acknowledge the evaluation session occurred. Should any employee decline to sign the appraisal, the Department Head will make every effort to ensure the employee understands that the signature in no way reflects the employee agrees with the rating. It simply acknowledges that the employee reviewed the written evaluation and was informed and/or counseled as to its contents. Should the employee continue to decline, the Department Head will write in the employee's signature block, "*Employee Refused to Sign*" and date the form, and the employee will be provided a COPY of the appraisal.

The Department Head will retain a copy of the appraisal in the department's personnel files and also submit the *original* to the Human Resources Department. (In the case of the Department of Social Services and the Health Department, each department will maintain the original evaluation for its primary files and forward a copy to the Human Resources Department).

C. Does Not Meet Some Expectations or Consistently Falls Below Expectations

Should a Department Head find it necessary to evaluate an employee's performance **does not meet some expectations**, the appraisal must contain a statement as to corrective action planned by the Department Head and will constitute *counseling*. An employee whose performance **consistently falls below expectations** will constitute a *written warning*.

In either case listed above, the Department Head's statement must specify what the employee must do to correct the situation and the maximum length of time the employee is given to take corrective action.

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

There is no requirement for the Department Head to wait the maximum time before deciding what must be done or terminating the employee. However, Department Heads are encouraged to give the employee sufficient time to correct the situation (*See* Article IX. Grievance Procedures and Appeals Policies).

D. Special situations

Any employee may be rated for a period “OTHER” than the routine “Annual Rating” for reasons as determined by the Department Head. Conditions that warrant ratings for other than annual are as follows:

1. A decision to terminate an employee at the end of his/her nine (9) month or (12) month probationary period. A copy of the rating should be attached to the Letter of Termination.
2. A change of jobs within the County government. If an employee acquires employment with another department with County Government, a closeout rating should be accomplished.
3. A change of supervisor. The departing supervisor should provide a closeout appraisal.
4. Exceptional performance or unsatisfactory performance on the part of the employee may warrant an evaluation.
5. When an employee is being considered for a merit (one-step increase), an original appraisal document must accompany the Department Head’s recommendation (cover memo attached for the County manager’s approval).

E. Merit Increase

The merit increase will be granted *every two (2) years*, effective the first day of the month of the employee’s anniversary date of employment.

Provisions:

- a) All full-time employees will automatically be considered for a merit increase every two (2) years of employment on his/her anniversary date with the County until such time as he/she reaches the maximum of the assigned salary range. In order for an employee to be eligible for a merit increase, the overall review rating shall be “Exceed Expectation in Some Areas or “Some Times” or “Consistently Exceeds Expectations”.

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

- b) At no time will an employee advance more than one (1) step at a time within a grade. A step increase, however, may be considered on the *Merit* anniversary date.
- c) In order for an employee to be eligible for a merit increase, the overall review rating shall be “Exceed Expectations in Some Areas or Some Times” or “Consistently Exceeds Expectations”.
- d) Employee’s salary will typically be adjusted one (1) step. Merit increases will be based strictly on performance of duties and **not** as a result of reclassification, or longevity.
- e) Merit increases will be granted upon the employee’s “Exceed Expectation in Some Areas or “Some Times” or “Consistently Exceeds Expectations”, but also at the recommendation of the immediate supervisor and department head.
- f) The performance evaluation documentation shall be forwarded to the Northampton County Human Resources Department two (2) weeks prior to payroll initiation.
- g) Department Heads are responsible for projecting the anticipated number of merits that may be administered on an annual basis and will make the necessary budgetary preparations to ensure merits are budgeted in the County’s annual budget.
- h) The County Manager will provide final approval after reviewing the evaluation.
- i) An eligible employee who does **not** justify a merit increase will **not** become eligible for reconsideration prior to their regularly scheduled two-year merit evaluation period.

F. Evaluation Ranking Order

1. *County Employees:* Department Head, upon notification of employee’s eligibility, will determine employee’s qualifications for merit and recommend to the County Manager whether or not the employee should receive a merit.
2. *Department Heads:* Department Heads are to be evaluated for merit purposes by the County Manager or the Assistant County Manager.
3. *Department Heads with Governing Boards/Commissions:* Where departments have governing boards or commissions, Board of Elections, Health Department and the Social Services Department, the County Manager will collaborate with the respective bodies on all final recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.

ARTICLE VII: PAY AND BENEFITS

4. *Elected Officials:* The elected officials, Sheriff and Register of Deeds, are not evaluated.
5. *County Manager:* The Northampton County Commissioners shall approve all merit increases given to the County Manager.