



**MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION
OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES**

2019-2021 Tentative Agreement Q & A

What wage increases will we be getting?

The proposed contract included general wage increases in both years: 2.25 percent effective July 1, 2019, and 2.5 percent effective July 1, 2020. Step increases apply both years for eligible employees (step increases average 3.55 percent in the MAPE contract).

Will all employees be getting these increases, even those at the top of their class?

The second-year wage increase will be given to all employees including those employees whose rates of pay exceed the maximum rate for their class.

What will my healthcare costs be?

Health care costs continue to escalate nationwide, and Minnesota is no exception. Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) negotiators tried to force \$122 million in additional costs on employees and we refused. Union negotiators were able to hold the line at \$23.5 million [\$8 million is MAPE's share] in increases while securing improvements in our dental plan and development of a new vision plan. The remaining \$98.5 million in costs will be paid for by the employer.

Monthly premiums will increase for singles by \$2.60 in 2020 and \$2.80 in 2021, and families will pay an additional \$17.73 in 2020 and \$19.14 in 2021.

MAPE was one of a handful of unions in the country two years ago to negotiate no increases in members' out-of-pocket costs and co-pays for office visits and prescriptions. The 2019-2021 contract includes market value increases in these services.

How does our plan compare to other local plans?

Healthcare costs are continuing to rise nationally with no apparent end in sight so cost-sharing is more important than ever. MAPE is not negotiating our insurance for two years. We're negotiating it for decades to come. Like pensions, our primary goal is to maintain the viability of the insurance. For years, healthcare costs have been rising much faster than other costs. We need to make sure that the State Employee Group Insurance Program (SEGIP) is sustainable over the long-term.

Compared to other health plans in and around Minnesota, SEGIP is still one of the best there is: In Wisconsin, their maximum cost of prescription drugs is \$8,650 a year and in Iowa, it's \$5,850. At \$2,100 we're well below either of them. Only having a strong union

has kept those costs under control. Hennepin County's maximum out-of-pocket costs for single coverage are \$3,500. Even after our changes, for Tier 1 and Tier 2 our maximum is \$2,750. For the federal government – which many people say is a very good plan – that maximum is \$5,500.

What's new in the dental plan?

The dental plan will now include a lifetime orthodontia benefits increase from \$2,400 to \$3,000, preventative dental services will no longer apply to a person's \$2,000 annual maximum dental benefit, and employees will now have coverage for repairs on a tooth that has previously been repaired without waiting two years. Employees with dependent or family (single and dependent) coverage will pay an additional \$1.66 monthly premium in 2020. There is no increase in premiums for single dental coverage.

What will the vision plan look like?

The Joint Labor Management coalition will meet to determine the parameters and details of the plan. The plan will go out for bid and a provider will be chosen. Unions must then sign-off on the vision plan before it goes into effect. The anticipated start date of this optional optical insurance plan is Jan. 1, 2021.

How will my health care costs compare to my wage increases?

Most MAPE members receiving the 2.25 and 2.5 percent wage increases over the next two years, including those eligible for step increases averaging 3.55 percent, will see a clear increase in wages. MAPE has developed a tool to allow you to calculate your own wages based on the proposed 2019-2021 contract at <https://mape.org/wage-calculator>. You will also be able to estimate your health care costs by looking at the chart below the calculator which shows the healthcare costs differences between the health care plans for the 2017-2019 and 2019-2021 contracts.

How do I apply for the student loan reimbursement program?

New language has been included in the contract allowing agencies the option of offering student loan payment reimbursement not to exceed \$5,000 per calendar year or \$25,000 over five years. Participating employees will be required to have been employed for 18 months and remain employed for one year after receiving a reimbursement payment.

Several agencies have expressed interest in opting into such a program and this will be an opportunity for members to join together to let their agency leaders know this is a priority to them. If you want your agency to take up this option, we encourage you reach out to your agency's Meet and Confer team and ask how you can help get involved.

What is Career Mapping?

Throughout a discussion on employee career paths and recognizing the need for professional development, the employer has agreed to simplify its classification system by providing more up-to-date class specifications, better distinction between classes in a series and continuing dialogue with members to address gaps in clarity and continued improvements. The employer also agreed to encourage agencies to accept employees from different agencies as part of their professional development.

What is phased retirement?

MAPE's current phased retirement program has been expanded. Agencies may participate by providing notice to MMB and MAPE. The program is no longer restricted to specific agencies. Phased retirement may now be granted for up to six months, instead of three months, without any additional written agreements.

Full-time employees at participating agencies who have reached aged 55 or more, have 10 or more years of continuous state service, and have given written notice of their retirement date to the Appointing Authority may be eligible to participate in the phased retirement program. The eligible employee's retirement date must occur in six months or less from the date of the phased retirement request. An employee requesting phased retirement shall submit the request in writing to the Appointing Authority.

If the request is approved, the length of the phased retirement period and the work schedule for the employee shall be mutually agreed upon by the employee and Appointing Authority. The employee's work schedule must be at least 50 percent time. At the end of the phased retirement period the employee must move to full retirement. Employees approved for the program shall be entitled to all rights and benefits of full-time employees.

What kind of recruiting incentives are being offered in this contract?

The employer may offer a recruiting incentive of up to \$5,000 to new employees who accept a hard-to-fill position. The employer may also offer a referral incentive up to \$1,000 to current employees who refer a new employee to a hard-to-fill position. Hard-to-fill positions will be determined by MMB with payments made in installments.

What's being done to address the recruitment and retention issues in IT?

Additional pay grids for Information Technology Specialists (ITS) positions have been added. There is no new language accompanying the pay scale, but this offers more pay and allows for future flexibility around recruitment and retention in IT.

What changes have been made to the sick leave policy?

The sick leave policy has been amended to allow the use of sick leave for adult children, grandparents, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother or sister and grandchild. It is also expanded to allow sick leave use for obtaining assistance or providing assistance to a covered relative for sexual assault, domestic abuse or stalking.

Are we getting a bereavement policy?

Employees who do not have sufficient accruals to take bereavement leave for covered family members will be allowed to get a credited amount of sick leave, not to exceed 40 hours, to cover their leave. The credited hours would be paid back in subsequent pay periods.

What is being done for people at the top of their pay range?

MMB is now allowed to make equity adjustments and advance incumbents within a pay range and/or provide a one-time lump sum payment of \$2,500 to an individual at the top of their range who has at least a satisfactory job performance. We expect this to be used only in limited circumstances.

What's being done to help temporary unclassified employees?

Employers are required, whenever practicable, to notify a temporary unclassified employee a minimum of 14 days in advance of the scheduled end of their position to update them on what their status will be at the end of their appointment. We will continue our efforts to improve the working conditions of temporary unclassified employees. If you want to get involved, let your local Negotiation Representative know. There is still more to do.

Will employees with disabilities using assistive devices be able to attend trainings?

An employee with a disability using an assistive device can attend training paid for by vacation and sick leave accruals.

Have improvements been made to tribal voting?

Voting in a tribal election is now included in voting time eligibility. This provides pay for the time it takes an employee to vote in a tribal election.

What's being done about letters of expectation?

MAPE was able to win language that letters of expectation are not discipline and can be removed from a personnel file after six months of satisfactory performance. Prior to this, letters of expectation could remain in personnel files for an undetermined amount of time.

Are employees now guaranteed a Loudermill hearing?

Before an employee is suspended or terminated, they have a right to meet with the employer – with union representation – to plead their case. Previously, this right was only guaranteed for terminations; now it is guaranteed for all suspensions.

What are the next steps?

There are proposals and ideas that didn't make it into this 2019-2021 tentative agreement but that doesn't mean it's the last we'll hear of them. Our work isn't done, and neither is yours. Once the tentative agreement goes into effect, there will be opportunities for all of us to act.

All of the Negotiations Committee representatives will be meeting with members in their regions to discuss the tentative agreement and next steps; meeting dates and locations are available on the MAPE website, www.mape.org.

When does voting on the tentative agreement begin?

Following the regional informational meetings, **electronic voting on the tentative agreement will begin on Aug. 14** and continue through 11:59 p.m. on Aug. 26. Only members may vote on the tentative agreement. The MAPE office must receive membership applications by 11:59 p.m. on **Aug. 9 to vote**. You may join online at www.mape.org/join-mape.

What happens if members don't vote to ratify the agreement?

According to MAPE bylaws, if the tentative agreement is rejected by a majority of the voting members, a strike is automatically authorized. The Board of Directors must then vote to implement the strike.

What happens if members approve the tentative agreement?

If the agreement is ratified by members, it will be sent to MMB and then forwarded on to the Subcommittee on Employee Relations (SER) for action.

- The SER must act within 30 days of official filing from MMB, which typically can be 30-60 days from the time our voting ends.
- By majority vote, the SER can vote to approve or not approve our contract on an interim basis.
- If the SER has a tie vote or does not act at all, the contract goes into effect on an interim basis.
- If approved, the full legislature must take up the contract for final approval during the 2020 legislative session.
- We'll continue to meet with legislators and share personal stories and talk about the work we do, and the services we provide, for our fellow Minnesotans. MAPE is working on setting up constituent meetings with SER members to talk about the contract and urge their approval. We will need your participation in these meetings.