



## PERSONNEL POLICY

### **SUBJECT: RETENTION BONUS, SIGN-ON BONUS, AND RELOCATION COSTS**

DATE: October 20, 2021

Number: 329-16

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#### **I. Statement of Policy**

Fulton County seeks to retain and attract employees with unusually high or unique qualifications in positions that are critical to the operation of the County. A lump-sum retention bonus or retention pay adjustment may be paid to a current employee in a position that is critical to the mission of the County, if it is determined that: (1) the unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee, or a special need of the County for the employee's services, make it essential to retain the employee; and (2) that the employee would likely leave County service in the absence of a retention bonus. The County Manager, based on the recommendation of the Chief Human Resources Officer and upon verification of availability of funds within the applicable department's budget or other available funding sources, may authorize the head of a department to pay a retention bonus of an approved-upon amount or rate.

A lump-sum sign-on bonus may be paid to an individual newly hired as part of an offer of employment, if it is determined that: (1) the individual accepted an offer in a position that is critical to the mission of the County and/or hard to fill; and (2) that the individual would not likely accept the position in the absence of a sign-on bonus. The County Manager, based on the recommendation of the Chief of Human Resources Officer and upon verification of availability of funds within the applicable department's budget or other available funding sources, may authorize a Department Head to offer and pay a sign-on bonus of an approved-upon amount.

The reasonable costs and expenses of relocating may be paid to an individual newly hired as part of an offer of employment, if it is determined that (1) the individual will reside in Georgia full-time upon commencing employment; (2) the individual is moving from a residence that is at least one hundred (100) miles from the Fulton County Government Center; (3) the individual accepted an offer for a position that is critical to the mission of the County and/or hard to fill; and (4) that the individual would not likely accept the position in the absence of reimbursement of relocation costs and expenses.

These policies do not create a contract of employment. Employment for non-classified employees remains "at will".

## **II. Background and Applicability**

This policy applies to all full-time employees of Fulton County in permanent positions. This policy shall also apply to full-time employees of elected officials in permanent positions to the extent they adopt the same.

This policy shall exclude temporary, seasonal, part-time and fee employees, elected officials, judges and contractors.

## **III. Establishment and Implementation of Procedure**

The County Manager, in consultation with the Chief Human Resources Officer and County Attorney, is authorized to establish and modify, as needed, a procedure for implementing this policy.



## PERSONNEL PROCEDURE

### SUBJECT: RETENTION BONUS, SIGN-ON BONUS, AND RELOCATION COSTS

DATE: November 4, 2021

Number: 329-16

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#### I. Considerations

##### A. Retention Bonus

1. The County Manager, based on the recommendation of the Chief Human Resources Officer and upon verification of availability of funds within the applicable department's budget or other available funding sources, may authorize an Appointing Authority to pay a retention bonus to an employee or group of employees if: The unusually high or unique qualifications of the employee or a special need of the agency for the employee's services makes it essential to retain the employee in his or her position; and
2. In the absence of a retention bonus, the employee would likely leave the County's service.

##### B. Sign-On Bonus

The County Manager, based on the recommendation of the Chief Human Resources Officer and upon verification of availability of funds within the applicable department's budget or other available funding sources, may authorize an Appointing Authority to offer a sign-on bonus to a candidate or group of candidates if:

1. The individual accepted an offer in a position that is critical to the mission of the County and/or hard to fill; and
2. The individual would not likely accept the position in the absence of a sign-on bonus.

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### **C. Relocation Costs and Expenses**

The County Manager, based on the recommendation of the Chief Human Resources Officer and upon verification of availability of funds within the applicable department's budget or other available funding sources, may authorize an Appointing Authority to offer reimbursement of relocation costs and expenses to a candidate or group of candidates if:

1. The individual will reside in Georgia full-time upon commencing employment;
2. The individual is moving from a residence that is at least one hundred (100) miles from the Fulton County Government Center, unless the individual works for the County Attorney, the County Auditor, the Clerk to the Commission or an elected officer, in which case, the minimum distance may be less than 100 miles as determined by the elected officer;
3. The individual accepted an offer for a position that is critical to the mission of the County and/or hard to fill; and
4. The individual would not likely accept the position in the absence of payment or reimbursement of relocation costs and expenses.

### **II. Service Agreement Conditions**

Payment of a retention bonus, sign-on bonus or relocation costs and expenses is contingent upon the employee entering into a written service agreement with the agency to complete a period of service, of at least twelve (12) months but not to exceed twenty-four (24) months, in a position. However, the County Attorney, the County Auditor, the Clerk to the Commission and any elected officer may require a service agreement for a longer term.

### **III. Criteria in Determining the Amount of a Retention Bonus, Sign-On Bonus and Relocation Costs**

The amount of a retention bonus or sign-on bonus will be determined by the Department of Human Resources Management, the Finance Department (for funding approval only) and approved by the County Manager for employees in departments under his/her supervision and shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the employee's base rate of pay. The amount of a retention bonus or sign-on bonus for employees who report to the County Attorney, the County Auditor, the Clerk to the Commission or any elected officer shall be determined by those respective department or agency heads and shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the employee's base rate of pay and is subject to budget availability.

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Relocation costs and expenses shall not exceed \$13,000 subject to funding availability and shall be limited to the Relocation Costs and Expense Schedule adopted by the Chief Human Resources Officer. An employee will be required to provide sufficient proof of the expense, as determined by the Finance Department, and its connection to the aforementioned relocation.

A request to exceed the existing caps may be submitted by an Appointing Authority to the Board of Commissioners accompanied by the written recommendation of the Chief Human Resources Officer.

#### **IV. Method of Payment, Limitations and Reimbursements**

A retention bonus or sign on bonus may be paid in a lump sum amount at the start of the service period or, if agreed upon, spread over multiple payments during the service period. No employee shall receive a retention bonus more than once while serving in the same position. A sign-on bonus shall not be permitted for employees transferring from a classification that is eligible for a sign-on bonus. Relocation costs and expenses pursuant to the Relocation Costs and Expense Schedule will be paid in the form of reimbursement in accordance with the Finance Department's reimbursement policies and protocols.

##### **A. Reimbursement for Separations or Departures**

In the event the employee separates from the County or voluntarily departs the classification for which the retention bonus, sign-on bonus or relocation costs were provided, the following terms shall apply:

1. If the separation or departure date is within the specified period of service or prior to the completion of the specific project, the employee will forfeit their right to the retention bonus, sign-on bonus and relocation costs and the amount agreed upon will not be paid. If money toward the retention bonus, sign-on bonus or relocation costs has been paid to the employee, then at the discretion of the County Manager, County Attorney, the County Auditor, the Clerk to the Commission or elected officer, whichever is applicable, the monies paid will be returned or recouped from the employee.
2. If the separation or departure date occurs after the specified period of service or after completion of the specific project, the retention bonus, sign-on bonus or relocation costs will be paid.
3. If the departure results in a transfer to another classification that is eligible for a retention bonus, sign-on bonus or relocation costs, then the retention bonus, sign-on bonus or relocation costs may be retained or honored at the determination of the receiving Department Head and subject to available funding in the receiving department to complete the remaining payment(s).

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**V. Salary Adjustment Following Completion of the Period of Service or Specific Project**

Upon completion of the specific period of service or the specific project, the employee's base rate of pay for that position may be adjusted by the amount of the retention bonus, at the discretion of the County Manager and subject to the availability of funds within the departmental budget.

**VI. Clarification and Discretion**

If clarification is required, an Appointing Authority Department Head, and/or employee should contact the Department of Human Resources Management and speak to the HR Policy Advisor or the Chief Human Resources Officer. Please note that the application of the Employee Retention Bonus, Sign-On Bonus and Relocation Costs Policy may vary from time to time and that all related decisions are at the discretion of the County Manager, in consultation with the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Any Department Head or Appointing Authority, who extends an offer of a retention bonus, sign-on bonus or payment of relocation costs to an employee or candidate prior to receiving required approvals will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. The County Attorney, the County Auditor, the Clerk to the Commission or any other elected officer are not to make an unconditional offer to pay a retention bonus, a sign-on bonus or relocation costs and expenses unless all necessary approvals, including funding from the Finance Department, have been confirmed.

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