



2024 PHSA Wages and Benefits Comparability Survey

Frequently Asked Questions and Instructions for Head Start Programs

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Why is this important? Why should I fill out the survey?

There is a **staffing crisis** in early learning programs, as you may know. The 2024 PHSA Head Start Wages and Benefits Comparability Project aims to provide you with the best information possible to **attract and retain qualified program staff** and sustain overall program quality. With the report, you will meet the requirement that your Head Start program conduct a wage survey. More importantly, you will be able to compare information on wages and benefits between your staff and those at organizations in your

service area with whom you compete for employees. This will help guide your efforts to keep your program strong by determining reasonable, fair, and appealing wages and benefit compensation systems.

It is important that you enter your organization's data into the survey. The more Head Start programs and comparable employers complete the survey, the stronger the report's findings will be. Be sure your program and your local job market are included!

How can we use the report and what will we get out of it?

This comprehensive wage survey, designed to meet federal Head Start requirements and administered throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, collects information on the wages and benefits of staff at participating PHSA member programs and non-Head Start employers referred to as comparable organizations or programs. The report will compare and contrast the wages and benefits between member programs and comparable organizations, and further supplements these findings with information on local cost of living and with wage data from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and similar sources.

Staff from PHSA member organizations who have previously purchased the report have stated,

"We refer to the Wage & Benefits report as one of our data points to update our wage scale."

"Our program is thankful PHSA does this survey regularly so that we have it and don't have to find a company to do one for us."

"It is a good amount of work for our HR team, but we are really happy to participate and purchase the final report which we have done for years through PHSA."

How will I learn the report's findings?

PHMC will submit the final report to PHSA in late April 2024, and will present findings in a webinar in spring 2024. The full report will be available for purchase from PHSA. Fee determination for purchase of the final report is a sliding scale based on program budget:

- Tier 1 <\$1,000,000: Fee \$550
- Tier 2 >\$1,000,000 <\$3,000,000: Fee \$990
- Tier 3 >\$3,000,00 <\$6,000,000: Fee \$1,210
- Tier 4 > \$6,000,000 <\$12,000,000: Fee \$1,540
- Tier 5 >\$12,00,000 <\$18,000,000: Fee \$1,980
- Tier 6 >\$18,000,000: Fee \$2,530

What are "comparable organizations" and why are they important?

Your organization competes with other employers in your area to attract, hire, and keep staff. These "comparable organizations" may include organizations with employees who do some of the same jobs, are located within the same geographic area, or that offer a similar service.

We are inviting comparable organizations from your local job markets to fill out a survey, too. They will earn a gift card for completing the survey. The more comparable organizations, the stronger the report will be!

Examples of comparable organizations include:

- Child care centers and pre-K programs
- Health, medical, rehabilitation, and mental health centers
- School districts, charter schools, institutes of higher education, and other educational agencies
- Social service agencies, family and child centers, senior citizen programs, community action agencies, and family service programs
- Companies or employers with entry-level jobs such as cook or custodian, such as fast food, retail, hotels or motels

What do I do if my organization does more than provide Head Start programming?

Are you a Head Start program embedded in a larger organization? For example, does your organization have completely separate preschool programs (e.g. in separate buildings, or with completely separate funding)? Is your Head Start program may be run by a school district or a community action agency? If so, please:

1. fill out the PHSA Member Survey. Report wages only for staff that are paid with Head Start funds.
2. Please also separately fill out the Comparable Organizations Survey! Report wages for staff whose wages are NOT paid by Head Start funds.

Your organization also qualifies as a comparable organization! Yes, it will be more work on your part, but you'll get both incentives – the PHSA Member discount on the report AND the gift card.

And, while *you* already know what the non-Head Start staff are paid at your organization, the main strength of the report is collecting *MANY* employers' wage information to be able to compare wages and benefits across a wide range of organizations. Staff positions that are not funded by Head Start are excellent for comparable staff wages.

What if our Head Start program receives funding from multiple sources? Do we submit different PHSA Member surveys for each funding source?

No, please submit one member survey for staff that deliver Head Start programming with Head Start funding, even if the Head Start program also received funds from other sources. We realize that many Head Start programs are now braiding funding and we want to capture data that reflects how programs are currently operating.

What questions are on the survey? What data will I need to report?

The survey asks for each organization to report three sets of information:

1. **Information about your organization:** Name, address, program type, agency type, funding sources, annual operating budget, % of budget allocated to salaries & benefits, average annual

salary increase, start date of current fiscal year, month of salary adjustments, use of pay scale, factors considered for salary of new hire, factors considered in salary of promoted employee, number of employees total, number of employees funding by Head Start, number of children/clients served annually, type of residential environment (urban/suburban/rural), counties served

2. **Wages and other data for individual employees for a variety of staff positions.** For positions with more than five employees in the same role, you'll be asked to enter data for the first five employees in alphabetical order. A guide describing all of the positions, including their levels/qualifications, duties, and so forth, is provided in the survey to help you determine which staff members' data to report for various roles.

Staff positions include:

- Staff in **administrative roles** (e.g., Executive Director, Center Manager, fiscal positions, administrative assistant)
- Staff in **education positions** (e.g., teachers and assistant teachers at various levels, coaches)
- Staff in **other positions at different levels** (e.g., manager, coordinator, and worker/assistant) in:
 - Health (e.g., Health/Nutrition manager, Disabilities Assistant),
 - Social Service (e.g., Family Services Coordinator, Parent Engagement Assistant), and
 - Service/Support (e.g., Bus driver, Custodian, Enrollment Manager)

Information you'll report on individual staff includes:

- Residential county and ZIP code (to understand local cost of living)
- Hourly wage, total hours worked per year
- Funding sources
- Educational level, credentials/certifications/licenses
- Years worked at the organization, Experience in the field
- Number of people who report directly to the employee

3. **Benefits offered to full-time and/or part-time employees:**

- a. Insurance (e.g., health, dental)
- b. Retirement benefits
- c. Other benefits
- d. Paid time off

What the purpose of collecting employee home ZIP codes?

We ask for the county and ZIP code of the employee so that we can better understand cost of living in their area of residence and how that compares to wages earned. We will not present data individually so employees will not be able to be identified.

How long will it take to fill out the survey?

The time it will take depends on the size of your organization and the types of staff positions it has. If your organization is large, it may take a couple of hours. There are about 32 positions on the list, and you may have several individuals in each role and would be asked to report data on up to 5 of those staff

(e.g., up to five lead teachers). However, the survey may take less time, if your organization does not have all of these roles or is smaller and has fewer staff in each position.

You can start and stop the survey to complete it in more than one sitting. You will be able to pick up where you left off.

Is the survey secure?

Yes, information submitted is in a secure online survey platform, Alchemer, and downloaded to PHMC's secured servers. Use the link in your email. All employee information that you provide will remain confidential. The wages you enter will be averaged across everyone's entries. No individual identifying information will be reported or shared.

Do I have to complete the survey all at once?

No, you can save and exit the survey, then come back to it at the place you left off at a later time. You'll get a link to your survey at the email address you provide. The link will send you back to the place where you stopped.

What do I need in order to fill out the survey?

Before sitting down to complete the survey, gather all employee records, or be sure you have access to employee records, including list of employees/titles.

When do I need to do this? How long will the survey be open?

The 2024 PHSA Wages and Benefits survey will be opening in February and is currently slated to close in late March.

What if I have more questions and need help?

- Watch the brief instructional webinar, available on the PHSA website.
- Contact PHMC at phsawage@phmc.org if you need assistance with data entry or have questions

Can I get a copy of my responses?

Yes, you will receive automated emails with copies of all of the questions and your responses. There will be a separate email for each of the sections of the survey. If you do not see the emails, check your SPAM or junk folder.

Can I get a copy of the report?

Yes, you can purchase the final report at a member discount by emailing Kara McFalls, Executive Director of PHSA, at kara@phsa.org. You can also watch a webinar presenting the findings that will be recorded after the report is complete.