

# **ERIE COUNTY**

## **2018 Citizens Salary Review Commission**



**FINAL REPORT**

October 9, 2018

## **Executive Summary**

Elected County officials have not received a wage increase since 1996. A proposed increase recommended by the last Citizen's Salary Review Commission (CSRC) in 2014 was unanimously rejected by the Erie County Legislature. 2014 members reported that their recommendations were "Dead on Arrival," sensing that Erie County legislators concluded it was "political suicide" to support salary increases for Erie County's elected officials, even though the recommendation did not grant them wage increases also.

The current CSRC concluded the best course of action was to use the best available scientific methods to derive fair and equitable wages for Erie County elected officials. Using input from interviews with current legislators and building upon statistical procedures synthesized from the last report and from recommendations of current commission members (some of whom have considerable expertise in compensation practices), the CSRC Developed a five-pronged procedure.

We reviewed jobs to make sure any comparisons for wage purposes was based on jobs with like duties.

We obtained data from similar counties about their pay levels. It is standard practice in determining wages to look at what is paid in similar counties as a measure of external equity, or fairness. Similar counties were defined as those with similar populations, median family income levels, and median real estate values. Population is a proxy for job difficulty, with larger constituencies presenting more demands on incumbents. The remaining measures are designed to equate for wealth, reasoning that less affluent counties only could afford to pay lower salaries. Our definition of "similar" following standard statistical practices, was to include only counties within one standard deviation of the mean for purposes of comparison.

To the extent possible wages for comparable towns in Erie County were considered, reasoning that within-county similarities might provide another perspective of fairness.

We also looked at internal equity. Wages of executives and their direct reports, at least in the private sector, tend to follow a similar pattern, with first level subordinates making roughly 70 percent of the superiors' wages. For the most part, Erie County elected officials made considerably less than their direct reports. Based on legislators' explanations of differences between the private and public sectors, reinforced by committee members, this data point was given little weight in our final recommendation.

We calculated change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) since 1996. One of the basic tenets of fairness is that employees should, at a minimum, be kept whole. CPI has risen 60% in the interim since the last increase. While not a primary factor in the final analysis, the sheer size of the change in cost of goods factored into the fairness consideration.

Wages in similar counties dictated much of our recommended increases. We decided that Erie County elected officials should be making a salary comparable to other similar counties. The appropriate measure of comparability in this case is the median family income and median real estate value of the similar counties (defined as the counties within one standard deviation of the

mean of all counties – i.e., the middle 67% of the distribution of counties in NYS). This yielded the following salary recommendations: County Executive (\$118,376), County Comptroller (\$94,037), County Sheriff (\$89,343), County Clerk (\$79,092 – no change), County Legislators (\$42,588 – no change), the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Erie County Legislature (\$47,588 – no change), and the Legislative Chair of the Erie County Legislature (\$52,588 - no change). We conclude that salaries should be brought up to the median after the next election.

To note the impact of this recommendation on the budget, it is minuscule: \$38,803 or less than 0.002 percent. Indeed, if we had regularly given these officials increases since 1996, the annual impact would have been considerably less than one percent per year.

To ensure that future generations of elected officials don't face a 22+ year drought of wage increases, and to reduce the political impact on this process, we recommend that subsequent increases be linked to changes in the CPI or some percentage thereof. We also recommend that future CSRC's monitor how well these annual increases track against wage increases in other counties and take appropriate actions, as warranted to ensure that such wage inequity not be permitted to arise in the future.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The Commission would like thank Scott Bylewski, Deputy Director of Budget & Management, Erie County and Mark Cornell, Budget Analyst, Erie County, Budget & Management, for their excellent administrative support and provision of all data we requested, which made it possible for the Commission to complete its work in a short timeframe and conduct the analyzes presented in this report. The Commission would also like to thank Erie County legislators for meeting with them and sharing their thoughts about the data analysis, the process, and the parameters of their positions. We would also like to thank Steven Whipple, Erie County Legislature, Chief of Staff (Minority) and Timothy Callan, Erie County Legislature, Chief of Staff (Majority) for their assistance throughout this process, including in arranging meetings with Erie County legislators. The Commission thanks Mark C. Poloncarz, Erie County Executive, for empaneling the 2018 Erie County Citizen Salary Commission. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all Erie County elected officials for their continued faith in entrusting to their citizens the consideration of such a politically-charged topic as salary levels for elected officials. Naturally, any errors or omissions in this report are the responsibility of the Commission.

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## **The Scenario in 1996**

This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time in 22 years that the Citizen's Salary Review Commission has convened to consider the salaries of all elected Erie County officials. These officials have not received a raise since 1996, back when Dennis Gorski was County Executive and Bill Clinton was President. A great deal has changed in nearly a quarter century. In 1996 "Dolly" the sheep was cloned; Mad Cow disease was identified; The Unabomber was captured; the Motorola Star-Tac flip phone was released; DVDs were introduced; and, Microsoft launched Internet Explorer 3!

The average price of a new car was \$16,000 in 1996; Bill Belichick was fired from the Cleveland Browns; The Macarena was the dance craze; and, the movie to see was Jerry Maguire (remember Cuba Gooding, Jr. "Show Me the Money"?).

- In 1996 a gallon of gasoline cost \$1.08; it is currently \$2.99/gallon (a 277% increase).
- The Dow Jones closed the year at 6,448; the Dow is currently 25,975 (a 402% increase).
- The minimum wage was \$4.25/hr.; it will rise to \$12.75/hour at the end of 2018 (a 300% increase).
- The dollar experienced an average inflation rate of 2.95% per year since 1996.
- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, average prices in 2018 are 60.62% higher than in 1996.
- To keep pace with the CPI, for example, the salary of \$79,092 for the clerk and sheriff in 1996 would need to be \$127,034 in 2018.

Who among us would suffer a job where no raises were granted in 22 years? Intuitively, salary increases are in order. To determine if this intuition is accurate, this Commission collected and examined data generally used to determine equitable compensation for public sector jobs. In this report, we then analyze this information and report whether salary increases are warranted. This scientific analysis can then be used by the legislature to make final decisions about 2018 salary levels for Erie County elected officials.

## **Purpose and Charge of the Commission**

The Citizens Salary Review Commission was established in 1986 as Article 22-B (now Article 22-A) of the Erie County Charter.

It is the purpose of this Commission to review the salaries of all elected County officials in the County of Erie, other than the District Attorney. This Commission has been charged with the responsibility of recommending to the Erie County Legislature salaries that are fair and equitable.

The current salaries last set under the 1996 Erie County Citizens Salary Review Commission and approved by the Erie County Legislature now under review are listed in Box 1 Current Salaries of Erie County Elected Officials.

*Box 1 Current Salaries of Erie County Elected Officials*

County Executive	\$ 103,248
County Clerk	79,092
Comptroller	80,613
Sheriff	79,092
County Legislature Chair	52,588
Majority and Minority Leader	47,588
County Legislators	42,588

## **The 2018 Commission**

### **Membership**

The commission consists of nine members representative of taxpayer, civic, labor, business, professional, financial and minority groups in the county of Erie. Five (5) members of the commission are appointed by the County Executive. Two (2) members of the commission are appointed by the Legislature’s Majority, one (1) member is appointed by the Legislature’s Minority and one (1) member is appointed by the County Comptroller.<sup>1</sup>

As provided in Section 22-A-01 of the Erie County Charter, the present Commission members were appointed in August of 2018 for a period of three years. See for a list of appointees.

## **Background to this Report**

### **Will History Repeat Itself?**

The members of the Commission took seriously their responsibility to represent the taxpayers in their deliberations, emphasizing both the importance of citizen “watchdogs” as provided in the Erie County Charter, but also their role in ensuring Erie County elected officials are compensated fairly.<sup>2</sup> But weighing heavily in our deliberations was an acceptance that the 2014 commission also took their responsibilities seriously, conducted a thorough and reasoned study, yet had their report rejected. The words “Dead on Arrival” were uttered more than once in characterization of that report. Despite this concern, our Commission vowed to conduct an impartial and scientifically reasoned analysis and arrive at wage determinations based on generally-accepted compensation practices. This analysis unfolded as follows.

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www2.erie.gov/csrf/>

<sup>2</sup> A citizen salary commission, for example, could have prevented the significantly higher salaries in Bell City, California, which came to light in an investigative series in the *LA Times*. Jeff Gottlieb; Ruben Vives (2010-07-14). Bell city manager could possibly be highest paid in nation: \$787,637 a year. *Latimesblogs.latimes.com*.



### **Work begins with a discussion of the 2014 report**

The current commission began its work by studying the 2014 Commission report and reading the media coverage surrounding the 2014 seating of the Commission, its report, and the economic situation as detailed by the media and decisionmakers (chiefly county legislators).

The 2014 report left several questions unanswered, particularly:

1. Why did County Legislature reject the report's recommendations?
2. Why did the report refer to, but not contain an analysis of internal equity?
3. To what extent was 2014 still considered a time of great economic hardship after the Great Recession (which began in Fall 2007)?
4. Would the County Legislature be amenable to annual percent increases rather than lump sum salary increases?
5. Would the County Legislature consider a lump sum increase, followed by annual percentage increases tied to a generally-accepted percentage (such as collective bargained county contracts or the CPI)?

### **Meetings with county legislators**

The Commission agreed a delegation of commissioners should meet with county legislators. Members volunteered based on availability given the short timeframe in which we operated. Therefore, Don Allen, Pat Brady, Laurie Buonanno, Mike Lukasik, and Chris Stone attended two meetings on September 20<sup>th</sup> – the first with minority legislators and the second with majority legislators. The meetings' discussions were based on the list of questions, provided in advance to the legislators (see Box 2 Questions for County Legislators).

The Commission promised anonymity to the county legislators; therefore, these results will not be reported by either name or whether the information was gathered in meetings with the majority or minority caucus.

The Commission supplied the legislators in advance with the following data analyses:

1. Internal equity for Erie County elected officials compensation;
2. Salaries of comparable counties (eight counties removed with median income and median real estate one standard deviation above the mean);
3. Salaries of the top five NYS counties in terms of population; and
4. Salaries of the top ten NYS counties in terms of population.

## Commission Deliberations

This 2018 Commission met six times: August 30<sup>th</sup>, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of 2018.<sup>3</sup> This timeframe was modeled on the amount of time allocated by the 2014 Commission from start to finish.

These meetings were open to the public and minutes are posted to the Erie County Citizen Salary Review Commission webpage at <http://www2.erie.gov/csrc/>.

Commissioners also met with county legislators on September 20, 2018.

The first meeting (August 30<sup>th</sup>) focused on the 2014 report and media coverage. The Commissioners agreed to interview County Legislators about the 2014 report and their general attitudes and concerns about the current charge. In the second meeting (September 11<sup>th</sup>), Commissioners agreed to metrics that would be used to consider whether salary increases were warranted, and if so, should the pay increases be given in a lump sum or based on an annual percentage.

The Commission sought to triangulate both the data collection and data analysis to ensure we considered the issue of salary levels from various perspectives.<sup>4</sup>

Based on internal deliberations, consultations with legislators, and a content analysis of the salary issue as reported by the media, the Commission agreed the salary analysis would need to be realistic and evidence-based. We also agreed our analyses would be informed by respect for the citizen-taxpayers of Erie County and the cost of living in Erie County.

We undertook the following five-pronged analysis:

1. The duties and responsibilities of each office;
2. The salaries of elected officials in other New York State counties of commensurate population, median family income, and median real estate value;
3. The salaries of somewhat analogous officials in Erie County towns;
4. The salaries of various department heads and personnel reporting to elected officials; and
5. Changes in the CPI since 1996.

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<sup>3</sup> We missed one week due to Labor Day weekend and the Chair having a previous out-of-town commitment.

<sup>4</sup> Public administration research strives to conduct “mixed methods” research, which combines the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The best research should also strive to “triangulate” the data collection, meaning we would assemble more than one type of quantitative and qualitative data and utilize them in our examination. The Commission adopted both approaches in its research methodology.

# Salary Analyses

## 1. The Duties and Responsibilities of Each Office

### *Relevancy*

We collected wage data for other counties in New York State (NYS), but for these data to be relevant we needed to make sure jobs had comparable responsibilities across counties, i.e., apples had to be compared to apples. To insure comparability in jobs, the Commission discussed the role of counties in NYS governance. We also discussed each respective Erie County elected official in comparison to other NYS counties, drawing on NYS documents, websites, and materials available from the NYS Association of Counties (NYSAC).

### *Analysis*

Counties have a unique role in local government as geographic subdivisions of state government or more colorfully referred to as “handmaidens of the state.” Unlike municipalities, which are distinguished legally by being independent corporations, counties are “branch offices” of NYS government.<sup>5</sup>

New York’s 57<sup>6</sup> counties located outside of the City of New York “carry out local functions specified by the State of New York. These functions, which include maintaining records, enforcing state laws, conducting elections for the state, and providing economic assistance through social services programs...reflect the role of the county as a regional government...and the structure of New York’s counties is fairly similar...”<sup>7</sup>

While we found the duties of the county **clerk** and county **sheriff** are long-established (dating back to the early history of NYS local governance), and are quite similar across NYS counties, variations among counties in terms of the county executive, comptroller, and legislator needed to be examined more closely.

County Executive. Erie County is one of 23 “charter counties” (defined by an elected executive or appointed administrative official), and one of just 18 counties with a county executive elected in county-wide general elections.<sup>8</sup> Based on Erie County’s “strong elected county executive

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, K. B. and A. Greenblatt. (2016). *Governing States and Localities*. 5<sup>th</sup> Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press; p. 352. SCOTUS Chief Justice Roger B. Taney wrote in *Maryland ex. Rel. Washington County v. Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Co.* (1845) counties “are nothing more than certain portions of the territory in which the state is divided for the more convenient exercise of the powers of government.”

<sup>6</sup> The five NYS boroughs are not considered comparable to the 57 NYS counties and are routinely excluded from comparative analyses of NYS counties.

<sup>7</sup> Pratt, Anastasia L. (2015, Spring). Our Evolving Counties: A History of New York State County Government. *NYSAC News Magazine*. (p. 1). Retrieved from <http://www.nysac.org/files/Our%20Evolving%20Counties%20-%20history%20of%20NYS%20counties.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Picente, A. and S. Acquario. (2015). *County Government Organization in New York State*. NYAC. Retrieved from [http://www.nysac.org/files/County%20Organization%20in%20NYS%20-%20Updated%2018\\_15.pdf](http://www.nysac.org/files/County%20Organization%20in%20NYS%20-%20Updated%2018_15.pdf). Erie County has been a charter county under NYS law since 1960.

system”<sup>9</sup> we decided the comparable position was county executive rather than county administrator (an appointed post).

County Comptroller. The majority of NYS counties have an elected treasurer instead of a comptroller, *and* the elected treasurers’ functions do not have the same “watchdog” role as Erie County’s comptroller.<sup>10</sup> As with the 2014 CSRC, we used the comptroller averages, but we did take note of the fact that most county treasurers are directly elected, and therefore directly accountable to the voters (see the last column, Table 7 NYS Counties - Descriptive Statistics.)

County Legislators. Of the 18 counties with the county executive system,<sup>11</sup> only two have fewer legislators than Erie County (Montgomery, 9 legislators: population 49,258 and Putnam, 9 legislators: population 99,323). Table 6 Legislatures Sorted by Population per Legislator contains comparable data for the ten most populous counties (all of which use the elected county executive system). A portion of this table is replicated below.

*Table 1 Number of County Legislators*

County	Rank in NYS	Populations Size (2017 Estimate)	Number of Legislators	Population per Legislator
Albany	9	309,612	39	<b>7,939</b>
Dutchess	10	295,568	25	<b>11,823</b>
Erie	4	925,528	11	<b>84,139</b>
Monroe	5	747,642	29	<b>25,781</b>
Nassau	2	1,369,514	19	<b>72,080</b>
Onondaga	6	465,398	17	<b>27,376</b>
Orange	7	382,226	21	<b>18,201</b>
Rockland	8	328,868	17	<b>19,345</b>
Suffolk	1	1,492,953	18	<b>82,941</b>
Westchester	3	980,244	17	<b>57,661</b>

Here one can see the Erie County Legislature is an outlier with just 11 members. The average number of legislators is 21 or 40,729 residents per legislator in these 10 counties. Erie County with 11 legislators has the highest constituency ratio with 84,139 residents per legislator. Thus, while the nature of the job of the county legislator in the elected county executive is the same, the workload is clearly higher for Erie County legislators.

We also noted the Erie County Legislature has been *reduced* from 17 legislators to 11 legislators in the period since 1996 when the last salary increase was granted.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> Erie County’s Comptroller is the county’s independent fiscal watchdog rather than the more limited role “treasurer” implies. (See Picente and Acquario, pp. 31-32 and the Erie County’s Comptroller’s website at <http://www2.erie.gov/comptroller/index.php?q=comptroller039s-office>.)

<sup>11</sup> Counties with a county executive: Albany, Broome, Chautauqua, Chemung, Dutchess, Erie, Monroe, Montgomery, Nassau, Oneida, Onondaga, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Suffolk, Ulster, Westchester.

Based on the Commission’s analysis and conclusions of the comparability of elected positions in NYS counties, the Commission undertook a comprehensive salary analysis in the 57 counties. Table 7 NYS Counties - Descriptive Statistics contains comprehensive salary data on each NYS county. Table 2 Average Salaries for NYS's 57 Counties, below, provides averages for each of the five elected positions and the percent difference between Erie County and all counties.

*Table 2 Average Salaries for NYS's 57 Counties*

	<b>Erie County Salaries</b>	<b>Average Salaries of All Counties</b>	<b>Percent Difference</b>
County Executive	\$103,248	\$138,189	33.8% lower
County Clerk	\$79,092	\$82,046	3.7 % lower
County Comptroller	\$80,613	\$103,808	28.8% lower
County Sheriff	\$79,092	\$96,377	21.9 % lower
County Legislators	\$42,588	\$19,420	54.4% higher

**2. Salaries of Elected Officials in Other NYS Counties of Commensurate Population, Median Family Income, and Median Real Estate Value**

*Relevancy*

The Legislature stressed that we look at similar counties to Erie County. For example, size of the county could be considered a proxy for job difficulty, i.e. counties with more citizens should face more demands on the elected officials. Legislators also asked us to provide salary comparisons exclusive of Suffolk County (an outlier with considerably higher salaries than counties of comparable population).

The Legislators were favorable to the idea of including an analysis considering comparable counties based on median family income and median real estate value. Median family income and median real estate prices are powerful indicators of cost of living; specifically, wages should be related to prices in the local area, and housing is generally the largest expense in a family’s budget. Housing costs vary considerably across counties and wages should reflect such disparities. Government salaries for elected officials should not only be consistent with the taxpayers’ ability to pay and standard of living (median family income), but also the ability of an elected official to maintain a reasonable standard of living (e.g. carry a mortgage for which median real estate value serves as a proxy).

*Analysis*

Filtering by median family income and median real estate value

Following best practices in statistical analysis, the Commission filtered counties by median household income and median real estate value. Counties found to be one standard deviation

above the mean (eight counties<sup>12</sup>) and one standard deviation below the mean (no counties fell in this range) were excluded from the analysis. Table 8 NYS Counties Filtered by Median Income and Median Real Estate Value contains the results of the filter.

The analysis indicated that the County Executive, County Sheriff, and County Comptroller<sup>13</sup> have salaries lower than their counterparts in comparable counties. The County Clerk and County Legislators, on the other hand, are compensated at salary levels higher than the average for comparable counties. Table 3, below, contains a comparison of average salaries for the five elected positions and the percent difference between Erie County and all counties.)

*Table 3 Erie County Salaries vs. Comparable Counties (Standard of Living Measures)*

	<b>Erie County Salaries</b>	<b>Average Salaries of Comparable Counties</b>	<b>Percent Difference</b>
County Executive	\$103,248	\$118,376	14.7% lower
County Clerk	\$79,092	\$73,332	7.3 % higher
County Comptroller	\$80,613	\$94,037	16.7% lower
County Sheriff	\$79,092	\$89,343	13.0 % lower
County Legislators	\$42,588	\$14,902	65.0% higher

As we can see from Table 3, Erie County Legislators earn substantially higher salaries than their counterparts in peer counties, and this merits further analysis. The mean legislature base salary in comparable counties is \$14,902, while Erie County Legislators earn a base salary of \$42,588.<sup>14</sup> However, as hinted at in Analysis #1, a more nuanced picture emerges. We found that in the top ten most populous counties, the average number of legislators is 21 or 40,729 residents per legislator in these counties. Erie County with 11 legislators has the highest constituency ratio with 84,139 residents per legislator. Therefore, while Erie County Legislators are compensated (substantially) higher than legislators in comparable counties, their workload is likely higher too, and perhaps quite considerably so.

### By county population

We also analyzed salaries for the top 10 and top 5 counties, and, also calculated average salaries after removing Suffolk County from the analysis. (See Table 9, Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12 in *Appendix B: Data and Other Relevant Information.*)

<sup>12</sup> Counties eliminated: Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Schenectady, Suffolk, Westchester.

<sup>13</sup> As with the 2014 CSRC, we used the comptroller averages, but report in this footnote the average for *elected* treasurers in comparable counties to assist Erie County Legislators in considering salaries. Chenango County is eliminated from the calculations because this county does not elect its treasurer. Therefore, the average **elected** county treasurer's salary is \$73,705 (rather than \$73,754 from Table 8 NYS Counties Filtered by Median Income and Median Real Estate Value).

<sup>14</sup> The standard deviation is \$6612. Therefore, one standard deviation above the mean is \$21,514; two standard deviations above the mean is \$28,125 (\$21,514 + \$6612); three standard deviations above the mean is \$34,738 (\$28,125 + \$6612); and, four standard deviations above the mean is \$41,350 (\$34,738 + \$6612), making Erie County a substantial outlier with respect to Legislator salaries.

Because three of the **five** most populous counties are in the New York City (NYC) metropolitan area, median family income and median real estate value reflect the NYC, rather than the Western New York cost of living.<sup>15</sup> So, too, looking at the **ten** most populous counties, half of the counties are not comparable to Erie County with respect to cost of living. Removal of Suffolk County from the analysis made little difference in this respect.

Therefore, the Commission concluded the relevant benchmark salaries would need to be based on Table 8 NYS Counties Filtered by Median Income and Median Real Estate Value.

### **3. Salaries of (Somewhat) Analogous Officials in Erie County Towns**

#### *Relevancy*

Several Legislators asked the Commission to provide a table comparing elected officials' salaries in municipalities located in Erie County, specifically town clerks (compare with Erie County Clerk), police chiefs (compare with Erie County Sheriff), town supervisors (compare with County Executive), and town treasurer (compare with Erie County Comptroller).

#### *Analysis*

Table 13 Salaries in Erie County's Cities and Ten Most Populous Towns reports salaries of town supervisors, clerks, treasurers, and police chief, along with the size of the police department in the largest 10 towns and the three cities in Erie County. Table 13 shows that municipal police chiefs are all compensated at a higher salary than the Erie County Sheriff, ranging from \$100,611 (City of Tonawanda) to \$186,788 (Town of Orchard Park).

However, the Commission agreed that "town supervisor" is not an exact equivalent to "county executive" because of their disparate responsibilities. This is also the case for the other positions, where for example the Erie County Sheriff is responsible for maintaining two correctional facilities. Therefore, while interesting data, they are not particularly instructive in making salary recommendations other than to demonstrate a wide salary disparity between municipal police chiefs and the County Sheriff (the latter having more responsibility than his/her counterparts in the municipalities), yet with a considerably lower salary than town police chiefs.

### **4. Salaries of Various Officials Reporting to Elected Administrators: Internal Equity**

#### *Relevancy*

Internal equity is the pay of an employee relative to the pay that the other employees of the same organization are receiving. It is the assurance that the employer pays salaries which are commensurate to each job's internal value.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Both Erie and Monroe Counties are more than one standard deviation below the mean in both median household income and median real estate value among NYS's 10 most populated counties. These disparities are replicated in a data analysis of NYS's 5 most populated counties. See Table 11 and Table 12.

<sup>16</sup> External compensation equity is the pay of an employee relative to the pay of employees of other organizations.

The concern is that underpaying elected officials may lead to a situation where either only unqualified or wealthy individuals will run for these offices or will succumb to the temptation to take on additional part-time employment.<sup>17</sup> In addition, underpaying for these influential roles may create an environment ripe for corruption to compensate for the lack of fair pay.

From an internal equity standpoint, the compensation of elected officials is compared to the compensation paid to others in the same or similar departments. The responsibilities of each job are compared and measured against the compensation differences to determine fairness.

### *Analysis*

Table 14 provides data on internal equity. There are scores of officials with a base salary higher than that of elected officials' salaries. Examples include the Under Sheriff at \$123,606 (compared to the Sheriff at \$79,092); the First Deputy County Clerk at \$102,742 (compared to the County Clerk at \$79,092); the Deputy Comptroller – Audit at \$124,488 (compared to the County Comptroller at \$80,613); and the Deputy County Executive at \$142,572 (compared to the County Executive at \$103,428). Furthermore, subordinates can increase their income beyond their base salary upwards of 50 percent through other compensation not afforded to elected officials such as overtime, shift differential, and lineup pay.

One drawback of using internal equity as a basis for salary determinations is that elected officials are often not career county employees, where their deputies often are. Furthermore, the salaries of deputies can drop substantially when an individual retires from the position and an employee with fewer years in county employment takes his or her place. How, then, do we determine what is the comparable internal equity?

Finally, County Legislators expressed the view it isn't practicable<sup>18</sup> to use internal equity as a basis from which to recommend salaries. Nevertheless, the Commission determined it is still useful to be aware of the sometimes quite large disparities in salary between elected officials and their immediate subordinates.

## **5. The Consumer Price Index Since 1996**

### *Relevancy*

According to the US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "the Consumer Price Index is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid by urban consumers for a market basket of consumer goods and services."<sup>19</sup> The CPI and variations in this index are commonly used for "escalation" (inflation) calculations.

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, *The Buffalo News*, Op-Ed (2014, July 15), "Howard Should Have Known that a Full-time Sheriff Can't Take a Part-time Job," retrieved from <https://buffalonews.com/2014/07/15/howard-should-have-known-that-a-full-time-sheriff-cant-take-a-part-time-job/>.

<sup>18</sup> Indeed, higher salaries for deputies and career employees compared to elected officials are a fact of life in government employment at the local, state, and federal levels.

<sup>19</sup> US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/cpi/questions-and-answers.htm>.



## Analysis

Table 15 CPI 1996 and 2018 contains calculations based on the CPI. So, for example, the current County Executive's salary of \$103,248 (the same since 1996) equates to \$164,978 in 2018 (a 59.8% increase). This CPI-based salary level is \$26,789 higher than the salary average of all county executives. (See Table 7 NYS Counties - Descriptive Statistics.) The CPI would suggest a salary of \$68,051 for County Legislators, which is \$48,631 above the average for NYS county legislators. Therefore, the CPI inflation calculator could not realistically serve as the basis for concrete salary recommendations given the Commission's criteria (realistic, respect for citizen-taxpayers, cost of living in Erie County).

## Comparison of Results

Table 4 summarizes the findings of the various statistical analyses for the reader's convenience. As can be seen, salaries based on Median Family Income (and Median Real Estate Value) are quite modest compared to the CPI inflation calculator and internal equity.

*Table 4 All Statistical Comparisons of Salary Analyses*

COMPARISONS	Executive	Clerk	Comptroller	Sheriff	Legislator
Top 5 Counties by population	\$156,587	\$135,436	\$123,457	\$142,736	\$50,028
Top 10 Counties by population	\$150,804	\$121,391	\$111,687	\$133,933	\$37,655
All Counties	\$138,189	\$82,046	\$103,808	\$96,377	\$19,420
Median Family Income	\$118,376	\$73,332	\$94,037	\$89,343	\$14,902
CPI Inflation (1996-2018)	\$164,978	\$126,380	\$128,810	\$126,380	\$68,051
Internal Equity (highest paid subordinate)	\$151,697	\$104,342	\$124,967	\$125,368	\$92,803
<b>Current Salaries EC Elected Officials</b>	\$103,248	\$79,092	\$80,613	\$79,092	\$42,588
	<b>Mayor - Supervisor</b>	<b>Clerk</b>	<b>Finance Director</b>	<b>Police Chief</b>	
Municipal Average (10 Towns & 3 Cities in Erie County)	\$76,442	\$77,502	\$78,043	\$137,258	

## Bringing Wages into Line after a 22-year Hiatus

The Commission members floated the idea of percentage increases in their meetings with County legislators, which seemed to have some appeal to the latter. County legislators supported the idea

of checking with the Erie County Attorney as to whether percentage increases were permissible under the Erie County Charter.

See Box 3 Opinion on Gradual Salary Increases for a summary of the results of the Commission’s inquiry into this option. Therefore, it does appear the Erie County Charter does not prevent legislators from approving annual salary increases, so long as any increases conform to the County Charter’s express prohibitions (e.g. the year a real property tax increase is levied).

Our Commission discussed several possibilities as the basis for an annual percentage increase, such as tying elected officials’ salary increases to CSEA annual contract increase (which is currently used as the basis for salary increments for Management Confidential employees who work for all elected officials), the CPI, or a percentage of the CPI.<sup>20</sup> For purposes of illustration as to the small impact of a portion of CPI (such as one percent) on salary outlays, we have provided calculations in Table 5 Effect of One Percent Annual Increases (below) using average salaries in comparable counties as the baseline.

*Table 5 Effect of One Percent Annual Increases*

	<b>Erie County Salaries</b>	<b>Salaries in Comparable Counties</b>	<b>One Percent COLA (annual basis – Year 1)</b>	<b>One Percent COLA (annual basis – Year 2)</b>
County Executive	\$103,248	\$118,376	\$119,560	\$120,756
County Clerk	\$79,092	\$79,092	\$79,883	\$80,682
County Comptroller	\$80,613	\$94,037	\$94,977	\$95,927
County Sheriff	\$79,092	\$89,343	\$90,236	\$91,138
County Legislators	\$42,588	\$42,588	No annual increment recommended at this time <sup>21</sup>	No annual increment recommended at this time

<sup>20</sup> The difficulty in using CSEA as the basis for salary increments, is that this is perceived by some County Legislators as a possible conflict of interest for the County Executive. This would be the case because a county executive negotiated CSEA contracts could be perceived as negotiating his or her own raise. Another pitfall is that the other collective bargaining units (e.g. AFSCME, PBA, Teamsters, ECCFF, ECC Admin, NYSNA, and Librarians) might perceive the CSEA as advantaged in negotiations with the County, and it could provide an incentive to come to agreement with CSEA more so than others. (This footnote is based on information shared by some members of the County Legislature with the Commission.)

<sup>21</sup> The rationale here is that Erie County legislatures are presently compensated at a level four standard deviations about the mean with respect to comparable counties.

## Conclusions

Citizen salary commissions must be realistic about recommending salary increases. While the notion of not receiving a raise since 1996 seems shocking, it is important to recognize that this is an office, not an individual. Elected administrators remain in office for two (terms of county legislators), four, eight, and perhaps even twelve years or more (legislators, on average, have the most incumbency longevity). Elected offices are also prestigious, involve quite interesting work, and can be a stepping stone to other equally interesting career challenges.

Nevertheless, the several analyses do converge with respect to lower than average salaries in NYS counties for some elected officials. (See Table 4 All Statistical Comparisons of Salary Analyses on p. 11.)

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The Commission decided to adopt the most conservative analysis (having the smallest wage impact) as the basis for salary recommendations, which can be found in Table 8 NYS Counties Filtered by Median Income and Median Real Estate Value. (See highlighted row for average salaries of elected officials in comparable counties.) We explained the methodology and rationale for this data analysis in 2. Salaries of Elected Officials in Other NYS Counties of Commensurate Population, Median Family Income, and Median Real Estate Value.

## **Recommendations**

Based upon the analyses and discussion presented in this report, the Commission unanimously makes the following salary recommendations. These recommendations are based on the average salaries for elected officials in comparable counties (cf. Table 8 NYS Counties Filtered by Median Income and Median Real Estate Value on p. 21 and Table 4 All Statistical Comparisons of Salary Analyses on p. 11).

### **Salary**

1. The County Executive position have a salary of \$118,376.
2. The County Comptroller position have a salary of \$94,037.
3. The County Sheriff position have a salary of \$89,343.
4. The County Clerk position have a salary of \$79,092. (no change)
5. The members of the Erie County Legislature have a salary of \$42,588. (no change)
6. The Majority and Minority Leaders of the Erie County Legislature have a salary of \$47,588. (no change)
7. The Legislative Chair of the Erie County Legislature have a salary of \$52,588. (no change)
8. After the salary of the County Executive has been increased (after the next election of this office), there should be an annual increase tied to the CPI.
9. After the salary of the County Comptroller has been increased (after the next election of this office), there should be an annual increase tied to the CPI.
10. After the salary of the County Sheriff has been increased (after the next election of this office), there should be an annual increase tied to the CPI.
11. The County Clerk (after the next election of this office) should have an annual increase tied to the CPI.

### **Process**

1. These salary increases should go into effect after the next election of each elected official per County Charter specifications.
2. The County Legislature should provide annual salary increases as recommended in this report.
3. The County Attorney author legislation that reflects the above recommendation to be forwarded to the Erie County Executive and the Erie County Legislature.
4. The Commission be activated and organized to ensure that a salary recommendation is made every two years as prescribed by law.
5. This Commission is empaneled until August 1, 2021 and as such is available for your future needs.

## **Appendix A: The 2018 Commission**

### **Independence of Commissioners**

The Commission members received their appointments letters to their home addresses. Each Commission member confirmed (September 20 meeting with county legislators) they did not speak with the officer who appointed them, namely, the County Executive, Majority Legislature, Minority Legislature, and County Comptroller. The members did not receive indications of any kind from any elected officer in terms of whether he or she desired no change, an increase, or decrease in elected officials' salaries. The Commission has worked independently of political bodies in its deliberations.

### County Executive Appointments

**Mr. Owen Patrick Brady** (27 years of experience in Commercial Banking, Commercial Real Estate Development and Property Management, and Consulting)

**Dr. Laurie A. Buonanno** (elected by the Commission members to serve as Chair, is a professor of public administration and political science at SUNY Buffalo State where she teaches in the Master of Public Administration and Nonprofit Management [MPA] program. Her scholarship focuses on comparative public administration and policy, regulatory policies, and bureaucratic behavior)

**Dr. Jerry Newman** (SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor, Emeritus, University at Buffalo, SUNY, School of Management and an expert on compensation and co-author of the book Compensation [McGraw-Hill], now in its 13<sup>th</sup> ed)

**Mr. William Ransom, Jr.** (Forty years of broadcast experience in small, medium and large markets, in positions of Sales and Management. Last 19 years as President and General Manager of ABC Affiliate, WKBW-TV in Buffalo, New York)

**Mr. Christopher Stone** (President and Business Agent, United Brotherhood of Carpenters - Local 276)

### Majority Legislature Appointments

**Mr. Michael J. Lukasik** (Human Resources [ret], University at Buffalo, SUNY Research Foundation)

**Ms. Tiffany Perry** (Court Attorney Referee, presiding over Custody, Visitation and Family Offense and Permanency hearings and was a member of the Erie County Charter Review Committee)

### Minority Legislature Appointment

**Mr. Louis Panzica** (President and CEO of Power Drives, Inc. Mr. Panzica is a CPA and leads Power Drives, Inc. a Manufacturing company with over 200 employees and plants in New York, Pennsylvania and China)

County Comptroller

**Mr. Donald Allen** (City of Buffalo 1978-2005: Commissioner of Community Services, under Mayor Antony M. Masiello, Commissioner of Human Resources under Mayor James D. Griffin, since 2010 Erie County Sheriff's Office, Deputy Sheriff, Professional Standards Division)

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## **Appendix B: Data and Other Relevant Information**

### *Box 2 Questions for County Legislators*

#### **Salary Review Commission – 2018 Anonymous Interview Questions**

1. Do you think Erie Co. elected office(s) are compensated fairly?
2. Which ones are not? Why do you believe that is the case?
3. Do you consider the Legislator position to be Part-time or Full-time?
4. Do you think that the pool of qualified candidates for EC elected office would increase with higher compensation level(s)?
5. What do you believe is a fair compensation level for EC elected officials?
6. What data analysis do you need to make an informed decision on our recommendations?
7. Why were the Commission's recommendations voted down in 2014?
8. What was wrong with the Commission's methodology in 2014?
9. Would raises be more acceptable to the legislature if step-increases were recommended?

*Note: responses to these questions are held in anonymity, (your name will not appear on this questionnaire.) Your responses along with the other elected officials will be used to help the Citizen's Salary Review Commission make an informed, practical and reasoned recommendation to Erie County.*

*Box 3 Opinion on Gradual Salary Increases*

From: Polowy, Martin  
Sent: Wednesday, September 26, 2018 4:03 PM  
To: Bylewski, Scott  
Cc: Siragusa, Michael  
Subject: RE: Citizens Salary Commission

Scott,

The procedure for increasing the salary of the elected officials (excluding the DA) are found in section 202.3 of the Charter.

Section 202.3. Increasing the salaries of County elected officials. The Erie County Legislature is hereby prohibited from changing the salary of any County elected official, excluding the District Attorney, except in accordance with the following procedure:

1. Prior to acting upon the Citizens Salary Review Commission's biennial report, the County Legislature shall hold at least one public hearing to solicit public input on said commission's recommendations.
2. Notices of all such public hearings shall be published at least once in the official newspaper or newspapers of the County and in such other newspapers as the County Legislature may direct. At least five days but not more than ten days shall elapse between the first publication of such notice and the date specified for the hearing.
3. The County Legislature shall have one year from the date said recommendations are submitted to adopt, modify, or reject the recommendations of the Citizens Salary Review Commission.
4. Any salaries approved by the County Legislature in excess of those recommended by the Citizens Salary Review Commission shall be approved by a vote of at least two thirds of all the members of the County Legislature.
5. The County Legislature shall specifically establish the effective date of any adjustments in the salaries of elected County officials. No increase in the salary of an elected official shall be permitted for any fiscal year in which there is an increase in the real property full value tax rate over the real property full value tax rate of the previous fiscal year.
6. The County Legislature's review of salaries as set forth above shall occur during every even year starting with nineteen hundred eighty six. No increase in the salary of any County elected official shall take effect until the current term of office of the elected official that is to receive an increase in salary has ended.

It appears that the Legislature in amending the Charter allowed for the possibility to have a one-time action, outside of the budget process, provide for multiple year adjustments (section 202.3(5)) and also for future year adjustments (section 202.3(6)). Those adjustments however are only permitted in fiscal years where there is no increase in the real property full value tax rate over the real property full value tax rate of the previous fiscal year and where the increase takes effect after the current term of office of the elected official that is to receive an increase in salary has ended. Accordingly there is a possibility that the adopted increase does not actually take effect.

Martin Polowy | Assistant County Attorney

Erie County | Department of Law

95 Franklin St., 1634 | Buffalo, NY 14202

P:+1(716)858-2233 | F:+1(716)858-2281

Martin.Polowy@erie.gov<mailto:Martin.Polowy@erie.gov> | <http://www.erie.gov>



Table 6 Legislatures Sorted by Population per Legislator

County	Rank in NYS	Populations Size (2017 Estimate)	Number of Legislators	Population per Legislator	Legislator Base Salary	Median Household Income	Median Real Estate Value
Albany	9	309,612	39	7,939	\$23,085	\$60,904	\$211,100
Dutchess	10	295,568	25	11,823	\$15,450	\$72,706	\$274,300
Erie	4	925,528	11	<b>84,139</b>	\$42,588	\$52,744	\$134,600
Monroe	5	747,642	29	25,781	\$18,000	\$53,568	\$140,200
Nassau	2	1,369,514	19	72,080	\$39,500	\$102,044	\$451,700
Onondaga	6	465,398	17	27,376	\$25,591	\$55,717	\$137,000
Orange	7	382,226	21	18,201	\$29,697	\$71,910	\$258,700
Rockland	8	328,868	17	19,345	\$32,587	\$86,134	\$420,700
Suffolk	1	1,492,953	18	82,941	\$100,854	\$90,128	\$376,000
Westchester	3	980,244	17	57,661	\$49,200	\$86,226	\$507,300
<i>Regional Counties:</i>							
Allegany	52	46,894	15	3,126	\$12,500	\$44,085	\$72,100
Cattaraugus	35	77,348	16	4,834	\$12,481	\$43,844	\$85,100
Chautauqua	23	129,046	19	6,792	\$9,000	\$43,211	\$85,500
Genesee	44	57,956	9	6,439	n/a	\$52,642	\$108,700
Niagara	18	211,328	15	14,089	\$19,075	\$50,094	\$56,253
Orleans	54	40,983	7	5,855	\$10,948	\$48,731	\$92,000
Wyoming	55	40,493	16	2,531	n/a	\$53,612	\$104,200

Table 7 NYS Counties - Descriptive Statistics

County	Population Size (2017 Estimate)	Rank In NYS	Median Household Income	Median Real Estate Value	Leg Chair	Leg Maj/Min or Comm	Leg Base	County Executive	County Admin	Sheriff	Clerk	Comptroller	Treasurer	Treas Elected
Albany	309,612	9	\$60,904	\$211,100	\$38,477	\$29,872	\$23,084	\$125,559		\$114,361	\$105,766	\$111,785		
Allegany	46,894	47	\$44,085	\$72,100	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$8,500			\$73,954	\$74,154		\$83,400	
Broome	193,639	14	\$47,744	\$112,300	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$92,083		\$91,578	\$81,606	\$96,473		
Cattaraugus	77,348	30	\$43,884	\$85,100	\$23,710	\$12,481	\$12,481		\$94,744	\$86,000	\$75,534		\$63,800	Y
Cayuga	77,603	29	\$53,114	\$117,800	\$30,000	\$10,100	\$10,100		\$97,500	\$82,621	\$73,937		\$73,937	Y
Chautauqua	129,046	18	\$43,211	\$85,500	\$17,000	\$10,000	\$9,000	\$92,500		\$82,500	\$55,500			
Chemung	85,557	27	\$49,578	\$101,800	\$37,895	\$18,333	\$15,790	\$166,273		\$113,686	\$88,466		\$125,998	Y
Chenango	47,863	44	\$46,979	\$93,400	\$41,774					\$84,388	\$66,547		\$75,511	N
Clinton	80,980	28	\$50,502	\$127,500	\$17,500		\$15,000		\$107,569	\$75,580	\$59,379		\$59,379	Y
Columbia	60,604	37	\$59,916	\$222,300	\$30,000	\$17,000	\$12,000		\$92,475	\$92,684	\$65,160		\$65,069	Y
Cortland	47,786	45	\$50,910	\$111,400	\$19,000	\$10,650			\$107,800	\$74,965	\$64,871		\$39,101	Y
Delaware	45,001	48	\$46,055	\$135,200	\$48,622					\$74,751	\$54,000		\$66,778	Y
Dutchess	295,568	10	\$72,706	\$274,300	\$32,960	\$23,690	\$15,450	\$139,869		\$125,664	\$106,023	\$99,937		
Erie	925,528	4	\$52,744	\$134,600	\$52,588	\$47,588	\$42,588	\$103,438		\$79,092	\$79,092	\$80,613		
Essex	37,956	51	\$53,244	\$144,100						\$90,486	\$74,944		\$74,280	Y
Franklin	51,116	41	\$49,782	\$100,900	\$18,000		\$15,000		\$76,000	\$45,500	\$18,200		\$41,860	Y
Fulton	53,877	40	\$46,090	\$108,300	\$10,665		\$8,102			\$63,633	\$63,633		\$63,633	Y
Genesee	57,956	39	\$52,641	\$108,700	\$15,943				\$104,935	\$102,423	\$92,674		\$95,375	Y
Greene	47,470	46	\$51,013	\$175,900	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000		\$132,000	\$109,000	\$69,000		\$94,083	Y
Hamilton	4,485	57	\$52,708	\$165,500										
Herkimer	62,240	35	\$48,893	\$97,300	\$13,000	\$8,500	\$7,500		\$94,497	\$70,233	\$60,802		\$56,674	Y
Jefferson	114,187	20	\$49,911	\$144,400	\$23,021		\$14,394		\$131,047	\$82,333	\$73,100		\$73,100	Y
Lewis	26,551	54	\$49,976	\$122,000	\$10,000		\$8,500			\$73,517	\$59,813		\$76,296	Y
Livingston	63,779	34	\$52,724	\$123,000					\$130,000	\$99,200	\$85,125		\$85,125	Y
Madison	70,965	32	\$55,858	\$128,000	\$31,914		\$15,957		\$105,000	\$94,044	\$69,257		\$95,425	Y
Monroe	747,642	5	\$53,568	\$140,200	\$54,000	\$23,000	\$18,000	\$120,000		\$123,030	\$81,000			
Montgomery	49,258	43	\$44,455	\$99,100	\$15,000		\$10,000	\$85,000		\$85,838	\$69,529		\$71,625	Y
Nassau	1,369,514	2	\$102,044	\$451,700	\$67,500	\$67,500	\$39,500	\$174,614		\$174,578	\$166,300	\$166,300		N
Niagara	211,328	13	\$50,094	\$56,253	\$22,075	\$19,575	\$19,075		\$105,000	\$115,048	\$96,595		\$93,164	Y
Oneida	231,332	11	\$49,838	\$117,600	\$28,000	\$22,000	\$16,000	\$140,000		\$115,000	\$85,000	\$73,844		
Onondaga	465,398	6	\$55,717	\$137,000	\$46,615	\$31,608	\$25,591	\$122,413		\$110,120	\$78,654	\$99,800		
Ontario	109,899	22	\$58,070	\$148,400	\$25,296		\$14,076			\$119,771	\$79,007		\$68,747	Y
Orange	382,226	7	\$71,910	\$258,700	\$49,684	\$36,436	\$29,697	\$182,177		\$140,988	\$107,650			
Orleans	40,983	49	\$48,731	\$92,000	\$16,424	\$10,948	\$10,948		\$91,590	\$70,189	\$64,571		\$64,571	Y
Oswego	118,478	19	\$49,571	\$96,000	\$28,810	\$15,715	\$13,096		\$108,128	\$90,555	\$81,642		\$81,642	Y
Otsego	60,094	38	\$49,689	\$140,600	\$19,834		\$10,500			\$64,461	\$54,185		\$65,878	Y
Putnam	99,323	24	\$97,606	\$354,800	\$35,839	\$35,839	\$35,839	\$148,635		\$142,818	\$119,494			
Rensselaer	159,722	16	\$61,754	\$180,700	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$121,300		\$99,600	\$102,000			
Rockland	328,868	8	\$86,134	\$420,700	\$40,805		\$32,587	\$155,087		\$143,322	\$138,640			
Saratoga	229,869	12	\$46,313	\$87,400	\$25,690		\$18,878			\$120,240	\$109,956		\$105,686	
Schenectady	155,565	17	\$74,080	\$238,600	\$16,499	\$15,499				\$90,668	\$85,750			
Schoharie	31,420	53	\$59,959	\$165,000					\$139,066	\$81,170	\$81,170		\$81,170	Y
Schuyler	18,000	56	\$50,607	\$143,700	\$5,448		\$9,500			\$69,573	\$57,573		\$54,808	Y
Seneca	34,498	52	\$47,229	\$111,300	\$16,715				\$108,202	\$71,365	\$67,463		\$35,000	Y
St. Lawrence	109,623	21	\$50,073	\$98,200	\$14,000		\$9,000		\$80,372	\$77,878	\$67,599		\$67,599	Y
Steuben	96,281	25	\$48,823	\$94,300	\$20,000		\$12,500		\$111,784	\$68,650	\$56,742			N
Suffolk	1,492,953	1	\$90,128	\$376,000	\$100,854	\$100,854	\$100,854	\$224,125	\$123,450	\$194,243	\$197,681			Y
Sullivan	75,485	31	\$52,027	\$165,900	\$31,600		\$22,600			\$92,529	\$82,775		\$84,308	
Tioga	48,578	42	\$58,115	\$112,300	\$33,067		\$10,225			\$83,000	\$61,000		\$63,000	Y
Tompkins	104,802	23	\$54,133	\$182,600	\$32,100		\$21,400			\$97,362	\$79,062			
Ulster	179,417	15	\$60,393	\$219,800	\$19,500	\$12,000	\$10,000	\$133,572		\$101,706	\$101,709	\$101,709		
Warren	64,532	33	\$57,174	\$191,500	\$38,723					\$105,447	\$78,477		\$97,784	Y
Washington	61,620	36	\$51,449	\$143,900	\$32,415		\$18,216		\$94,964	\$87,804	\$72,153		\$84,937	
Wayne	90,670	26	\$51,627	\$115,100	\$38,163		\$16,258		\$63,063	\$114,248	\$85,943		\$78,588	Y
Westchester	980,244	3	\$86,226	\$507,300	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$160,760	\$122,337		\$153,105			
Wyoming	40,493	50	\$53,612	\$104,200	\$73,856					\$78,303	\$55,000		\$56,000	Y
Yates	24,955	55	\$50,105	\$126,900	\$8,183				\$95,627	\$89,052	\$60,590		\$65,576	Y
MEAN	196,959		\$56,253	\$161,057	\$29,792	\$25,533	\$19,420	\$138,189	\$104,881	\$96,377	\$82,046	\$103,808	\$73,754	
SD	310,342		\$13,152	\$94,799	\$18,119	\$20,820	\$15,859	\$35,679	\$18,554	\$27,227	\$29,357	\$28,015	\$18,467	
1 SD above M	507,302		\$69,405	\$255,857	\$47,911	\$46,353	\$35,279	\$173,869	\$123,435	\$123,604	\$111,403	\$131,823	\$92,222	
1 SD below M	(113)		\$43,101	\$66,258	\$11,673	\$4,713	\$3,561	\$102,510	\$86,328	\$69,150	\$52,689	\$75,792	\$55,287	
NOTES:														
Median Household and Real Estate Value is from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey Estimate														
Salary information for elected officials gathered as part of a 2018 survey conducted by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC)														
Areas left blank indicate either the position does not exist or information is unavailable for a given county														

Table 8 NYS Counties Filtered by Median Income and Median Real Estate Value

County	Population Size (2017 Estimate)	Rank In NYS	Median Household Income	Median Real Estate Value	Leg Chair	Leg Maj/Min or Comm	Leg Base	County Executive	County Admin	Sheriff	Clerk	Comptroller	Treasurer	Treas Elected
Albany	309,612	9	\$60,904	\$211,100	\$38,477	\$29,872	\$23,084	\$125,559		\$114,361	\$105,766	\$111,785		
Allegany	46,894	47	\$44,085	\$72,100	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$8,500			\$73,954	\$74,154		\$83,400	
Broome	193,639	14	\$47,744	\$112,300	\$7,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$92,083		\$91,578	\$81,606	\$96,473		
Cattaraugus	77,348	30	\$43,884	\$85,100	\$23,710	\$12,481	\$12,481		\$94,744	\$86,000	\$75,534		\$63,800	Y
Cayuga	77,603	29	\$53,114	\$117,800	\$30,000	\$10,100	\$10,100		\$97,500	\$82,621	\$73,937		\$73,937	Y
Chautauqua	129,046	18	\$43,211	\$85,500	\$17,000	\$10,000	\$9,000	\$92,500		\$82,500	\$55,500			
Chemung	85,557	27	\$49,578	\$101,800	\$37,895	\$18,333	\$15,790	\$166,273		\$113,686	\$88,466		\$125,998	Y
Chenango	47,863	44	\$46,979	\$93,400	\$41,774					\$84,388	\$66,547		\$75,511	N
Clinton	80,980	28	\$50,502	\$127,500	\$17,500		\$15,000		\$107,569	\$75,580	\$59,379		\$59,379	Y
Columbia	60,604	37	\$59,916	\$222,300	\$30,000	\$17,000	\$12,000		\$92,475	\$92,684	\$65,160		\$65,069	Y
Cortland	47,786	45	\$50,910	\$111,400	\$19,000	\$10,650			\$107,800	\$74,965	\$64,871		\$39,101	Y
Delaware	45,001	48	\$46,055	\$135,200	\$48,622					\$74,751	\$54,000		\$66,778	Y
Erie	925,528	4	\$52,744	\$134,600	\$52,588	\$47,588	\$42,588	\$103,438		\$79,092	\$79,092	\$80,613		
Essex	37,956	51	\$53,244	\$144,100						\$90,486	\$74,944		\$74,280	Y
Franklin	51,116	41	\$49,782	\$100,900	\$18,000		\$15,000		\$76,000	\$45,500	\$18,200		\$41,860	Y
Fulton	53,877	40	\$46,090	\$108,300	\$10,665		\$8,102			\$63,633	\$63,633		\$63,633	Y
Genesee	57,956	39	\$52,641	\$108,700	\$15,943				\$104,935	\$102,423	\$92,674		\$95,375	Y
Greene	47,470	46	\$51,013	\$175,900	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000		\$132,000	\$109,000	\$69,000		\$94,083	Y
Hamilton	4,485	57	\$52,708	\$165,500										
Herkimer	62,240	35	\$48,893	\$97,300	\$13,000	\$8,500	\$7,500		\$94,497	\$70,233	\$60,802		\$56,674	Y
Jefferson	114,187	20	\$49,911	\$144,400	\$23,021		\$14,394		\$131,047	\$82,333	\$73,100		\$73,100	Y
Lewis	26,551	54	\$49,976	\$122,000	\$10,000		\$8,500			\$73,517	\$59,813		\$76,296	Y
Livingston	63,779	34	\$52,724	\$123,000					\$130,000	\$99,200	\$85,125		\$85,125	Y
Madison	70,965	32	\$55,858	\$128,000	\$31,914		\$15,957		\$105,000	\$94,044	\$69,257		\$95,425	Y
Monroe	747,642	5	\$53,568	\$140,200	\$54,000	\$23,000	\$18,000	\$120,000		\$123,030	\$81,000			
Montgomery	49,258	43	\$44,455	\$99,100	\$15,000		\$10,000	\$85,000		\$85,838	\$69,529		\$71,625	Y
Niagara	211,328	13	\$50,094	\$51,543	\$22,075	\$19,575	\$19,075		\$105,000	\$115,048	\$96,595		\$93,164	Y
Oneida	231,332	11	\$49,838	\$117,600	\$28,000	\$22,000	\$16,000	\$140,000		\$115,000	\$85,000	\$73,844		
Onondaga	465,398	6	\$55,717	\$137,000	\$46,615	\$31,608	\$25,591	\$122,413		\$110,120	\$78,654	\$99,800		
Ontario	109,899	22	\$58,070	\$148,400	\$25,296		\$14,076			\$119,771	\$79,007		\$68,747	Y
Orleans	40,983	49	\$48,731	\$92,000	\$16,424	\$10,948	\$10,948		\$91,590	\$70,189	\$64,571		\$64,571	Y
Oswego	118,478	19	\$49,571	\$96,000	\$28,810	\$15,715	\$13,096		\$108,128	\$90,555	\$81,642		\$81,642	Y
Otsego	60,094	38	\$49,689	\$140,600	\$19,834		\$10,500			\$64,461	\$54,185		\$65,878	Y
Rensselaer	159,722	16	\$61,754	\$180,700	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$121,300		\$99,600	\$102,000			
Saratoga	229,869	12	\$46,313	\$87,400	\$25,690		\$18,878			\$120,240	\$109,956		\$105,686	
Schoharie	31,420	53	\$59,959	\$165,000					\$139,066	\$81,170	\$81,170		\$81,170	Y
Schuyler	18,000	56	\$50,607	\$143,700	\$5,448		\$9,500			\$69,573	\$57,573		\$54,808	Y
Seneca	34,498	52	\$47,229	\$111,300	\$16,715				\$108,202	\$71,365	\$67,463		\$35,000	Y
St. Lawrence	109,623	21	\$50,073	\$98,200	\$14,000		\$9,000		\$80,372	\$77,878	\$67,599		\$67,599	Y
Steuben	96,281	25	\$48,823	\$94,300	\$20,000		\$12,500		\$111,784	\$68,650	\$56,742			N
Sullivan	75,485	31	\$52,027	\$165,900	\$31,600		\$22,600			\$92,529	\$82,775		\$84,308	
Tioga	48,578	42	\$58,115	\$112,300	\$33,067		\$10,225			\$83,000	\$61,000		\$63,000	Y
Tompkins	104,802	23	\$54,133	\$182,600	\$32,100		\$21,400			\$97,362	\$79,062			
Ulster	179,417	15	\$60,393	\$219,800	\$19,500	\$12,000	\$10,000	\$133,572		\$101,706	\$101,709	\$101,709		
Warren	64,532	33	\$57,174	\$191,500	\$38,723					\$105,447	\$78,477		\$97,784	Y
Washington	61,620	36	\$51,449	\$143,900	\$32,415		\$18,216		\$94,964	\$87,804	\$72,153		\$84,937	
Wayne	90,670	26	\$51,627	\$115,100	\$38,163		\$16,258		\$63,063	\$114,248	\$85,943		\$78,588	Y
Wyoming	40,493	50	\$53,612	\$104,200	\$73,856					\$78,303	\$55,000		\$56,000	Y
Yates	24,955	55	\$50,105	\$126,900	\$8,183				\$95,627	\$89,052	\$60,590		\$65,576	Y
MEAN	124947		\$51,543	\$128,438	\$26,347	\$18,019	\$14,902	\$118,376	\$103,244	\$89,343	\$73,332	\$94,037	\$73,754	
SD	170702		\$4,608	\$37,711	\$14,261	\$9,778	\$6,612	\$24,020	\$18,528	\$17,699	\$16,235	\$14,149	\$18,467	
1 SD above M	295649		\$56,151	\$166,148	\$40,608	\$27,797	\$21,514	\$142,396	\$121,772	\$107,042	\$89,567	\$108,186	\$92,222	
1 SD below M	-45755		\$46,934	\$90,727	\$12,086	\$8,240	\$8,290	\$94,356	\$84,716	\$71,644	\$57,098	\$79,888	\$55,287	
NOTES:														
Counties Filtered														
Counties filtered by 1 SD above/below MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (8 counties removed) then Median Real Estate Value (none removed)														
No counties 1 SD below the mean in median household income and median real estate value.														
Counties Eliminated: Dutchess, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Schenectady, Suffolk, Westchester														
With these counties removed:														
Erie County's population is more than 4 standard deviations above the mean.														
The median household income & median real estate prices after removing eight counties is quite comparable to Erie County's.														
Median Household and Real Estate Value is from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey Estimate														
Salary information for elected officials gathered as part of a 2018 survey conducted by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC)														
Bolded values indicate the elected official salary has been raised since 2014														
Italicized values indicate the elected official salary has decreased since 2014														
Areas left blank indicate the position does not exist or information is unavailable for a given county														

Table 9 NYS Counties Top 10 Population

County	Population Size (2017 Estimate)	Rank In NYS	Median Household Income	Median Real Estate Value	Leg Chair	Leg Maj/Min or Comm	Leg Base	County Executive	County Admin	Sheriff	Clerk	Comptroller
Albany	309,612	9	\$60,904	\$211,100	\$38,477	\$29,872	\$23,084	\$125,559		\$114,361	\$105,766	\$111,785
Dutchess	295,568	10	\$72,706	\$274,300	\$32,960	\$23,690	\$15,450	\$139,869		\$125,664	\$106,023	\$99,937
Erie	925,528	4	\$52,744	\$134,600	\$52,588	\$47,588	\$42,588	\$103,438		\$79,092	\$79,092	\$80,613
Monroe	747,642	5	\$53,568	\$140,200	\$54,000	\$23,000	\$18,000	\$120,000		\$123,030	\$81,000	
Nassau	1,369,514	2	\$102,044	\$451,700	\$67,500	\$67,500	\$39,500	\$174,614		\$174,578	\$166,300	\$166,300
Onondaga	465,398	6	\$55,717	\$137,000	\$46,615	\$31,608	\$25,591	\$122,413		\$110,120	\$78,654	\$99,800
Orange	382,226	7	\$71,910	\$258,700	\$49,684	\$36,436	\$29,697	\$182,177		\$140,988	\$107,650	
Rockland	328,868	8	\$86,134	\$420,700	\$40,805		\$32,587	\$155,087		\$143,322	\$138,640	
Suffolk	1,492,953	1	\$90,128	\$376,000	\$100,854	\$100,854	\$100,854	\$224,125	\$123,450	\$194,243	\$197,681	
Westchester	980,244	3	\$86,226	\$507,300	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$160,760	\$122,337		\$153,105	
MEAN	729755		\$73,208	\$291,160	\$53,268	\$45,528	\$37,655	\$150,804	\$122,894	\$133,933	\$121,391	\$111,687
SD	448400		\$17,379	\$139,555	\$19,230	\$25,168	\$24,679	\$36,209	\$787	\$34,591	\$40,902	\$32,510
1 SD above M	1178155		\$90,587	\$430,715	\$72,498	\$70,696	\$62,334	\$187,013	\$123,681	\$168,524	\$162,293	\$144,197
1 SD below M	281355		\$55,830	\$151,605								
<b>NOTES:</b>												
<i>Erie County is more than one standard deviation below the mean in Median Household Income &amp; Median Real Estate Value</i>												
Median Household and Real Estate Value is from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey Estimate												
Salary information for elected officials gathered as part of a 2018 survey conducted by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC)												
Areas left blank indicate either the position does not exist or information is unavailable for a given county												

Table 10 NYS Counties Top 9 Population (Suffolk County removed)

County	Population Size (2017 Estimate)	Rank In NYS	Median Household Income	Median Real Estate Value	Leg Chair	Leg Maj/Min or Comm	Leg Base	County Executive	County Admin	Sheriff	Clerk	Comptroller
Albany	309,612	9	\$60,904	\$211,100	\$38,477	\$29,872	\$23,084	\$125,559		\$114,361	\$105,766	\$111,785
Dutchess	295,568	10	\$72,706	\$274,300	\$32,960	\$23,690	\$15,450	\$139,869		\$125,664	\$106,023	\$99,937
Erie	925,528	4	\$52,744	\$134,600	\$52,588	\$47,588	\$42,588	\$103,438		\$79,092	\$79,092	\$80,613
Monroe	747,642	5	\$53,568	\$140,200	\$54,000	\$23,000	\$18,000	\$120,000		\$123,030	\$81,000	
Nassau	1,369,514	2	\$102,044	\$451,700	\$67,500	\$67,500	\$39,500	\$174,614		\$174,578	\$166,300	\$166,300
Onondaga	465,398	6	\$55,717	\$137,000	\$46,615	\$31,608	\$25,591	\$122,413		\$110,120	\$78,654	\$99,800
Orange	382,226	7	\$71,910	\$258,700	\$49,684	\$36,436	\$29,697	\$182,177		\$140,988	\$107,650	
Rockland	328,868	8	\$86,134	\$420,700	\$40,805		\$32,587	\$155,087		\$143,322	\$138,640	
Suffolk Removed												
Westchester	980,244	3	\$86,226	\$507,300	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$160,760	\$122,337		\$153,105	
MEAN	644,956		\$71,328	\$281,733	\$47,981	\$38,612	\$30,633	\$142,657	\$122,337	\$126,394	\$112,914	\$111,687
SD	381,178		\$17,321	\$144,604	\$10,076	\$15,230	\$11,421	\$26,988		\$27,980	\$32,768	\$32,510
1 SD above M	1,026,134		\$90,587	\$430,715	\$58,057	\$53,842	\$42,054	\$169,645		\$154,374	\$145,682	\$144,197
1 SD below M	263,777		\$55,829	\$151,605								
<b>NOTES:</b>												
<i>Erie County is more than one standard deviation below the mean in Median Household Income &amp; Median Real Estate Value</i>												
Median Household and Real Estate Value is from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey Estimate												
Salary information for elected officials gathered as part of a 2018 survey conducted by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC)												
Areas left blank indicate either the position does not exist or information is unavailable for a given county												

Table 11 NYS Counties Top 5 Population

County	Population Size (2017 Estimate)	Rank In NYS	Median Household Income	Median Real Estate Value	Leg Chair	Leg Maj/Min or Comm	Leg Base	County Executive	County Admin	Sheriff	Clerk	Comptroller
Erie	925,528	4	\$52,744	\$134,600	\$52,588	\$47,588	\$42,588	\$103,438		\$79,092	\$79,092	\$80,613
Monroe	747,642	5	\$53,568	\$140,200	\$54,000	\$23,000	\$18,000	\$120,000		\$123,030	\$81,000	
Nassau	1,369,514	2	\$102,044	\$451,700	\$67,500	\$67,500	\$39,500	\$174,614		\$174,578	\$166,300	\$166,300
Suffolk	1,492,953	1	\$90,128	\$376,000	\$100,854	\$100,854	\$100,854	\$224,125	\$123,450	\$194,243	\$197,681	
Westchester	980,244	3	\$86,226	\$507,300	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$160,760	\$122,337		\$153,105	
MEAN	1,103,176		\$76,942	\$321,960	\$64,828	\$57,628	\$50,028	\$156,587	\$122,894	\$142,736	\$135,436	\$123,457
SD	314,618		\$22,484	\$174,817	\$21,309	\$28,883	\$30,724	\$47,611	\$787	\$51,980	\$53,097	\$60,590
1 SD above M	1,417,794		\$99,426	\$496,777								
1 SD below M	788,558		\$54,458	\$147,143								
<b>Notes:</b>												
Erie and Monroe Counties more than one standard deviation below the mean in both median household income and median real estate value.												
Median Household and Real Estate Value is from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey Estimate												
Salary information for elected officials gathered as part of a 2018 survey conducted by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC)												
Areas left blank indicate either the position does not exist or information is unavailable for a given county												

Table 12 NYS Counties Top 4 Population (Suffolk County Removed)

County	Population Size (2017 Estimate)	Rank In NYS	Median Household Income	Median Real Estate Value	Leg Chair	Leg Maj/Min or Comm	Leg Base	County Executive	County Admin	Sheriff	Clerk	Comptroller
Erie	925,528	4	\$52,744	\$134,600	\$52,588	\$47,588	\$42,588	\$103,438		\$79,092	\$79,092	\$80,613
Monroe	747,642	5	\$53,568	\$140,200	\$54,000	\$23,000	\$18,000	\$120,000		\$123,030	\$81,000	
Nassau	1,369,514	2	\$102,044	\$451,700	\$67,500	\$67,500	\$39,500	\$174,614		\$174,578	\$166,300	\$166,300
Suffolk Removed												
Westchester	980,244	3	\$86,226	\$507,300	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$49,200	\$160,760	\$122,337		\$153,105	
MEAN	1,005,732		\$73,646	\$308,450	\$55,822	\$46,822	\$37,322	\$139,703	\$122,337	\$125,567	\$119,874	\$123,457
SD	262,062		\$24,527	\$198,825	\$8,042	\$18,269	\$13,502	\$33,494		\$47,794	\$46,311	\$60,590
1 SD above M	1,417,794		\$98,173	\$507,275								
1 SD below M	788,558		\$49,118	\$109,625								
<b>Notes:</b>												
Median Household and Real Estate Value is from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey Estimate												
Salary information for elected officials gathered as part of a 2018 survey conducted by the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC)												
Areas left blank indicate either the position does not exist or information is unavailable for a given county												

Table 13 Salaries in Erie County's Cities and Ten Most Populous Towns

Rank	Town	Population	Supervisor	Clerk	Treas./ Compt. (Finance Dir.)	Police chief	P.O.'s	Sup. Staff		
1	Amherst	122,366	\$24,138	Vacant	\$134,135	\$166,827	154	35		
2	Cheektowaga	88,226	\$80,662	\$60,912	\$96,182	\$139,361	129			
3	Tonawanda (town)	73,567	\$76,992	???	\$90,363	\$133,970	106	52		
4	Hamburg	56,936	\$98,240	\$79,460	\$76,057	\$173,613	62	19		
5	West Seneca	44,711	\$75,000	\$71,406	\$29,615	\$124,977	66	29		
6	Lancaster	41,604		\$86,118	\$51,923	\$138,700	43			
7	Clarence	30,673	\$76,357	\$82,949	\$52,220	Co. sheriff		NYS police		
8	Orchard Park	29,054	\$79,176	???	\$101,189	\$186,788	32			
9	Grand Island	20,374	\$68,917	\$76,096	\$78,427		6	C. Sheriff	NYS pol.	
10	Evans	16,356		\$62,250	\$57,000	\$115,424	22+ 6 p/t			
	<b>City</b>									
	Buffalo	328,500	\$108,499	\$100,826	\$91,358	\$116,386				
	Lackawanna	18,141				\$113,181	52			
	Tonawanda (City)	15,130				\$100,611	30			

Table Sources: [www.seethroughny.com](http://www.seethroughny.com), [www.usacops.com](http://www.usacops.com)

Table 14 Internal Equity in Erie County Officials' Compensation

ECCSRC Analysis of Internal Equity in Erie County Elected Officials Compensation					
Erie County Executive		2017		2018	
County Executive			\$ 103,428		\$ 103,428
Deputy County Executive	38.8%	\$	143,572	46.7%	\$ 151,697
Director of Budget and Management	31.4%	\$	135,930	31.9%	\$ 136,453
Senior Executive Assistant (2)	-13.9%	\$	89,092	-11.3%	\$ 91,714
Erie County Comptroller					
County Comptroller			\$ 80,613		\$ 80,613
Deputy Comptroller	54.4%	\$	124,488	55.0%	\$ 124,967
Director of Grant Accounting Services	28.8%	\$	103,840	29.3%	\$ 104,239
Associate Deputy Comptroller	17.5%	\$	94,719	17.9%	\$ 95,083
Director of Accounting Services	6.8%	\$	86,058	7.2%	\$ 86,389
Erie County Clerk					
County Clerk			\$ 79,092		\$ 79,092
First Deputy County Clerk	29.9%	\$	102,742	31.9%	\$ 104,342
Asst. Deputy County Clerk - Adm	-26.9%	\$	75,148	-27.7%	\$ 75,437
Erie County Sheriff					
Sheriff			\$ 79,092		\$ 79,092
Under Sheriff	56.3%	\$	123,606	58.5%	\$ 125,368
Superintendent - Holding Center	38.2%	\$	109,302	38.7%	\$ 109,722
First Deputy Super. - Sheriff (2)	30.8%	\$	103,465	31.3%	\$ 103,863
Chief of Administration	25.3%	\$	99,114	25.8%	\$ 99,495
Erie County Legislature*					
		2017		2018	
Chairperson - County Legislature			\$ 52,588		\$ 52,588
County Legislator (Maj./Minority)			\$ 47,588		\$ 47,588
County Legislator			\$ 42,588		\$ 42,588
Clerk of Legislature	112.0%	\$	90,270	117.9%	\$ 92,803
Chief of Staff- Legislature	96.1%	\$	83,518	96.9%	\$ 83,839
Special Project Coordinator	76.5%	\$	75,148	77.1%	\$ 75,437
Administrative Liaison Assistant	57.7%	\$	67,149	58.3%	\$ 67,407
Executive Assistant	33.7%	\$	56,925	41.2%	\$ 60,141
Special Assistant to the Chair	33.5%	\$	56,865	37.2%	\$ 58,441
*Percentages relative to County Legislator Salary					

Table 15 CPI 1996 and 2018

<b>US Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI - Inflation Calculator</b>				
<b>1996</b>		<b>2018</b>		
\$103,248	equates to	\$164,978	County Exec.	59.80%
\$80,613	equates to	\$128,810	Comptroller	59.80%
\$79,092	equates to	\$126,380	Clerk / Sheriff	59.80%
\$52,588	equates to	\$84,029	Leg Chairman	59.80%
\$47,588	equates to	\$76,040	Maj./ Min. Leader	59.80%
\$42,588	equates to	\$68,051	County Legislator	59.80%
Source: <a href="https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm">https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm</a>				