



Multi-State Association Executive Compensation & Benefits Survey Findings: Executive Summary:

The overall response rate was 29% among the CEOs invited to participate completed a survey. A total of 1,486 associations in 21 states participated from:

- **Northeast:** Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Mid-Atlantic (Delaware and Pennsylvania).
- **South:** Virginia, North & South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Oklahoma.
- **Midwest:** Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.
- **West:** California, Washington, and Colorado.

Chief Staff Officer Compensation Levels

- In the national sample, Chief Staff Officers report earning a mean of \$125,137 and a median of \$110,000 in the current year.
- In addition, 53% were awarded a bonus that averaged a mean of \$16,406 and a median of \$8,000.
- Their mean average salary levels varied considerably by association structure, scope, and size:

SCOPE OF OPERATIONS

- \$126,797 for state associations
- \$144,438 for regional, national, or international associations
- \$101,252 for local associations

MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

- \$118,757 for individual member-only associations
- \$136,394 for organization member-only associations
- \$116,594 for combined individual & organization member associations
- \$91,882 for Association Management Companies

BUDGET SIZE

- \$68,354 for the smallest associations (smaller than \$400,000 annual budget)
- \$105,580 for medium sized associations (\$400,000 to \$1 million budget)
- \$136,759 for medium-larger associations (\$1 to \$2 million budget)
- \$172,270 for larger associations (\$2 to \$5 million budget)
- \$236,298 for the largest associations (larger than \$5 million annual budget)

Compensation, Other Positions

Highest-paid positions include a mix of the most senior and the most specialized positions generally reported by larger respondents:

- Attorney (\$111,788 mean salary), COO/Deputy Director (\$102,399), Subsidiary Director (\$99,957), Government/Lobbying Director (\$92,396), CFO/Director of Finance (\$88,296), HR Director (\$79,166), IT Director (\$78,199), Sponsorship Director (\$77,046), and Foundation Director (\$73,931).
- The lowest-paid positions include support positions—Receptionist (\$30,995), Administrative Assistant (\$37,175), and Bookkeeper/Accounting Clerk (\$38,952) and junior positions—Membership Coordinator (\$38,266) and Education Coordinator (\$44,451).

The full report presents mean and median current and previous year salaries for all positions, overall and by membership structure, geographic scope, and budget size for the national results, and overall for each state. The state reports present this data overall and by size, scope, and budget size if there was sufficient participation to present reliable findings by position.

Annual Salary Changes

The median annual change in salary was 2.3%. The most common bases for increases were merit (53%), cost of living (35%), or general/across the board increases (18%).

- For other positions, median salaries rose as high as 3.6% for Research/Statistics Directors, 3.3% for Sponsorship Directors and Meeting Planners, and 3.2% for Membership Managers, Exposition Managers, and PAC Coordinators.
- Salaries rose at a lowest annual rate for Ad Sales Representatives (1.9%), Credentialing Program Specialists (2.1%), CEOs, and Social Media Managers (2.4%).

Association Profile

- The majority of participating associations were state-wide (62%), with 15% local, 17% international or national, and 6% regional (multi-state).
- Associations were almost evenly split between company member only (40%) and individual member only (36%) memberships, with another 17% combined individual & organization members, and 4% each AMCs and other structures.
- By annual budget range, 23% were in the smallest category, 32% medium, 20% medium-larger, 15% larger, and 10% largest.
- Associations report a mean of \$3.27 million and a median of \$924,000 annual gross revenue.
- Average total expense for salaries was a mean of \$887,000 and a median of \$294,000; total expense for employee benefits was a mean \$282,000 and a median \$80,000. Using these overall averages, labor burden is approximately 36% for participating associations.
- Most are 501(c)6 organizations (67%) with some 501(c)3 (24%), or another IRS classification (8%).
- Half report no subsidiaries while 41% have a foundation and 18% have a for-profit subsidiary.

Individual Profile

Associations report a mean of 8.1 and a median of 4.0 average full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.

- Only 15% report 0 to 1.9 FTE, while 36% have 2 to 4.9, 45% have 5 to 19.9, and 4% have 20 or more.
- The CEO generally has the longest tenure in their current position, a mean of 10.9 years.
- Other long-tenured positions, when present in the association, include the COO/Deputy Director (9.9 years), HR Director and Meetings & Convention Director (9.4 years), CFO/Finance Director (8.8 years), and the IT Director (8.6 years).
- Positions with the least tenure include Social Media Manager (2.6 years), Sponsorship Director (4.3 years), and Foundation Director (4.8 years).
- CEOs are almost evenly split by gender, 47% female and 52% male, with 1% reporting both genders (multiple individuals holding the position, generally AMCs).
- The only other positions that were held predominantly by males were IT Director (79%), Attorney (61%), and Government/Lobbying Director (53%).
- Positions held by the largest proportion of females were Administrative Assistant, Meeting Planner, Receptionist, Meetings & Convention Director, and Bookkeeper/Accounting Clerk (all 90% or higher). The only other roles with no more than 60% females holding the position were Website Content Manager, Database Administrator, Social Media Manager, and PAC Coordinator.

Time Off Policies

Associations provide a mean average of 10.1 holidays, 10.1 vacation days, 8.5 sick leave days or 11.7 days paid time off (for the 30% who offer PTO rather than vacation and sick leave).

- To show how leave rises by experience level we used 4+ years as a break point for greater seniority. These employees receive a mean of 15.1 days of vacation or 15.0 days of PTO.

Health Insurance

Medical insurance benefits are most frequently PPO (54%), HMO (22%), HSA (18%) or HSA compatible (15%) with few reporting Point of Service (7%) or other formats (10%).

- A slight majority with the PPO extend coverage to spouse (54%) and children (52%). The HMO is less frequently extended to spouse (38%) or children (37%).
- Most respondents (59%) indicate making no changes to their program in the past 12 months, with the most common changes were increased deductibles (23%), increased out of pocket maximum limits (13%), changes in the type of plan offered (11%), and/or changed insurance carriers (10%).

Other Insurance

Associations often provide life and dental insurance to their CEOs (58% and 52%, respectively), and 44% provide disability insurance. Fewer provide these policies to their upper management or other staff.

- Mean average CEO insurance coverage is \$162,000 for life; \$84,000 for disability; and \$2,140 for dental.
- Coverage for other upper management positions (means of \$97,600, \$52,300, and \$2,480, respectively) and other positions (\$74,300, \$39,400, and \$2,230, respectively) are lower.

Retirement Benefits

78% of associations provide a retirement plan to employees: 56% of the plans provided are 401(k), while 9% to 16% provide SEP, Simple IRA, or 403(b).

- Maximum employer contribution is a mean average of 6.5% and a median of 5.0% of base salary.
- Employees have to work a mean of 9.5 months to become eligible for the retirement plan, if offered.
- Many (52%) are vested immediately, while 16% are fully vested in five years, 8% after three years, 11% are on some graduated partial vesting schedule, and 13% have other plan terms.

Other Benefits

Professional membership dues, mobile/cellular phone purchase and monthly fees are provided to at least two-thirds of CEOs. Half are reimbursed for professional license/credentials, and more than one-third are provided time off for external volunteer activities and maternity or paternity leave.

Chief Staff Officer Role

The chief staff officer typically carries the title Executive Director (52%), and sometimes CEO/President (25%), EVP (8%), or another title (15%).

- The most common arrangement is a formal contract with the organization (51%), followed by a verbal agreement (24%), or an informal letter of agreement (16%). Written contracts cover a mean of 2.6 years.
- Most (71%) are required to have a formal performance review and 57% report that compensation is based on comparable salary /benefits data/benchmarks.
- Most performance reviews (66%) are conducted by the Executive Committee rather than a special committee, chief elected/appointed officer, or the overall Board.
- The most common bases for evaluation are performance objectives (84%) and job description (74%).
- Two-thirds (66%) have a termination clause, with almost all of them (61% of all respondents) reporting that it includes termination by the employee. Fewer (41%) report a severance clause and 29% of all respondents have salary paid for a set time (a mean of 16.7 weeks).
- Only 12% report that there severance for a non-renewed contract, and 22% of respondents indicate that benefits are paid during the severance period.

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