

**City of Alexandria, Virginia
FY 2027 Proposed Operating Budget & CIP
Budget Questions & Answers**

April 9, 2026

Question:

How do Alexandria's animal control officer pay and job descriptions compare across the region?

Response:

*Note: Response updated since original publish date. The City had not received Arlington County's salary data at the time the budget memo was published. Following the release of the budget memo, staff received the information, which was added to the comparator summary table and differences were recalculated.

The City contracts with the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) to provide animal shelter management and animal control services, a business model also used by Arlington County. The AWLA maintains a staff of five animal services officers and the Chief of Animal Control to enforce all state and city laws pertaining to the humane care and control of animals. The City's contracted rate for entry-level animal services officers is \$20-24/hour, with higher hourly rates available to candidates already credentialed in the Commonwealth. These hourly rates equate to annual salaries ranging from \$41,600-\$49,920 a year. The job class specification for the supervisor role indicates a starting annual salary of \$58,000-\$60,000, commensurate with experience and qualification.

The Department of Human Resources, in collaboration with the AWLA, obtained pay and job description information from Fairfax, Montgomery, Arlington, and Prince George's County for their entry-level animal services officer positions. AWLA's officers provide services that closely mirror those in neighboring jurisdictions, including cruelty investigations, enforcement of state and local animal laws, rabies control, animal capture and transport, and humane euthanasia. A notable difference is that AWLA officers have a larger responsibility in coordinating directly with law enforcement and legal/compliance employees on cruelty/neglect cases, along with running the City's rabies control program.

Salary range information from Fairfax, Montgomery, Arlington, and Prince George's County is provided in the table below. Findings show that the AWLA's entry-level salary at the minimum end of the scale (\$20/hour) is currently 17% lower than the average salary of comparator jurisdictions (\$24.20/hour). To increase the minimum entry-level salary to \$24.35/hour, or \$50,648, would require an additional \$27,000 be added to the City's contract with the AWLA.

Salary Range Comparison for Entry-Level Animal Services Officers

County	Min	Mid	Max
Fairfax County	\$56,905	\$75,873	\$94,841
Montgomery County	\$55,648	\$71,552	\$87,456
Prince George’s County	\$40,272	\$61,309	\$82,346
Arlington County (AWLA) ¹	\$48,317	\$50,960	\$60,320
Average, Neighboring Jurisdictions	\$50,286	\$64,924	\$81,241
City of Alexandria (AWLA) ²	\$41,600	\$45,760	\$49,920
Salary Difference, Average in Neighboring Jurisdictions to AWLA	\$8,686	\$19,164	\$31,321
AWLA Salary Compared to Average in Neighboring Jurisdictions	-17.27%	-29.52%	-38.55%

¹ Arlington County is the only local jurisdiction following the same business model as Alexandria; they operate through contractual services and utilize pay bands.

² Entry-level animal services officers (ASO) can make as much as \$24.00/hour or \$49,920 after one year if they meet all training incentives. At \$24.00/hour, when compared to entry-level ASOs across the comparator jurisdictions after one year, the entry-level salaries of AWLA ACOs are 1.5% below other local jurisdictions.