

2020 Washington State Employee Compensation Report FAQs

Why does the Office of Financial Management, State Human Resources conduct a salary survey?

RCW [41.06.160](#) and WAC [357-28-325](#) require the Office of Financial Management to conduct a salary survey to determine the prevailing pay rates for jobs that are comparable to state government jobs. (The survey does not cover management jobs.)

The 2020 Washington Employee Compensation Report shows how our state compensation for general government and higher education employees in our classified structures compares to our competitors. When we say “competitor,” we mean in-state public employers, in-state private employers, and state governments. The report represents pay and benefits data as of July 1, 2019.

The 2020 report does not define the appropriate compensation level for our workforce. Instead, state leaders can use it as a tool to find the appropriate balance among:

- Containing government operations costs
- Compensating state employees fairly
- Competing for specialized employees in the job market

When does State HR conduct the salary survey?

Generally, State HR conducts the survey every two years. The last survey was conducted in 2018.

How does State HR conduct the survey?

For 2020, State HR contracted with a third party, Segal Consulting, to conduct the survey. Segal is a nationwide human resources consultancy with 80 years of experience in compensation and benefits evaluation and design.

Who participated in the survey?

Invitations were sent to 52 public employers; salary and benefit data was collected for 43 employers through a custom survey or data mined from the employer’s website. Of those, 58% are from the in-state public sector and 28% are from other state governments. Other state governments provide data for jobs found only in state government or when salary information cannot be obtained from the Washington labor market. These states are California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah and Wyoming.

In-state private sector salary and benefit data was collected through published, purchased survey sources.

If the salary survey results show a job receives less pay than the prevailing market rate, does it automatically get a pay increase?

No. The collective bargaining process, the Legislature and the governor determine what impact, if any, the salary survey findings will have on state employee compensation. The salary survey is just one of several factors considered by decision-makers.

Why are only certain jobs included?

Establishing benchmark classes is industry practice when conducting compensation surveys. State HR, in consultation with its contractor, chose the most populated and representative state job classifications that are also similar to jobs commonly found in the public and private sectors for the survey. Although not every state job is included, the survey includes a sufficient number of benchmark classes to cover the state's classification plan.

How do I request more information on the salary survey results?

Questions about the survey may be directed to classandcomp@ofm.wa.gov. To request more detail on the survey results, please follow the instructions on the [How to request public records](#) webpage.