



2261 South Redwood Road Suite K
(801) 972-1974
info@afscmeutah1004.org

Salt Lake County Council
2001 South State Street N2-200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4575

Dear County Council,

As a union representing Salt Lake County employees, we recognize and appreciate the monumental task and challenge that it takes to create an annual budget. We always strive to form professional working relationships with employers throughout Utah. We acknowledge the work that was put into this proposal and look forward to having open dialog with County officials moving forward.

First and foremost, we applaud the plan to pay full time employees a living wage of \$15.00 per hour. We recognize that there are many full time employees that exceed this hourly amount, but for those that do not, this will be a boon to them and their families. As a union, we believe in the dignity of all workers and would encourage the Mayor and Council to continue to find ways to bring all employees to this level of compensation.

We recognize and appreciate the work towards reducing large increases in medical benefits. The Bariatric Surgery benefit is most welcomed and appreciated in addition to the Teleheath \$0 copay.

AFSCME Local 1004 has reservations and concerns surrounding the compensation proposal. The compensation recommendation presented in Mayor Wilson's proposed budget falls short of the needs of employees as well as the needs of Salt Lake County as an organization. Our analysis leads us to state that the Mayor's recommendation not only fails to meet the market needs initially identified by Human Resources, but also includes factually inaccurate market considerations. On behalf of the County workforce we ask the Council to consider revising this portion of the budget to better serve the employees who give so much to the County.

The initial market data provided by Salt Lake County Human Resources to the employee groups indicated the need for a 2% structure increase and a 3% merit increase, which total a 5% increase in employee pay. (See Attached) One day later a second set of data was provided, after the Mayor's budget presentation, stating that the County was in need of a 2.2% structure increase and a 2.58% merit increase. Additionally, the numbers cited in this second set of data were lacking important comparisons from cities and counties that directly compete with Salt Lake County for labor. Inexplicably, this data also included a local university as a comparison, which makes little sense given the vast difference in workforces. This has clearly deflated the market data used for merit increases.

The proposed compensation recommendation fails to meet the market by only offering 4.75% increase in pay. While this may seem to be in the ballpark of what the data is telling us it disregards the fact that the market has been and continues to be running away from the County. We have all seen this first hand with multiple agencies coming before the Council this year and explaining that they are no longer competitive in the job market. Sadly, these are not outliers, but rather the first of many.

The Council should be cognizant of the fact that the market data presented by Human Resources is a snapshot of the past year rather than where the County sits at this point in time. Clearly, this is a very hot labor market that shows no signs of slowing. By the time these pay increases begin to take effect Salt Lake County will already be falling behind the market. Now would be an opportune time for Salt Lake County to lead out in the market, knowing full well that it will catch up to us in the later part of 2022.

Another factor that we strongly encourage the Council to keep in mind is that the Mayor's recommendation is based on a 5% inflation rate. According to the Consumer Price Index the October year-over-year inflation percentage change sits at 5.73%. The forecasted Consumer Price Index rate being used to determine among other things the 2022 COLA increases for individuals who receive Social Security is 5.9%.

While we assume the best of intentions in the data presented by Human Resources, we do not feel that the data presented is an accurate reflection of what our workforce is dealing with regarding economic pressures such as inflation and rising housing costs to name a few. A job with Salt Lake County in the past assured a reasonable middle class wage with good benefits in which an individual could raise a family and be self-reliant. Today many of our employees are failing to make ends meet. A pay increase that fails to meet inflation exacerbates this issue and puts our employees and their families further behind in their struggle for economic security.

We respectfully request an increase to merit employee compensation as part of the Council's final budget. While we acknowledge that Council members endeavor to be fiscally responsible in the budgeting process please understand that balancing the budget on the backs of employees is not the answer. Salt Lake County has long considered employee compensation the first priority in the budgeting process as the foundation of good employee relations. The Council is in an exceptional position to provide for the needs of employees and their families in a market and economy that continues to hedge up the way of progress and self-reliance due to forces out of their control. Employee compensation is a relatively small portion of the Salt Lake County budget and we as a union are confident that the Council will be able to find savings in the overall budget to fairly compensate our employees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Asay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brad Asay
Executive Director
AFSCME Local 1004

Market Considerations

5%

Inflation Rate
West Urban CPI
12 mos ending August

15.4%

**Utah House
Price Increase**
Utah Assn. Realtors -
June 2021

\$15/hr

**Minimum Living
Wage**
MIT Living Wage
Calculator

Market Data

2%

**Average
Structure
Increase**
Aggregated survey data
- MarketPay

3%

**Average Merit
Increase**
Aggregated survey data
- Market Pay



2022 Compensation Recommendations

\$15 Minimum Living Wage

Applies to merit employees

2% Structure Increase

Applied to structure AND employee pay rates

2.75% Merit Increase

Applied to those with a 3 or higher
performance appraisal rating



2022 Benefit Recommendations

No increase in premiums

Add bariatric surgery as a covered benefit

Telehealth as \$0 copay before deductible

Add Vision Plan to 2023 plan year

Remove \$1000 Retiree Death benefit in 2023