

When and how do State Classified employees get a raise?

Hello CSU State Classified Employees –

Thanks for another great year at CSU. Throughout the year I and my fellow Council members receive a number of questions related to State Classified salary, raises, what we (as a Council are doing), and how the process works. If this is a topic of interest to you – keep reading – I apologize in advance, this is not going to be short and quick because, I want to do the best I can to explain a complex process that unfolds over the course of a year (or more). If you stop reading here – please accept my thanks and gratitude for the work you do every day to make and keep our institution something we can all be proud of – thanks.

On July 31, 2017, we received our first paychecks of the new fiscal year – FY18. For most, this paycheck reflected an increase – a 1.75% “across-the-board” (ATB) and for many, a merit increase. The amount of the merit increase is determined by a “matrix” posted by CSU Human Resources (HR) in June. The matrix, developed by the Colorado Division of Human Resources, outlines the percentage increase each of us may expect for this new fiscal year for last year’s performance – depending upon the combination of your performance rating and the current quartile your salary falls in. Confused by this so far – keep reading – I want to explain how we got here. If you just want to peek at the matrix – you can view it here: <http://hrs.colostate.edu/compensation/sc-salary-increase-fy18.html>.

OK, here we go... here is how the process unfolds...

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It starts (sort of) with DPA/DHR:

- Each year, the [Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration](#) (DPA), [Division of Human Resources](#) (DHR) conducts a survey to measure and compare the total compensation package offered to the State’s classified employees. Every odd year, DHR contracts with a third-party compensation consultant, with actuarial experience, to perform this survey analysis.
 - For FY17, the analysis was performed within and by DHR. For FY18 – the analysis will be performed by the third-party consultant. You can learn more about this process here: <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/dhr/compensationplans>.
 - Findings from the annual survey are used to develop recommendations for salary adjustments; medical, dental and basic life insurance plan premium contributions; and leave benefits. The survey results, as well as DHR’s recommendations, are submitted to the Governor to assist in developing the Governor’s proposed budget.

The Governor of Colorado:

- State statute requires that the Governor submit a “proposed” budget to the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) by November 1st of each year – for the coming fiscal year.
 - Remember, budgets for the State of Colorado and CSU operate on a fiscal year – which is July 1 – June 30. So, FY17 was July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017.
 - Any raises that State Classified employees may see this fiscal year (FY18) starting July 1, 2017 – had to start with either DPA/DHR, the Governor’s “proposed” budget, or requested / inserted into the budget by the JBC or Colorado General Assembly (the Legislature) – more on all of these groups ahead – keep reading!
 - You may recall most State Classified employees did not see a raise in FY17 – in part – because the Governor did not “propose” a raise in Nov. 2015 – nor did the JBC (or enough of our elected officials from across the state) suggest there should be one.

- And, looking forward – if we hope to have a raise in FY19 (starting July 1, 2018), the time to start talking to the Governor is right now (summer/fall 2017).*

The Joint Budget Committee:

- The [JBC](#) is a bi-partisan committee of six elected officials from both the House and the Senate of the Colorado Legislature
- In November, 2016 – Governor Hickenlooper delivered his proposed FY18 budget to the JBC – and it included a *proposed* raise of 2.5% Across-the-Board and no merit pay increase for the State Classified employees of Colorado (and I sent an email to CSU Classified employees on 11-2-16 to let everyone know).
 - This was great news and very helpful to have the Governor include a raise in his budget recommendation for State Classified Employees.
 - Once in the hands of the JBC – the political sausage making begins. Items and expenses can be removed, and new items and expenses can be added – however – the JBC must deliver a “balanced budget” to the Colorado General Assembly.
- There is a very helpful step-by-step description of the State’s budget process here: <http://leg.colorado.gov/agencies/joint-budget-committee/budget-process> (There are a lot of details I am leaving out in my two-page description).
- The JBC is allowed to make any changes it believes are for the good of the State to the Governor’s proposed budget. Regarding wages for State Classified employees, several things could happen:
 - A wage increase proposed by the Governor could be reduced or eliminated
 - The JBC can introduce a raise for State Classified employees (if the Governor did not)
 - The JBC can change the proposed amount – or, they can change the percentages to be allocated via ATB and/or merit.
- It is the task of the JBC to deliver a budget bill – known as the “Long Bill” – to the General Assembly. Any proposed raise for State Classified employees is just a small piece of this comprehensive budget bill. The bill is usually introduced in March or April each year.
- The General Assembly convenes in early January and meets for 120 days – so, they have been in session and hearing things about the budget, the economy, projected revenues for the state, and more by the time they see the actual piece of legislation.

The General Assembly:

- The Colorado General Assembly, also known as the Legislature – is made up of two bodies – the House of Representatives and the Senate.
 - These Representatives and Senators are your locally elected officials.*
- Both the House and Senate work on independent versions of the Long Bill, but they must eventually reconcile the two.
- The Long Bill, when sent to the legislature from the JBC is just a proposal. It is a “bill” and will become an adopted piece of legislation – but it is the job of our elected officials in the House and the Senate to debate and determine the final version of the budget and to pass/adopt the Long Bill – allowing the State to continue to function!
- Again, several things could happen to a proposed (or missing) wage increase:
 - A wage increase proposed by the JBC could be reduced or eliminated (by either or both the House and the Senate).
 - The House or Senate can introduce a raise for State Classified employees (if the JBC or Governor did not).
 - The House or Senate can change the proposed raise amount – or, they can change the percentages to be allocated via Cost of Living (COLA)/ATB and merit.

- This year, that is what happened – the Legislature changed what the Governor had proposed. The Governor had proposed a 2.5% ATB increase and no merit pay increase. The Legislature changed that to a 1.75% ATB increase coupled with .75% merit – amounting to an average increase for State Classified employees of 2.5% (again, remember the matrix – that determines the actual amount any one of us will receive).
- The Legislative session ends in May.

If you are still reading – you will now understand – we start talking about the possibility of a raise in late summer/early fall of the year, and that conversation can continue for more than nine months into April/May – and during these nine plus months, it is still possible for anything to happen – good, or not so good. Until the Long Bill passes, and until the Governor signs it – a raise is uncertain. Once the Long Bill is signed into law, there are steps that each institution must take to prepare and implement for updating salaries. ...and then, it all starts over again!

In summary:

If your July 31, 2017 paycheck reflected an increase, understand that is the result of a long and sometimes difficult process. Remember the cycle:

- DPA/DHR
- The Governor – and the Governor’s Proposed Budget
- The Joint Budget Committee (JBC) – creators of the Long Bill
- The General Assembly – the House and the Senate
 - Remember your locally elected Representatives and Senators*
- While this process is taking place in the Legislature – you and I are likely in the midst of our annual performance evaluation – remember, your rating can impact your salary increase in years where merit pay is a part of the Long Bill
- The Governor (again) to sign the Long Bill
- Implementation of Long Bill decision at Colorado State University in Human Resources
- Finally – your pocket 😊

Along the way – this process – that resulted in a pay increase for FY18, was suggested, encouraged, supported, and advocated for by: DPA/DHR, the Governor of Colorado, the Colorado Legislature, CSU Administration, CSU HR, the lobbyists who work on behalf of CSU and, your CSU Classified Personnel Council. It takes many people, over a long period to deliver a wage increase.

All of the people and groups mentioned above are grateful for the work you do. Sometimes we get a little bump in pay and benefits (and there have been plenty of recent past years where we did not). However, no matter what, I know that every day CSU State Classified employees are showing up, doing the work – and contributing to this great institution. For that – I give you my sincere thanks. Thanks for reading. I’ve got go – time to email the Governor* (from my personal email account on my personal time) (see note below). Thanks for all you do – Best – Stacey

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*If reading the description above was fun for you and you are excited to get involved in the process by emailing the Governor or your elected State official – please be sure you follow the guidelines outlined in the related CPC document [How to contact your elected officials](#).