

**SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATIVE MANUAL**

Topic: ADVANCE STEP APPOINTMENTS REGULAR AND EXTRA HELP	Date Issued: Nov. 15, 1990 Date Revised: March 29, 2000 March 25, 2001 July 1, 2018 May 23, 2023
Section: RATES OF PAY	
Number: IX.1.	

PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines on how to document criteria necessary for advance step placement above the first* step in the salary range.

BASIS:

Santa Cruz County Personnel Regulations 161.C and 161.D

Definitions:

Original appointment is defined as:

1. when an employee is initially appointed to a budgeted position unless otherwise noted in MOU regulations.
2. when an employee is appointed to an extra-help position
3. when an employee transfers to a new class as extra-help (Unless rules indicate otherwise; i.e. former employee appointed as extra-help may be appointed at the step in former class)
4. when an employee changes status from extra-help and is appointed to a budgeted position, i.e. provisional, substitute, or probationary (advance step request is not required if same position and same step)

POLICY:

All appointments above the first* step in the salary range shall include written documentation of any of the following applicable items:

Years of experience – Total number of years of related and relevant experience. The step the candidate would be at if the work experience had been with the County.

Difficulty of Recruitment/Filling position -- a scarcity of applicants that meet the minimum employment standards, documentation of the efforts made, number on eligible

list, number on certification list based on criteria to fill position (i.e., bilingual) results of interview, how long recruitment conducted, number of recruitments conducted, etc.

Unique Qualifications -- possession of bona fide occupational skills which are necessary to provide needed service, and which are unusual in the applicant population and normally have been acquired through substantial specialized training or experience.

Employment Negotiation – candidate voluntarily disclosed salary information or candidate engaged in competitive negotiation of salary.

Employment Retention – to retain candidate for hard-to-recruit classifications.

Adverse impact on supervisor or existing incumbents in the same class within the department– Would granting the request result in the employee being placed at a higher step than existing employees with similar training and experience? If so, justification must be provided to consider factors such as hardship in filling a position(s), workforce composition, specialized skills/experience, etc.

All advance step appointments, including extra-help, should address as many of the above criteria in writing as are relevant. The Personnel Director or designee may request that the operating department provide additional information when they feel that the above criteria have not been adequately documented.

Note: Assembly Bill 168 prohibits an employer from relying on the salary history information as a factor in determining whether to offer an applicant employment or what salary to offer. An applicant may voluntarily and without prompting disclose salary history information which may be used to determine salary.

PROCEDURE:

1. Departments must submit documentation requesting an advance step appointment on the current form or method being used.

Request for appointment at steps 2 and 3

Department Heads may offer and approve appointments. Documentation of criteria (as outlined in this policy) will accompany transaction documents.

Request for appointment at steps 4 and 5

- a. Department Heads may offer advance step contingent on approval of the Personnel Director.
- b. Documentation of criteria is submitted to the Personnel Director for approval.
- c. The Personnel Director or designee will inform the department of the approval or denial of the advance step request within a reasonable time period after receiving requests.

Request for appointment at steps 6 and 7 or higher

- a. Department Heads may offer advance step contingent on recommendation of Personnel Director and approval by the County Administrative Officer.
- b. Documentation of criteria is submitted to the Personnel Director.
- c. The Personnel Director will review the request and if it meets the required criteria, forward it to the County Administrative Officer with a recommendation to approve.
- d. The County Administrative Officer will review the request and provide the Personnel Director with a decision approving or denying the request.
- e. The Personnel Director or designee will notify the department of the County Administrative Officer decision.

*Some classifications may have the same salary in multiple steps. For those circumstances, please use the following guidance:

For example if Steps 1-3 all are same – place employee at step 3 – no advance step appointment justification needed.

For example if Steps 1-7 all are same – place employee at step 7 – no advance step appointment justification needed.

[Advance Step Request Form](#)

[Advance Step Guidelines/Tips](#)

[Job History Spreadsheet](#)

[Sample Incumbent Spreadsheet](#)