

**Fairness**

**Work Ethic**

**Integrity & Character**

**Excellence & Innovation**

**Professionalism & Accountability**



**You Asked,  
Mayor Jacobs Answered**



# Our Mission

**“To serve the citizens of Orange County and our guests with integrity, honesty, fairness and professionalism.”**

**Mayor Teresa Jacobs**

**"Proud to serve our community with you."**

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# Introduction

All County Employees,

You are working hard serving the community and engaging businesses to make Orange County the best region to live, work and play. As an Orange County Government employee you are on the front lines interacting with the thousands of citizens, businesses and tourists that encompass Central Florida. I want to hear your ideas about ways we can enhance your experience.

With the help of the Human Resources Division, the questions and comments you raised during our employee engagement meetings have been compiled, categorized and carefully reviewed. This booklet addresses your most frequently asked questions. Questions that were department specific are not addressed in these FAQ's, but have been evaluated directly with management and staff in those respective areas. I have held department meetings that focused on their unique specialties and are implementing ways to improve our service areas.

Employee centered activities like the Employee Service Awards, the quarterly Mayor's Coffee, and the Wall of Fame create venues to recognize individual accomplishments that boost our organization as an employment leader in Central Florida. Our mission to serve goes beyond day-to-day operations. There are many opportunities for you to expand your experience as you continue to serve citizens and visitors with integrity, honesty, fairness, and professionalism.

Orange County Government partners with a variety of organizations like the Heart of Florida United Way, and the Second Harvest Food Bank, and through the Mayor's Holiday Toy Drive to provide employees an opportunity to give back to individuals and families.

Through my visits with a number of departments, I understand the passion it takes each and every day to meet the needs of our ever changing environment. It is important that we stay true to our mission and Core Values.

As always, I thank you for your commitment to serve the citizens of Orange County. I look forward to continuing our conversation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Jacobs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Orange County Mayor

# FAQ's

## Health and Wellness

### *Can you explain the overall structure and philosophy of our medical plan?*

Wellness for Life is the County's employee benefits program and it is offered to all eligible employees. The medical plan is a significant component of this program and it has been reengineered in recent years into a more comprehensive and sustainable model. This new plan design covers the same benefits that were covered under the previous HMO and Point of Service plans.

### *How and why has our medical plan changed from the plan we had a few years ago?*

The basic parameters for changing the philosophy was to have a plan design which focuses on the short-term need to manage health care costs and the longer-term requirement to change underlying behavior patterns creating an environment to actively manage employee health. In the past, the County had relied on short-term strategies such as increasing plan co-payments and/or raising insurance premiums. However, these solutions yielded relatively minimal savings and did little to change individual awareness of the true costs for medical care.



*Employee events combining health, wellness and community service are a top priority. The Corporate 5K is a great example of staying fit and providing service.*

**Did you know many organizations had to increase employees' annual premium rates between nine and eleven percent between 2011 and 2014? County Employees had not seen a medical rate increase since 2011.**

### *Is our medical plan changing for the better or worse?*

Overall, the new plan design gives you more control over your health care dollars. A key concept is to share cost and benefit information with employees. By doing this you can make conscientious health decisions and maximize plan benefits for your unique needs. For example, consider shopping around for the best deals on prescription drugs and buy generic when possible or take advantage of our medical plan home delivery service. Many of you ask questions of your doctors about the necessity of certain procedures. As you bear part of the cost, you own the responsibility for managing expenses though prudent use of both the health plan and your personal savings.

### *What is the future of our medical plan?*

Financially, the health insurance plan changes have put the County's medical insurance finances onto sustainable ground. As the County and employees work together to contain cost and manage health care choices, we will continue to see savings and provide you with a plan design that puts you in control of your health care decisions. This will offer you engagement opportunities and provide more flexibility with healthy lifestyle choices. We are looking forward to a healthier future.

## **Paid Leave Benefits – Term Leave**

### *Why must we be out five consecutive days before Term Leave can be used?*

Term Leave is intended for longer illnesses or injuries lasting the equivalent of a full workweek (normally 40 hours) or more. For less than 5 consecutive days, personal leave provides you with time away from work for reasons such as vacation, short-term illnesses and medical appointments. The County monitors the overall accrual and use of term leave, re-evaluates its initial intent and reviews its current application on a regular basis. Presently, the five consecutive days, or the equivalent of a normally scheduled workweek, was determined to be the best use of the Term Leave benefit.

### *Is there a plan to revise or eliminate the Term Leave Policy?*

As with other county policies, Term Leave may require some future modification as productivity needs, staffing strategies, benefits options and work environments change. Most recently, the policy was revised to accommodate employees working 12-hour permanent work shifts and whose normal workweek fluctuates between 36 and 48 hours. In this case, qualifying absences of 36 or more consecutive hours may be approved as Term Leave. This is a change from the original intent of forty (40) or more hours which was a typical workweek.



## Employee Leave Bank

### *How does the Leave Bank policy work?*

The Employee Leave Bank provides support to employees who experience a catastrophic illness or injury after their own leave balances have been exhausted, and they are not eligible for Short or Long Term Disability. Qualifying illnesses or injuries are those that are considered to be serious in nature or potentially life threatening, such as a terminal illness, stroke or heart attack. Hours donated to the Employee Leave Bank only apply for eligible absences due to the employee's own illness or injury. The Leave Bank is available to all regular, full time employees who have been with the County at least six months.



The Leave Bank is funded by employee donations of personal, term, or old sick leave hours which are then converted to a dollar amount. If approved, the Leave Bank will pay up to sixty percent (60%) of the employee's normal hours worked in the pay period at the employee's regular hourly rate of pay. An employee may be granted a maximum of two-hundred (200) Leave Bank hours per fiscal year.

### *Why can't employees give time to whoever they want?*

Leave Bank requests are submitted to a Leave Bank Committee which is made up of seven County employees from various divisions, to include a medical professional that provides guidance on medical terminology and prognosis. Employee requests for leave bank withdrawals and their supporting medical documentation are presented to the committee every pay period for review and approval. Specifics about the employee's identity or where he or she works are excluded.

The program is designed to protect the privacy of employees submitting requests and to ensure that the reviewers administer the program in a fair, equitable and impartial manner. Therefore, employees donating time are not allowed to designate recipients of their leave bank hours.

## Retirement Benefits and Florida Retirement System (FRS)

### *Who is required to participate in the FRS retirement program?*

Employees working in regularly established positions are required to participate in the FRS. Most employees who are classified as temporary or casual do not participate.

As a participant in the FRS, you may select from two retirement choices: the Pension Plan and the Investment Plan. The County contributes the majority of your FRS retirement plan savings. In addition, a mandatory 3% pre-tax contribution is directed from your paycheck into your retirement account regardless of the plan you choose. FRS participation is based on criteria determined by the State of Florida. The County does not make decisions of who pays into the system or how much is contributed.

## *What is the status on reversal of the mandatory employee 3% retirement contribution?*

Effective July 2011, FRS members were required to contribute 3% of their salary towards their retirement plan. The contribution is on a pre-tax basis and is automatically deducted from the employee's bi-weekly paycheck. This contribution was not mandated by Orange County but rather by the FRS and was an approved legislative action signed by Florida Governor Rick Scott. Orange County is required to collect the 3% contribution from designated county employees.

The payment of the retirement contribution was challenged by several bargaining units across the State. The decision of whether it was constitutionally allowed rested with the Florida Supreme Court to determine the legality of the required contributions. In January 2013 the court decided that the FRS can legally require the three percent retirement contribution from participants. Therefore the three percent retirement contribution remains in effect.

## **Employee Selection and Promotion**

### *Why does it take a long time to get new or vacant positions approved and filled?*

Due to recent economic challenges, the County has taken more fiscally conservative measures in its approach to fill vacant positions. In addition, the County has a vacancy committee. County Administration and the Human Resources Division carefully scrutinize each position vacancy before publish for recruitment. Only positions determined by the vacancy board as filling the most critical service needs are considered for approval.



Once a position is approved, hiring and promoting the right person takes patience, careful review and analysis. It involves the design of comprehensive and effective employee selection methods. The time required to select the best candidate depends on several factors, including (but not limited to) authorization to fill a vacancy, the unique requirements of a particular position, the methods used for selection, and the quality of the candidate pool. Therefore, the entire process (from advertising the position to job offer) can take as little as a few weeks to as much as several months. However, the time invested in this effort helps the County achieve its objective of selecting the best employees.

### *How does the recruitment process work and is there oversight on hiring practices to ensure that decisions are not based on relationships and favoritism?*

In partnership with the Human Resources Division, hiring managers develop selection criteria and additional evaluation methods to identify the best candidates. Some methods may include structured interviews, physical agility and knowledge-based tests, simulation exercises, etc.

The Human Resources Division establishes and oversees the County's recruitment and candidate evaluation processes to ensure consistency and fairness. Once a position is approved to be filled, the Human Resources Division can initiate the recruitment process. Position openings may be advertised internally only to County employees and/or advertised outside of the County.

*I have applied for multiple positions and meet the minimum qualifications but I am never selected. Why?*

Positions are competitive and advertisements often result in a large volume of applications. Meeting minimum qualifications is not enough to move to the interview or selection phase of the process. It is important to distinguish yourself and stand out from the rest of the applicants. This begins with submitting a complete and comprehensive job application packet.

As you review job postings, it is best to not focus on the job title or department but instead read the duties and qualifications of the position and consider whether your skills and abilities may be a good fit. The advantage of working for a large and diverse organization is the availability of numerous promotional opportunities.



**Did you know that the County receives an average of 57,000 applications each year and 21,000 of those applications meet the minimum qualifications of the position?**

*Some jobs are part of a clear career path, such as Plant Specialist Trainee, I, II, III. I am in a position that is a stand-alone position with no clear promotion opportunities. I like where I work. How do I move to a better paying, challenging position?*

Some positions are aligned in a series of progressively higher, related jobs distinguished by levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities (competencies) and other factors. Positions with this alignment provide promotional opportunities over time along a clearly defined

career path. If you are in a position that does not follow this alignment, you may consider a different approach for career advancement. To compete for promotional opportunities, look at your previous experience, education and skills; the tasks and projects in which you have done well. For example, if you are in a position in Utilities responsible for communication and public engagement, you may have transferable skills that would make you a successful candidate for a position within your department or elsewhere in the County.



*Marc Leard on the left and Billy Kane on the right during the Mayor's Workday on January 25, 2013, with the Field Services Divisions' Eastern Crew. The Mayor helped the crew replace a damaged water valve.*

**Effective the 2013-14 Fiscal Year, the Educational Assistance Policy will increase the reimbursement amount for regular, full-time employees to a maximum of \$1,250 each fiscal year. If you are a regular, part-time employee (work less than 35 hours but more than 20 per week) your reimbursement amount will increase to a maximum of \$625 each fiscal year.**

Orange County has several benefits that will help you make the most of your career in county government. Pursuing additional education is a great way for you to align your skills and abilities with promotional opportunities. The Tuition Reimbursement program is available for all employees and allows a set reimbursement amount each fiscal year towards continuing education. There are guidelines for the reimbursement so be sure to check with your Human Resources Representative for the specific qualifying requirements.

You may want to consider the training opportunities offered through Human Resources. Check out the new Passport course schedule for a complete list

of classes and resources available to you. These courses offer insightful ways to improve leadership, skills and abilities and it may be just what you need to help guide your career path.

## Employee Pay

*We received a 3% increase Fiscal Year 2012-13 but that only compensated employees for the 3% paid to FRS in retirement contributions. Positions were eliminated or not filled and we are asked to do more. Will there be future increases for employees?*

As good stewards of public funds, Orange County strives to be fair and equitable, yet remain competitive in its pay practices. Economic challenges forced the County to take a more conservative approach in filling positions and granting employee pay increases. The County budget is reviewed annually through our budget work session process mandated by the County Charter. When fiscally prudent, the Board of County Commissioners has voted for an across the board pay increase for all employees. Since the budget process is conducted annually it is not feasible to predict what will be proposed in future years.

*The Public Works Department hosted the Pasta with a Purpose Great Oaks Village fundraiser event. Participants feasted on a delicious Italian lunch. From left to right, Mark Massaro, Deputy Director, Public Works Department along with Jim Harrison, Assistant County Administrator and Joel Prinsell, representing the County Attorney's Office.*



*How is the annual increase determined? Is there any possibility that the increase could be significantly higher than 3%?*



**Professionalism & Accountability:**

Take pride in serving the public and in yourself. Deliver measurable results that matter.

The ability and decision to award an employee increase is primarily based on an analysis of the County's revenue and budget by the Office of Management & Budget (OMB). Human Resources also reviews national pay trends and surveys government entities that are the same size as Orange County and other local public agencies. A 3% employee pay increase has been budgeted in the fiscal year 2013-14.

*Why is there not an anniversary incentive, longevity pay or cost-of-living increases for all employees? Has the County looked at ways to compensate employees financially for outstanding performance? Has County employees ever received merit pay and, if yes, is there any plan to return to it?*

The county periodically re-evaluates its pay policies for competitiveness with other comparable employers. Any future decisions to change the County's employee pay philosophy will be based on market trends and available funding. In fiscal year 2013-14 county employees received a three percent merit pay increase. Any future decisions to change the County's employee pay philosophy will be based on market trends and available funding.

## **Work Schedules, Hours Worked and Overtime Eligibility**

*Productivity may increase with flexible schedules. Is this an option that can be promoted and encouraged?*

*I am an hourly employee. Instead of a 1 hour lunch break, why can't I take only 30 minutes and start a half hour later or leave early?*

The Orange County Policy **Manuel** Section 109, which is governed by the Board of County Commissioners, determines hours worked, and schedules based on department's client base and the duties of the position. Federal law governs break times and compensation policies. For example, some departments operate Monday through Friday, while others staff operations are 24 hours, seven days per week. Also, work schedules can vary based on operational needs. They may range from as four hours to as many as 24 hours per day. Department management determines the flexibility of an employee work schedule, including the time for lunch breaks. The most important determinate of an employee's work schedule is to maintain exemplary service to the citizens of Orange County.

It is best to discuss your reporting time and daily work schedule with your immediate supervisor. This may involve a clear discussion on the service needs of your area. days and schedules are based on departmental operations, their client base and the duties of the position.



***Why are salary (exempt) employees not required to be as accountable for hours worked as hourly employees are?***

All employees are accountable for their time based on the job requirements regardless of their classification. In many cases, getting the job done takes more than 40 hours. It may be necessary for exempt employees to work additional hours, take work home or work weekends with no additional compensation. Management may provide flexibility in scheduling to accommodate long hours spent on project work.

## **Performance Evaluations**

***Please explain the County's policy on performance evaluations. What is considered and addressed during these evaluations?***

The performance evaluation assesses an employee's job performance and productivity in relation to certain pre-established criteria and organizational objectives. Other areas addressed include accomplishments, areas identified for future improvement. Performance evaluations help both management and employees with career development. Working together the supervisor and employee can develop plans to assist in developing and meeting career goals that benefit Orange County and the employee.

Additionally, performance evaluations give managers a chance to recognize employees who performed well during the evaluated year. Recognizing employees for their achievements builds morale, and employees with high morale are more productive.

## Temporary Employment

### *Why does the County use temporary employees?*

Orange County uses temporary employees to meet operational needs that are not long term. The positions are generally not authorized for longer than 6 months; the work may be performed intermittently or on an as-needed basis.

### *It seems unfair that temporary employees do the same work as regular employees but are paid less. Can you explain this?*

The temporary pay plan titles reflect the type of work performed and the temporary category. The pay plan is reviewed each time the Federal or State of Florida minimum wage is adjusted. Temporary employment is designed to be limited in duration. The hiring manager determines the starting salary based on the tasks the employee will perform. Hiring departments also consider if the temporary employee is a returning employee and may adjust the pay offered.

### *I have worked for Orange County for 10 years, seven of which have been in a temporary capacity. Why isn't there a program or some way that employees are given service credit or retirement benefits for temporary employment?*

Temporary positions are normally limited in duration. Certain positions which are filled for more than 6 consecutive months may be eligible to participate in the Florida State Retirement System (FRS) for retirement benefits.

## Training and Professional Development

### *What is the status of Employee Academy?*

After 2010, Human Resources Division eliminated many of its programs and services due to fiscal constraints. The Employee Academy is one program under consideration for reinstatement in the future. However, a specific date and the format of any future programs has not yet been determined.

### *Are all employees eligible for Employee Academy?*

The Employee Academy was geared towards front line employees, first level supervisors and entry-level professional employees. Any employee with at least six years of service and with no disciplinary actions against them in the past year was eligible to apply for the program.

### *Do we have to use personal time to attend County trainings?*

County employees do NOT have to use personal time to attend county trainings. Trainings offered through The Passport training catalog are available to employees who have their supervisor's permission to do so. Due to the many different operations that exist in an organization of our size, some employees are not able to leave their place of business to attend trainings. In the past, at the request of divisional managers, trainings have been conducted on-site for employees that cannot leave their stations for an extended period of time. Regardless of training location, county employees do NOT have to use personal time to attend county trainings.

# Wall of Fame Special Recognition

## Be A STAR on the WALL OF FAME!

Did you know that Orange County has a Wall of Fame to honor employees for their professional achievements and noble contributions to the community? That's because Orange County has so many star employees who deserve to be recognized for their unwavering dedication to serving Orange County citizens. Any county employee can nominate an exemplary co-worker or project group for the Wall of Fame based on "off the clock" accomplishments.

Our most recent honoree was Orange County Fire Fighter Lavon Williams, who is also an ordained Deacon with the Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church in Eatonville. He answered a challenge from First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative to create a video highlighting what his church was doing to improve the overall health of the community. The video, Macedonia on the Move, was selected as #1 out of hundreds submitted by organizations nationwide. Earlier this year, Lavon traveled to Washington D.C. to accept the award from First Lady Obama on behalf of his church. When not fighting fires and saving lives, he devotes much of his off-time to promoting healthy activities and programs at his church. Congratulations Lavon Williams!

So who will be our next star of the Wall of Fame? Candidates are selected quarterly. If you know someone who should be a star on the Wall of Fame, please email the employee nomination to [Carol.Clark@ocfl.net](mailto:Carol.Clark@ocfl.net). If selected for the Wall of Fame, his/her photo and biography highlighting your accomplishments will be displayed in the main lobby at the County Administration Center.



# Summary

Thank you for taking time to review this booklet. My goal continues to be to streamline Orange County Government to provide excellent service in a cost effective manner to our citizens. It is my hope that these answers to your most frequently asked questions provides insight for you to carry out the mission of our Core Values.

I encourage you to continue the conversation with your leadership team through open communication and engagement. If you have specific questions not addressed, I encourage you to contact your immediate supervisor and your Human Resources Representative.



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