

Public Comment on Salary Benchmarking & Comparator Counties

Chair and Members of the Board,

I am Lee Tannenbaum and serve as the President of the Taxpayers Association of EDC. I appreciate the CAO's commitment to addressing recruitment and retention challenges through past salary adjustments, including the two percent raises implemented in 2022–23, which brought many county positions to near the median of benchmark organizations ("median +/- 1%").

However, we have two critical questions:

1. Has the CAO initiated or scheduled a new comprehensive salary comparison study since the last one in 2021?
2. If so, which comparator counties are being used for this benchmark?

In 2022, Placer County responded to similar recruitment needs by approving three consecutive years of 4% pay increases. Sacramento County followed suit with comparable multi-year adjustments. These examples indicate that EDC's compensation needs are real—but accurate benchmarking requires careful selection of peers.

The most valid comparators for El Dorado County are those with similar unincorporated population bases, not those skewed by large incorporated cities. As of current estimates:

- El Dorado County: ~160,500 unincorporated residents
- Placer County: ~145,000 unincorporated residents – Already used
- San Luis Obispo County: ~132,000 unincorporated residents

These counties share similar demands for rural roads, public safety, and decentralized services—making them more appropriate than urbanized areas like Sacramento. We recommend that future salary studies focus on these rural-urban hybrid counties to ensure comparability and fairness.

In closing, please clarify:

1. When the last salary study was published
2. Whether a new study is in progress and when it will be published
3. Which counties are included—and why the unincorporated population lens should guide those selections

Doing so will increase transparency, improve public trust, and ensure that El Dorado County's salary comparisons reflect the true costs and responsibilities our government

faces.

Thank you for your attention.

Lee Tannenbaum

President, Taxpayers Association of EDC