

REGION 21
WAGE STUDY INSTRUCTIONS/GUIDANCE

1. If the cost of the wage study is \$5,000 or more, three bids should be submitted to your standing trustee coordinator (Handbook, page 6-10, item 4) with a request to use the consultant of your choice. The trustee is not required to pick the consultant with the lowest bid. However, if the consultant selected is not the lowest bid, the request should justify why the selected consultant's product is better for the trusteeship than the lowest bidder's product.
2. Once the wage study is completed, the draft report should be submitted to your standing trustee coordinator for review before it is finalized. Your coordinator will review the draft product to ensure it contains recommendations that are consistent with the Program's positions and policies as well as all pertinent information (see Attachment).
3. The trusteeship must implement the wage study as outlined in the product provided by the consultant.
4. If a new position is created after the wage study is completed, the trustee must submit a request to the study provider to assess the job description and identify the appropriate wage class and range for the new position. This also applies if you want to change the wage class and range of a position previously assessed by the consultant because significant changes have been made to the duties of the position. The only exception to this requirement is if your wage study provides specific instructions on how to assess and rate a new position in-house. In this case, you must discuss with your coordinator how you determined the new wage class and range before implementing the change.
5. Prior approval is required from your standing trustee coordinator to increase an employee's salary from the salary approved in the annual budget. This includes salary adjustments outlined in a new wage study.
6. Annual cost of living adjustments (COLA) are applied to wage ranges as outlined by your wage study. They are not applied to individual employee salaries unless you choose to use your merit pool in this manner. If an employee's current salary falls below the minimum rate once the ranges are adjusted by the COLA, the funds required to increase the employee's salary to the minimum are not deducted from the merit pool.
7. Red-circled employees cannot receive any salary increase, including a cost of living increase, until the time when the maximum salary in his/her wage range increases above the employee's current salary. A red-circled employee may receive a discretionary bonus; however, the bonus must be deducted from the merit pool available for the fiscal year.

ATTACHMENT

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN WAGE STUDY REPORTS

- The report should acknowledge that the annual salary increases are limited to the range and merit pool adjustments provided for in the annual budget package from the Executive Office for U.S. Trustees. All salary increases, including bonuses, are allocated from the annual merit pool with the exception of promotion increases and increases to bring an employee up to the minimum of his/her wage range.
- The report must identify the number of hours worked per week (e.g. 37.5 hours or 40 hours per week)
- The report must contain an analysis of the individual components of the trustee's benefit package with a comparison to market rate for each component.

The study must also state the average benefit to salary percentage for the local market and for the trustee. For example:

- The Trust Operation's employee benefit costs as a percentage of payroll are 27%. Based on a recent survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average cost of employee benefits as a percentage of salary for a small firm is 30%.
- The report must not refer to data or procedures outlined in a prior report or study. The current study must be stand-alone report.
- Salary increases cannot be retroactive. The report recommended implementation date should take into consideration the time required for USTP review and any revisions needed to the report.

Specific items that are often overlooked when preparing the draft report:

- Accumulated leave:
 - How many hours can be carried forward from one year to the next (this may vary by type of leave)?
 - Is leave accrued on a calendar year or fiscal year period?
 - Do employees receive cash upon separation for accrued leave (this may vary by type of leave and whether the employee resigns or is terminated)?

- Jury duty pay:
 - Do employees receive their salary while on jury duty? If so, for how many days?
 - If the office continues to pay an employee's salary while on jury duty, is the employee required to turn the stipend over to the trust operation or is the employee permitted to keep the stipend paid by the Court?

- Position Descriptions:
 - If a position is listed in multiple wage classes such as a Staff Attorney I, Staff Attorney II, and Staff Attorney III, there must be a separate position description that identifies the additional duties/years of practice required to move from position I, II, and III.