

2026 Washington State Employee Compensation Report FAQ

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 classified state government jobs. The survey does not cover management jobs.

The 2026 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 January 1, 2026.

The 2026 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; and
- 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 2024.

How does State HR conduct the survey?

For 2026, State HR contracted with a third party, The Segal Company, Inc., to conduct the survey. Segal was established in 1939 and has grown to become a leading benefits, compensation, and human resources consulting firm in the U.S. and in Canada.

Who participated in the survey?

The survey participants included 32 employers from the in-state public sector and 14 state government employers. We also used 10 published data sources to represent in-state private employers.

If the salary survey results show a job receives less pay than the 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 when determining pay increases.

Why are only certain jobs included?

Establishing benchmark job classes is standard industry practice when conducting compensation surveys. State HR, in consultation with its contractor, chose representative state job classifications that are similar to jobs commonly found in the public and private sectors for the survey. Although not every state job class is included, the survey includes a sufficient number of benchmark classes to cover the majority of the state’s classification plan. State HR held forums in 2025 to gather input from labor organizations and agencies on the benchmark jobs.

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

Questions about the survey may be directed to Allie Kohlhorst, Compensation Policy Analyst, at allie.kohlhorst@ofm.wa.gov. To request additional details on the survey results, please follow the instructions on the [Make a public records request](#) webpage.