

Frequently Asked Questions

About the Sonoma Co. Tentative Agreement

Q: Does “no COLA” mean no step or merit increases?

A: No. Step or merit increases (A, C, E, G, I) will be as usual.

Q: What is “PERB”?

A: “Public Employee Relations Board.” PERB is an appointed Board which exists to hear allegations that State labor laws have been violated.

Q: What does holding PERB Case No. 509M “in abeyance” do for us?

A: In PERB Case No. 509M, an Administrative Law Judge has ruled that the County should have negotiated with the Union before changing retiree health in April of 2007. The County has appealed that decision to the full PERB Board. It is unknown how the PERB Board would finally rule, but if they rule in our favor, the County will have to pay retirees the difference between what they have received for retiree health and what they would have received—a considerable amount of money. Having the case undecided provides motivation to work in earnest to resolve the retiree health issue.

Q: How does the “salary research” which led to the wage equity agreement work?

A: As part of the 2002-2006 MOU, it was agreed to use eight counties to compare wages for purposes of addressing external equity, which is important for recruitment and retention. Benchmark classifications—ones for which comparisons are relatively easy to locate—are surveyed at top monthly wage. The average of the top monthly wages from the eight counties is calculated. Based on the average for the eight counties, increases are negotiated for benchmark classifications that are below average. In addition, other classifications which are not benchmark classifications, but which have been agreed to be linked or tied to the various benchmarks, receive the same increases.

Counties are: Marin, Solano, Napa, Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and Santa Barbara. The tentative agreement releases us from being bound to these particular counties.

Q: When the ratification materials refer to healthcare relief for families in PacifiCare and the County Health Plans, does that include Employee +1?

A: No. “Family” means the Family level of health care coverage. This is also known as “Employee +2.”

Q: If I retiree this year, under this contract, am I giving up being a part of any future “global” resolution of the retiree healthcare issue?

A: No.

