

HR CAREERS REPORT 2019

Trends in Salaries, Titles, & More

Namely  HR for Humans

INTRODUCTION

Think you know HR? It's time to forget the cliches about [complaint departments](#) and the office police. There are few professions better positioned to positively impact the future of work. Pulling from Namely's database of over 1,000 companies and 200,000 employees, we sought to uncover new insights into the field of HR.

From demographics to compensation, no data point was off-limits. Our findings cut through the stereotypes to paint a more vivid picture of the individuals central to today's workplace—HR professionals.

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DEMOGRAPHICS

What does HR look like?

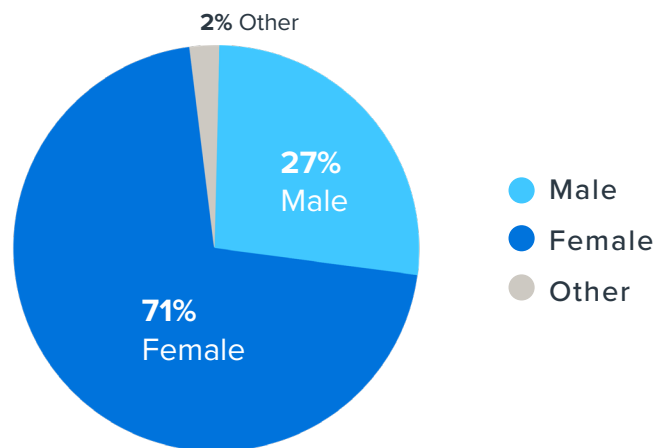
Close your eyes and picture this: you're at work, sitting across from one of your company's HR representatives. What do they look like? Are they a man or a woman? How old are they?

[HR stereotypes](#) have long perpetuated notions of HR being the “fun police” or “the firing department,” but modern HR professionals are working to eliminate the negative associations and make strides toward a better workplace for all employees. We dug deep into the demographic data to discover what HR teams *really* look like.

Gender

First, we examined HR's gender breakdown. The data reveals that 71 percent HR professionals are female. It's important to note that this divide may be growing—when Namely's [2018 Workplace Diversity Report](#) was published last summer, women represented 67 percent of HR. In both cases, our findings were consistent with what the [Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#) has reported as part of its own demographic research.

HR Gender Demographics



Even more surprising, however, is the rise in non-binary gender classification among HR employees. With diversity and inclusion top of mind for many organizations, the HR industry itself goes beyond merely [supporting non-binary employees](#) and is giving them a seat at the table. As diversity becomes a staple in the workplace, it's encouraging to see that HR embodies a more inclusive experience for employees across the identity spectrum.

Age and Generational Trends

If you instinctively picture HR as a tenured “principal” figure—think again. [According to the BLS](#), the median age of all U.S. employees is 42 years old. In comparison, the average age of HR professionals in our database was just 35 years old. This suggests that HR is still an appealing field for young job seekers. The industry may be trying to move beyond its long held reputation and add fresh voices to guide the future of work.

Average Age of HR Professionals

Seniority	Average Age
Overall Average	35
Non-Managers	33
Managers	39

The average HR age range finds a sweet spot in an increasingly age-diverse workforce. As Gen X employees look toward retirement, millennials begin to think about starting families, and a new generation enters the workforce, it's more challenging than ever to offer benefits and perks that account for everyone's diverse experience. An HR team that sits on the generational border is well positioned to understand and better provide for the full range of employee needs.

Ethnicity

While HR teams are often internal leaders on diversity, they still have a long way to go themselves. Our data shows that **65 percent of HR professionals identify as white**, with the next highest representations at 12 percent identified as Asian and 10 percent as Hispanic. These figures may seem disheartening considering HR's role in helping lead diversity efforts and implementing unconscious bias training. [Similar-to-me bias](#) starts from the top down, and HR is a model for the rest of the company.

To buck the trend, HR should commit to proactively tapping into [new and diverse networks](#), such as universities and community centers, to connect with candidates that may not come through typical recruiting channels. Be sure to prioritize [diversity reporting](#) so that you can identify trends across the HR team and the larger organization. Nothing stalls innovation like a homogenous workforce, so find ways to make diversity a top priority—starting with the HR team.

Diversity of HR Professionals

Ethnicity	HR Professionals
American Indian	0.2%
Asian	12%
Black	8%
Hispanic	10%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.7%
Two or More	4.4%
White	65%



TENURE

Are HR professionals “job-hoppers?”

At a time when [job hopping](#) is more common than ever, companies are working hard to retain employees for the long haul. While it often falls on HR to build the policies that inspire tenure amongst employees as a whole, it's also important to consider their department's own turnover.

So who is responsible keeping HR professionals engaged? More often than not, it's up to the department's leader and the C-Suite. If HR departments are understaffed, under-resourced, or seen as purely administrative rather than a voice "at the table," it's likely that individual representatives will look to transition to other, more people-centric businesses.

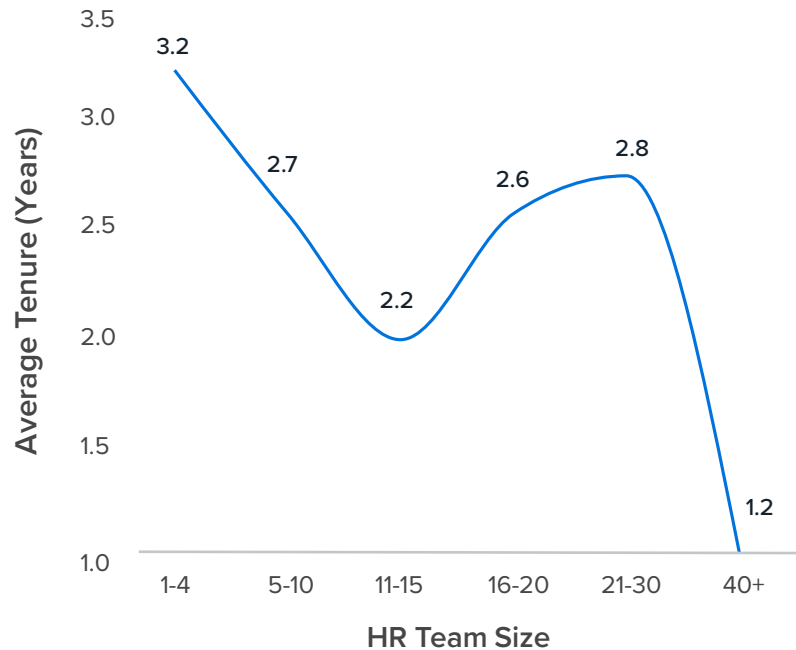
Average HR Tenure

Seniority	Average Tenure (Years)
Overall Average	2.63
Non-Managers	2.21
Managers	3.49

On average, HR managers have an average tenure of 3.5 years, while non-managers spend around 2.2 years in their role. It takes time to move up the [HR career ladder](#). Once you reach the manager level, it makes sense that you're likely invested in your team and direct reports. Not to mention, manager positions likely receive higher compensation and more influence among key decision makers. We'll touch on compensation later in the report.

(**Fun fact:** the HR professionals in our database have clocked over 36,000,000 hours of work since they started using Namely. Yes, 36 million hours!)

Average HR Tenure by Team Size



Tenure by HR Team Size

As HR teams grow in size, their individual employees' tenure trends lower. While HR teams with 1-4 employees have an average tenure of 3.24 years, those with 40+ HR people average just over a year with their company. The full results of our analysis are pictured above.

Digging deeper, there are a number of potential explanations here. Larger HR teams tend to evolve into a set of highly specialized roles at all levels, from temporary interns and contract staff all the way up. Growing HR teams are also indicative of broader company growth, especially when scaling talent acquisition to keep up with hiring needs. As a result, the organization as a whole ebbs and flows.

On the other hand, in a small organization, HR professionals have the opportunity to build people processes and company culture from the ground up. While this can be hard work, it's often rewarding and can lead to a workforce that's more invested in staying long-term. In small companies, even an entry-level HR specialist plays an important and strategic role in the employee experience. That sense of purpose is hard to replicate, and it may be fueling long-term retention.

COMPENSATION

How much can you earn working in HR?

COMPENSATION

Odds are that most people don't pursue an HR career to find fame and fortune. Instead, according to what we've heard from many professionals, you might unexpectedly [fall into the field](#). So while HR professionals don't have to worry about the paparazzi just yet, the data shows that they can still earn a pretty penny.

How pretty? The average salary across all HR practitioners is an impressive \$94,950. Managers, as expected, make even more: an average of \$135,191. Note that these figures vary widely across different company sizes, geographic location, and (unfortunately) genders.

Average HR Salary

Seniority	Average Salary
Overall Average	\$94,949
Managers	\$135,191
Non-Managers	\$75,716



HR Salaries by Company Size



Salary by Company Size

Based on Namely’s data, company size has a clear impact on HR professionals’ salaries. As overall headcount grows, managers and non-managers alike should use these findings to inform potential career moves, like deciding to pursue an internal promotion or a move to another company.

According to the data shown above, non-managers hoping to optimize their earnings should look for companies with 1-50 employees or those with more than 750 employees. Conversely, earnings for non-managers is lowest at companies with 50-750 employees.

On the other hand, managers should expect to earn more as their company grows. At companies with 1-200 employees, manager salaries steadily increase alongside overall headcount. Managers see a spike in earnings at companies with 300-500 employees, where increasing team size and direct reports can earn them as much as \$148,838 per year, the highest average salary in our dataset.

Salary by Gender

Average HR Salary by Gender

Gender	Average Salary
Female	\$91,981
Male	\$103,644

Data reveals that HR is not immune to the gender wage gap. Putting company size and title aside, it appears female HR professionals are at a disadvantage when it comes to salary. While female practitioners earned an impressive \$91,981 a year on average, their male counterparts earned almost 13 percent more, or \$103,644. In other words, for every dollar male HR professionals earn, females earn just \$0.89. To get a better sense of the factors influencing the wage gap, we looked at salaries by company size, title, and gender.

HR Salary by Gender, Company Size, & Title

Highlighted: Company size with highest gender pay inequity.

Company Size	Female Overall Average	Male Overall Average	Female Managers	Male Managers	Female Non-Managers	Male Non-Managers
0-50	\$86,989	\$102,118	\$104,012	\$139,320	\$80,623	\$91,489
50-100	\$87,378	\$100,661	\$122,441	\$137,333	\$69,422	\$79,164
100-150	\$96,219	\$95,565	\$129,826	\$150,688	\$76,500	\$74,191
150-200	\$97,609	\$115,201	\$133,559	\$159,873	\$77,459	\$91,199
200-300	\$91,231	\$104,235	\$125,311	\$148,837	\$70,638	\$82,781
300-500	\$93,759	\$103,589	\$146,166	\$156,070	\$71,220	\$76,995
500-700	\$85,061	\$99,407	\$131,606	\$145,562	\$68,901	\$79,867
750-1000	\$101,774	\$112,760	\$137,677	\$155,504	\$86,917	\$95,274
1000+	\$91,238	\$107,862	\$125,0412	\$151,075	\$77,338	\$94,846

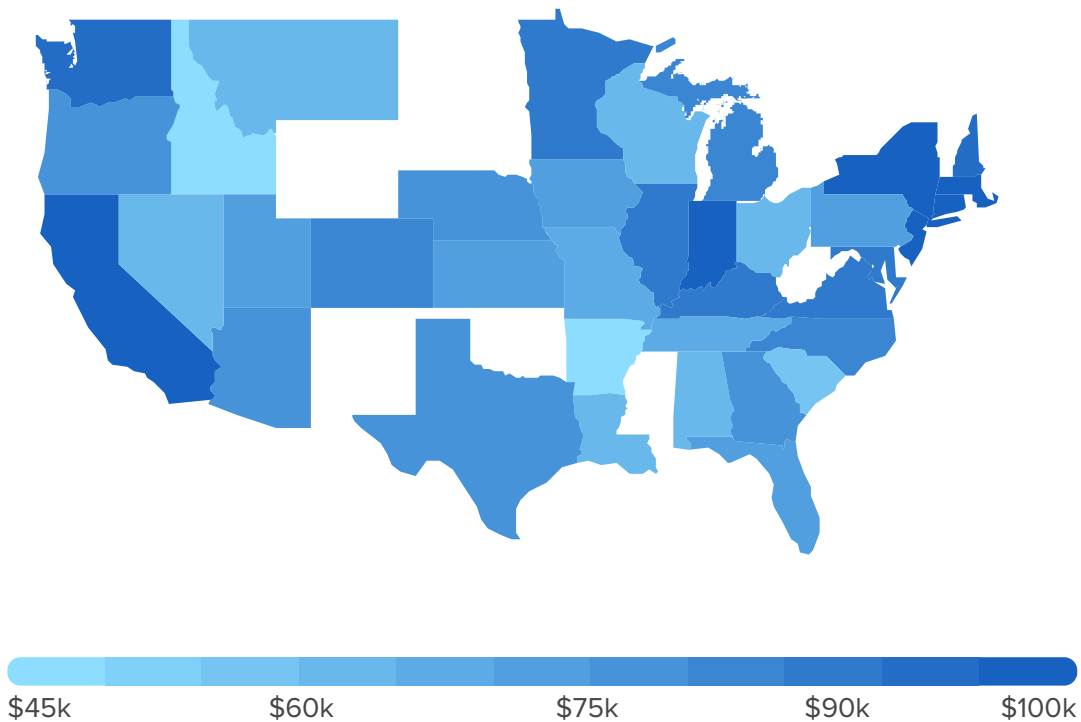
COMPENSATION

Pay inequality exists across all company sizes and job titles. At companies with either under 50 employees or more than 1,000 employees, men's salaries were more than \$15,000 higher than women's.

This pay disparity is even more pronounced among manager-level employees. At companies with less than 50 employees, male managers earn almost 34 percent more than their female counterparts. This disparity is less pronounced at companies with over 1,000 employees, yet still present. Male managers at these larger companies earn 20 percent more than women in the same role. Even though HR teams are arguably the best suited to help mend the gender pay gap overall, inequality still persists even in a predominantly female field.

Average HR Salaries by State

Note: Only states with statistically sufficient data were included in this analysis.



Salary by Geography

HR professionals looking to boost their earnings might want to consider packing up their desks and moving cross-country. Aside from its movie stars and temperate climate, California is also known for impressive HR salaries. The state’s average non-manager salary is \$88,935, perhaps to compensate for the fact that it’s one of the [hardest states in which to practice HR](#).

If you call the northeast home, you’re also in luck. After California, New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut have the highest average salaries in the country. While Connecticut places fourth in top non-manager salaries, HR professionals in the Constitution State also have the highest manager-level earning potential in the country. The state’s average manager and executive salary is \$127,128. By contrast, the states with the lowest HR salaries in the country are Iowa, Alabama, Nevada, South Carolina, and Wisconsin.

HR’s Highest & Lowest Paying States

Highest Paying	Lowest Paying
California – \$88,936	Iowa – \$55,089
New York – \$84,857	Alabama – \$53,960
Massachusetts – \$80,801	Nevada – \$53,760
Connecticut – \$79,227	South Carolina – \$51,117
Washington – \$76,304.	Wisconsin – \$48,909

TOP HR TITLES

What are the most popular
HR jobs this year?

Top 10 HR Titles

What are the top HR careers of 2019? While we've seen a rise in [creative HR job titles](#) like “Chief Happiness Officer,” we found that the most popular HR careers stay true to the profession's roots.

Top 10 HR Titles and Demographics

Title	Average Age	Average Salary	Average Tenure at Company (Years)
Recruiting Coordinator	27	\$60,158	1.04
HR Manager	37	\$81,762	3.62
HR Generalist	32	\$64,790	1.96
HR Coordinator	30	\$49,579	2.34
Director, HR	42	\$138,929	3.37
Recruiting Manager	38	\$109,627	2.7
HR Specialist	32	\$52,760	2.54
HR Assistant	33	\$40,853	2.39
VP, HR	45	\$149,472	4.29
HR Director	42	\$109,181	4.02

You'll note that the HR profession has a clear path to long term growth opportunity. We found tenure and seniority were positively correlated, which suggests that where there is opportunity for career growth, there is greater chance of retention. Not to mention, HR entry-level roles have a much higher starting salary than the average [entry level role](#), which levels up to an impressive salary at the VP or director level. This may be due in part to the fact that many HR professionals [fell into HR](#) later on in their career and start out at a higher base rate than they would if they were new to the workforce.

Something as seemingly arbitrary as a comma may also play a role. Surprisingly, we found that those with a “Director, HR” title made much more than an “HR Director.” There’s a potential explanation here: those with the former title likely have a chain of direct reports, whereas an HR director may sit on a smaller team with fewer direct reports.

Looking at age, tenure, and salaries in this manner may also shed light on the pay equity issues discussed earlier. It’s clear that most HR professionals begin to move into high level positions in their early 40s, which coincides with the time women typically re-enter the workforce after taking time off to start a family. This suggests that if women take a break in their careers, it may be difficult for them to reach their full salary potential even in the people-centric field of HR.

HR and Recruiting Salaries and Tenure

	HR Coordinator	Recruiting Coordinator	HR Manager	Recruiting Manager
Salary	\$49,579	\$60,158	\$81,762	\$109,627
Tenure (Years)	2.34	1.04	3.62	2.7

Comparing HR and recruiting roles gives us a unique perspective on how the two functions are valued in the modern workplace. HR coordinators, for example, receive a lower average salary than recruiting coordinators. That said, HR coordinators also have more than double the tenure.

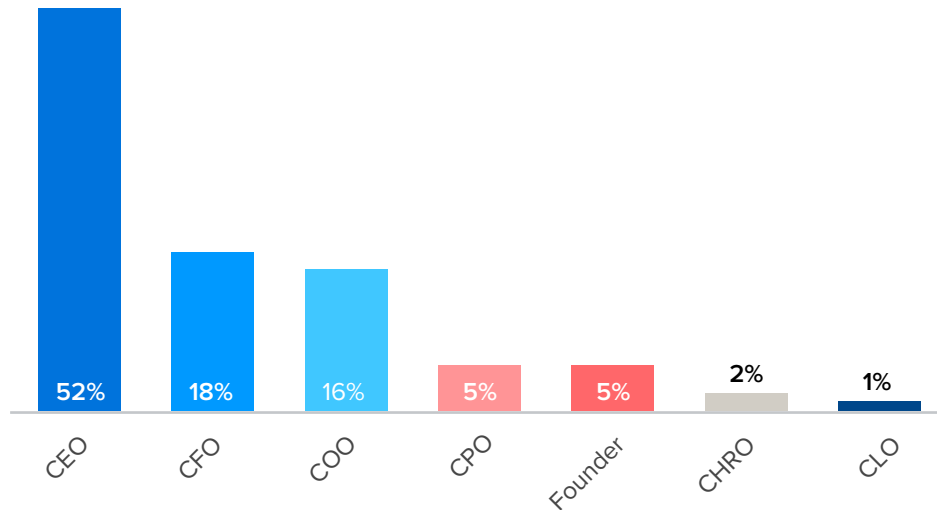
This trend extends up the totem pole all the way to the manager level—with HR making less than their recruiting counterparts, but staying put for longer. Recruiting is a fast paced and high demand function, so compensation may be commensurate. However, it might also be time to put more value on engagement and build up the tenured HR professionals who work to reduce employee turnover and build better workplaces.

TEAM STRUCTURE

How are today's HR teams organized?

Who Does HR Leadership Report To?

Note: HR leaders were defined as director-level or above.



Reporting Structure

Whether you have one or 50 people on your team, HR has arguably the most impact on every individual in an organization.

Your company's reporting structure determines HR's access to the proverbial "seat at the table." Promisingly, the data shows that the majority of HR leadership reports directly to the CEO, which suggests that HR finally has access to that elusive gathering. Notably, less than 1 in 5 HR leaders report to the CFO. Where HR used to be associated primarily with compensation and compliance, it is now a strategic arm dedicated to helping engage and support the workforce.



Average HR Team Size

Company Size	Average HR Team Size
1 - 50	1
51 - 100	2
101 - 150	3
151 - 200	4
201 - 300	5
300 - 500	10
501 - 750	18
751 - 1000	16
1001+	23

HR to Employee Ratio

How should your HR team scale to support a growing workforce? While early stage companies can manage with shared HR duties among various employees, 50 employees is a key milestone to make sure there is a dedicated HR representative on the team. Crossing this threshold triggers various compliance and reporting requirements, so it's important to position your business for success as your overall headcount continues to grow.

Once companies move above 50 employees, HR scales at a somewhat predictable rate, adding an additional hire for every additional 50 employees. However, as companies approach 300-500 employees, you'll note a clear tipping point where the need for specialized HR essentially doubles. An enterprise company has fundamentally different needs, and [HR technology](#) becomes an increasingly important tool to ensure efficiency and compliance.

HR's Span of Control

On average, HR managers have a maximum of four direct reports. This varies slightly by company size, but even at companies with over a thousand employees, four direct reports is best practice to ensure HR leaders can give adequate attention to their reports and the company. Conventional wisdom says you shouldn't have [more direct reports than days](#) in the workweek, and HR is one step ahead, setting the standard for a company culture that values attentive management.

4

**AVERAGE NUMBER OF
HR DIRECT REPORTS**



INDUSTRY

**Which industries have the highest
HR representation?**

HR's Industry Presence

It's no secret that HR professionals are often tasked with wearing many "hats." You might want to add helmets to that list. Namely's database includes HR professionals in every major industry, from technology to construction.

HR Presence by Industry

Industry	Average HR Presence
Non-Profit	3.1%
Government	3.0%
Technology	2.7%
Education	2.4%
Transportation & Logistics	2.3%
Wholesale	2.3%
Financial Services	2.2%
Retail	2.1%
Professional Services	2.1%
Media & Telecommunications	2.0%
Manufacturing	1.9%
Hospitality	1.8%
Agriculture	1.7%
Healthcare	1.5%
Real Estate	1.5%
Utilities	1.2%
Holding Companies	1.2%
Construction	0.9%
Mining, Oil, and Gas	0.3%
Grand Total	2.3%

Industry Focus

Where were people teams needed the most? We found that nonprofits and government contractors maintained the greatest HR presence. Both sectors had just over three professionals on staff for every 100 employees. That should come as no surprise given the governmental scrutiny organizations like these face. Higher minimum wage laws, complex reporting requirements, and other regulatory concerns make it all the more necessary to have not only an HR point-person but dedicated people team in place. Companies in these industries also often rely on interns, seasonal workers, or volunteers to execute, meaning they're also at a [higher risk](#) for wage and hour disputes.

Conversely, we found blue collar workplaces had much smaller people teams. Manufacturing companies have just under two HR professionals per 100 employees. Further down the list, construction firms have less than a 1 percent HR presence—which may be surprising given the long list of compliance requirements enforced by the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#). OSHA guards workers across all industries against hazards like exposure to harmful chemicals or even things as innocuous as loose extension cords. HR teams at these organizations often need to interface with [labor unions](#) as well, adding additional nuance and complexity.

Perhaps in part due to the lack of HR presence, construction firms [often struggle](#) with employee engagement and turnover. One young professional is looking to buck the trend: [Ashley Valenzuela-Ruesgen](#), a Colorado-based HR director at White Construction Group. At White Construction, Valenzuela-Ruesgen instituted career pathing, implemented a new human resources information system, and even founded a “construction over coffee” program for employees to spur mentorship and strengthen teams.

Conclusion

CONCLUSION

Whether you consider yourself an HR generalist or Chief People Officer, it's never been a more exciting or challenging time to be an HR professional.

As employee engagement and culture emerge as key areas of focus for businesses, the C-Suite continues to invest heavily in bolstering people teams. According to our data, the profession today boasts impressive earning potential and senior leadership opportunities.

It wasn't always this way, but HR has evolved far beyond its strictly administrative legacy. While tasks like processing payroll and managing compliance continue to matter, the profession has a new, higher calling—and a direct line into the CEO.

Modern day people teams are expected to be strategic and data-driven, whilst driving seemingly subjective criteria like employee wellbeing. Business theorists no longer talk about HR needing “a seat at the table.” If people truly are a company's most valuable resource, it's hard to overstate an HR professional's role in cultivating and maintaining that asset.

Quite simply, the state of HR has never been stronger.



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