

State Employee Salary Database

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the State Employee Salary Database?

The database is a searchable data source providing names, job titles and total annual earnings of most state employees. The total annual earnings include the base pay and any additional compensation or premiums such as overtime, call-back, standby or assignment pay. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) works with higher education institutions to collect the data, which is then provided to the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program for posting on the state's website (fiscal.wa.gov).

What earnings information is included in the database?

The database displays the total annual earnings for most employees who worked for the state at anytime during the previous five years and earned more than \$300 during a calendar year. Retroactive adjustments to pay are not included. Total annual earnings are rounded to the nearest \$100.

Why can't I find information about some individuals working in state government? Why does the earnings information for some employees seem incomplete?

The database does not include anyone new to state government since Jan. 1 of the *current* calendar year. However, it does include individuals who were employed at any time during the previous five years but have since retired or separated from state service. Thus, for some individuals, the database reflects earnings for only a portion of the year.

Does the database show sources of income that aren't paid by the state, such as funding from a federal program, a research grant or private donors?

Earnings are reported regardless of the funding source(s) for the employee's position. For some employees paid by both state and non-state jurisdictions, the database displays only the state portion of their salaries (e.g., Superior Court judges).

Why are some state employees paid with non-state money? Is it possible to be a state employee and not be paid with any state funds?

Some state employees are paid salaries from non-state funds. For example, federally funded state programs may include funding for a state employee's salary. Many employees at institutions of higher education are paid from grants, contracts, funds from self-sustaining programs or other non state sources of funds.

Why are some employees listed more than once?

Employees who have held more than one position in the calendar year or worked in more than one agency/institution will have more than one record in the database.

Does the database include student employees?

No. Some student employment information at higher education institutions is protected by federal regulation and is not public information.

However, non-University of Washington student nursing technicians at the UW Medical Centers and student interns at the Washington State Historical Society are not in that category and so are included in the database. Legislative interns are also included, but legislative pages are not.

Why is this database published?

Access to the database is provided as a public service; it is not required by law.

How often will the database be updated?

We update the database annually.

How are salaries determined for state employees?

Various laws and rules govern salaries for state employees depending on the position, whether the position is classified or exempt, and whether the position is represented by a union. Salary bands or ranges are typically established or modified through a public meeting process and require adoption by the director of the OFM State Human Resources Division.

For employees represented by a union in collective bargaining, salary rates are agreed to in contract. The initial salaries for individual employees within a salary band or range are determined by hiring authorities.

For more information on the setting of salaries of state employees, visit HR.wa.gov and select Compensation and Job Classes.

How are salaries set for elected officials?

The Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials determines the salaries for the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Auditor, Attorney General, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Public Lands, Insurance Commissioner, members of the Legislature, justices of the Supreme Court and judges of the Court of Appeals and Superior and District courts.

Why are salaries for some legislators not displayed?

According to RCW 28B.10.409, any employee who is on leave of absence from an institution of higher education (the four-year schools, the community and technical colleges, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) to serve as a state legislator may elect to continue to participate in any annuity or retirement plan authorized under RCW 28B.10.400 during the leave period.

The institution will pay the employee's salary attributable to legislative service and match the employee's retirement plan contributions based on the salary for the leave period. The Legislature will reimburse the institution for the salary and employer contributions covering the leave period. In these instances, the data for the salary for the legislator will appear in the institution rather than in the Legislature.

Why are many of the highest salaries paid to State Investment Board staff?

The Washington State Investment Board (WSIB) salaries are based on a biennial salary survey of other pension funds and set within a range of the average of other funds. This salary-setting method is set in state law and designed to ensure that the WSIB can attract and retain investment professionals. The survey methods and results are reviewed by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee and others. This review includes a 60-day public comment period.

All WSIB expenses, including salaries, are paid out of dedicated funds netted from investment earnings, at no cost to state taxpayers. The agency participates in a benchmarking service that compares its costs to 149 U.S. pension funds and ranks as a low-cost provider of investment management services.

For more information about WSIB salaries, see RCW 43.33A.100.

Why are so many University of Washington employees paid so highly?

The UW competes for exceptionally talented people with advanced degrees of specialization in a very competitive international marketplace, as do the other public institutions of higher education. Many of the highest-paid employees at the UW, for example, are in high-demand, high-paying fields such as medicine, computer science, genome sciences and other fields in which the market determines the salary scale. As one of the nation's preeminent research institutions, it is essential that the university attract and retain people at the top of their fields. In these disciplines, salaries tend to be higher than those in other areas of state government. Salaries for the vast majority of UW employees in such fields as medicine and research are not paid from state taxpayer dollars or tuition.

Are University of Washington athletic coaches' salaries paid for by taxpayers?

No state taxpayer dollars are used to pay the salaries of any UW athletic department employees, including coaches. The UW's Intercollegiate Athletic Department is responsible for generating all the revenue it needs to operate its programs and maintain its facilities. No General Fund tax dollars or any other tax dollars support the program. Nor are there any other institutional funds going to the program. And unlike many universities, there are no student fees or tuition dollars going to support athletics. All the department's revenue comes from ticket and gate receipts, television and radio contracts and philanthropic gifts. The only state contributions are a limited number of legislatively authorized tuition waivers granted years ago to help the state's colleges and universities achieve gender equity in their athletic programs.

What about athletic department salaries at Washington State University?

No state funds are used to pay salaries for any WSU athletic department employees.

How do I obtain a print copy?

To save money and resources, OFM no longer prints state employee salary information. Click the "Download Data" link at the top of the screen to receive an email with a link to download the full database.

What if I don't want my salary/identity disclosed?

Under RCW 42.56.210, salaries of state employees are public information. Employee names are withheld for victims of domestic violence and for employees whose jobs require confidentiality.

If my salary information is incorrect, how do I get it corrected?

Please report incorrect salaries to your human resource or payroll office. Due to resource restrictions, only significant disparities will be corrected in the online report.

Who do I contact if I have questions about specific employee salaries?

If you have questions about specific employee salaries, go to the employing organizations website and select the 'Public Records Request' link.