



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
Telephone 770.920.7306 • Fax 770.920.7371

SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

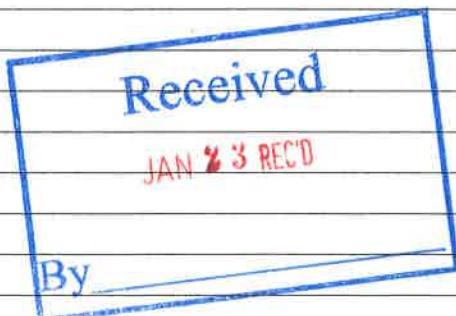
SECTION: 13-32 Promotions 2.(a)

CURRENTLY READS:

If Employees will not be recommended for a reclassification during their initial probationary period and re classifications will normally be restricted to one within a two(2) year period. Department heads will submit the requested re-classification with complete justification, documentation, and a statement from Finance , to the Human Resources Director. The HR Director will verify all information within the packet and will submit the request to the County Administrator for approval. These re-classification promotions will not create a vacancy within the department but will move the employee and the position they occupy to a higher rated position within the department.

CHANGE TO:

Employees will not be recommended for a reclassification during their initial probationary period.. Department heads will submit the requested re-classification with complete justification, documentation, and a statement from Finance , to the Human Resources Director. The HR Director will verify all information within the packet and will submit the request to the County Administrator for approval. These re-classification promotions will not create a vacancy within the department but will move the employee and the position they occupy to a higher rated position within the department.





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REASON FOR CHANGE:

At the rate personnel are obtaining certifications and the ability to hire qualified personnel, An employee could be re classified more than one (1) time in a two year period. An employee should not be penalized for advancing their career.

SUBMITTED BY:

Lt. Nathan Britt



08/26/2023

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
Telephone 770.920.7306 • Fax 770.920.7371

SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-40 Promotion

CURRENTLY READS: When an employee is promoted to a new class, such employee shall have their salary

Raised to at least the entry level step of the class to which the employee has been promoted and the raise in salary shall be at
Least as great as a one-step increase in that employee's previous salary class.

CHANGE TO: (a)When an employee is promoted to a new class, such employee shall have their salary

raised to at least the entry level step of the class to which the employee has been promoted and the raise in salary shall be at
least as great as a one-step increase in that employee's previous salary class.

(b) if an employee serves in an higher graded position for a continuous period of time, (240 hours for 56 hour employees. 160
hours for 40-hour employee), that employee is entitled to compensation for the rate of the higher grade from that time forward
while serving in said position.

Received

JAN 30 RECD

By

Employees are stepping up and assisting the county by filling a superior role in
supervisory positions. Employees should be compensated for working outside of their
classification.

REASON FOR CHANGE:

SUBMITTED BY:

Lt. Nathan Britt.



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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION:

13-124(a)

CURRENTLY READS: Rate of leave accrual. Permanent, full-time employees begin to accrue vacation leave leave immediately upon employment, although vacation leave may not be used until the employee has successfully completed such employee's probationary period. Employees are entitled to the paid vacation according to the schedule below:
1 year = 10 days; 5 years = 12 days; 10 years = 18 days; 15 years = 20 days; 21 years = 24 days; 24 years = 25 days

CHANGE TO: Change is needed for the accrual rate of a 12-hour employee versus an 8.5-hour employee.
1 year = 10 days; 5 years = 12 days; 10 years = 18 days; 15 years = 20 days; 21 years = 24 days; 24 years = 25 days

Received

JAN 87 RECD

By

REASON FOR CHANGE: The current leave accrual system for 12-hour employees with 12 years of service does not align with their intended benefit of 18 days of vacation per year. At the current rate of 5.5385 hours per pay period, a 12-hour employee accrues only 144.01 hours annually—falling short of the promised 216 hours (18 days x 12 hours). This discrepancy not only creates inequity between employees working different shifts but also reduces the operational value of their leave time, as 12-hour employees must use more hours to cover a single shift. Revising the accrual rate to reflect the appropriate annual leave allocation would ensure fairness, improve morale, and align the policy with its intended design.

SUBMITTED BY:

Lt. Terrence Dukes (DCSO)



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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION:

13-124(d)

CURRENTLY READS: Maximum accumulation. Unused vacation leave may be accumulated by the employee from year to year, but such accumulation may never exceed a total of thirty-five (35) days (280 hrs./40 hr. employee;/56 hr. employees). Any hours above this amount on the last day of the last pay period of the year will be deducted from your vacation time and added to your sick leave hours.

CHANGE TO: Maximum accumulation. Unused vacation leave may be accumulated by the employee from year to year, but such accumulation may never exceed a total of thirty-five (35) days (280 hrs./40 hr. employees; 420 hrs./56 hr. employees). Any hours above this amount on the last day of the last pay period of the year will be deducted from your vacation time and paid out to the employee.



REASON FOR CHANGE: Per section 13-124(a), "Employees are entitled to the paid vacation..." Converting an employee's earned vacation time to sick time results in a loss of earned benefits for the employee. Vacation time is generally more flexible and can be used for any purpose. While sick time on the other hand is typically restricted to health-related absences, and its use is more scrutinized within the department. This could cause employees to feel that they are losing a benefit they have earned and are expected to use for leisure or personal reasons, potentially leading to a dissatisfaction or decreased morale.

SUBMITTED BY:

Lt. Terrence Dukes (DCSO)



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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13.58 Employee Rehire Policy

CURRENTLY READS: If any employee voluntarily resigns their position with the county (see Section 13-88 Resignation) or is laid-off from the county (see Sec.13-90 Lay Offs), and has correctly completed all necessary exit interview Information with his/her supervisor or department head, the county may consider this previous employee eligible for rehire With all benefits re-instated if the subject employee re-applies for employment with the county within no more than six (6 months)

For the standard employee population and one (1) year for the certified Public Safety employee population from the date last Worked with the county.

CHANGE TO: If any employee voluntarily resigns their position with the county (see Section 13-88 Resignation) or is laid-off from the county (see Sec. 13-90 Lay Offs), and has correctly completed all necessary exit interview Information with his/her supervisor or department head, the county may consider this previous employee eligible for rehire With all benefits reinstated if the subject employee re-applies for employment with the county within no more than six months For the standard employee population and one (1) year for the certified Public Safety Employee population from the date last Worked with the county. Retroactive starting January 1, 2021, as long as the employee was not gone more than 6 for standard employees and no more than 1 year for public safety employees.

REASON FOR CHANGE: I left the county on June 26, 2020 and was gone until January 26, 2021. While I was Gone I was still sworn in by Sheriff Tim Pounds as a Deputy Sheriff for the Douglas County Sheriff's Office. I appealed To go get my time back with the Personnel Review Board. They agreed to give me my time back. Mrs. Nichols took it upon herself

To send the decision to the County Attorney, which has never been done, and the county attorney denied the decision of Personnel Review Board. Nowhere in the Merit book does it state that the Personal Review Board decisions go to the county attorney for approval.

Received

JAN 27 REC'D

By



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
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SUBMITTED BY:

Sgt. Christina Clark



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: Proposed Merit System Addition 13-44: Cost of Living
Adjustment (COLA)

CURRENTLY READS: At present there is no wording in the Merit System Handbook for COLA.

CHANGE TO: Key Elements to consider: 1) **Eligibility:** Clearly define which employees are eligible for COLA. 2) **Calculation Method:** Specify how COLA amount will be calculated; current Federal COLA is 2.5% based upon CPI. 3) **Effective Date and how it will be implemented.** 4) **Application:** How COLA percentage will be applied to Employee's Base salary. 5) **Review process:** How COLA will be evaluated based upon economic conditions and inflation factors. 6) **Transparency:** Clearly communicate the COLA policy to all employees to avoid confusion. 7) **Legal Compliance:** Ensure COLA policy adheres to all applicable employment laws.

REASON FOR CHANGE: To establish a COLA policy in the Douglas County Merit System. The purpose of a COLA policy is to ensure that employee compensation remains competitive and reflective of economic conditions. The policy should also include a list of exclusions such as temporary workers, contractors, et cetera that will be made known to all.

SUBMITTED BY:

Philbert Smith





HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-148 Drug-Free Workplace Statement

CURRENTLY READS: See attached.

CHANGE TO: See attached.

Received
JAN 6 0 REC'D
By

REASON FOR CHANGE: Clarification of policy

SUBMITTED BY: Justin McDermott



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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Currently Reads: **Sec. 13-148 Drug-Free Workplace Statement**

Douglas County is a drug-free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace, and disciplinary action will result for violation of this prohibition pursuant to the Douglas County Merit System, Section 13-101 (9). Disciplinary action includes; reprimand, probation, suspension, demotion/reduction in salary, and termination. If an employee is convicted of a criminal drug statute involving the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, use, or possession of any controlled substance for a violation occurring in the workplace, the employee must notify the Director of Human Resources within five (5) days of such conviction. A conviction includes a plea of nolo contendere. As a condition of employment, an employee is required to abide by the terms of this drug-free workplace statement.

Any individual covered by this policy may be subject to a fitness for duty evaluation, and urine and/or breath testing when there are reasons to believe that drug or alcohol use is adversely affecting job performance. A reasonable suspicion referral for testing will be made on the basis of documented objective facts and circumstances which are consistent with the short-term effects of substance abuse or alcohol misuse.

Reasonable suspicion referrals must be made or authorized by a supervisor who is trained to detect the signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use and who reasonably concludes that an individual covered by this policy may be adversely affected or impaired in his/her work performance due to possible prohibited substance abuse or alcohol misuse.

As a condition of employment, an employee is required to abide by the terms of this drug-free workplace statement.

If an employee needs information, assistance, and/or counseling on the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the employee may contact the Director of Human Resources or the county's E.A.P. services to be directed to an agency or person who can provide assistance.



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Change to: **Sec. 13-148 Drug-Free Workplace Statement**

Douglas County is a drug-free workplace. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace. Violations pursuant to the Douglas County Merit System, Section 13-101(9) will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If an employee is convicted of a criminal drug statute involving the manufacture, distribution, dispensation, use, or possession of any controlled substance for a violation occurring in the workplace, the employee must notify the Director of Human Resources in writing within five (5) days of such conviction. A conviction includes a plea of nolo contendere. As a condition of employment, an employee is required to abide by the terms of this drug-free workplace statement.

Any individual covered by this policy may be subject to a fitness for duty evaluation, and urine and/or breath testing when there are reasons to believe that drug or alcohol use is adversely affecting job performance. A reasonable suspicion referral for testing will be made based on documented objective facts and circumstances which are consistent with the short-term effects of substance abuse or alcohol misuse.

Reasonable suspicion referrals must be made or authorized by a supervisor who is trained to detect the signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use and who reasonably concludes that an individual covered by this policy may be adversely affected or impaired in his/her work performance due to possible prohibited substance abuse or alcohol misuse.

No employee shall refuse to submit to a required fit for duty, drug, or alcohol screening under this policy. A refusal to submit to a fitness for duty screening shall be constituted as a failure of the screening. A refusal to submit to drug or alcohol testing shall be considered as a positive drug or alcohol screening and will result in the same disciplinary action as if the employee had submitted to the test and gotten a positive result.

As a condition of employment, an employee is required to abide by the terms of this drug-free workplace statement.

If an employee needs information, assistance, and/or counseling on the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace, the employee may contact the Director of Human Resources or the county's E.A.P. services to be directed to an agency or person who can provide assistance.

Safety sensitive employees are subject to the rules and regulations set forth in 49 CFR Part 655 and shall report to the Designated Employee Representative before beginning any safety sensitive function.



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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: Sec. 13-149. Weapon Free Workplace

CURRENTLY READS: Additional policy

Received
JAN 0 REC'D
By

CHANGE TO: Employees are prohibited from possessing or carrying weapons while on county property to include any county owned or operated facility, vehicle, or equipment and during county sponsored events. Weapons include but are not limited to any firearm, taser, knife, mace, or pepper spray. Employees found in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline as outlined in **Sec. 13-100 Types of Disciplinary Action** up to and including termination. This section shall not apply to P.O.S.T. certified individuals who have Permission from the Douglas County Sheriff or higher governing authority.

REASON FOR CHANGE: To give a clear and defined policy regarding weapons in the workplace and on County owned or operated property and during County sponsored events.

SUBMITTED BY:

Justin McDermott



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13: 42

CURRENTLY READS:

No annual cost of living allowance.

CHANGE TO: Cost of living allowance of 3-5%
Annually or semi-annually.

Received

JAN 30 RECD

By

REASON FOR CHANGE: To help employees better keep up
with inflationary pressures.

SUBMITTED BY:

Ann Baker

Ann Bolen
Voter Registration Coordinator
Board of Elections & Voter Registration (415)
Douglasville, GA 30134

January 29, 2025

Douglas County Board of Commissioners
Human Resources Department
8700 Hospital Drive
Douglasville, GA 30134

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to respectfully request the consideration of an Amendment to the Douglas County Employee Merit System Handbook to include a bi-annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase of at least 3-5%. This request is made to help employees better keep up with inflationary pressures, which are increasingly impacting the cost of living.

Implementing a bi-annual COLA would not only allow employees to maintain purchasing power but would also be a strategic investment in retaining trained and dedicated staff. As inflation continues to rise, it becomes more difficult for employees to manage their daily living expenses without corresponding adjustments in their wages. In turn, this can lead to dissatisfaction, decreased morale, and increased turnover, all of which could adversely affect the County's ability to retain skilled employees who have demonstrated loyalty and expertise.

By including a periodic COLA increase in the Merit System Handbook, Douglas County would demonstrate a commitment to its workforce, acknowledging their ongoing contributions and encouraging long-term retention. This would ensure that employees remain motivated and financially secure, ultimately benefiting the overall productivity and success of the County.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to provide any additional information or discuss this request further.

Sincerely,

Ann Bolen
Abolen@douglascountyga.gov
Cell 909.559.2098



FEB 03 2025 10:04 AM '25

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
Telephone 770.920.7306 • Fax 770.920.7371

SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-42. Salary Reviews

CURRENTLY READS: On the anniversary date of employment with the county each permanent employee MAY receive a salary increase not to exceed one (1) step.

CHANGE TO: At the beginning of each calendar year, a Cost-of-Living Allowance of at least 3% SHALL be given. In addition, on the anniversary date of employment with the county, each permanent employee SHALL receive a salary increase of at least 2-4%.

Received

FEB 03 REC'D

By _____

REASON FOR CHANGE: Douglas County would ensure that employees are financially secure, which increases morale, shows appreciation for the employee's loyalty and will be beneficial to the continued success of the county.

SUBMITTED BY:

Heather James



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
Telephone 770.920.7306 • Fax 770.920.7371

SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: Sec. 13-42. Salary Reviews

CURRENTLY READS: On the anniversary date of employment with the county each permanent employee may receive a salary increase not to exceed one (1) step.

CHANGE TO: On the anniversary date of employment with the county each permanent employee shall
ary increase of at least 3% not to exceed one (1) step.

REASON FOR CHANGE: I am writing to respectfully request the consideration of an Amendment to the Douglas county Employee Merit System Handbook to include an annual Cost of Living Allowance increase of at least 3% to keep up with inflation and assist in competent long term employee retention. It will also help acknowledge ongoing contributions and ensure employees stay motivated and financially secure, ultimately benefiting overall productivity and success of the county.

SUBMITTED BY: Tesha Green



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
Telephone 770.920.7306 • Fax 770.920.7371

FEB 3 2025 10:08AM

SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-42

CURRENTLY READS: On the anniversary date of employment with the county each permanent employee may receive a salary increase not to exceed one (1) step. The salary increase can be denied if the employee's overall performance rating is marginal or below satisfactory. Any across-the-board or cost-of-living increase given to full-time permanent employees shall not affect the annual increases for each employee.

CHANGE TO: Request the consideration of an Amendment to the Douglas County Employee Merit System Handbook to include a bi-annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase of at least 3-5%.

Implementing a bi-annual COLA would not only allow employees to maintain purchasing power but would also be a strategic investment in retaining trained and dedicated staff.

REASON FOR CHANGE: This request is made to help employees better keep up with inflationary pressures, which are increasingly impacting the cost of living.

Received

FEB 03 REC'D

SUBMITTED BY:

Romann Ducoste Amedee-Fire/Admin

By



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-42

CURRENTLY READS: On the anniversary date of employment with the county each permanent employee may receive a salary increase not to exceed one (1) step. The salary increase can be denied if the employee's overall performance rating is marginal or below satisfactory. Any across-the-board or cost-of-living increase given to full-time permanent employees shall not affect the annual increases for each employee.

CHANGE TO: Request the consideration of an Amendment to the Douglas County Employee Merit

System Handbook to include a bi-annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase of at least 3-5%.

Implementing a bi-annual COLA would not only allow employees to maintain purchasing power but would also be a strategic investment in retaining trained and dedicated staff.

REASON FOR CHANGE: This request is made to help employees better keep up with inflationary pressures,

which are increasingly impacting the cost of living.

Received

FEB 03 REC'D

By _____



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
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SUBMITTED BY:

Monique Ducoste Amedee-Clerk Of Superior Court



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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-42

CURRENTLY READS: On the anniversary date of employment with the county each permanent employee may receive a salary increase not to exceed one (1) step. The salary increase can be denied if the employee's overall performance rating is marginal or below satisfactory. Any across-the-board or cost-of-living increase given to full-time permanent employees shall not affect the annual increases for each employee.

CHANGE TO: Request the consideration of an Amendment to the Douglas County Employee Merit

System Handbook to include a bi-annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase of at least 3-5%.

Implementing a bi-annual COLA would not only allow employees to maintain purchasing power but would also be a strategic investment in retaining trained and dedicated staff.

REASON FOR CHANGE: This request is made to help employees better keep up with inflationary pressures, which are increasingly impacting the cost of living.

Received

FEB 03 REC'D

By



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8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
Telephone 770.920.7306 • Fax 770.920.7371

SUBMITTED BY:

Taisha Freeman- Clerk of Superior Court



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

8700 Hospital Drive • Douglasville, Georgia 30134
Telephone 770.920.7306 • Fax 770.920.7371

1/18/2013 3:51:14

SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION:

Not in Merit Book

CURRENTLY READS:

Constitutional Officers Being elected
to either Opt in or Opt out of
the merit system

CHANGE TO:
this should

If we are truly one Douglas County
not be an option.

Received

JAN 31 REC'D

By

REASON FOR CHANGE:

I + actually creates a liability
for the County by not having one system
that every office adheres to, it allows
a wieldy power that some may enforce
recklessly. I believe if you are elected to represent
Douglas County then an officer should abide
by the rules set forth that will protect all
employees, not just the elected one's

SUBMITTED BY:

Jeremy Germaine
J G



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION:

13-42

CURRENTLY READS:

HR Hes Handbook

CHANGE TO:

Note Attached

Received

JAN 31 REC'D

By

REASON FOR CHANGE:

To fully support Employees

SUBMITTED BY:

Jeremy Germaine

Crystal Danley-Bridges
Administrative Coordinator
Board of Elections & Voter Registration (415)
Douglasville, GA 30134

January 29, 2025

Douglas County Board of Commissioners
Human Resources Department
8700 Hospital Drive
Douglasville, GA 30134

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to respectfully request the consideration of an Amendment to the Douglas County Employee Merit System Handbook to include a bi-annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase of at least 3-5%. This request is made to help employees better keep up with inflationary pressures, which are increasingly impacting the cost of living.

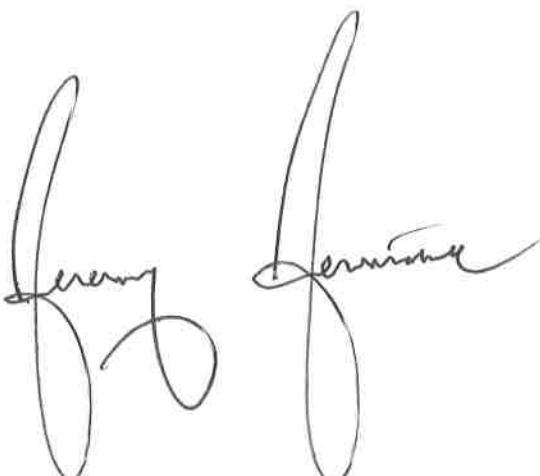
Implementing a bi-annual COLA would not only allow employees to maintain purchasing power but would also be a strategic investment in retaining trained and dedicated staff. As inflation continues to rise, it becomes more difficult for employees to manage their daily living expenses without corresponding adjustments in their wages. In turn, this can lead to dissatisfaction, decreased morale, and increased turnover, all of which could adversely affect the County's ability to retain skilled employees who have demonstrated loyalty and expertise.

By including a periodic COLA increase in the Merit System Handbook, Douglas County would demonstrate a commitment to its workforce, acknowledging their ongoing contributions and encouraging long-term retention. This would ensure that employees remain motivated and financially secure, ultimately benefiting the overall productivity and success of the County.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to provide any additional information or discuss this request further.

Sincerely,

Crystal Danley- Bridges
Cdbridges@douglascountyga.gov
Cell 404.406.0474

Two handwritten signatures are shown side-by-side. The signature on the left is "Jeremy" and the signature on the right is "Jerome".

please, See Attached

Crystal Danley-Bridges
Dept. 415

76831 25 514694



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-42

CURRENTLY READS:

NO COLA listed right now.

Received

JAN 31 REC'D

By _____

CHANGE TO:

Submit Cost of Living Allowance
Annually of @ least 3-5%.

(See attached letter)

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Greatly needed to maintain
standard of living due to increasing
inflation amounts.

SUBMITTED BY:

Crystal Danley-Bridges
Crystal Danley-Bridges
work 770 920 7213
cell 404 406 0474

Crystal Danley-Bridges
Administrative Coordinator
Board of Elections & Voter Registration (415)
Douglasville, GA 30134

January 29, 2025

Douglas County Board of Commissioners
Human Resources Department
8700 Hospital Drive
Douglasville, GA 30134

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to respectfully request the consideration of an Amendment to the Douglas County Employee Merit System Handbook to include an annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) increase of at least 3.5%. This request is made to help employees better keep up with inflationary pressures, which are increasingly impacting the cost of living.

Implementing an annual COLA would not only allow employees to maintain purchasing power but would also be a strategic investment in retaining trained and dedicated staff. As inflation continues to rise, it becomes more difficult for employees to manage their daily living expenses without corresponding adjustments in their wages. In turn, this can lead to dissatisfaction, decreased morale, and increased turnover, all of which could adversely affect the County's ability to retain skilled employees who have demonstrated loyalty and expertise.

By including an annual COLA increase in the Merit System Handbook, Douglas County would demonstrate commitment to its workforce, acknowledging their ongoing contributions and encouraging long-term retention. This would ensure that employees remain motivated and financially secure, ultimately benefiting the overall productivity and success of the County.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to provide any additional information or discuss this request further.

Sincerely,



Crystal Danley-Bridges
Cdbridges@douglascountyga.gov
Cell 404.406.0474



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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: _____

CURRENTLY READS:

Personnel Department

CHANGE TO:

Change any reference in the merit system stating "Personnel Department" to "Human Resources Department".

REASON FOR CHANGE:

Human Resources is the official terminology for what was previously known as Personnel and should be updated in the merit system to reflect the change.

SUBMITTED BY:

Paula Magee, HR Deputy Director

Received

FEB 03 REC'D

By _____



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-130 Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

CURRENTLY READS:

(b) Scope. An employee may take a total of twelve (12 workweeks of unpaid leave for the reasons specified above during the twelve-month period measured forward from the date any employee's first FMLA leave begins.

CHANGE TO:

(b) Scope. An employee may take a total of twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid leave for the reasons listed above during a twelve-month rolling period.

REASON FOR CHANGE:

To minimize confusion on the 12 month period.

SUBMITTED BY:

FILED OR REC'D

By

HR Deputy Director, Paula Magee



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: Sec. 13-19. Personnel Review Board

CURRENTLY READS: (f) Changes in the county merit system will be on an annual basis with the annual Public meeting being held in the month of February. The Board of Commissioners shall consider all changes approved by The Personnel Review Board and within Sixty (60) days after receipt of such changes

CHANGE TO: (f) Changes in the county merit system will be conducted on a quarterly basis, with one (1) annual hearing for the public to provide input regarding proposed changes in a Public Meeting held in the month of February. Changes aimed at ensuring continuity of language or corresponding sections, correcting typographical errors, and updates that reflect changes to operational practices of the county shall be presented by County Administration, County Attorney, HR Director on a quarterly basis as needed. Such changes shall be submitted to the Personnel Review Board for initial review. Following the Personal Review Board's assessment and written commentary, the proposed changes shall be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for review, modification and final approval. All proposed changes, whether annual or quarterly shall be documented and made available to the public.

REASON FOR CHANGE: The Merit Handbook is outdated, in several aspects, as it pertains to language, operational practices, conflicting sections, typos and absent of updates related to existing county policies. Introducing quarterly reviews for updates offer provisions to ensure continuity within the handbook and consistency with current or new policies and practices.

SUBMITTED BY:

Paula Magee, HR Deputy Director on behalf of the HR Department

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FEB 03 REC'D

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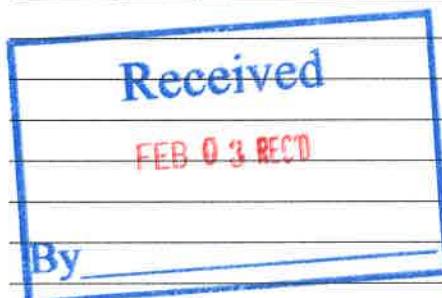
CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-58. Employee Rehire Policy

CURRENTLY READS: (a) If an employee voluntarily resigns their position with the county (see Section 13-88 Resignations) or is laid-off from the county (see Sec. 13-90 Lay Offs), and has correctly completed all necessary exit Interview information with his/her supervisor or department head, the county may consider this previous employee for rehire with all benefits re-instated if the subject employee re-applies for employment with the county within no more than six (6) Months for the standard employee population and one (1) year for the certified Public Safety employee population from the date last worked with the county. No benefits will be accrued during the period of unemployment with the county. The only authorized benefit not immediately restored is insurance which takes effect on the first day of the next month after rehire.

CHANGE TO: Healthcare benefits (medical, dental and vision) become effective the first day of the month following 30 days of rehire. Accrual rate for vacation leave at the time of resignation will be fully restored.



REASON FOR CHANGE: Provide specificity regarding the benefits that will be restored upon rehire and ensures alignment with the County's current healthcare coverage start date. This change also aligns with industry standards with respect to restoration of benefits upon rehire.

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-14. Definitions

CURRENTLY READS: (a) *Permanent employee*: A full-time, non-temporary employee who has completed the probationary period.

CHANGE TO: (a) *Regular employee*: A full-time, non-temporary employee who has completed the probationary period. Also, change all “permanent employee” references in the Merit Handbook to “regular employee”.

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REASON FOR CHANGE: Correction to the definition of regular full-time employment status. A “permanent employee” signifies someone hired for a long-term position with no set end date. A “regular employee” refers to a full-time employee with a regular consistent work schedule and does not signify there is no set end date. Correcting this definition aligns with industry standard as well as “At-Will” employment in the State of Georgia.

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SUGGESTED CHANGE TO THE MERIT SYSTEM HANDBOOK

CHANGE FROM:

YEAR: 2025

SECTION: 13-14. Definitions

CURRENTLY READS: (a) *Part-time employee*: An employee who, on a continuing basis, works fewer than thirty (30) hours per week. A part-time employee shall not be entitled to employee benefits, such as insurance, retirement, vacation or sick leave, nor shall that person be covered by these rules and regulations.

CHANGE TO: (a) *Part-time employee*: An employee, who on a continuing basis, works fewer than thirty (30) hours per week. A regular part-time employee shall not be entitled to employee benefits, such as insurance, Retirement, vacation or sick leave, nor shall that person be covered by these rules and regulations.

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REASON FOR CHANGE: Updating the definition of part-time employment status. A "part-time" employee" is considered a regular employee that is not entitled to employee benefits.

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