

2026 Compensation Planning Guide



HUB International is happy to provide you with the following data to assist you in planning for 2026 personnel expenses. National and regional data are reported as average percentages of payroll.

As you review this information, the following definitions are available for your reference:

- **General increase/COLA:** Across-the-board base pay increase given to all eligible employees.
- **Merit increase:** Pay increase based on individual measures such as performance; the most common type of increase.
- **Other increases:** Pay increase based on other factors such as market adjustments or pay equity adjustments; does not include promotional increases.
- **Total salary increase budget:** The pool of money (as a percent of total payroll) available for base pay increases.
- **Salary structure adjustment:** Increase applied to pay range control points (minimums, midpoints and maximums).
- **Variable pay:** Compensation contingent on discretion, performance or results achieved and is provided as a bonus, incentive pay or commission.

CONTACT US

If you would like consulting advice regarding specific issues pertaining to jobs in your organization, or would like additional information about the compensation consulting services we provide, please contact:

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NATIONAL DATA

Salary Increase Budget by Type			
Type of Increase	2025 Projected	2025 Actual	2026 Projected
General Increase/COLA	1.8	1.3	1.5
Merit Increase	3.4	3.2	3.2
Other Increase	0.9	0.8	0.8
Total Increase	3.8	3.7	3.6

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Total Salary Increase Budget by Employee Group, 2024 Revenue and # of Employees			
Employee Group	2025 Projected	2025 Actual	2026 Projected
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	3.8	3.7	3.6
Nonexempt Salaried	3.8	3.7	3.6
Exempt Salaried	3.8	3.7	3.6
Officers/Executives	3.8	3.6	3.6
2024 Revenue	2025 Projected	2025 Actual	2026 Projected
Up to \$10M	3.8	4.0	3.6
>\$10M to \$30M	3.9	3.3	3.2
>\$30M to \$100M	3.9	3.9	3.8
>\$100M to \$500M	3.9	3.8	3.7
>\$500M to \$1B	4.0	3.7	3.7
>\$1B to \$5B	3.8	3.7	3.6
>\$5B to \$10B	3.6	3.5	3.4
\$10B or more	3.8	3.5	3.5
# of Employees	2025 Projected	2025 Actual	2026 Projected
1 to 499	4.1	4.0	3.7
500 to 2,499	3.9	3.8	3.7
2,500 to 9,999	3.8	3.6	3.6
10,000 to 19,999	3.7	3.4	3.4
20,000+	3.6	3.5	3.5

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Total Salary Increase Budget by Industry			
Industry	2025 Projected	2025 Actual	2026 Projected
Accommodation & Food Service	3.6	3.5	3.6
Ag, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4.0	3.5	3.4
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	3.5	3.3	3.5
Construction	4.2	3.7	3.9
Educational Services	3.4	3.4	3.0
Finance & Insurance	3.8	3.7	3.7
Healthcare & Social Assistance	3.6	3.5	3.6
Information	3.7	3.6	3.7
Manufacturing	3.7	3.6	3.5
Public Administration/Government	3.7	4.2	3.9
Real Estate/Rental & Leasing	4.2	4.1	3.9
Retail Trade	3.6	3.4	3.5
Transportation & Warehousing	3.8	3.6	3.3
Utilities	3.9	4.0	3.8
Wholesale Trade	3.5	3.2	3.3

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Merit Increase Budget by Employee Group		
Employee Group	2025 Actual	2026 Planned
Non-exempt	3.1	3.1
Exempt (Non-management)	3.2	3.1
Managers	3.3	3.2
Officers & Executives	3.3	3.1

Source: Salary Budget Survey, Payscale 2025/2026

Salary Structure Adjustments by Employee Group

Employee Group	2025 Projected	2025 Actual	2026 Projected
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	2.5	2.3	2.2
Nonexempt Salaried	2.5	2.4	2.4
Exempt Salaried	2.5	2.3	2.3
Officers/Executives	2.2	2.2	2.1

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Salary Structure Adjustments by Employee Group

Employee Group	2025 Actual	2026 Planned
Non-exempt	2.3	2.1
Exempt (Non-management)	2.3	2.1
Managers	2.3	2.2
Officers & Executives	2.2	2.0

Source: Salary Budget Survey, Payscale 2025/2026

Variable Pay Budget by Employee Group

Employee Group	2024 Percent Paid	2025 Percent Budgeted	2025 Projected Percent Paid	2026 Projected Percent Budgeted
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	6.7	7.6	6.8	7.4
Nonexempt Salaried	9.4	9.8	9.9	9.7
Exempt Salaried	16.1	14.9	16.4	14.8
Officers/Executives	38.6	37.0	38.8	36.0

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

REGIONAL DATA

Projected Salary Increase Budget by Employee Group and Type – Northeast Region								
	2025 Actual				2026 Projected			
Employee Group	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total
Nonexempt	2.5	3.1	2.8	3.3	2.4	3.1	1.6	3.4
Exempt Non-Management	2.9	3.2	3.3	3.5	2.4	3.2	1.7	3.5
Managers	2.8	3.3	3.3	3.6	2.4	3.2	1.6	3.5
Officers/Executives	2.4	3.2	2.1	3.2	2.1	3.1	1.3	3.2

Source: Salary Budget Survey, Payscale 2025/2026

Projected Salary Increase Budget by Employee Group and Type – Middle Atlantic Region								
	2025 Actual				2026 Projected			
Employee Group	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total
Nonexempt	2.7	3.1	3.0	3.3	2.3	3.1	1.7	3.5
Exempt Non-Management	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.5	2.4	3.2	1.7	3.5
Managers	2.9	3.3	3.0	3.7	2.4	3.2	1.6	3.5
Officers/Executives	2.3	3.3	2.1	3.5	2.1	3.0	1.2	3.2

Source: Salary Budget Survey, Payscale 2025/2026

Projected Salary Increase Budget by Employee Group and Type – Midwest Region								
	2025 Actual				2026 Projected			
Employee Group	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total
Nonexempt	2.7	3.1	3.0	3.4	2.5	3.1	1.7	3.5
Exempt Non-Management	2.8	3.2	3.0	3.5	2.6	3.2	1.7	3.5
Managers	2.8	3.3	3.2	3.6	2.5	3.2	1.6	3.5
Officers/Executives	3.4	3.3	2.1	3.3	2.3	3.1	1.3	3.3

Source: Salary Budget Survey, Payscale 2025/2026



Projected Salary Increase Budget by Employee Group and Type – South Region

	2025 Actual				2026 Projected			
Employee Group	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total
Nonexempt	2.8	3.2	2.9	3.5	2.4	3.2	1.8	3.6
Exempt Non-Management	2.9	3.3	3.1	3.5	2.5	3.2	1.8	3.6
Managers	2.9	3.4	3.1	3.7	2.5	3.3	1.7	3.7
Officers/Executives	4.0	3.6	2.3	3.7	2.2	3.3	1.3	3.6

Source: Salary Budget Survey, Payscale 2025/2026

Projected Salary Increase Budget by Employee Group and Type – West Region

	2025 Actual				2026 Projected			
Employee Group	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total	General /COLA	Merit	Other	Total
Nonexempt	2.9	3.3	2.7	3.4	4.0	3.1	1.5	3.4
Exempt Non-Management	3.0	3.4	2.9	3.5	4.1	3.2	1.5	3.5
Managers	3.0	3.5	2.8	3.6	4.2	3.2	1.5	3.5
Officers/Executives	3.1	3.5	1.8	3.4	3.9	3.1	1.1	3.2

Source: Salary Budget Survey, Payscale 2025/2026

Total Salary Increase Budget by Employee Group and Region

	2025 Actual				2026 Projected			
Employee Group	Central Region	East Region	South Region	West Region	Central Region	East Region	South Region	West Region
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6
Nonexempt Salaried	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6
Exempt Salaried	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6
Officers/ Executives	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Salary Structure Adjustments by Employee Group and Region								
	2025 Actual				2026 Projected			
Employee Group	Central Region	East Region	South Region	West Region	Central Region	East Region	South Region	West Region
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3
Nonexempt Salaried	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4
Exempt Salaried	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Officers/ Executives	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Salary Structure Adjustments by Employee Group and Region										
	2025 Actual					2026 Planned				
Employee Group	North-east	Mid-Atlantic	South	Mid-west	West	North-east	Mid-Atlantic	South	Mid-west	West
Non-exempt	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.9
Exempt (Non-management)	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.8
Managers	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.9
Officers & Executives	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.7

Source: Salary Budget Survey, Payscale 2025/2026

Variable Pay Budget by Employee Group – Central Region				
Employee Group	2024 Percent Paid	2025 Percent Budgeted	2025 Projected Percent Paid	2026 Projected Percent Budgeted
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	7.0	7.1	7.4	6.9
Nonexempt Salaried	9.9	10.0	11.1	10.0
Exempt Salaried	16.9	15.0	17.6	15.0
Officers/Executives	40.4	38.3	40.9	37.5

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Variable Pay Budget by Employee Group – East Region

Employee Group	2024 Percent Paid	2025 Percent Budgeted	2025 Projected Percent Paid	2026 Projected Percent Budgeted
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	6.7	7.6	6.7	7.3
Nonexempt Salaried	9.4	10.2	9.9	10.1
Exempt Salaried	16.8	15.5	17.2	15.5
Officers/Executives	40.2	38.4	40.3	37.4

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Variable Pay Budget by Employee Group – South Region

Employee Group	2024 Percent Paid	2025 Percent Budgeted	2025 Projected Percent Paid	2026 Projected Percent Budgeted
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	6.7	8.0	7.1	7.9
Nonexempt Salaried	9.5	10.5	10.4	10.4
Exempt Salaried	17.0	15.8	17.7	15.7
Officers/Executives	40.7	39.0	41.1	37.8

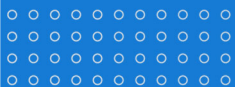
Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026

Variable Pay Budget by Employee Group – West Region

Employee Group	2024 Percent Paid	2025 Percent Budgeted	2025 Projected Percent Paid	2026 Projected Percent Budgeted
Nonexempt Hourly Nonunion	6.9	7.3	7.3	7.3
Nonexempt Salaried	9.5	10.3	10.5	10.2
Exempt Salaried	17.5	15.3	18.1	15.3
Officers/Executives	40.8	38.3	41.4	37.2

Source: 52nd Annual Salary Budget Survey, World at Work 2025/2026





LET US HELP YOU STAY COMPETITIVE, CURRENT, AND COMPLIANT

With our People & Technology Consulting Team’s extensive experience and integrated approach, we can help your organization develop effective compensation strategies, mitigate compliance risks and maximize resources to drive both employee and organizational performance. Our team can help structure competitive base pay plans, incentive plans and total rewards strategies. Our experts stay abreast of regulatory changes and help you interpret the impact for your organization, greatly reducing complexity and time involved. Done properly, risks that could have a crippling effect can be eliminated. Leverage your human resources to achieve strategic and financial goals. Contact us today to see how we can help you.

