

Compensation Discussion and Analysis

This Compensation Discussion and Analysis provides an overview of the elements and philosophy of our executive compensation program as well as how and why the Compensation Committee and our Board of Directors make specific compensation decisions and policies with respect to our Named Executive Officers (“NEOs”).

Executive Summary



We delivered strong performance in 2023. Kroger achieved strong results in 2023 as we executed on our *Leading with Fresh and Accelerating with Digital* strategy, building on growth in 2021 and 2022. We are delivering a fresh, affordable, and seamless shopping experience for our customers, with zero compromise on quality, selection, or convenience. We are delivering on our financial commitments through our strong, resilient Value Creation Model. In 2023, we achieved financial performance results of ID sales, without fuel, of 0.9% with underlying ID sales without fuel of 2.3%¹, and adjusted FIFO operating profit, including fuel, of \$5.0 billion².



Our executive compensation program aligns with long-term shareholder value creation. 92% of our CEO’s target total direct compensation and, on average, 84% of the other NEOs’ compensation is at risk and performance-based, tied to achievement of performance targets that are important to our shareholders or our long-term share price performance.



The annual performance incentive was earned below target. The annual incentive program, based on a grid of identical sales, excluding fuel, and adjusted FIFO operating profit, including fuel, paid out at 24.02% of target, in line with the goals and targets set by the Committee.



The long-term performance incentive payout reflects alignment with performance over fiscal years 2021, 2022, and 2023. Long-term performance unit equity awards granted in 2021 and tied to commitments made to our investors and other stakeholders regarding long-term sales growth, adjusted FIFO operating profit growth, free cash flow generation, our commitment to Fresh, and relative Total Shareholder Return were earned at 83.34% of target.



We prioritized investment in our people. We strive to create a culture of opportunity for more than 414,000 associates and take seriously our role as a leading employer in the United States. In 2023, we invested more than ever in our associates by continuing to raise our average hourly wage to nearly \$19, or nearly \$25, including industry-leading benefits.



In response to our shareholder feedback, we incorporated an ESG metric focused on diversity and inclusion into our individual performance management program, beginning in 2022. Our core values of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion are incorporated into compensation decisions made for our associates who supervise a team of others, which range from store department leaders through our NEOs. These performance goals are factored into compensation decisions for these leaders, including salary increases and the amount of the annual grant of equity awards.

¹ ID Sales without fuel would have grown 2.3% in 2023 if not for the reduction in pharmacy sales from the termination of our agreement with Express Scripts effective December 31, 2022.

² See pages 29-36 of our Annual Report on Form 10-K for the fiscal year ended February 3, 2024, filed with the SEC on April 2, 2024, for a reconciliation of GAAP operating profit to adjusted FIFO operating profit.

Our Named Executive Officers for Fiscal 2023

Name	Title
W. Rodney McMullen	Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Gary Millerchip	Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer
Stuart W. Aitken	Senior Vice President and Chief Merchant & Marketing Officer
Yael Cosset	Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer
Timothy A. Massa	Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer

Fiscal 2023 Financial and Strategic Performance Highlights

Driven by our unwavering purpose to Feed the Human Spirit, Kroger achieved strong results in 2023 as we executed on our *Leading with Fresh and Accelerating with Digital* strategy, building on growth in 2021 and 2022. Our associates are customer-focused, delivering the products customers want, when and how they want them, with zero compromise on quality, convenience, and selection.

In 2023, we achieved financial performance results of ID sales, without fuel, of 0.9%, with underlying ID sales without fuel of 2.3%¹ and adjusted FIFO operating profit of \$5.0 billion. We have built a digital platform that offers a seamless shopping experience, allowing customers to shift effortlessly between store, pickup and delivery solutions. In 2023, we increased delivery sales, increased digitally engaged households, and grew loyalty as our customers more deeply engaged with personalized coupons and fuel rewards.

Our associates enable our success, and we are committed to investing in theirs by continuing to improve wages, comprehensive benefits, and career development opportunities. Over the last five years, we have invested more than \$2.4 billion in incremental wage investments.

Continued strategic efforts to streamline our operations allowed us to achieve cost savings greater than \$1 billion to balance these investments without compromising food affordability for our customers across our communities.

As part of our Zero Hunger | Zero Waste social and environmental impact plan, in 2023, we donated nearly 455 million meals to feed families across America.

Our proven go-to-market strategy enables us to successfully navigate many operating environments. We believe that by delivering value for our customers, investing in our associates and serving our communities, we will continue to achieve attractive and sustainable total returns for our shareholders.

2023 Advisory Vote to Approve Executive Compensation and Shareholder Engagement

At the 2023 annual meeting, we held our annual advisory vote on executive compensation. Approximately 91% of the votes cast were in favor of the advisory vote. As part of our ongoing dialogue with our shareholders regarding governance matters, in 2023, we requested meetings with 39 shareholders representing 59% of our outstanding shares during proxy season and off-season engagement and 16 shareholders representing 39% of our outstanding shares accepted our invitation to share feedback. Some investors we contacted either did not respond or confirmed that a discussion was not needed at that time.

Conversations in these meetings included discussions about our NEOs' compensation program, with our shareholders providing feedback that they appreciated the pay-for-performance structure of our executive pay program. The Compensation Committee considers both the general and specific feedback received from shareholders, and with the guidance of our independent compensation consultant, incorporates that input into pay design.

During shareholder engagement, we specifically discuss our shareholders' perspectives on ESG metrics in executive compensation programs. Our investors are all supportive of decisions to incorporate ESG metrics, but none are prescriptive about how to do so. Our investors share our view that a range of ESG matters are essential to our current and future success, and acknowledge that ESG priorities are embedded into our strategic and operational priorities. Management collects and reports the feedback to the Compensation Committee, and the Committee decided, beginning in 2022, to integrate our core values of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion into compensation decisions made for our associates who supervise a team of others, which range from store department leaders

¹ ID Sales without fuel would have grown 2.3% in 2023 if not for the reduction in pharmacy sales from the termination of our agreement with Express Scripts effective December 31, 2022.

through our NEOs. Specifically, one of several performance goals established for these associates and senior officers relate to improvement in the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion category score as measured by our annual Associate Insights Survey and active mentorship and development of at least one other associate with a different background. These performance goals are factored into compensation decisions for these associates and senior officers, including salary increases and the amount of the annual grant of equity awards, consistent with our program design as described herein.

2023 Compensation Program Overview

The fixed and at-risk pay elements of the NEO compensation program are reflected in the following table and charts.

	Element	Form	Description	
ANNUAL / SHORT-TERM INCENTIVE	Base Salary	Cash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attract, incentivize, retain talented executives Fixed cash component Reviewed annually <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No automatic or guaranteed increases Based on individual performance & experience 	FIXED
	Annual Incentive Plan	Cash Bonus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Metrics and targets align with annual business goals; payout depends on actual performance against each goal Rewards and incentivizes Kroger employees, including NEOs, for annual performance on key financial and operational metrics 	VARIABLE / AT-RISK
LONG-TERM INCENTIVE	Performance-Based Equity	Performance Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance units are equity grants which are "paid out" in Kroger common shares, dependent upon company performance against each goal, at the end of the 3-year performance period Measures performance on key financial and operational metrics over a 3-year period and payout is subject to a relative TSR modifier Designed to create shareholder value, foster executive retention, and align NEO and shareholder interests 	
	Time-Based Equity	Restricted Stock Stock Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stock options and restricted stock for NEOs vest ratably over 4 years; exercise price of stock options is closing price on day of grant Provides direct alignment to stock price appreciation and rewards executives for the achievement of long-term business objectives and providing incentives for the creation of shareholder value 	

Fiscal Year 2023 CEO Compensation

The Compensation Committee establishes Mr. McMullen's target direct compensation such that only 8% of his compensation is fixed. The remaining 92% of target compensation is at-risk, meaning that the actual compensation Mr. McMullen receives will depend on the extent to which the Company achieves the performance metrics set by the Compensation Committee, and with respect to all of the equity vehicles, the future value of Kroger common shares.

The table below compares fiscal 2023 to 2022 target direct compensation. Target total direct compensation is a more accurate reflection of how the Compensation Committee benchmarks and establishes CEO compensation than the disclosure provided in the Summary Compensation Table, which includes a combination of actual base salary and annual incentive compensation earned in the fiscal year, the grant date fair market value of at-risk equity compensation to be earned in future fiscal years, and the actuarial value of future pension benefits.

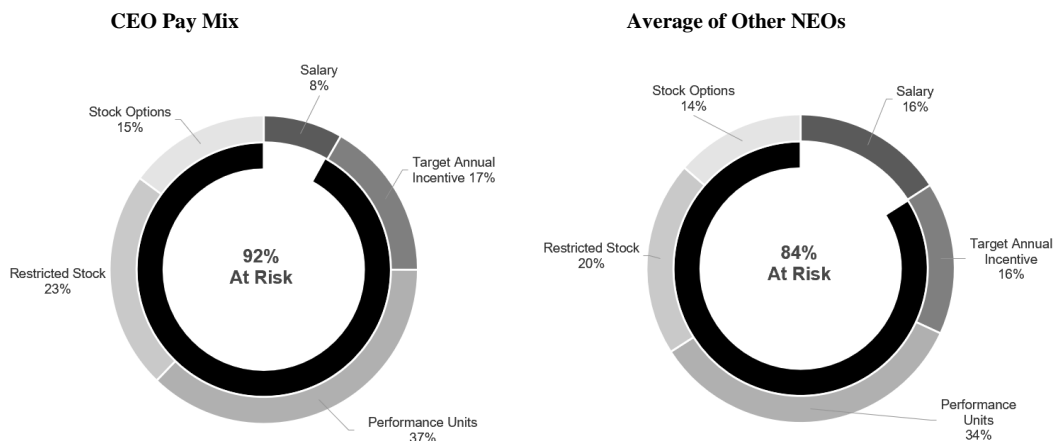
Mr. McMullen's total target direct compensation shown below was based on our independent compensation consultant's examination of pay levels and the Committee's intention to achieve median pay levels among our peer group. Mr. McMullen's base salary and target annual incentive remained unchanged in fiscal 2023. The only increase was to his long-term equity compensation to position his total target direct compensation to market median. Target total compensation, which is the sum of target annual compensation and target long-term compensation, is positioned around market median.

(\$000s)

Year	Annual			Long-Term				Target TDC	Increase
	Salary	Target Annual Incentive	Total Annual	Performance Units	Restricted Stock	Stock Options	Total LTI		
2023	1,400	2,800	4,200	6,250	3,750	2,500	12,500	16,700	+6.4%
2022	1,400	2,800	4,200	5,750	3,450	2,300	11,500	15,700	

CEO and Named Executive Officer Target Pay Mix

The amounts used in the charts below are based on 2023 target total direct compensation for the CEO and the average of other NEOs. As illustrated below, 92% of the CEO’s target total direct compensation is at-risk. On average, 84% of the other NEOs’ compensation is at risk.



Our Compensation Philosophy and Objectives

Our executive compensation philosophy is to attract and retain the best management talent as well as motivate these associates to achieve our business and financial goals. Kroger’s incentive plans are designed to reward the actions that lead to long-term value creation. We believe our strategy creates value for shareholders in a manner consistent with Kroger’s purpose: To Feed the Human Spirit. The Compensation Committee believes that there is a strong link between our business strategy, the performance metrics in our short-term and long-term incentive programs, and the business results that drive shareholder value.

To achieve our objectives, the Compensation Committee seeks to ensure that compensation is competitive and that there is a direct link between pay and performance. To do so, it is guided by the following principles:

- Compensation must be designed to attract and retain those individuals who are best suited to be an NEO at Kroger.
- A significant portion of pay should be performance-based, with the percentage of total pay tied to performance increasing proportionally with an NEO’s level of responsibility.
- Compensation should include incentive-based pay to drive performance, providing superior pay for superior performance, including both a short- and long-term focus.
- Compensation policies should include an opportunity for, and a requirement of, significant equity ownership to align the interests of NEOs and shareholders.
- Components of compensation should be tied to an evaluation of business and individual performance measured against metrics that directly drive our business strategy and progress toward our corporate ESG priorities.
- Compensation plans should provide a direct line of sight to company performance.
- Compensation programs should be aligned with market practices.
- Compensation programs should serve to both motivate and retain talent.

Summary of Key Compensation Practices

What we do:	What we do not do:
✓ Alignment of pay and performance	× No employment contracts with executive officers
✓ Stock ownership guidelines for executives	× No special severance or change in control programs applicable only to executive officers
✓ Multiple performance metrics under our short- and long-term performance-based plans discourage excessive risk taking and align with our long-term value creation strategy	× No cash component in long-term incentive plans
✓ Double-trigger change in control provisions in all equity awards	× No tax gross-up payments for executives
✓ Double-trigger change in control provisions in cash severance benefits	× No special executive life insurance benefit
✓ All long-term compensation is equity-based	× No re-pricing or backdating of stock options without shareholder approval
✓ Engagement of an independent compensation consultant	× No guaranteed salary increases or bonuses
✓ Robust clawback policy	× No payment of dividends or dividend equivalents until performance units are earned
✓ Ban on hedging, pledging, and short sales of Kroger securities	× No evergreen or reload feature; no shares can be added to stock plan without shareholder approval
✓ Minimal perquisites	

Establishing Each Component of Executive Compensation

The Compensation Committee recommends, and the independent members of the Board determine, each component of the CEO's compensation. The CEO recommends, and the Compensation Committee determines, each component of the other NEOs' compensation. The Compensation Committee and the Board made changes to compensation in March of 2023. Equity awards were granted in March and salary and annual incentive plan increases were effective April 1, 2023.

The Compensation Committee determines the amount of each NEO's salary, annual cash incentive plan target, and long-term equity compensation by taking into consideration numerous factors including:

- An assessment of individual contribution and performance;
- Benchmarking with comparable positions at peer group companies;
- Level in organization and tenure in role; and
- Internal equity among executives.

The assessment of individual contribution and performance is a qualitative determination, based on the following factors:

- Leadership;
- Contribution to the executive officer group;
- Achievement of established performance objectives;
- Decision-making abilities;
- Performance of the areas or groups directly reporting to the NEO;
- Support of company culture;
- Strategic thinking; and
- Demonstrated commitment to Kroger's Values: Safety, Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Diversity, and Inclusion, including improvement in the DE&I category score as measured by our annual Associate Insights Survey and active mentorship and development of at least one other associate with a different background.

At the end of each year, individual performance is evaluated based on the NEO's performance objectives listed above, and the results of that evaluation are used in the determination of salary increases and the grant amount of all annual equity awards: restricted stock and stock options, which are time-based, and performance units granted under the long-term incentive plan, which are performance-based.

Elements of Compensation

Salary

Our philosophy with respect to salary is to provide a sufficient and stable source of fixed cash compensation that is competitive with the market to attract and retain a high caliber leadership team. NEO salaries, effective April 1, 2022 and April 1, 2023 were as follows:

Name	2022 Base Salary	2023 Base Salary
W. Rodney McMullen	\$1,400,000	\$1,400,000
Gary Millerchip	\$825,000	\$900,000
Stuart W. Aitken	\$925,000	\$1,000,000
Yael Cosset	\$825,000	\$875,000
Timothy A. Massa	\$850,000	\$900,000

2023 Annual Incentive Plan

The NEOs participate in a corporate performance-based annual cash incentive plan. The corporate annual cash incentive plan is a broad-based plan used across the Kroger enterprise. Approximately 54,000 associates are eligible to receive incentive payouts based all or in part on the incentive plan described below. The value of annual cash incentive awards that the NEOs earn each year is based upon Kroger's overall company performance compared to goals established by the Compensation Committee based on the business plan adopted by the Board of Directors.

A minimum level of performance must be achieved before any payout is earned, while a payout of up to 200% of target incentive potential can be achieved for superior performance on the corporate plan metrics. There are no guaranteed or minimum payouts; if none of the performance goals are achieved, then none of the incentive amount is earned, and no payout is made.

The annual cash incentive plan is designed to encourage decisions and behavior that drive the annual operating results and the long-term success of the Company. Kroger's success is based on a combination of factors, and accordingly, the Compensation Committee believes that it is important to encourage behavior that supports multiple elements of our business strategy.

NEO target incentive potentials for fiscal years 2022 and 2023, were as follows:

Name	2022 Target Annual Incentive	2023 Target Annual Incentive
W. Rodney McMullen	\$2,800,000	\$2,800,000
Gary Millerchip	\$850,000	\$950,000
Stuart W. Aitken	\$850,000	\$950,000
Yael Cosset	\$850,000	\$950,000
Timothy A. Massa	\$775,000	\$850,000

2023 Annual Incentive Plan Metrics

Metric	Rationale for Use
Sales and Profit Grid, Maximum Payout of 200% of Target	
ID Sales, excluding Fuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identical Sales (“ID Sales”) represent sales, excluding fuel, at our supermarkets that have been open without expansion or relocation for five full quarters, excluding supermarket fuel sales, plus sales growth at all other customer-facing non-supermarket businesses. • We believe that ID Sales are the best measure of real growth of our sales across the enterprise. A key driver of our model is ID Sales growth.
Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including Fuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This financial metric equals gross profit, excluding the LIFO charge, minus OG&A, minus rent, and minus depreciation and amortization. • Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including fuel, is a key measure of company success as it tracks our earnings from operations, and it measures our day-to-day operational effectiveness. It is a useful measure to investors because it reflects the revenue and expense that a company can control.

Potential payouts under the plan are based on Company performance on two primary metrics, ID Sales, excluding Fuel, and Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including Fuel. The performance objectives are shown in the grid below, with payouts interpolated for actual performance between levels.

The goals established by the Compensation Committee were as follows:

ID Sales, excluding Fuel and Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including Fuel

		ID Sales, excluding Fuel				
		-1.30%	0.95%	3.20%	5.45%	7.70%
Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including fuel (\$M)	≥4,983	0%	14%	20%	29%	40%
	≥5,083	10%	25%	45%	60%	75%
	≥5,183	20%	65%	80%	95%	115%
	≥5,283	30%	75%	90%	105%	130%
	≥5,383	40%	85%	100%	115%	160%
	≥5,483	55%	95%	110%	125%	170%
	≥5,583	70%	105%	120%	135%	180%
	≥ 5,683	100%	115%	130%	155%	190%
	≥5,783	110%	125%	140%	170%	200%

2023 Annual Incentive Plan – Actual Results and Payout Percentage

Corporate Plan Metric	2023 Performance ⁽¹⁾	Payout
Identical Sales, excluding fuel	0.9%	24.02%
Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including fuel	\$5.0B	
Total Payout		24.02%

(1) See grid above.

Following the close of the 2023 fiscal year, the Compensation Committee reviewed Kroger’s performance against each of the metrics outlined above and determined the extent to which Kroger achieved those objectives. Our performance compared to the goals established by the Compensation Committee resulted in a payout of 24.02% of the participant’s incentive plan target for the NEOs, with the exception of Mr. Aitken.

Mr. Aitken’s annual bonus payout equaled 22.71% of his bonus potential because it included the corporate annual plan described above and a team metric as follows. The merchandising team metric measured supermarket ID sales excluding pharmacy and fuel, and supermarket selling gross dollars less shrink dollars for all departments excluding pharmacy and fuel.

	Payout Percentage	Weight
Corporate Annual Bonus Plan	24.02%	60%
Merchandising Team Metric	20.75%	40%
Total Payout	$(24.02\% \times 0.6) + (20.75\% \times 0.4\%) = 22.71\%$	

The Compensation Committee maintains the ability to reduce the annual cash incentive payout for all executive officers, including the NEOs, and the independent directors retain that discretion for the CEO’s incentive payout if they determine for any reason that the incentive payouts were not appropriate given their assessment of Company or individual performance. No adjustments were made to the incentive payout amount in 2023.

As described above, the corporate annual incentive payout percentage is applied to each NEO’s incentive plan target which is determined by the Compensation Committee, and the independent directors in the case of the CEO. The actual amounts of performance-based annual incentive paid to the NEOs for 2023 are reported in the Summary Compensation Table in the “Non-Equity Incentive Plan Compensation” column.

Long-Term Compensation Program

The Compensation Committee believes in the importance of providing an incentive to the NEOs to achieve the long-term goals established by the Board. As such, a majority of NEO compensation is dependent on the achievement of those goals. Long-term compensation promotes long-term value creation and discourages the over-emphasis of attaining short-term goals at the expense of long-term growth.

The long-term incentive program is structured to be a combination of performance- and time-based compensation that reflects elements of financial and common share performance to provide both retention value and alignment with company performance. The Compensation Committee determined that all long-term compensation would be equity-based as follows: 50% of equity granted under the program would be performance-based and the remaining 50% of equity would be time-based, consisting of 30% in restricted stock and 20% in stock options.

Each year, NEOs receive grants under the long-term compensation program, which is structured as follows:

- *Performance-Based (50% of NEO long-term target compensation)*
 - Long-term performance-based compensation is provided under a Long-Term Incentive Plan adopted by the Compensation Committee. The Committee adopts a new plan every year, measuring improvement on the Company’s long-term goals over successive three-year periods. Accordingly, at any one time there are three plans outstanding, which are summarized below.
 - Under the Long-Term Incentive Plans, NEOs receive grants of equity called performance units. A target number of performance units based on level and individual performance is awarded to each participant at the beginning of the three-year performance period.
 - Payouts under the plan are contingent on the achievement of certain strategic performance and financial measures and incentivize recipients to promote long-term value creation and enhance shareholder wealth by supporting the Company’s long-term strategic goals.
 - The payout percentage, based on the extent to which the performance metrics are achieved, is applied to the target number of performance units awarded. Then, a modifier based on Relative Total Shareholder Return compared to the S&P 500 is applied, which can increase or decrease the payout.
 - Performance units are paid out in Kroger common shares based on actual performance, along with dividend equivalents for the performance period on the number of issued common shares.
- *Time-Based (50% of NEO long-term target compensation)*
 - Long-term time-based compensation consists of 20% stock options and 30% restricted stock, which are linked to common share performance, creating alignment between the NEOs’ and our shareholders’ interests. Grants vest ratably over four years.
 - Stock options have no initial value and recipients only realize benefits if the value of our common shares increases following the date of grant, further aligning the NEOs’ and our shareholders’ interests.

Amounts of long-term compensation awards issued and outstanding for the NEOs are set forth in the Executive Compensation Tables section.

Summary of The Three Long-Term Incentive Plans Outstanding During 2023

With respect to our long-term performance-based compensation, the Compensation Committee designed plan metrics to align with Kroger’s long-term business plans and growth model. These metrics are the key elements in driving Kroger’s TSR.

The Compensation Committee adopts a new Long-Term Incentive Plan each year, which provides for overlapping three-year performance periods. Additional detail regarding each of the three plans is provided below, and a summary of the design of the plans outstanding during 2023 is as follows:

	2021 – 2023 LTIP	2022 – 2024 LTIP	2023 – 2025 LTIP
Performance Units and Dividend Equivalents	Performance units are equity grants which are paid out in Kroger common shares, based on actual performance at the end of the 3-year performance period, along with dividend equivalents for the performance period on the number of issued common shares ultimately earned.		
Performance Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons; • Growth in Adjusted FIFO; Operating Profit, including Fuel; • Cumulative Adjusted Free Cash Flow; • Fresh Equity metric; and • Relative Total Shareholder Return modifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons; • Value Creation Metric (iTSR) Percentage; • Fresh Equity metric; and • Relative Total Shareholder Return modifier 	
Determination of Payout	The payout percentage, based on the extent to which the performance metrics are achieved, is applied to number of performance units awarded.		
Maximum Payout	187.5%	187.5%	187.5%
Payout Date	March 2024	March 2025	March 2026

2021-2023 Long-Term Incentive Plan – Metrics

The 2021-2023 Long-Term Incentive Plan has the following components which support our long-term business plans, each accounting for 25% of the payout calculation:

Metric	Rationale for Use	Weighting
Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This metric represents total revenue dollars without fuel + the number of fuel gallons sold over the three-year term of the plan. It represents the important metric of top line growth of the business from all channels. 	25%
Growth in Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including Fuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This financial metric equals gross profit, excluding the LIFO charge, minus OG&A, minus rent, and minus depreciation and amortization. Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including fuel, is a key measure of company success as it tracks our earnings from operations, and it measures our day-to-day operational effectiveness. It is a useful measure to investors because it reflects the revenue and expense that a company can control. It is particularly important to focus on growth of this financial measure over time. 	25%
Cumulative Adjusted Free Cash Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumulative Adjusted Free Cash Flow is an adjusted free cash flow measure calculated as net cash provided by operating activities minus payments for property and equipment, including payments for lease buyout, plus or minus adjustments for certain items. It is an important measure for the business because it reflects the cash left over after the company pays for operating expenses and capital expenditures. 	25%
Fresh Equity metric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh is a key element of how people decide where to shop. It drives trips and therefore delivers business results. Fresh is the core focus of how we differentiate and drive great engagement with customers and it will be a key driver of our growth. 	25%

After the calculation of the four metrics above, a modifier based on Relative Total Shareholder Return compared to the S&P 500 will be applied which can increase or decrease the payout, as follows, interpolated for actual results between thresholds:

TSR Rank Relative to S&P 500	Modifier
25 th percentile	75%
50 th percentile	100%
75 th percentile	125%

The payout percentage, as modified by the Relative TSR modifier, will be applied to the target number of performance units granted under the plan to determine the payout amount. The maximum payout under the 2021-2023 Long-Term Incentive Plan is 187.5% as further described below.

Going into 2021, there were an extraordinary number and degree of unknowns that could have impacted our financial results. The Compensation Committee considered, among other factors, the course of the pandemic, including new COVID variants, availability and outcomes of vaccine programs, continuing sales trends, food at home and food away from home trends, inflation/deflation, and other potential market influencing events. To account for these unknowns, the Compensation Committee designed the 2021-2023 Long-Term Incentive Plan with an incremental goal setting approach due to our inability to forecast reliable long-term performance targets against the background of the economic uncertainty at the time. The Committee designed the plan to take into account the extraordinary uncertainties going into the three-year plan, while aligning to our identical sales and operating profit growth and productivity improvement goals, all in support of our long-term value creation model. Under the incremental goal setting approach, the plan was designed with clearly defined financial performance goals for 2021, and a mechanism for setting the 2022-2023 goals based on actual 2021 results.

For the 2021-2023 Long-Term Incentive Plan, the Compensation Committee aligned the plan with market practices, increasing the maximum payout potential on the four metrics from 100% to 150%. The highest payout from the four metrics alone equals 100%. However, the payout may exceed 100%, if for years 2 and 3 of the plan: (1) the Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons metric, the Growth in Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit, including Fuel, metric, and the Cumulative Adjusted Free Cash Flow metric all achieve 100%, and (2) the 2-year compound annual growth rate of Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons exceeds 3.5%. The plan payout will increase incrementally from 100%, up to 150% maximum if the 2-year compound annual growth rate on the Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons metric is 5.0%. With the potential application of the relative TSR modifier, the total maximum payout would be 187.5%.

2021-2023 Long-Term Incentive Plan – Results and Payout

The results and payout of the 2021-2023 Long-Term Incentive Plan are as follows.

2021 Results			
Metric	Performance	Goal	Payout Percentage for 2021 Portion of Plan
Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons	\$127.96B	\$123.99B	100%
Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit	\$4.31B	\$3.48B	100%
Adjusted Free Cash Flow	\$3.94B	\$1.7B	100%
Fresh Equity Metric	N/A		
Payout for 2021 Portion of Plan (1/3)			100%
2022-2023 Results			
Metric			Payout Percentage For 2022-2023 Portion of Plan
Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons	\$135.61B	\$135.75B	97.26%
Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit	\$4.80B	\$4.75B	100%
Adjusted Cumulative Free Cash Flow	\$4.9	\$4.7B	100%
Fresh Equity Metric	43.2	46.1	0%
Payout for 2022-2023 Portion of Plan (2/3)			74.32%
Combined Results			
Metric	Calculation		Payout Percentage for Full 2021-2023 Plan
Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons	$(100\% \times 1/3) + (97.25\% \times 2/3)$		98.17%
Adjusted FIFO Operating Profit	$(100\% \times 1/3) + (100\% \times 2/3)$		100%
Adjusted Cumulative Free Cash Flow	$(100\% \times 1/3) + (100\% \times 2/3)$		100%
Fresh Equity Measure			0%
Payout before Modifier	$(98.17\% \times 1/4) + (100\% \times 1/4) + (100\% \times 1/4) + (0\% \times 1/4)$		74.54%
Relative TSR Modifier*	191 st out of 500 in S&P 500 resulting in multiplier between 100% and 125%		111.8%
Total Payout for 2021-2023 Plan			83.34%

* The Company ranked 191st in the S&P 500 over the three year period for TSR. Based on this result, the Company is in the second quartile of TSR results within the S&P 500. Because the Company ranking falls between 125 and 375, the multiplier to be applied in order to calculate the final LTIP payout is calculated based on an interpolation of payouts between 75% and 125%, illustrated below:

TSR Rank in S&P 500	Payout Multiplier
1 to 125	125%
250	100%
375 to 500	75%
Actual Result = 191	111.8%

The NEOs were issued the number of Kroger common shares equal to 83.34% of the target number of performance units awarded to each executive, along with dividend equivalents for the three-year performance period on the number of issued common shares.

The dividend equivalents paid on common shares earned under the 2021 – 2023 Long-Term Incentive Plan are paid at the end of the plan and are reported in the “All Other Compensation” column of the Summary Compensation

Table and footnote 5 to that table, and the common shares issued under the plan are reported in the 2023 Option Exercises and Stock Vested Table and footnote 2 to that table.

The annual and long-term performance-based compensation awards described herein were made pursuant to our 2019 Long-Term Incentive Plan, which was approved by our shareholders in June 2019, and the 2019 Amended and Restated Long-Term Incentive Plan, which was approved by our shareholders in June 2022.

2022 – 2024 and 2023 – 2025 Long-Term Incentive Plan Metrics

Both the 2022 – 2024 and 2023 – 2025 Long-Term Incentive Plan metrics have been designed to reflect commitments made to our investors and other stakeholders regarding long-term sales growth, our Value Creation algorithm (through intrinsic Total Shareholder Return, or iTSR) and our commitment to Fresh as a strategic differentiator. The plan also includes a modifier based on our shareholder return relative to the S&P 500 shareholder return.

Metric	Rationale for Use	Weighting
Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This metric represents total revenue dollars without fuel + the number of fuel gallons sold over the three-year term of the plan. It represents the important metric of top line growth of the business from all channels. 	25%
Value Creation Metric (iTSR) Percentage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This financial metric equals adjusted earnings per diluted share (EPS) growth plus dividend yield. 	50%
Fresh Equity metric	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh is a key element of how people decide where to shop. It drives trips and therefore delivers business results. Fresh is the core focus of how we differentiate and drive great engagement with customers and it will be a key driver of our growth. 	25%

The highest payout from the three metrics alone equals 100%. However, the payout may exceed 100% if: (1) both the Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons metric and the iTSR metric achieve 100%, and (2) the 3-year compound annual growth rate of Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons exceeds 3.5%. The plan payout will increase incrementally from 100%, up to 150% maximum if the 3-year compound annual growth rate on the Total Sales without Fuel + Fuel Gallons metric is 5.0%.

After the calculation described above, a modifier based on Relative Total Shareholder Return compared to the S&P 500 will be applied, as follows, interpolated for actual results between the 25th percentile and 75th percentile thresholds:

TSR Rank Relative to S&P 500	Modifier
25 th percentile	75%
50 th percentile	100%
75 th percentile	125%

The payout percentage, as modified by the Relative TSR modifier, will be applied to the number of performance units granted under the plan to determine the payout amount. If all three metrics are achieved at the maximum level and the Relative Total Shareholder Return modifier is maximized, the total plan payout would be 187.5%.

Stock Options and Restricted Stock

Stock options and restricted stock continue to play an important role in rewarding NEOs for the achievement of long-term business objectives and providing incentives for the creation of shareholder value. Awards based on Kroger’s common shares are granted annually to the NEOs. Kroger historically has distributed time-based equity awards widely, aligning the interests of associates with interests of shareholders.

The options permit the holder to purchase Kroger common shares at an option price equal to the closing price of Kroger common shares on the date of the grant. Options are granted only on one of the four dates of Board meetings conducted at least one business day after Kroger’s public release of its quarterly earnings results.

The Compensation Committee determines the vesting schedule for stock options and restricted stock. During 2023, the Compensation Committee granted to the NEOs stock options and restricted stock, each with a four-year ratable vesting schedule.

Restricted stock awards are reported in the “Stock Awards” column of the Summary Compensation Table and footnote 1 to the table and the 2023 Grants of Plan Based Awards Table. Stock option awards are reported in the “Option Awards” column of the Summary Compensation Table and the “All other Option Awards” column of the 2023 Grants of Plan Based Awards Table.

Retirement and Other Benefits

Kroger maintains several defined benefit and defined contribution retirement plans for its associates. The NEOs participate in one or more of these plans, as well as one or more excess plans designed to make up the shortfall in retirement benefits created by limitations under the Internal Revenue Code (the “Code”) on benefits to highly compensated individuals under qualified plans. Additional details regarding certain retirement benefits available to the NEOs can be found below in footnote 5 to the Summary Compensation Table and the 2023 Pension Benefits Table and the accompanying narrative.

Kroger also maintains an executive deferred compensation plan in which the CEO has elected to participate. This plan is a nonqualified plan under which participants can elect to defer up to 100% of their cash compensation each year. Additional details regarding our nonqualified deferred compensation plans available to the NEOs can be found below in the 2023 Nonqualified Deferred Compensation Table and the accompanying narrative.

Kroger also maintains The Kroger Co. Employee Protection Plan (“KEPP”), which covers all of our management associates who are classified as exempt under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act and certain administrative or technical support personnel who are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement, with at least one year of service. KEPP has a double trigger change in control provision, and it provides for severance benefits and extended Kroger-paid health care, as well as the continuation of other benefits as described in the plan, when an associate is actually or constructively terminated without cause within two years following a change in control of Kroger (as defined in KEPP). Participants are entitled to severance pay of up to 24 months’ salary and annual incentive target. The actual amount is dependent upon pay level and years of service. KEPP can be amended or terminated by the Board at any time prior to a change in control.

Stock option and restricted stock grant agreements with award recipients provide that those awards “vest,” with options becoming immediately exercisable, and restrictions on restricted stock lapsing upon a change in control as described in the grant agreements, but only if an associate is actually or constructively terminated without cause within two years following a change in control of Kroger (as defined in the grant agreement, and consistent with KEPP).

None of the NEOs are party to an employment agreement.

Perquisites

Our NEOs receive limited perquisites as the Compensation Committee does not believe that it is necessary for the attraction or retention of management talent to provide executives with a substantial amount of compensation in the form of perquisites.

Process for Establishing Executive Compensation

The Compensation Committee of the Board has the primary responsibility for establishing the compensation of our executive officers, including the NEOs, with the exception of the CEO. The Compensation Committee’s role regarding the CEO’s compensation is to make recommendations to the independent members of the Board; those members of the Board establish the CEO’s compensation.

The Compensation Committee directly engaged Korn Ferry as a compensation consultant to advise the Compensation Committee in the design of compensation for executive officers and to advise with respect to the unique circumstances of the 2023 compensation cycle.

Korn Ferry conducted an annual competitive assessment of executive positions at Kroger for the Compensation Committee. The assessment is one of several factors, as described above, on which the Compensation Committee determines compensation. The consultant assessed:

- base salary;
- target performance-based annual cash incentive;
- target annual cash compensation (the sum of salary and annual cash incentive potential);
- long-term incentive compensation, comprised of performance units, stock options and restricted stock; and

- total direct compensation (the sum of target annual cash compensation and long-term compensation).

In addition to the factors identified above, the consultant also reviewed actual payout amounts against the targeted amounts.

The consultant compared these elements against those of other companies in a group of publicly traded companies selected by the Compensation Committee. For 2023, our peer group consisted of:

Albertsons	CVS Health	Sysco
Best Buy	Home Depot	Target
Cardinal Health	Johnson & Johnson	TJX Companies
Cencora, Inc (formerly known as	Lowe's	Walgreens Boots Alliance
AmerisourceBergen)	Procter & Gamble	Walmart
Costco Wholesale		

The make-up of the compensation peer group is reviewed annually and modified as circumstances warrant. In addition, the Compensation Committee considered supplemental data provided by its independent compensation consultant from “general industry” companies, a representation of the Fortune 40, excluding financial services companies. This data provided reference points, particularly for senior executive positions where competition for talent extends beyond the retail sector. The peer group includes a combination of food and drug retailers, other large retailers based on revenue size, and large consumer-facing companies. Median 2023 revenue for the peer group was \$108 billion, compared to our 2023 revenue of \$150 billion.

Considering the size of Kroger in relation to other peer group companies, the Compensation Committee believes that salaries paid to our NEOs should be competitively positioned relative to amounts paid by peer group companies for comparable positions. The Compensation Committee also aims to provide an annual cash incentive potential to our NEOs around the market median. Actual payouts may be as low as zero if performance does not meet the baselines established by the Compensation Committee while superior financial performance is rewarded with compensation falling above the median.

The independent members of the Board have the exclusive authority to determine the amount of the CEO's compensation. In setting total compensation, the independent directors consider the median compensation of the peer group's CEOs. With respect to the annual incentive plan, the independent directors make two determinations: (1) the annual cash incentive potential that will be multiplied by the corporate annual cash incentive payout percentage earned that is applicable to the NEOs and (2) the annual cash incentive amount paid to the CEO by retaining discretion to reduce the annual cash incentive percentage payout the CEO would otherwise receive under the formulaic plan. The independent directors also retain discretion to determine the form of payout, to include a portion in equity in place of cash.

The Compensation Committee performs the same function and exercises the same authority as to the other NEOs. In its annual review of compensation for the NEOs, the Compensation Committee:

- Conducts an annual review of all components of compensation, quantifying total compensation for the NEOs including a summary for each NEO of salary; performance-based annual cash incentive; and long-term performance-based equity comprised of performance units, stock options and restricted stock.
- Considers internal pay equity at Kroger to ensure that the CEO is not compensated disproportionately. The Compensation Committee has determined that the compensation of the CEO and that of the other NEOs bears a reasonable relationship to the compensation levels of other executive positions at Kroger taking into consideration performance and differences in responsibilities.
- Reviews a report from the Compensation Committee's compensation consultant reflecting a comprehensive review of each element of pay, both annual and long-term and comparing NEO compensation with that of other companies, including both our peer group of competitors and a larger general industry group, to ensure that the Compensation Committee's objectives of competitiveness are met.
- Takes into account a recommendation from the CEO for salary, annual cash incentive potential and long-term compensation awards for each of the senior officers including the other NEOs. The CEO's recommendation takes into consideration the objectives established by and the reports received by the Compensation Committee as well as his assessment of individual job performance and contribution to our management team.

The Compensation Committee does not make use of a formula, but both qualitatively and quantitatively considers each of the factors identified above in setting compensation.

Stock Ownership Guidelines

To more closely align the interests of our officers and directors with your interests as shareholders, the Board has adopted stock ownership guidelines. These guidelines require independent directors, executive officers, and other key executives to acquire and hold a minimum dollar value of Kroger common shares as set forth below:

Position	Multiple
Chief Executive Officer	5 times base salary
President and Chief Operating Officer	4 times base salary
Executive Vice Presidents and Senior Vice Presidents	3 times base salary
Independent Directors	5 times annual base cash retainer

All covered individuals are expected to achieve the target level within five years of appointment to their positions. Until the requirements are met, covered individuals, including the NEOs, must hold 100% of common shares issued pursuant to performance units earned, shares received upon the exercise of stock options and upon the vesting of restricted stock, except those necessary to pay the exercise price of the options and/or applicable taxes, and must retain all Kroger common shares unless the disposition is approved in advance by the CEO, or by the Board or Compensation Committee for the CEO.

Executive Compensation Recoupment Policy (Clawback)

Under the 2019 Amended and Restated Long-Term Incentive Plan (the “2019 Plan”), unless an award agreement provides otherwise, if a participant’s employment or service is terminated for cause, or if after termination the Compensation Committee determines either that (i) prior to termination, the participant engaged in an act or omission that would have warranted termination for cause or (ii) after termination, the participant violates any continuing obligation or duty of the participant with respect to Kroger, any gain realized by the participant from the exercise, vesting or payment of any award may be cancelled, forfeited or recouped in the sole discretion of the Committee. Under the 2019 Plan, any gain realized by the participant from the exercise, vesting or payment of any award may also be recouped if, within one year after such exercise, vesting or payment, (i) a participant is terminated for cause, (ii) the Compensation Committee determines that the participant is subject to recoupment pursuant to any Kroger policy, or (iii) after a participant’s termination for any reason, the Compensation Committee determines either that (1) prior to termination the participant engaged in an act or omission that would have warranted termination for cause, or (2) after termination the participant violates any continuing obligation or duty of the participant with respect to Kroger. Unless otherwise defined under 2019 Plan award agreement, “cause” has the meaning as defined in The Kroger Co. Employee Protection Plan, as amended from time to time.

Additionally, if an award based on financial statements that are subsequently restated in a way that would decrease the value of such award, the participant will, to the extent not otherwise prohibited by law, upon the written request of Kroger, forfeit and repay to Kroger the difference between what was received and what should have been received based on the accounting restatement, which will be repaid in accordance with any applicable Kroger policy or applicable law.

We have adopted a policy on incentive compensation-based recovery, which meets the requirements of NYSE listing standards and Section 10D of the Exchange Act. The policy requires the recoupment of incentive-based compensation paid to certain current and former executive officers in the event that the Company is required to restate its financial results due to the Company’s material non-compliance with any financial reporting requirement under the securities laws. Under the policy, the Company will seek recovery of erroneously awarded incentive-based compensation received by current and former executive officers during the three-year fiscal year period prior to the date the Company is required to prepare an accounting restatement. The Policy is administered by the Compensation Committee of the Board.

Kroger also has an additional recoupment policy, which provides that if a material error of facts results in the payment to an executive officer at the level of Group Vice President or higher of an annual or a long-term incentive in an amount higher than otherwise would have been paid, as determined by the Compensation Committee, then the officer, upon demand from the Compensation Committee, will reimburse Kroger for the amounts that would not have been paid if the error had not occurred. This recoupment policy applies to those amounts paid by Kroger within 36 months prior to the detection and public disclosure of the error or restatement.

Prohibition on Hedging and Pledging

The Board has adopted a policy prohibiting Kroger directors and executive officers from engaging, directly or indirectly, in the pledging of, hedging transactions in, or short sales of, Kroger securities.

Section 162(m) of the Internal Revenue Code

Prior to the effective date of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, Section 162(m) of the Code generally disallowed a federal tax deduction to public companies for compensation greater than \$1 million paid in any tax year to specified executive officers unless the compensation was “qualified performance-based compensation” under that section. Pursuant to the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the exception for “qualified performance-based compensation” under Section 162(m) of the Code was eliminated with respect to all remuneration in excess of \$1 million other than qualified performance-based compensation pursuant to a written binding contract in effect on November 2, 2017 or earlier which was not modified in any material respect on or after such date (the legislation providing for such transition rule, the “Transition Rule”).

As a result, performance-based compensation that the Compensation Committee structured with the intent of qualifying as performance-based compensation under Section 162(m) prior to the change in the law may or may not be fully deductible, depending on the application of the Transition Rule. In addition, compensation arrangements structured following the change in law will be subject to the Section 162(m) limitation (without any exception for performance-based compensation). Consistent with its past practice, the Committee will continue to retain flexibility to design compensation programs that are in the best long-term interests of the Company and our shareholders, with deductibility of compensation being one of a variety of considerations taken into account.

Compensation Committee Report

The Compensation Committee has reviewed and discussed with Kroger’s management the Compensation Discussion and Analysis contained in this proxy statement. Based on its review and discussions with management, the Compensation Committee has recommended to the Board that the Compensation Discussion and Analysis be included in Kroger’s proxy statement and incorporated by reference into its Annual Report on Form 10-K.

Compensation Committee:

Clyde R. Moore, Chair
Kevin M. Brown
Amanda Sourry
Mark Sutton