



The Nevada Policy Research Institute

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Public-employee salaries for 2011 now posted at NPRI's TransparentNevada

LAS VEGAS — Salary data for more than 121,000 government employees statewide, for the 2011 calendar year, is now available at TransparentNevada.com, a Nevada Policy Research Institute website that makes government-spending data easily accessible to taxpayers.

The new 2011 data — covering 45 government jurisdictions throughout Nevada, including state, county and city levels — includes several newly added jurisdictions.

“Thanks to the information available at TransparentNevada, Nevada’s citizens, media members and lawmakers will now be able to easily see exactly how much government employees are being paid,” said Andy Matthews, president of NPRI.

“For instance, more than 990 government employees throughout the state received over \$200,000 last year in total compensation,” he added. That list includes a Clark County fire captain who made over \$525,000, a Las Vegas Metro lieutenant who took home more than \$507,000, and a UNLV English professor who received over \$326,000.

Matthews also noted that several categories of public employees had dozens of employees earning more than \$200,000. In the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, that included 32 sergeants, while in the City of North Las Vegas — recently on the verge of bankruptcy — 23 firefighters and more than 55 police and corrections officers were paid over \$200,000.

The number of firefighters earning over \$200,000 dropped from 199 in Clark County in 2010, to 142 in 2011, and from 123 in Las Vegas in 2010, to 79 in 2011.

“While it’s encouraging for taxpayers to see more restraint in the number of government employees making over \$200,000 — decreasing from 1,174 in 2010 to 994 in 2011 — it’s still a stark reminder of how inflated salaries for government workers remain,” said Matthews. “Although government officials have told taxpayers the last five years that they’ve ‘cut to the bone,’ these salaries show that extravagant pay is still the norm for many government employees.

“Nevada’s citizens are struggling with prolonged unemployment, tax increases and an upside-down housing market,” noted Matthews, “while government employees still live high on the hog. Yet these inflated government salaries add another layer of hurt: They announce a clearly inequitable system where government employees — once called ‘public servants’ — are clearly becoming average Nevadans’ masters.”

Matthews noted that the base pay of numerous administrators within local governments — like the North Las Vegas city clerk, whose base pay is \$145,606, and the general manager of the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, whose base pay is \$227,625 — is higher than the governor’s base pay of \$143,426. He also noted that 17 senior attorneys working for Clark County start at \$152,372, while the base pay of the state attorney general is \$140,389.

Not all government jurisdictions complied fully with requests for public-employee data, Matthews said.

“Several jurisdictions, including the State of Nevada, the cities of Henderson and Reno and the Clark and Washoe county school districts, failed to comply with Nevada’s open-records law and provide TransparentNevada with information on their employee benefits costs,” said Matthews. “By not following the law, these jurisdictions have needlessly opened themselves up to potential lawsuits.”

Benefits typically increase compensation totals significantly, but even in their reported absence, an Animal Control Facility administrator working for Henderson received over \$239,000 and a graphic artist in Henderson took home over \$212,000.

TransparentNevada, on the Web at <http://TransparentNevada.com>, was first launched in September 2008 and has served as a unique source of government-financing information for thousands of citizens, journalists and elected officials.

Matthews said that the site will be adding salary data from even more jurisdictions in the coming weeks.

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