



DECEMBER 2021

UTAH PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
Communicator

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The important work of putting together Utah's budget for the 2023 fiscal year is underway, as legislators meet with various stakeholders throughout Utah, and interim committees meet to discuss potential legislation for the 2022 session.

Over the past year, UPEA lobbyists have been emphasizing the need to increase compensation for public employees. UPEA representatives have been meeting regularly with DHRM and state legislators to address the severe compression, recruitment, and retention crisis happening across all state agencies.

Utah public employees have proven their dedication and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to provide outstanding services to the citizens of Utah despite ongoing challenges – such as high turnover and low recruitment causing many employees to take on new positions and workloads to provide these critical services. Employees should be recognized for their dedication in the form of a generous pay increase. State employees deserve more.

Governor Spencer Cox released his proposed budget Tuesday, December 7, 2021. The governor's recommendations include a 3.5% salary increase for state employees, funding for the projected 6.7% health insurance increase and continuity of the 401(k) match (\$26 a pay period match for employees). Additionally, the Governor's budget proposed funding over \$12 million for targeted pay increases for below-market positions. UPEA believes that targeted position funding is the most effective way to make a tangible impact.

The legislature will convene on January 18 for the 2022 General Session. UPEA will continue to prioritize employee compensation throughout the 45-day session and lobby to secure funding for the 3.5% COLA and recommended targeted compensation.

2022 LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE

COMPENSATION

UPEA will lobby to secure funding for a 3.5% cost-of-living increase for state employees, continuity of the 401(k) match (\$26 a pay period match for employees), as well as the \$12 million proposed in the Governor's budget for targeted pay increases for below-market positions. UPEA continues to emphasize the need to prioritize pay increases for state employees.

HEALTH CARE

UPEA will advocate for the Legislature to fully fund the 6.7% health insurance premium increase, and keep the current structure of health insurance co-pays, co-insurance, deductibles, and other plan benefits funded at the same rate. Premium increases or benefit changes should be applied equitably between the Star and Traditional plans.

Mental Health Benefits

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for increased mental health coverage is more prominent than ever. UPEA will lobby to secure enhanced mental health benefits including increased coverage, additional providers, and educational resources to guide employees through the mental health treatment process

RETIREMENT

The URS membership board voted to change the current assumed rate of return (ROI) from 6.95 to 6.85%. This may change the URS Tier II retirement system to a contributory system. UPEA will support legislation to keep the Tier II system non-contributory.

CAREER SERVICE SYSTEM

The Career Service System provides due process rights and protections for schedule B employees. UPEA will lobby to maintain the current system for employees. Draft legislation for the upcoming session may impact career service protections for supervisors.

PAYROLL DEDUCTION

UPEA will lobby against efforts to eliminate the ability to have association dues deducted from public employee pay.

REMOTE WORK

UPEA will lobby the legislature to continue to provide employees in designated positions with the option to telework when possible, and ensure they are provided the resources necessary to do so effectively.

LEAVE/PTO

UPEA will protect, or support enhancements to, the current leave structure.

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE

UPEA supports the enactment of a paid parental leave policy for mothers and fathers after the birth or adoption of a child. UPEA will lobby to grant eligible employees up to 240 hours of paid leave.

PRIVATIZATION

UPEA has an interest in preserving efficient, effective, and responsible governmental functions. UPEA will evaluate all moves to privatize any functions currently being conducted by public employees.

POST-RETIREMENT EMPLOYMENT

Retire/Rehire

Throughout the last five legislative sessions, multiple bills have been sponsored to modify the post-retirement re-employment benefit. UPEA supports enhancing post-retirement legislation for the benefit of its members.