
Sponsor: Human Resources

Meeting Date: 6/22/2021

Title: Eliminate Wages Below \$15 per Hour in Ramsey County Salary Plans

File Number: 2021-319

Background and Rationale:

In 2016, the County established a strategic initiative around Talent Attraction Retention and Promotion (TARP) with the intention of setting a course to becoming the premiere public sector employer of choice in the region. As part of that effort, a full classification and compensation study was commissioned and conducted by Arthur J. Gallagher Benefit Services beginning in 2019. The pandemic of 2020-2021 has caused the delays finalizing the study and the implementation while wage disparities continue to exist and grow.

In alignment with TARP, the County desires to eliminate wages that are below \$15 per hour and establish a wage floor for all job classifications of \$15 per hour for Ramsey County's internal workforce. The classifications affected by the action are:

- Clerk 1
- Highway Maintenance Summer Laborer
- Lifeguard
- Lifeguard, Senior
- Naturalist Aide
- Park and Recreation Aide 1
- Park and Recreation Aide 2
- Service Worker
- Student Worker
- Supported Employment Worker

Elimination of wages below \$15 per hour will alleviate the difficulties of recruiting for these entry level jobs and will help to ensure that Ramsey County remains competitive as an employer. This action is consistent with other employers around Ramsey County, including other public sector employers in Minnesota and at the federal level. This action also aligns with Ramsey County Workforce Solutions who is establishing a \$15 per hour wage floor for its workforce trainees participating in workforce programs.

Perhaps more compelling, is the need to further improve the quality of life and reduce the wage gap of our lowest wage workers. Communities experiencing the greatest barriers to employment and economic disparities are more often than not communities of color and people with disabilities and Ramsey County has the authority and responsibility to address the wage gap for its internal workforce and its service recipients where it can. These actions are in alignment with the County's goals of economic prosperity, well-being and strategic investment and speaks to its commitment to residents first given that approximately fifty percent of Ramsey County employees are also Ramsey County residents.

Recommendation:


The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

1. Authorize the County Manager to eliminate wages below \$15 per hour in Ramsey County's salary plans effective June 26, 2021.
2. Authorize the Human Resources Director in consultation with the County Manager to conduct necessary transactions to adjust compensation for any employee making less than \$15.00/hour.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner McDonough, seconded by Commissioner MatasCastillo.

Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Carter, Frethem, MatasCastillo, McDonough, McGuire, Ortega, and Reinhardt

By: 
Abby Goldsmith, Deputy Clerk - County Board