

NEXT STAGE

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg
**Nonprofit Executive
Compensation Study**

2020 EDITION

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Notes and Acknowledgements

Next Stage is thankful to the nonprofit chief executives who took part in the survey and shared important insights about executive compensation in the Charlotte region. Special thanks to those who also participated in stakeholder interviews that furthered those insights and provided much-needed context. Participants in both the survey and interviews were granted anonymity in exchange for their candid feedback.

This study was made possible through the collaborative work of Next Stage’s 2018-2020 Summer Fellows from the Davidson College Nonprofit Leadership Fellows program, Savannah Dukes (2018), Ellie Pennybacker (2019) and Michi LaCorte (2020), who poured through hundreds of 990 statements to source the study’s underlying data. The research team utilized GuideStar and Candid’s 990 Finder to source the most up-to-date organizational data including self-reported compensation. This data was sourced from FY17-FY19 990 statements and is presented as “most recent fiscal year” and “prior fiscal year” for comparison purposes. These were used to represent “% change” year-over-year in the charts throughout the study.

Overview of the Study

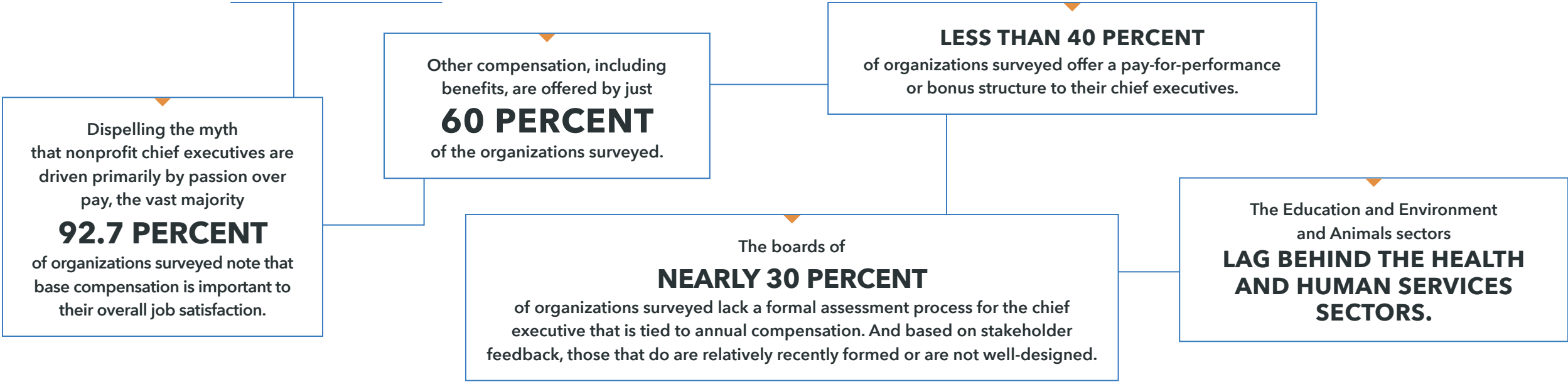


Welcome to the 2020 edition of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Nonprofit Executive Compensation Study.

Next Stage launched this project as a response to challenges repeatedly brought forward through its work facilitating strategic planning processes and executive searches for area organizations. Talent acquisition and retention is a priority across the nonprofit landscape. How to fairly compensate nonprofit leadership is a question that boards and executive directors wrestle with across organizations of every size, budget and mission focus.

Overview of the Study

In this report, readers will find research culled from the 990 forms of over 150 local nonprofits, insights gleaned from more than 40 participants in an in-depth survey and commentary provided by 11 executives who agreed to one-on-one interviews. Criteria for inclusion in the study include being headquartered in Mecklenburg County and having revenue of more than \$350,000. This research forms the basis of findings that are outlined throughout. **Highlights include:**



This is the first edition of a study that Next Stage aims to produce every three years, allowing the firm to compare against benchmarks and illuminate how organizations are addressing executive compensation from today into the future.

Compensation by Sector

	TOTAL COMP - MOST RECENT				Average Base Compensation	Average Other Compensation	% of Orgs Offering Other Compensation
	Orgs	Mean	Median	% Change			
TOTAL	155	\$125,317	\$108,605	5.9%	\$116,188	\$15,216	60%
ARTS, CULTURE & HUMANITIES (A)	19	\$155,621	\$143,370	3.3%	\$148,137	\$10,939	68%
EDUCATION (B)	17	\$102,476	\$100,693	2.2%	\$96,444	\$12,817	47%
ENVIRONMENT & ANIMALS (C-D)	9	\$100,993	\$87,284	12.6%	\$96,060	\$8,881	56%
HEALTH (E-H)	30	\$129,230	\$125,958	8.9%	\$117,317	\$18,811	63%
HUMAN SERVICES (I-P)	63	\$121,481	\$102,583	4.1%	\$111,843	\$16,712	59%
PUBLIC, SOCIETAL BENEFIT (R-W)	17	\$134,481	\$124,884	6.9%	\$125,664	\$13,626	65%

Analysis

Next Stage utilized the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) classification system developed by the National Center for Charitable Statistics. The NTEE code includes many sub-classifications and organizations may be assigned several codes based on mission and programming. For the purposes of this study, Next Stage grouped organizations based on the most prominent mission alignment.

Higher mean and median compensation figures for the Arts, Culture & Humanities sector is attributable in part to the modest number of small/emerging cultural organizations in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region. Just five of the 17 organizations profiled had revenue under \$1 million for the most recent fiscal year, balanced by seven with revenues over \$5 million.

The Environment & Animals sector features the lowest mean and median chief executive compensation, though the sample size is low (just nine organizations) with

only two realizing revenue of more than \$5 million in the most recent fiscal year. Both chief executives from the Environment & Animals sector interviewed for this study noted that historical compensation had been impacted by previous executives who had taken more modest salaries to join their respective organizations following successful careers in the private sector.

The Education sector lags behind the Health and Human Services sectors in both mean and median salaries. One chief executive from the Education sector noted that a past administrator elected to “grow the organization rather than take quality of life raises,” a comment consistent with comments from other interviewees from organizations with revenues under \$1 million.

Compensation by Revenue Size

	TOTAL COMP - MOST RECENT				Average Base Compensation	Average Other Compensation	% of Orgs Offering Other Compensation
	Orgs	Mean	Median	% Change			
TOTAL	155	\$125,777	\$108,605	5.9%	\$116,188	\$15,216	60%
\$10,000,000+	17	\$243,742	\$223,993	8.5%	\$222,783	\$22,270	94%
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\$1,000,000-\$2,499,999	42	\$113,388	\$107,925	3.6%	\$106,397	\$11,944	59%
UNDER \$1,000,000	50	\$74,823	\$71,747	11.0%	\$70,116	\$13,076	36%

Analysis

Not surprisingly, organizations that take in less revenue annually offer lower salaries while organizations with more robust revenues are able to pay a more competitive rate. There is a \$20,000-\$30,000 difference at each of the revenue levels from the bottom up, with a sizable, more than two-fold jump for organizations with revenues over \$10,000,000.

One chief executive from an Education sector nonprofit noted having previously conducted analysis of peers from within the same sector but wondered if the diversity of business models for similarly-sized organizations in other sectors might result in less meaningful data for comparison purposes.

Other compensation including benefits are paid to chief executives by just 60% of the organizations surveyed. This includes only 68% of the organizations in the middle

range, starting at \$2.5 million in annual revenue. Based on the surveys and interviews, this may be the result of organizations not offering benefits as well as chief executives not taking them. One chief executive from the Human Services sector noted that s/he elected to receive a total compensation package rather than the benefits offered to other employees of the organization since the individual’s spouse received a more generous benefits package in the private sector.

A number of factors contributing to the sizable percentage change in compensation year-over-year (11%) were sourced from interviews with chief executives from organizations with revenues under \$1 million. These include turnover in the position, longer tenures for founding chief executives and increased willingness of their boards to fairly address compensation.

Compensation by Number of Employees

	TOTAL COMP - MOST RECENT				Average Base Compensation	Average Other Compensation	% of Orgs Offering Other Compensation
	Orgs	Mean	Median	% Change			
TOTAL	155	\$125,317	\$108,605	5.9%	\$116,188	\$15,216	60%
200+ EMPLOYEES	14	\$236,443	\$205,405	-0.1%	\$218,195	\$19,651	93%
100-199 EMPLOYEES	10	\$161,911	\$166,646	2.4%	\$146,807	\$16,782	90%
50-99 EMPLOYEES	21	\$141,557	\$129,250	-1.9%	\$129,927	\$17,445	67%
21-49 EMPLOYEES	41	\$129,274	\$130,655	5.7%	\$118,602	\$15,088	72%
0-20 EMPLOYEES	69	\$90,173	\$79,575	9.7%	\$85,437	\$11,672	41%

Analysis

Not surprisingly, organizations with more full-time and part-time employees are also more likely to raise more revenue, which leads to increased salaries for chief executives. The chart above tracks similarly to the break down by revenue size presented on page 5.

A chief executive for an organization with 100-199 employees noted that management expertise is critical for organizations with larger staff sizes, an attribute that may not be as easy to find. Whereas chief executives of smaller nonprofits may come to their organizations through past roles in programming or fundraising, this chief executive noted how important operations and human resources expertise is to success in the role, creating market demand that drives up salaries.

With more than 70% of the organizations profiled having staff sizes under 50 employees, one chief executive for an organization with \$10+ million organization

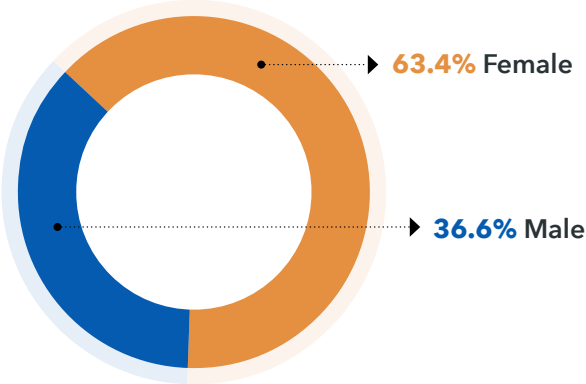
noted how ripe the Charlotte-Mecklenburg region is for an increased number of mergers and consolidations, particularly in light of the challenges many are facing from COVID-19.

One chief executive for an Environment & Animals nonprofit noted that s/he expects compensation at the top of the organization will likely go down in FY21 across the region, but particularly for larger organizations that may have had to furlough or make staffing cuts due to the impacts of COVID-19. Another chief executive in the Human Services sector offered an alternative opinion, that chief executives are being given an opportunity to rethink how their organizations deploy resources and that cost control should be a significant factor in rewarding successful nonprofit executives.

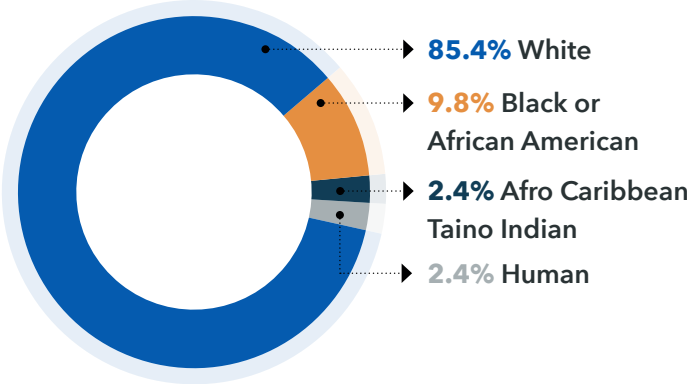
Survey Analysis: Participation

To augment the data sourced from 990 statements for the compensation analysis, Next Stage conducted a survey targeting exclusively the chief executives of profiled organizations. Of the 155 chief executives invited to participate, 41 completed the survey (26.4%). The following graphs provide greater demographic detail on those who participated in the survey.

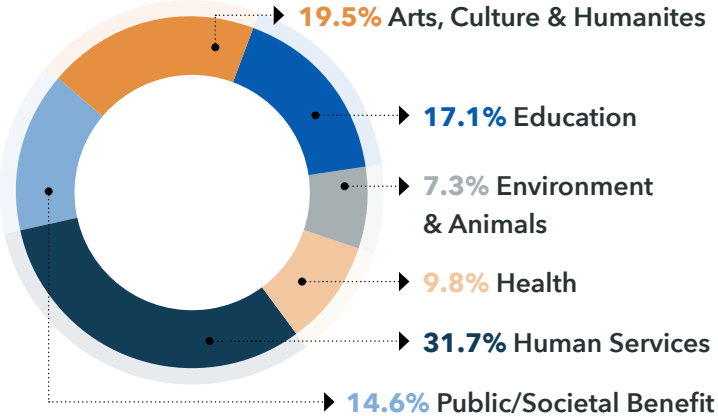
GENDER OF SURVEY PARTICIPANT



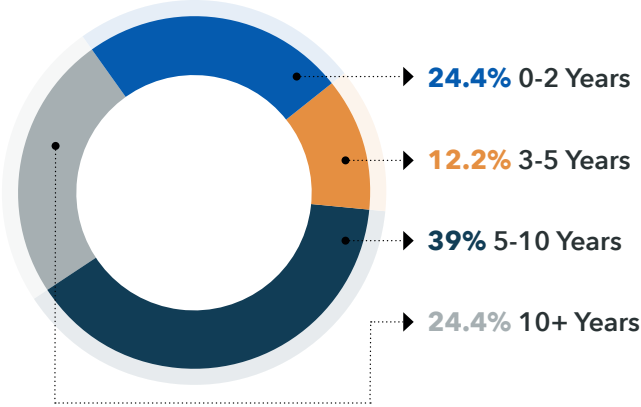
RACE OF SURVEY PARTICIPANT



AREA OF FOCUS FOR CURRENT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

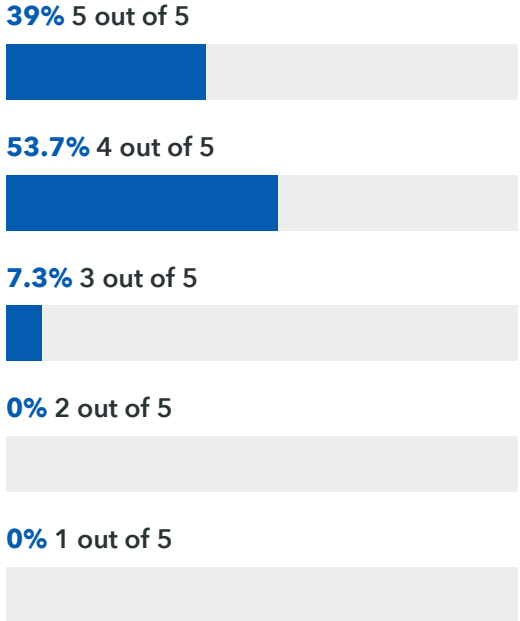


TENURE AS CEO OF CURRENT NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

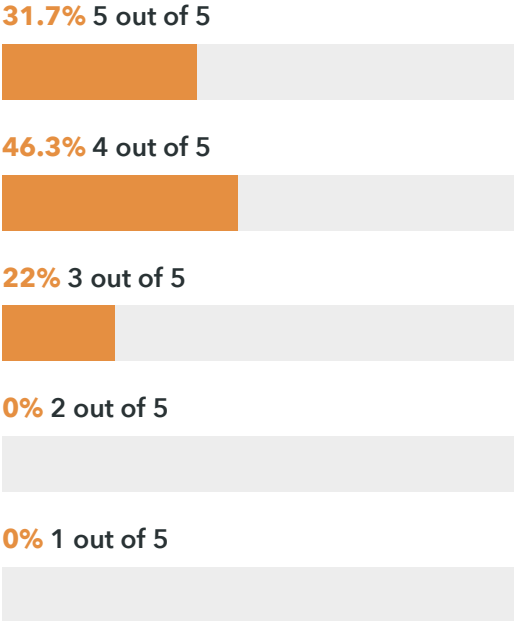


Survey: Base Compensation

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE BASE COMPENSATION TO YOUR OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION?



HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR CURRENT LEVEL OF COMPENSATION?



Analysis

Dispelling the myth that nonprofit chief executives are driven primarily by passion over pay, the vast majority of survey respondents (92.7%) note that base compensation is important or highly important to their overall job satisfaction.

A chief executive from an organization with revenue from \$2,500,000 to \$4,999,999 noted that s/he has encountered board chairs who approach compensation for nonprofit staff with a volunteer lens, e.g. "I'm here out of passion for the cause, therefore everyone involved must be similarly motivated." This "charity mentality" was noted by several stakeholders interviewed as a barrier to overcome.

Multiple individuals interviewed noted being satisfied with their salaries though "I know I am being underpaid for the value I bring to my role." This dichotomy of relative satisfaction with one's salary level despite a belief in a higher self-worth was grounded typically in choice - these chief executives believe they could make more in other industries but choose to work in social good. One interviewee with a background in the private sector noted that s/he was "frankly overpaid in the private sector."

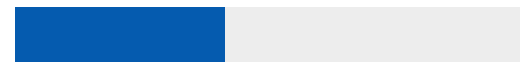
Survey: Benefits

HOW IMPORTANT ARE BENEFITS TO YOUR OVERALL JOB SATISFACTION

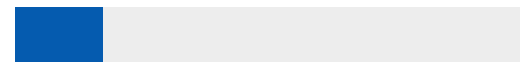
41.5% 5 out of 5



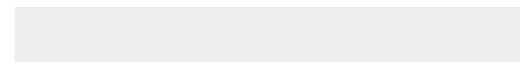
41.5% 4 out of 5



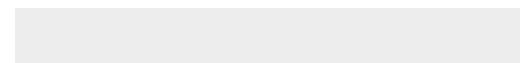
17.1% 3 out of 5



0% 2 out of 5



0% 1 out of 5



BENEFITS

97.5% Paid Time Off



85% Health insurance



75% 403b/Retirement Plan



75% Dental Insurance Plan



67.5% Life/Disability Insurance Plan



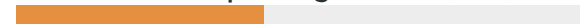
67.5% Employer Match on Retirement



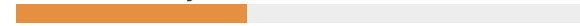
55% Vision Insurance Plan



42.5% Flexible Spending Account (FSA)



40% Maternity Leave



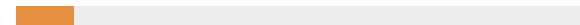
27.5% Health Savings Account (HSA)



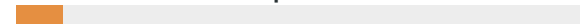
25% Paternity Leave



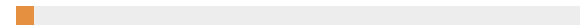
10% Educational Benefits



7.5% Health Care Stipend



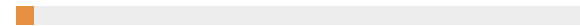
2.5% Full Reimbursement for Cost of Commute



2.5% Opportunity for a Sabbatical



2.5% Automobile



2.5% Company Car, Deferred Comp, Key Man Policy, Built in Bonus Structure



Analysis

A strong majority (83%) rated benefits as important or highly important to their overall job satisfaction. One noted in the comment section that benefits are as important as base compensation to job satisfaction, while another acknowledged not taking benefits though they are offered.

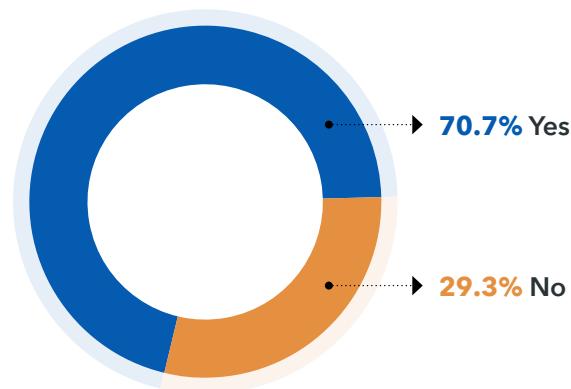
The benefits cited most often were Paid Time Off (97.5%), Health Insurance (85%), Dental Insurance (75%) and a 403b/Retirement Plan (75%). Of those organizations that offered a 403b/Retirement Plan, 90% offered an employer match.

Interviewees noted that Paid Time Off was the benefit most often negotiated as a part of the offer process, with “work-life balance” a key component of long-term success in their roles.

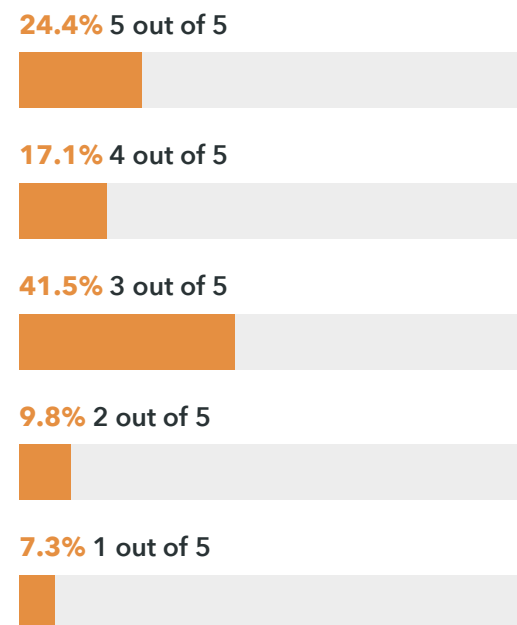
With an increasing reliance on cell phones and home-based Internet, multiple chief executives interviewed noted exploring not only reimbursements on these expenses for themselves but for their employees as well.

Survey: Compensation Review

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS HAVE A FORMAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TIED TO AN ANNUAL COMPENSATION REVIEW?



HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE PROCESS OF THE BOARD'S EVALUATION OF YOUR COMPENSATION?



Analysis

One of the biggest findings of this study is how poorly many area chief executives view the board-led effort to assess executive compensation. Nearly 30% of the organizations surveyed lack a formal performance evaluation tied to an annual compensation review, and those that do note that it is either relatively new or a flawed process.

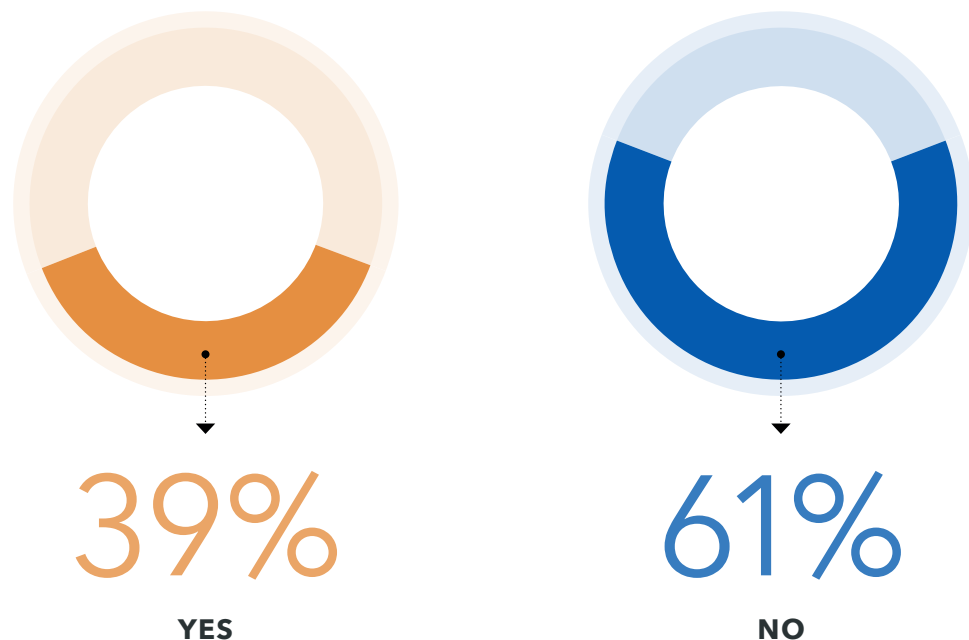
One chief executive for an organization with revenue under \$1 million noted a conflict of interest for his/her organization's process. Since the budgeting process starts with a draft formulated by the chief executive, that person is put in the awkward position of having to advocate for his/her own compensation against the backdrop of other needs in the organization.

Another significant finding was how prevalent employee contracts are for chief executives, particularly for those in larger organizations. The upside to this is a built-in re-negotiation every two to three years. One chief executive for an Education sector nonprofit noted requesting a contract during the negotiation stage, which was a change in policy for the organization.

Most of the chief executives interviewed noted how important it is to source comparative data during the annual review. One chief executive for a Human Services sector nonprofit noted that boards should not approach the setting of compensation as "what do they need?" but rather "what should we pay?"

Survey: Pay for Performance

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFER A PAY-FOR-PERFORMANCE OR BONUS STRUCTURE?



Analysis

The majority of survey participants noted that their organizations do not utilize a pay-for-performance or bonus structure. Based on qualitative feedback from the survey and interviews, those that do only added it to their compensation structure relatively recently.

The majority of chief executives interviewed for this study believe pay-for-performance should be considered more often by nonprofit boards, with the caveat that the key performance indicators (KPIs) be thoughtfully constructed. As one executive from an Arts, Culture & Humanities sector nonprofit noted, the metrics should be based on the strategic plan and need to be consistently set across multiple board chairs and executive committees. The desire to avoid "twisted incentives" was expressed by multiple interviewees.

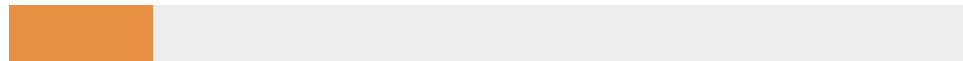
A chief executive in the Environment & Animals sector suggested that incentivization may be a strong way to encourage nonprofit executives to advance long-term strategies that require increased near-term attention, such as diversifying revenue streams.

Executives interviewed with already competitive base compensation were less likely to note being motivated by pay-for-performance. One chief executive from an organization with revenue from \$5,000,000-\$9,999,999 opposed the concept of pay-for-performance, believing it is not fair to other staff members and suggesting, "we all win together or we all lose together." A similar sentiment was shared by the leader of an organization with \$10 million in revenue, stating that his/her bonus is not a personal motivator.

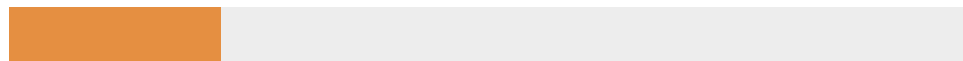
Survey: Anticipated Tenure

HOW LONG DO YOU ANTICIPATE CONTINUING TO SERVE IN THE ROLE YOU ARE CURRENTLY IN?

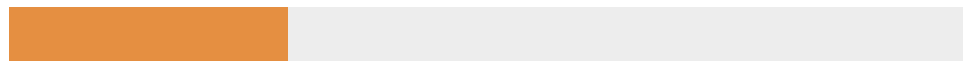
14.6% 10+ years



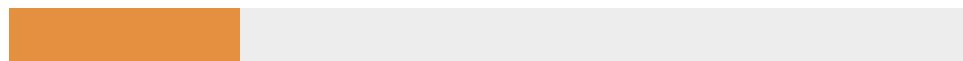
22% 5-10 years



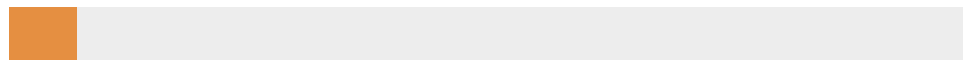
29.3% 3-5 years



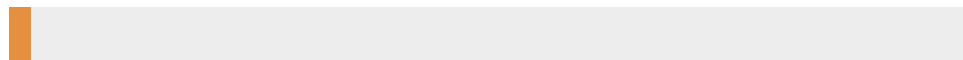
24.4% 1-3 years



7.3% Less than 1 more year



2.4% Prefer not to say



Analysis

While not intended to be an analysis of executive job satisfaction, this study also uncovered significant concern by nonprofit executives concerning the state of the local nonprofit sector during the era of COVID-19. Of survey respondents, more than one-third noted not expecting to stay with their current organization beyond the next three years.

The impact of COVID-19 was a resounding theme of interviews, with organizational leaders more confident through the end of the fiscal year but uncertain about 2021-2022 and beyond. One chief executive of a Health sector nonprofit noted recent projections that as many as one-third of nonprofits will shut their doors by June 2021.

Support for mergers and other forms of integration was expressed by several chief executives, as the turnover suggested in this chart occurs at the top of organizations. One chief executive from the Human Services sector suggested that barriers to consideration of these strategies include the lack of strong financial modeling and the hubris of some nonprofit leaders.

Appendix A: Full Compensation Analysis Chart

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0-20 EMPLOYEES	69	\$90,173	\$79,575	9.7%	\$85,437	\$11,672	41%

Appendix B: Organizations Profiled

24 Foundation	Beds for Kids	Charlotte Hornets Foundation, Inc.
A Child's Place	Bethlehem Center of Charlotte	Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership
Ace & TJ's Grin Kids	Blumenthal Performing Arts	Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Foundation
ADA Jenkins Families and Careers Center	BRAKES - Put on the BRAKES, Inc.	Charlotte Rescue Mission
Adult Care and Share Center	Bruce Irons Camp Fund	Charlotte Speech and Hearing Center
Alexander Youth Network	Care Ring	Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Allegro Foundation	Carolina Breast Friends	Child Care Resources, Inc.
Alliance Credit Counseling, Inc.	Carolina Raptor Center	Children & Family Services Center
Anuvia Prevention and Recovery Center	Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency	Children's Theatre of Charlotte
Apparo	Carolina Voices	Classroom Central
Arts & Science Council Charlotte Mecklenburg, Inc.	Carolinas CARE Partnership	Clayworks
Arts for Life	Catawba Lands Conservancy	Clean Air Carolina
Arts+	Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation Inc.	Communities in Schools
Autism Charlotte	Center for Prevention Services	Community Culinary School of Charlotte
Bechtler Museum of Art	Charlotte Ballet	Community Link
	Charlotte Bilingual Preschool	Council for Children's Rights
	Charlotte Bridge Home	Crisis Assistance Ministry
	Charlotte Family Housing	CrossRoads Corporation

Appendix B: Organizations Profiled

Digi-Bridge	Hinds' Feet Farm	Make a Wish of Central and Western NC
Dilworth Center	Holy Angels, Inc.	Matthews HELP Center
Disability Rights & Resources	Hope Haven, Inc.	McColl Center for Visual Art
Discovery Place	InnerVision Inc.	MeckEd
Dress for Success Charlotte	InReach	Mental Health America of Central Carolinas
E2D, Inc.	International House	Metrolina Association for the Blind
Elon Homes and Schools for Children	Jackson Park Ministry	Misty Meadows Mitey Riders
Farmer Foodshare	Jeff Gordon Children's Foundation	National Children's Oral Health Foundation
Florence Crittenton Services, Inc.	Jimmie Johnson Foundation	NC MedAssist
Freedom School Partners	Junior Achievement of Central Carolinas	Nevins Inc.
Friendship Trays	KinderMourn	North Carolina Outward Bound School
Girl Scouts - Hornets' Nest Council	Lakewood Preschool Corporation	North Carolina Wildlife Federation
Girls on the Run Charlotte	Legal Services of Southern Piedmont	On Eagles Wings Ministries
Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont	Let Me Run	One 7 Ministries
Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture	Levine Museum of the New South	Opera Carolina
Heart Math Tutoring	LIFESPAN Inc.	Pat's Place Child Advocacy Center
	Loaves & Fishes	People of the Second Chance
	Lupus Foundation of America, NC Chapter	Planned Parenthood South Atlantic

Appendix B: Organizations Profiled

Playing for Others Inc.
 Pregnancy Resource Center of Charlotte
 Present Age Ministries
 Project 658
 Purple Heart Homes, Inc.
 RAIN (Regional AIDS Interfaith Network)
 Refugee Support Services
 Renaissance West Community Initiative
 Samaritan House
 Samaritan's Feet
 Sandbox Group Inc.
 Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina
 Silent Images
 Smart Start of Mecklenburg County
 Socialserve.com (Nonprofit Industries, Inc.)
 Spay Neuter Charlotte
 Special Olympics North Carolina, Inc.
 Speedway Children's Charities

Supportive Housing Communities
 Sustain Charlotte
 Swim Across America
 Teen Health Connection
 The Center for Community Transitions
 The Choir School at St. Peter's
 The First Tee of Greater Charlotte
 The Foundation for Tomorrow
 The Harvest Center of Charlotte
 The Humane League
 The Independence Fund
 The Isabella Santos Foundation
 The John Crosland School
 The Learning Collaborative
 The Mint Museum of Art, Inc.
 The Paula Takacs Foundation for
 Sarcoma Research
 The Relatives, Inc.

The Shepherd's Center of Charlotte, Inc.
 Theatre Charlotte
 Thompson Child and Family Focus Inc.
 Time Out Youth
 TreesCharlotte
 UMAR
 United Way of Central Carolinas
 University Radio Foundation –
 WFAE 90.7 FM
 Urban League of Central Carolinas, Inc.
 USO of NC Charlotte Center
 Wing Haven Gardens
 Wings of Eagles Ranch
 Women's Impact Fund
 World Affairs Council of Charlotte
 YMCA of Greater Charlotte
 Youth Development Initiatives
 YWCA Central Carolinas

Appendix C: About Next Stage

Next Stage is a social enterprise company based in Charlotte, NC that partners with nonprofit and corporate change-makers to design and implement strategies that build strong organizations and fuel community change.

The world is changing fast, community problems seem bigger than ever and the competition for resources can feel overwhelming. The lines between nonprofit, business, civic and policy impact grow increasingly blurred, as more organizations recognize the need for partnerships and strategies that value both people and sustainability to create systemic change. These changes are making way for leaders with courageous visions to forge new partnerships and strategies that will create change in communities felt for generations. Leaders and organizations have the internal drive and expertise to make big impact. Next Stage partners to fuel this drive and make these visions a reality.

Like the many nonprofits it serves, Next Stage is guided by a mission and a set of values and guiding principles. The firm is focused intensely on the social good needs in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, and as a social enterprise company, that means working with and through clients to make the region a more just and equitable place to live. This study was produced and freely distributed to nonprofit staff and volunteer leaders as an expression of Next Stage's commitment to achieving these goals.

The firm is comprised of four professionals: **Janet Ervin** (Consultant), **Caylin Haldeman** (Director of CULTIVATE), **Josh Jacobson** (Managing Director) and **Tanya Varanelli** (Project Manager).

Learn more at www.nextstage-consulting.com.