

2018 State Salary Survey Frequently Asked Questions

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

[RCW 41.06.160](#) and [WAC 357-28-325](#) require State HR to conduct a salary survey to determine the prevailing pay rates for jobs that are comparable to those state jobs in classified service. (The survey does not cover management jobs.)

State leaders use tools such as the salary survey to help find the appropriate balance among containing the cost of government operations, compensating state employees fairly and competing in the job market for employees with the specialized skills and knowledge required to perform the work of state government.

The salary survey is one source of data and should be used as a tool in conjunction with other workforce factors and data when informing potential changes to employee pay, benefits or working conditions.

When does State HR conduct the salary survey?

Generally, State HR conducts the survey every two years. The last survey was conducted in 2016.

How does State HR conduct the survey?

For 2018, State HR contracted with a third party, [Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.](#), to conduct the survey. Gallagher is a national survey firm with more than 32 years of industry surveying experience.

Who participated in the survey?

Invitations were sent to 58 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, 63 percent are from the in-state public sector and 37 percent are from other state governments. Other state governments provide data for jobs only found in state government or when salary information cannot be obtained from the Washington labor market. These states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Virginia 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 covers a sufficient number of benchmark classes to cover the state's classification plan.

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

Basic 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.