



Employee Compensation Policy

KELP ARK (formally AltaSeeds Conservancy)
A California Public Benefit Corporation

2451 Signal Street, San Pedro, CA 90731

Approved by: Board of Directors

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this Employee Compensation Policy is to outline the principles and practices guiding the compensation structure at Kelp Ark (the “Organization”). This Policy ensures that compensation decisions are made fairly, equitably, and in alignment with the Organization’s mission, values, and financial resources.

II. Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of Kelp Ark, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contract employees. It covers salary structure, benefits, performance-based compensation, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

III. Compensation Philosophy

Kelp Ark is committed to providing competitive, fair, and equitable compensation to its employees. The Organization strives to attract and retain qualified individuals who are passionate about the Organization’s mission and goals. Compensation decisions are made based on the following guiding principles:

1. **Fairness:** Employees will be compensated in a manner that is fair, equitable, and aligned with their job responsibilities, skills, and experience.
2. **Transparency:** The compensation structure will be communicated clearly to employees, and pay decisions will be made based on objective criteria.
3. **Market Competitiveness:** The Organization will regularly review compensation data to ensure it remains competitive with comparable positions in the nonprofit sector and the local labor market.
4. **Fiscal Responsibility:** Compensation decisions will be made in alignment with the Organization’s budget, financial position, and available resources.

IV. Salary Structure

Salaries at Kelp Ark are determined by the following factors:

1. **Job Classification:** Each position within the Organization will be classified according to its responsibilities, level of expertise required, and the impact it has on the mission. Job descriptions and classifications will be reviewed regularly.
2. **Experience and Qualifications:** The level of experience, education, certifications, and relevant skills an employee brings to the position will be considered when setting salary levels.
3. **Performance:** Employee performance will be a key consideration in salary decisions, including merit-based increases or bonuses where applicable.
4. **Geographical Market:** The compensation will be adjusted based on the geographical location of the Organization and the market rate for similar positions in that region.

Salary scales and compensation bands will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with market conditions and the Organization’s financial situation.

V. Benefits and Perks

In addition to base salary, Kelp Ark offers the following benefits and perks to eligible employees:

1. **Health Benefits:** The Organization offers health insurance options, including medical, dental, and vision coverage. Employees are eligible for benefits after a specified waiting period, as outlined in the employee handbook.
2. **Retirement Plans:** Kelp Ark offers a retirement plan, such as Simple IRA unmatched.
3. **Paid Time Off (PTO):** Employees are eligible for paid time off, including vacation days, sick leave, and holidays. Specific amounts of PTO are determined by employment status and length of service.
4. **Other Benefits:** Additional benefits may include life insurance, employee assistance programs, professional development allowances, and wellness programs, depending on available resources and the employee's role.
5. **Workplace Flexibility:** In alignment with organizational needs, employees may have access to flexible work hours or remote work arrangements, where appropriate.

VI. Performance-Based Compensation

Performance reviews are conducted on an annual basis to evaluate employee performance against predefined goals and competencies. The results of performance evaluations may influence decisions regarding salary increases, promotions, and eligibility for bonuses or other performance-based rewards.

Performance-based compensation will be designed to:

1. Recognize exceptional performance and contributions to the Organization's mission.
2. Motivate employees to meet and exceed performance expectations.
3. Align individual performance with the Organization's strategic goals and priorities.

VII. Salary Increases and Bonuses (depending on funds availability)

Salary increases and bonuses will be awarded based on the following:

1. **Annual Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA):** If applicable, the Organization may provide annual COLA increases to account for inflation or changes in the cost of living.
2. **Merit-Based Increases:** Employees demonstrating strong performance may receive merit-based salary increases during their annual review.
3. **Bonus Programs:** The Organization may offer performance bonuses, though bonuses are discretionary and subject to available funding. The criteria for receiving a bonus will be outlined during performance evaluations.

VIII. Compliance with Legal Requirements

Kelp Ark will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws concerning employee compensation, including wage and hour laws, minimum wage requirements, and overtime provisions.

The Organization will also ensure compliance with tax laws and regulations related to employee compensation and benefits, including withholding taxes and reporting requirements.

IX. Payroll Procedures

Employees will be paid on a twice-a-month basis, with payroll distributed via direct deposit or paper check. The Organization will provide employees with a paycheck stub detailing their earnings, taxes withheld, and any other deductions made from their pay.

X. Employee Classification and Exemptions

The Organization classifies employees as either exempt or non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA):

1. **Exempt Employees:** Employees in managerial, professional, or administrative roles, whose duties and salary meet specific criteria, are classified as exempt from overtime pay.
2. **Non-Exempt Employees:** Employees whose positions do not meet the criteria for exemption are entitled to overtime pay for hours worked over 40 hours in a workweek.

XI. Review and Adjustments

The compensation structure, salary scales, and benefits offered by the Organization will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors or a designated compensation committee. Adjustments will be made as necessary based on changes in the Organization's financial position, market conditions, and legal requirements.