

KARNES COUNTY ESSENTIAL WORKER PREMIUM POLICY



PURPOSE : The purpose of this policy is to provide a one-time payment for essential workers for employees through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

FUNDING SOURCE : American Rescue Plan appropriation to Karnes County, Texas.

ESSENTIAL WORKERS : In support of COVID-19 response efforts and critical continuity of operations provided by all Karnes County employees, the Karnes County Commissioners Court designated all employees as essential infrastructure employees as allowed by the American Rescue Plan Act.

On March 10, 2021, the United States Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) providing direct relief to units of local government through the United States Department of Treasury. The Department of Treasury has issued guidelines for the allowable uses of the direct relief funds, and one permissible use of these funds is to provide premium pay to eligible local government workers facing increased risk due to COVID-19. Many County employees, by and through the nature of their job, cannot choose to work from home and have been required to be on the front lines at a worksite to perform their job duties, ensuring citizens access to government services, which can also involve the interaction with the public and co-workers facing the danger of workplace exposure to COVID-19.

Karnes County hereby finds that there are county employees who were providing essential services to the citizens of Karnes County but who, due to the nature of their job duties, title, or rate of pay, were unable to do their job by remote means. This incentive pay is directed at employees who have proven their value, courage, and altruism by exposing themselves and their families to financial and health risks during the pandemic.

NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PREMIUM PAY : A county employee who performed telework or any employee who will make over 150% average wage for all occupations in Texas ($\$52,400 \times 150\% = \$78,600.00$ or an hourly wage above \$37.79 per hour) if they are otherwise eligible to receive the essential worker premium pay or an elected official. These individuals are not eligible for payment from ARPA funds.

In accordance with the Department of Treasury, premium pay “must be entirely additive to a worker’s regular rate of wages and other remuneration and may not be used to reduce or substitute a worker’s normal earnings.” Premium pay, by this policy and order, is not a substitute for a worker’s regular income.

ELIGIBILITY FOR PREMIUM PAY :

1. A county employee must have been employed by the county either full-time or part-time as of February 8, 2022 .
2. A county employee must have been employed as a County employee either full-time or part-time as of February 8, 2022.
3. Full-time Employment : A County employee employed as of February 8, 2022 Karnes County as a full-time employee and by Karnes County as a full-time employee and remains until the date of the order and the date of payment of premium pay. (Employees are not eligible if they were not employed in the proceeding ninety-days. The start date of employment eligibility is November 10, 2021.)
4. Part-time Employment : A County employee remains employed by Karnes County as a part-time County employee as of the date of the order and the date of payment of premium pay and has worked an average of 24 hours per pay period for pay dates between January 1, 2022 and February 8, 2022. (Employees are not eligible if they were not employed in the proceeding ninety-days. The start date of employment eligibility is November 10, 2021.)
5. Employees must be actively working, on approved FMLA or approved military leave to receive Essential Worker Premium Pay. It will not be paid to employees on leave who have exhausted their 12 weeks of FMLA.
6. Temporary or seasonal workers are not eligible.
7. A county employee is required to sign a Karnes County Employee Time and Effort Certification Form prior to receiving payment, attested to by the Elected Official or Department Head and the form must be received by the Human Resources Office on or before February 28, 2022.
8. If the form is not received, the employee is not eligible for payment.
9. Premium Payment Scale :

For workers that meet the guidelines,

\$3,320.00 for full-time employees.

\$1,660.00 for part-time employees.

KARNES COUNTY ESSENTIAL WORKER TIME AND EFFORT CERTIFICATION FORM



ESSENTIAL WORKER PREMIUM PAY

This form **MUST** be submitted to the Human Resource Office no later than February 28, 2022 or you are not eligible for the essential worker premium pay.

I, _____, am employed in the _____(dept), and hereby certify that my work-time with Karnes County through February 15, 2022 applies to the American Rescue Plan Grant Essential Worker Premium Pay Policy passed by the Karnes County Commissioners Court on February 8, 2022.

My duties, during these dates, were performed as a Karnes County Essential Worker and during that time, I :

- did not telework (work from home)
- teleworked approximately ____ days
- regularly teleworked

Employee Signature Printed Name Date

Attested to by :

Supervisor Signature Printed Name Date