

RCW 41.56.530 Uniformed personnel—Interest arbitration panel—Determinations—Factors to be considered. (1) In making its determination, the panel shall be mindful of the legislative purpose enumerated in *RCW 41.56.501 and, as additional standards or guidelines to aid it in reaching a decision, the panel shall consider:

- (a) The constitutional and statutory authority of the employer;
- (b) Stipulations of the parties;
- (c) The average consumer prices for goods and services, commonly known as the cost of living;
- (d) Changes in any of the circumstances under (a) through (c) of this subsection during the pendency of the proceedings; and
- (e) Such other factors, not confined to the factors under (a) through (d) of this subsection, that are normally or traditionally taken into consideration in the determination of wages, hours, and conditions of employment. For those employees listed in RCW 41.56.030(14) (a) who are employed by the governing body of a city or town with a population of less than fifteen thousand, or a county with a population of less than seventy thousand, consideration must also be given to regional differences in the cost of living.

(2) For employees listed in RCW 41.56.030(14) (a) through (d), the panel shall also consider a comparison of the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of personnel involved in the proceedings with the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of like personnel of like employers of similar size on the west coast of the United States.

(3) For employees listed in RCW 41.56.030(14) (e) through (h), the panel shall also consider a comparison of the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of personnel involved in the proceedings with the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of like personnel of public fire departments of similar size on the west coast of the United States. However, when an adequate number of comparable employers exists within the state of Washington, other west coast employers may not be considered.

(4) For employees listed in *RCW 41.56.153:

(a) The panel shall also consider:

- (i) A comparison of child care provider subsidy rates and reimbursement programs by public entities, including counties and municipalities, along the west coast of the United States; and

- (ii) The financial ability of the state to pay for the compensation and benefit provisions of a collective bargaining agreement; and

(b) The panel may consider:

- (i) The public's interest in reducing turnover and increasing retention of child care providers;

- (ii) The state's interest in promoting, through education and training, a stable child care workforce to provide quality and reliable child care from all providers throughout the state; and

- (iii) In addition, for employees exempt from licensing under chapter 74.15 RCW, the state's fiscal interest in reducing reliance upon public benefit programs including but not limited to medical coupons, food stamps, subsidized housing, and emergency medical services.

(5) For employees listed in RCW 74.39A.270:

(a) The panel shall consider:

- (i) A comparison of wages, hours, and conditions of employment of publicly reimbursed personnel providing similar services to similar clients, including clients who are elderly, frail, or have

developmental disabilities, both in the state and across the United States; and

(ii) The financial ability of the state to pay for the compensation and fringe benefit provisions of a collective bargaining agreement; and

(b) The panel may consider:

(i) A comparison of wages, hours, and conditions of employment of publicly employed personnel providing similar services to similar clients, including clients who are elderly, frail, or have developmental disabilities, both in the state and across the United States;

(ii) The state's interest in promoting a stable long-term care workforce to provide quality and reliable care to vulnerable elderly and disabled recipients;

(iii) The state's interest in ensuring access to affordable, quality health care for all state citizens; and

(iv) The state's fiscal interest in reducing reliance upon public benefit programs including but not limited to medical coupons, food stamps, subsidized housing, and emergency medical services.

(6) Subsections (2) and (3) of this section may not be construed to authorize the panel to require the employer to pay, directly or indirectly, the increased employee contributions resulting from chapter 502, Laws of 1993 or chapter 517, Laws of 1993 as required under chapter 41.26 RCW. [2025 c 58 s 2020; 2007 c 278 s 1; 1995 c 273 s 2; 1993 c 398 s 3. Formerly RCW 41.56.465.]

***Reviser's note:** These RCW references have been corrected to reflect the reorganization of chapter 41.56 RCW by 2025 c 290 s 2.

Explanatory note—2025 c 58: See note following RCW 1.16.050.

Effective date—1995 c 273: See note following RCW 41.56.030.

Effective dates—1993 c 398: See note following RCW 41.56.030.