



## ASSOCIATION OF DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

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# BARGAINING UPDATE

## *THE COUNTY CHOOSES NEW HIRES OVER PROMOTIONS SALARY COMPARISON TO OTHER COUNTIES*

Your ADDA Contract Negotiations Team (“CNT”) is continuing our efforts to secure improved salary, benefits and workplace conditions for you. We have had some recent developments that are rather interesting:

**1. TWENTY ADDITIONAL NEW HIRES INSTEAD OF 100 GRADE IV PROMOTIONS** – Earlier in the negotiations process, DA management informed the CNT that the DA’s office received approval to hire 20 DDA I’s. Given the attrition in the office, we did not raise any objection. A DDA I’s starting pay is approximately \$61,824 (the Count conducted a salary comparison among other counties and confirmed that Los Angeles County’s pay is the second lowest for DDA I’s. This is discussed below). We then discovered at a recent bargaining session that the DA’s office obtained approval to hire an additional 20 DDA I’s, doubling the new hires to 40, and the approval to do so was recently granted.

As a general rule, the County’s overall cost for an employee’s salary and benefits is 1 ½ times their salary. Therefore, each new Grade I costs approximately \$90,000 per year. These new 40 DDAs will cost the County approximately \$3.6 million dollars in the first year alone. Given the virtual automatic promotions to Grade II, each new hire will cost an additional \$13,656 in salary, and \$20,484 for salary and benefits for a total of approximately \$4.4 million dollars. By contrast, Grade IV promotions only cost the County a 5.5% increase in salary for each promoted DDA. Assuming that a person is a top step Grade III when promoted to Grade IV, the salary increase would only be approximately \$7,338 per DDA. For far less money, the remaining list of Grade IV’s could all have been promoted, and every DDA in the office could receive an annual bonus of \$2,000, and the County still would have saved money.

The following chart provides a quick summary, incorporating the assumptions above:

Comparison of 40 Additional New Hires to 40 Promotions			
	New Hire	Grade IV Promotion	Annual Salary Bonus
Salary	\$61,824 per DDA	\$7,338 per DDA	\$2,000 per DDA
Salary and Benefits	\$90,000 per DDA	\$10,500 per DDA	N/A
Total Cost	\$3,600,000	\$420,000	\$1,920,000

Given that the mantra repeated by the County that there is no money we are concerned with what has happened. When your CNT confronted the County as to why there was not a more equitable balance between new hires and promotions, the County simply stated, “It does not work that way.” They claimed we can not trade promotions for new hires. Our position in contrast is simple, “Money is money!” During his first campaign, District Attorney Steve Cooley stated, “Budget increases should go to

promotions, not automatically to the hiring of more deputies.” The County claims that we do not have an attrition or retention problem, but if we do not have a retention problem, then why are we hiring so many new DDAs?

**2. THE COUNTY WAS INDISPUTABLY WRONG IN COMPARISON OF SALARIES** – At a recent bargaining session the County attempted to present financial comparisons between L.A. DDAs and those in Santa Clara, Orange, Sacramento, Riverside, Ventura, San Bernardino and San Diego counties. The survey revealed that the starting salary for a Los Angeles County DDA is second from the bottom! The County conceded that our DA received a 23% pay increase. The County’s position was simple: the L.A. District Attorney should be the highest paid DA in California due to the size of the office and the seriousness and complexity of the cases prosecuted. Likewise, Los Angeles County Judges receive a County boost to their salary to account for the higher cost of living. The County’s position was simple: it was necessary to recruit and retain the best judges. Our judges are some of the top paid judges in the State. By contrast, though the County acknowledges that we handle more serious and violent cases per DDA than any other county, but in their own study they reveal that the starting salary for a DDA is second from the bottom! Your CNT believes that Los Angeles DDAs should be accorded the same respect, and be the top paid prosecutors in the state due to the higher cost of living, complexity and seriousness of the cases handled and the volume of the work.

Interestingly, the County claimed that L.A. does not compare to Santa Clara because some of their Grade IVs are also supervisors. When the CNT pointed out that supervisors like Assistant Head Deputies, Deputies-In-Charge, and VIP Coordinators are also Grade IVs the County was speechless and baffled. The County claimed they took into consideration the higher cost of living in Los Angeles, but when confronted failed to explain how they made the adjustments. Housing costs in Los Angeles County are 25% to 50% higher than nearly all of the comparison counties. Despite discussions, the County failed to take into consideration the promotion process in Los Angeles, which often requires 10 to 15 years of hard work prior to receiving a Grade IV. This is significantly longer than Santa Clara, Riverside and every other county, but the County failed to take this into consideration. The County was also misinformed when they claimed that Santa Clara does not get life time medical for retirement, another mistake we pointed out. Unlike the County, your CNT has reviewed nearly all available MOUs for DDAs throughout the state to prepare for bargaining. Having done so, we disproved the false propositions and assumptions asserted by the County. We are optimistic that the County will return with a more comprehensive and accurate salary survey in the future.

Although we understand that economic times are challenging, nevertheless our position in the face of this was quite reasonable: All we urged was a commitment from the County that Los Angeles deputy district attorneys should be the highest paid in the state. This is our goal and it’s based on the simple fact that we handle more cases per DDA and we handle more serious and violent cases per DDA.

These are some of the issues we have been addressing on your behalf. Despite what many believe, these are not bad times to be bargaining. While huge economic gains are not likely, commitments to better pay and benefits can be gained as well as improvement to workplace conditions.

Your continued support is essential to the betterment of your own economic position. If you have not already joined the hundreds of DDAs who are active dues paying members of the ADDA to fund our negotiations please contact us at [LA-ADDA@hotmail.com](mailto:LA-ADDA@hotmail.com) and request a dues deduction card. As always if you have any questions or want a summary of our initial proposal please e-mail us.