



2025 CSAE Benefits & Compensation Report



Inspiring
Association
Excellence

2025 CSAE Benefits & Compensation Report

42nd Edition

CSAE

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About CSAE

Incorporated in 1962, the CSAE is Canada’s only national member-based not-for-profit organization committed to delivering the knowledge, resources and environment to advance association excellence. CSAE, also known as an “association of associations,” offers robust networking and learning opportunities, including an education program leading to the Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation. For further information, please visit the CSAE website at www.csae.com.

About The Portage Group Inc.

The Portage Group Inc. is a consulting group with a shared passion for helping organizations along the various stages of their journey. Our consulting team offers deep sector expertise across multiple service areas that include research, strategy, search, human resources, organizational performance, and governance. For more information, please visit www.portagegroup.com.

Disclaimer

Although the information in this report has been obtained from sources that The Portage Group Inc. believes to be reliable, this report is based on survey responses during the period of Nov. 6 to Dec. 13, 2024. Accordingly, its accuracy and completeness cannot be guaranteed. This report is for information purposes only. All opinions and estimates included in this report constitute the views of survey respondents combined with our judgment as of this date and are subject to revision.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	I
1. INTRODUCTION	1
METHODOLOGY	1
STUDY LIMITATIONS.....	3
2. CASH COMPENSATION – HOW DOES YOUR PAYCHEQUE MEASURE UP?.....	4
HIGHLIGHTS.....	5
CASH COMPENSATION BY LEVEL.....	6
COMPENSATION DISTRIBUTION.....	8
ASSOCIATION COMPENSATION GROWTH.....	11
EMPLOYMENT STATUS.....	14
3. CASH COMPENSATION BY ASSOCIATION CHARACTERISTICS.....	15
HIGHLIGHTS.....	15
ASSOCIATION TYPE	16
GEOGRAPHY	17
ASSOCIATION JURISDICTION.....	20
ASSOCIATION SIZE	21
AFFILIATION STATUS	25
MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS	26
4. CASH COMPENSATION BY DEMOGRAPHICS	30
HIGHLIGHTS.....	30
AGE.....	31
GENDER.....	32
QUALIFICATIONS.....	33
REMOTE WORK STATUS.....	37
EXPERIENCE	39
ROLE IN ORGANIZATION	46
5. INCENTIVE PLANS	47
HIGHLIGHTS.....	47
PARTICIPATION IN INCENTIVE PLANS	48
INCENTIVE PERCENTAGES.....	49
6. EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	50
HIGHLIGHTS.....	50
RETIREMENT BENEFITS	52
HEALTH BENEFITS	55
AUTOMOBILE/PARKING BENEFITS	58
FRINGE BENEFITS.....	61
SUMMARY OF BENEFIT VALUES.....	63

APPENDIX I: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS 64
APPENDIX II: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS 76
APPENDIX III: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN REGISTERED CHARITIES 88
APPENDIX IV: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES 100
APPENDIX V: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS..... 112
APPENDIX VI – CHARACTERISTICS OF TOP QUARTILE MANAGEMENT 124
APPENDIX VII – SUMMARY OF COMPENSATION BY REGION 129

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

2.	CASH COMPENSATION – HOW DOES YOUR PAYCHEQUE MEASURE UP?.....	4
	EXHIBIT 2-1: CASH COMPENSATION BY LEVEL	6
	EXHIBIT 2-2: ADDITIONAL CASH COMPENSATION RATIO	7
	EXHIBIT 2-3: BASE COMPENSATION AS AN HOURLY WAGE.....	7
	EXHIBIT 2-4: COMPENSATION QUANTILES BY LEVEL.....	8
	EXHIBIT 2-5: TOTAL CASH DISTRIBUTION BY LEVEL.....	9
	EXHIBIT 2-6: TOTAL CASH DISTRIBUTION BY LEVEL (CONT'D).....	10
	EXHIBIT 2-7: COMPENSATION 2014 TO 2024 (000s).....	11
	EXHIBIT 2-8: ASSOCIATION PAYROLLS.....	13
	EXHIBIT 2-9: EMPLOYMENT STATUS	14
3.	CASH COMPENSATION BY ASSOCIATION CHARACTERISTICS.....	15
	EXHIBIT 3-1: ASSOCIATION TYPE	16
	EXHIBIT 3-2: REGION OF HEADQUARTERS.....	18
	EXHIBIT 3-3: COMMUNITY SIZE	19
	EXHIBIT 3-4: ASSOCIATION JURISDICTION	20
	EXHIBIT 3-5: ASSOCIATION REVENUE.....	22
	EXHIBIT 3-6: ASSOCIATION STAFF SIZE	24
	EXHIBIT 3-7: AFFILIATION STATUS	25
	EXHIBIT 3-8: TYPE OF MEMBERS.....	27
	EXHIBIT 3-9: NUMBER OF MEMBERS (CONSTITUENTS)	29
4.	CASH COMPENSATION BY DEMOGRAPHICS	30
	EXHIBIT 4-1: AGE	31
	EXHIBIT 4-2: GENDER	32
	EXHIBIT 4-3: EDUCATION.....	33
	EXHIBIT 4-4: RELEVANT DEGREE	34
	EXHIBIT 4-5: CERTIFICATION.....	35
	EXHIBIT 4-6: CSAE MEMBER STATUS.....	36
	EXHIBIT 4-7: REMOTE WORK STATUS	37
	EXHIBIT 4-8: HYBRID WORK FORMAT	38
	EXHIBIT 4-9: YEARS AT CURRENT ORGANIZATION	40
	EXHIBIT 4-10: YEARS IN CURRENT POSITION	41
	EXHIBIT 4-11: YEARS AT SENIORITY LEVEL	42
	EXHIBIT 4-12: YEARS IN THE ASSOCIATION/NOT-FOR-PROFIT SECTOR	43
	EXHIBIT 4-13: YEARS IN THE CURRENT DISCIPLINE	44
	EXHIBIT 4-14: PRIOR SECTOR EXPERIENCE.....	45
	EXHIBIT 4-15: ROLE IN ORGANIZATION	46

5. INCENTIVE PLANS	47
EXHIBIT 5-1: PARTICIPATION IN INCENTIVE PLANS.....	48
EXHIBIT 5-2: ACTUAL, TARGET AND MAXIMUM BONUS BY LEVEL.....	49
6. EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	50
EXHIBIT 6-1: PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING RETIREMENT BENEFITS	52
EXHIBIT 6-2: RETIREMENT BENEFITS BY LEVEL.....	53
EXHIBIT 6-3: EMPLOYER RSP AND PENSION CONTRIBUTION PERCENTAGES	54
EXHIBIT 6-4: PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING HEALTH BENEFITS.....	55
EXHIBIT 6-5: PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING HEALTH BENEFITS.....	57
EXHIBIT 6-6: PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING AUTOMOBILE BENEFITS.....	58
EXHIBIT 6-7: AUTOMOBILE BENEFITS BY LEVEL.....	59
EXHIBIT 6-8: AVERAGE VALUE OF PARKING BENEFITS.....	59
EXHIBIT 6-9: MILEAGE ALLOWANCES FOR USE OF PERSONAL VEHICLE	60
EXHIBIT 6-10: PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING FRINGE BENEFITS	61
EXHIBIT 6-11: FRINGE BENEFITS BY LEVEL	62
EXHIBIT 6-12: SUMMARY OF BENEFITS VALUES.....	63
APPENDIX I: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	64
PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	65
RETIREMENT BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.....	65
AUTOMOBILE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.....	65
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	66
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS (CONT'D).....	67
FRINGE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	67
SUMMARY OF BENEFIT VALUES BY LEVEL IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.....	68
COMPENSATION QUANTILES BY LEVEL IN INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	68
LEVEL 1: CEO – DETAILED COMPENSATION: INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	70
LEVEL 2/3: EXECUTIVES – DETAILED COMPENSATION: INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.....	71
LEVEL 4: SENIOR MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.....	72
LEVEL 5: FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS – DETAILED COMPENSATION: INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	73
LEVEL 6: NON-MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.....	74
LEVEL 7: SUPPORT STAFF – DETAILED COMPENSATION: INDUSTRY/TRADE ASSOCIATIONS	75

APPENDIX II: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	76
PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	77
RETIREMENT BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.....	77
AUTOMOBILE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.....	77
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	78
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS (CONT'D)	79
FRINGE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	79
SUMMARY OF BENEFIT VALUES BY LEVEL IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.....	80
COMPENSATION QUARTILES BY LEVEL IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	80
LEVEL 1: CEO – DETAILED COMPENSATION: PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	82
LEVEL 2/3: EXECUTIVES – DETAILED COMPENSATION: PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.....	83
LEVEL 4: SENIOR MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.....	84
LEVEL 5: FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS – DETAILED COMPENSATION: PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS	85
LEVEL 6: NON-MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.....	86
LEVEL 7: SUPPORT STAFF – DETAILED COMPENSATION: PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.....	87
APPENDIX III: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN REGISTERED CHARITIES	88
PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGISTERED CHARITIES.....	89
RETIREMENT BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGISTERED CHARITIES	89
AUTOMOBILE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGISTERED CHARITIES	89
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGISTERED CHARITIES	90
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGISTERED CHARITIES (CONT'D)	91
FRINGE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGISTERED CHARITIES.....	91
SUMMARY OF BENEFIT VALUES BY LEVEL IN REGISTERED CHARITIES.....	92
COMPENSATION QUARTILES BY LEVEL IN REGISTERED CHARITIES	92
LEVEL 1: CEO – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGISTERED CHARITY	94
LEVEL 2/3: EXECUTIVES – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGISTERED CHARITY.....	95
LEVEL 4: SENIOR MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGISTERED CHARITY.....	96
LEVEL 5: FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGISTERED CHARITY	97
LEVEL 6: NON-MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGISTERED CHARITY.....	98
LEVEL 7: SUPPORT STAFF – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGISTERED CHARITY.....	99

APPENDIX IV: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES	100
PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES	101
RETIREMENT BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES.....	101
AUTOMOBILE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES.....	101
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES	102
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES (CONT'D).....	103
FRINGE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES	103
SUMMARY OF BENEFIT VALUES BY LEVEL IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES.....	104
COMPENSATION QUANTILES BY LEVEL IN REGULATORY AUTHORITIES	104
LEVEL 1: CEO – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGULATORY AUTHORITY	106
LEVEL 2/3: EXECUTIVES – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGULATORY AUTHORITY	107
LEVEL 4: SENIOR MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGULATORY AUTHORITY	108
LEVEL 5: FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGULATORY AUTHORITY	109
LEVEL 6: NON-MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGULATORY AUTHORITY	110
LEVEL 7: SUPPORT STAFF – DETAILED COMPENSATION: REGULATORY AUTHORITY	111
APPENDIX V: DETAILED COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS.....	112
PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES RECEIVING BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS.....	113
RETIREMENT BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS	113
AUTOMOBILE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS	113
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS.....	114
HEALTH BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS (CONT'D)	115
FRINGE BENEFITS BY LEVEL IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS.....	115
SUMMARY OF BENEFIT VALUES BY LEVEL IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS	116
COMPENSATION QUANTILES BY LEVEL IN SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS.....	116
LEVEL 1: CEO – DETAILED COMPENSATION: SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS	118
LEVEL 2/3: EXECUTIVES – DETAILED COMPENSATION: SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS	119
LEVEL 4: SENIOR MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS.....	120
LEVEL 5: FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS – DETAILED COMPENSATION: SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS.....	121
LEVEL 6: NON-MANAGEMENT – DETAILED COMPENSATION: SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS	122
LEVEL 7: SUPPORT STAFF – DETAILED COMPENSATION: SPECIAL/COMMON INTEREST ASSOCIATIONS	123
APPENDIX VI – CHARACTERISTICS OF TOP QUARTILE MANAGEMENT	124
DETAILED MANAGEMENT COMPENSATION BY LEVEL BY QUARTILE.....	125
MANAGEMENT QUARTILE COMPARISON: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS.....	125
MANAGEMENT QUARTILE COMPARISON: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS (CONT'D).....	126
MANAGEMENT QUARTILE COMPARISON: PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.....	127
MANAGEMENT QUARTILE COMPARISON: EXPERIENCE.....	128
APPENDIX VII – SUMMARY OF COMPENSATION BY REGION	129
DETAILED COMPENSATION BY LEVEL BY REGION	130

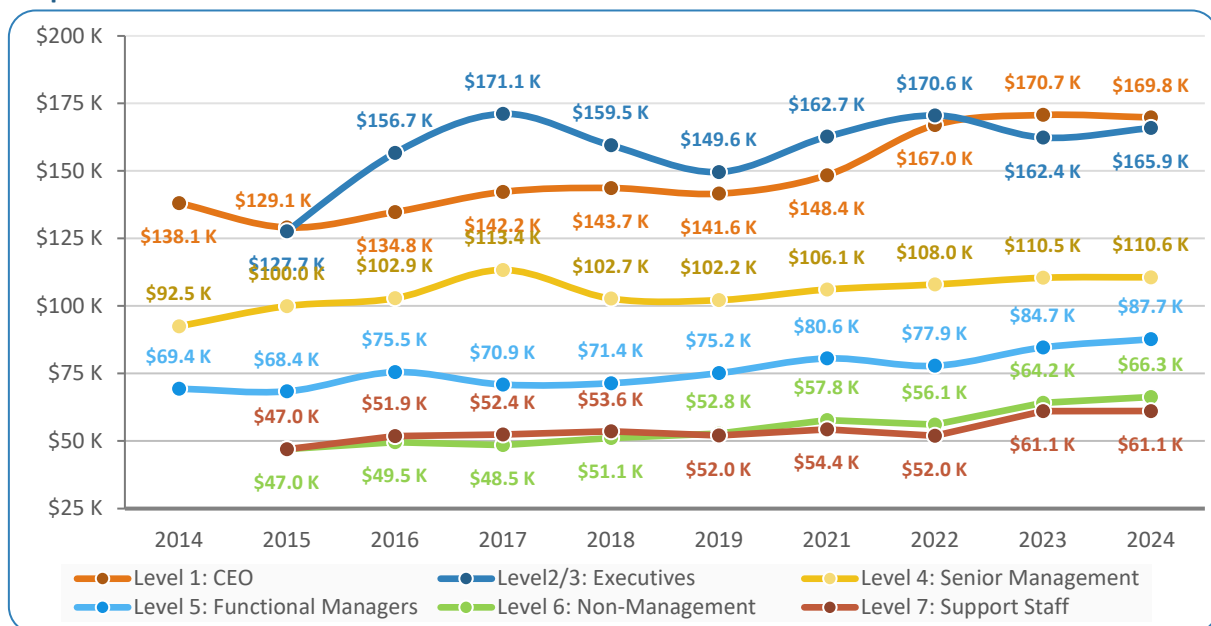
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 edition of the **CSAE Benefits & Compensation Report** marks the 42nd installment in CSAE's annual series. Jointly developed by CSAE and The Portage Group (TPG), this report offers a detailed analysis of the compensation and benefits provided to staff working in associations and other not-for-profit organizations across Canada.

MODEST COMPENSATION GROWTH IN 2024 ACROSS MOST LEVELS

- Compensation increased at five of six staff levels in 2024, although gains were more modest compared to previous years. Over the past decade, long-term trends show cumulative growth in compensation at all levels. These findings reflect a continuation of long-term compensation growth trends, albeit at a more subdued pace in 2024, with notable variations between management and non-management levels.

Compensation 2014 to 2024



Notes: Source for 2014 through 2023 figures was the CSAE Benefits & Compensation Reports.

- The average cash compensation for CEOs in 2025 is \$169,800, comprising \$161,200 in base salary and \$8,600 in additional cash compensation (e.g., bonuses or incentives). CEO (Level 1) compensation saw a slight decline of 0.5% in 2024, following increases of 8.4% in 2022 and 2.2% in 2023. This marks the first decline in recent years, although cumulative growth for CEOs over the past decade stands at 23%, with an average annual growth rate of 2.1%.

- In contrast, Executives (Level 2/3) rebounded from a 4.8% decline in 2023, seeing compensation grow by 2.2% in 2024.
- Senior Management (Level 4) experienced negligible growth of 0.2% in 2024, continuing a trend of modest increases ranging from 1.2% to 2.3% annually since 2021.
- Functional managers and non-management, which experienced sharp rebounds in 2023, saw significantly slower growth in 2024. Functional Management (Level 5) compensation grew by 3.6%, down from 8.7% in the last study. Non-Management increased by 3.3% compared to 14.4% in 2023.
- Looking ahead, confidence remains high, with 81%-93% of management and executive staff anticipating compensation increases in the next 12 months. Average anticipated increases range from 2.8% to 3.2%. For lower levels, 71%-84% anticipate increases, with expected growth averaging 2.3% to 2.5%.

BENEFITS REMAIN A CORE COMPONENT OF ASSOCIATION COMPENSATION PACKAGES

- 72% of participating organizations report offering retirement benefits to at least one level of staff. CEOs (Level 1) are the least likely to receive retirement benefits, with only 71% reporting access, compared to 84% to 94% for other levels.
- RSP plans remain more common than pension plans across all levels. At the CEO level (Level 1), 56% receive an RSP contribution, while for other levels, the proportion ranges from 62% to 66%. Matched contribution RSPs are more prevalent than basic contributions at all levels, except among Support Staff (Level 7), where basic contributions are slightly more common.
- Pension plans are most prevalent among Executives (Level 2/3 - 34%), Support Staff (Level 7 - 33%), and Functional Management (Level 5 - 29%).
- Nine in ten (91%) participants reported that their organization offers health benefits to at least one level. Health benefits, while still received by the majority, are least common at the CEO level (Level 1 - 87%) levels. For other levels, between 95% and 99% of staff receive at least some health benefits
- The value of health benefits for those who receive them ranges from \$4,500 to \$7,700 across all levels, representing 3.8% to 7.5% of base compensation.
- Automobile benefits are most commonly provided to CEOs (10%), followed by Executives (9%) and Senior Management (2%).
- Nearly all organizations (96%) provide fringe benefits to at least one staff member, with most employees at all levels receiving them. Non-Management staff (Level 6) are the least likely to be covered, at 82%. Professional development remains a top fringe benefit across all levels.

SIZE, LOCATION, AND ASSOCIATION TYPE CONTINUE TO CORRELATE TO COMPENSATION LEVELS FOR MANY POSITIONS

- At the CEO level, the highest compensation in the 2025 study is found among special/common interest associations, followed closely by industry/trade associations. Conversely, compensation at all levels is lowest among the registered charities that participated.
- In 2025, Ottawa (followed closely by Toronto) offers the highest average compensation for CEOs (Level 1). Ottawa leads in compensation for most other staff levels. Toronto is the second highest for CEOs and Non-Management (Level 5) and ranks first for Support Staff (Level 7).
- Continuing a trend from previous studies, larger organizations generally offer higher compensation, with factors like organizational scope, revenue, and staff size correlating with pay for most positions.

COMPENSATION INFLUENCED BY AGE, EDUCATION, GENDER, AND EXPERIENCE

- Compensation continues to positively correlate with age across all levels, with pay increasing as age rises. This relationship is statistically significant for all staff levels except Executives (Levels 2/3).
- The sector continues to be predominantly female-staffed, though the proportion of female staff declines with seniority. A persistent wage gap remains at management levels, with a significant gap at the CEO level (Level 1), where males earn 20% more than females. The wage gap is 22% for Senior Management (Level 4), 17% for Functional Managers (Level 5), and 6 to 8% for other levels.
- Compensation increases with higher levels of education, particularly at senior levels. At the CEO level (Level 1), those with a post-graduate degree earn 42% more than those with a college degree. The trend continues for Executives (25% more) and Senior Management (21% more).
- Five types of experience were included in the survey: time at the current organization, time in the current position, time spent at the current seniority level, experience in the discipline, and sector experience. For all five measures, compensation generally increases with years of experience.

IMPACT OF REMOTE WORK ON COMPENSATION

- The 2025 study explores how remote work affects compensation, highlighting hybrid work as the most common arrangement for all staff levels except Support Staff (Level 7), who are more likely to work fully in-office. Hybrid work arrangements offer the highest compensation for CEOs (Level 1) and Executives (Level 2/3). Hybrid CEOs earn 5% more than fully in-office peers and 19% more than fully remote CEOs. For Executives, hybrid workers earn 24% more than in-office and 17% more than remote workers.