



Foundation of the  
American College of  
Healthcare Executives  
*for leaders who care*<sup>®</sup>

# Postgraduate Fellowship Compensation Survey

Executive Office, Research  
American College of Healthcare  
Executives

**Survey Report  
Spring 2024**

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2002, the American College of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) conducted a study to provide current information to health administration students, faculty and fellowship sponsors about compensation and compensation trends among postgraduate fellows in healthcare management. Follow-up studies were conducted in 2006, 2010 and 2016. This study in 2024 represents the fourth in this series of investigations.

## **METHODS**

The 2024 Postgraduate Fellowship Compensation Survey was sent to all members of ACHE in the United States or Canada with the job title of postgraduate fellow (or its synonyms) on February 5, 2024. The survey was sent electronically and was in the field for three weeks. Reminders were sent to non-respondents on February 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, and data collection closed on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. The survey successfully reached 256 individuals, of whom 127 responded, yielding a response rate of 50 percent.

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*

## FINDINGS

### Characteristics of respondents and work arrangements

The characteristics of respondents and the work arrangements pertaining to their fellowships are detailed below. The median age of respondents was 27 years, with females comprising 60 percent of the cohort. Prior to their fellowships, respondents had a median of 1.5 years of full-time, post-baccalaureate work experience. In terms of licensure, 11 respondents reported holding an 'Other healthcare license'; there were no reports of licenses in medicine, nursing, law, or accounting.

Regarding the duration of fellowships, 58 percent were designed to last between 12 to 17 months, while 40 percent were scheduled for 18 months or more. Additionally, over 80 percent of respondents were recruited with the anticipation of continued employment at the same organization following their fellowship.

On average, respondents reported working 46 hours per week, which included 36 hours in the office, 8 hours from home, and 2 hours dedicated to official office functions.

<b>Gender</b> (Percentages)	
Female	60%
Male	<u>40</u>
	100%
(N)	(111)
<b>Median Years of Age</b>	
	26.7 years
(N)	(123)

2. What is the term of your fellowship, in months? (Please enter number of months, e.g., 12 months, 18 months.)

<b>Term of Fellowship</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Less than 12 months	3%
12 – 17 months	58
18 – 23 months	16
More than 23 months	<u>24</u>
	100%
(N)	(113)

3. How many years of full-time, post bachelor's degree work experience did you have prior to starting your fellowship? (Please enter number of years.)

<b>Median Years of Experience</b>	1.5 years
(N)	(113)

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*

## Characteristics of respondents and work arrangements (cont'd)

4. Please indicate whether you currently hold any of the following: (Circle **all** that apply.)

Licensure	(N)
Medical (MD or DO with current license to practice)	(0)
Nursing (RN)	(0)
Nursing home administration	(0)
Other healthcare license (e.g., pharmacy, therapy, LPN)	(11)
Law license	(0)
Certified Public Accounting (CPA) license	(0)
Total N responding	(11)

11. In a typical week, how many hours would you estimate that you work...(Please enter number of hours.)

Mean Hours Worked Weekly	Hours
At the office	35.8
At home	8.1
Outside the office	1.7
Total	45.5
(N)	(100)

12. Were you hired into your fellowship with an expectation of continued employment with the sponsoring organization at the completion of the fellowship term? (Circle **one** number.)

Hired with Expectation of Continued Employment After Fellowship	Percentages
Yes	82%
No	18
Don't know	<u>0</u>
	100%
(N)	(99)

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*

## Characteristics of sponsoring organizations

The characteristics of the sponsoring organizations for the survey respondents are delineated in this section. A significant portion, 83 percent, of respondents held positions within healthcare systems; this includes 61 percent in hospitals affiliated with healthcare systems and 22 percent at the corporate headquarters of these systems. An additional eight percent were employed by independent, stand-alone hospitals.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents had their fellowships in not-for-profit organizations, with the rest split between government settings — seven percent in federal and six percent in state roles. Geographic distribution of these fellowships was mainly urban area at 59 percent, followed by 27 percent in suburban and 14 percent in rural settings. Regarding the size of these organizations, around three-fourths 76 percent of the respondents were associated with organizations having annual revenues exceeding \$200 million, and many were part of organizations with revenues above \$1 billion.

14. What is the ownership/control of your employing organization? (Circle **one** number.)

Ownership	Percentages
Not for profit (includes faith-based and non-faith-based)	87%
Federal government	7
State or local government	6
Investor-owned/for profit	0
	100%
(N)	(99)

15. Which of the following **best** describes the type of organization that employs you? (Circle **one** number.)

Type of Sponsoring Organization	Percentages
System hospital	61%
Corporate headquarters of a healthcare system	22
Independent, free-standing hospital	8
Association	2
Consulting firm	2
Ambulatory care/medical group	1
Other	4
	100%
(N)	(99)

16. In which setting is your employing organization situated? (Circle **one** number.)

Setting	Percentages
Urban	59%
Suburban	27
Rural	14
	100%
(N)	(98)

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*

**Characteristics of sponsoring organizations (cont'd)**

17. Please select the annual revenue for your employing organization from the categories below. (If you are employed by a hospital or other provider that is part of a multi-facility system, please select the category based *only* on the revenue for the hospital/provider unit, not the entire system.) (Circle *one* number.)

<b>Revenue Size</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
\$0 to \$50 million per year	8%
\$50 million to \$200 million per year	16
\$200 million to \$500 million per year	13
\$500 million to \$1 billion per year	11
Over \$1 billion per year	<u>52</u>
	100%
(N)	(91)

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*

## Respondents' compensation

This section covers the compensation details for respondents. The median income reported by respondents was approximately \$65,700. A small fraction, 1%, earned less than \$40,000 annually, while 30% reported incomes of \$70,000 or more. The majority, nearly 70%, had yearly earnings in the range of \$50,000 to \$70,000.

Sixty-four percent of respondents indicated eligibility for a pay increase, yet only 15% were eligible for an incentive compensation or bonus program.

5. What is your annual base income from your employment as a postgraduate fellow? (Do not include income from other work, e.g., consulting, teaching, publishing.) (Circle **one** number.)

Annual Base Income from Fellow Employment	Percentages
Under \$40,000	1%
\$40,000 - \$44,999	0
\$45,000 - \$49,999	0
\$50,000 - \$59,999	22
\$60,000 - \$69,999	47
\$70,000 - \$79,999	14
\$80,000 or more	16
	100%
(N)	(111)

6. Is it possible for your compensation to increase during the term of your fellowship?

Possible for Compensation to Increase	Percentages
No	64%
Yes	36
	100%
(N)	(111)

7. Are you eligible for an incentive compensation/bonus program? (Circle **one** number.)

Eligible for Incentives/Bonus	Percentages
No	85%
Yes	15
Don't know	0
	100%
(N)	(106)

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*

## Respondents' perquisites and employment benefits

The survey outlines the perquisites and employment benefits that accompany the postgraduate fellowship positions of the respondents. Data in the following tables show the percentages of organizations that fully paid, partially paid, or did not pay various benefits. Travel for professional development is completely covered by 59% of organizations, while life insurance and professional association dues are fully funded by 40% and 39% of employers. Full tuition funding for professional development and continuing education is provided by 36% of organizations.

Thirty-one percent of employers offer full disability insurance coverage, 23% cover all medical insurance costs, and 21% provide complete dental insurance. Moving expenses were paid in full by 19% of organizations. Retirement plan contributions and academic tuition assistance are completely financed by 17% and 13% of organizations.

Ninety-nine percent of organizations provide paid time off for health and personal reasons, about 90% provide paid holidays.

8. The following is a list of perquisites and employment benefits. Please indicate whether or not your organization pays for each as part of your fellowship compensation or benefit package, and if so, whether your organization pays for it fully or in part. (Circle *one* number in each row.)

	Percentages (Rows sum to 100%)			(N)
	Organization pays for this fully	Organization pays for this in part	Organization does not pay for this	
Travel to meetings for professional development	59%	28%	13%	(99)
Life insurance	40	43	17	(100)
Professional association dues	39	23	37	(99)
Tuition for professional development/continuing education	36	40	24	(98)
Disability insurance	31	55	14	(99)
Medical insurance	23	69	8	(99)
Dental insurance	21	66	13	(100)
Moving expenses	19	50	31	(98)
Retirement contributions	17	81	2	(98)
Tuition assistance (academic)	13	56	31	(98)

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*



**Respondents’ perquisites and employment benefits (cont’d)**

9. Are you eligible for any of the following? (Circle *one* number in each row.)

	Percentages	
	Paid time off (health and personal)	Paid holidays
Yes	99%	89%
No	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>
	100%	100%
(N)	(101)	(102)

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*

## Comparison with 2016 survey findings

**Characteristics of respondents and work arrangement.** In the 2024 survey of our respondents, there was a four percent increase in female representation compared to 2016, accompanied by a corresponding decrease in male respondents. There was also a notable increase in respondents expecting continued employment with their sponsoring organization, from 76 percent in 2016 to 82 percent in 2024.

The average total working hours reduced from 53 in 2016 to 46 in 2024. This change is primarily due to adjustments in the breakdown of working locations: the average office hours decreased from 46 in 2016 to 36 in 2024, while work from home hours increased from 5 to 8. The average time spent working outside the office remained consistent at approximately 2 hours for both 2016 and 2024.

**Characteristics of sponsoring organization.** In 2024, the share of fellows at independent hospitals was three percent lower than in 2016. Conversely, more respondents reported working in hospitals part of healthcare systems or in corporate headquarters than in the previous survey. The representation in not-for-profit organizations increased to 87 percent in 2024, up from 78 percent in 2016. Federal government fellowships rose by one percent in the current study. In 2016, six percent of respondents worked in investor-owned/for-profit organizations, a contrast to 2024 where none of the respondents reported working in such organizations. The proportion of respondents in urban settings also decreased to 59 percent in 2024 from 64 percent in 2016.

**Respondents' compensation.** There was a 16 percent increase in median income from \$56,600 in 2016 to \$65,700 in 2024. The share of respondents expecting a potential compensation increase rose from 29 percent in 2016 to 36 percent in 2024.

**Respondents' perquisites and employment benefits.** Compared to 2016, there was a general decline in the organizations' support for most perquisites and employment benefits, except for moving expenses, retirement contributions, and professional association dues. Notable decreases included: travel for professional development (75 percent fully paid in 2016 to 59 percent in 2024), tuition for professional development (49 percent fully paid in 2016 to 36 percent in 2024), disability insurance (36 percent fully paid in 2016 to 31 percent in 2024), life insurance (49 percent partially paid in 2016 to 43 percent in 2024), and dental insurance (71 percent partially paid in 2016 to 66 percent in 2024). While the overall percentage for moving expenses remained the same, the share of fully paid expenses dropped from 29 percent in 2016 to 19 percent in 2024.

However, the percentage not paying at all for academic tuition assistance dropped from 41 percent in 2016 to 31 percent in 2024. Similarly, the share not contributing to retirement contributions fell from 13 percent in 2016 to 2 percent in 2024.

Paid time off remained almost universally offered in 2024 as in 2016. Yet, there was a decrease in paid holidays, with 89 percent of respondents eligible in 2024, down from 93 percent in 2016.

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*

## **CONCLUSION**

This survey was designed to assist fellows and their employing organizations with learning about demographic and educational characteristics of postgraduate fellows in healthcare management, as well as the types of organizations that provide such individuals with managerial experience and the level of compensation they offer. We will continue to conduct surveys like this in future years to track changes among these dimensions of postgraduate fellowship compensation.

## **LIMITATIONS**

While indicative, the results from this current study, and those conducted previously, are not intended to represent all postgraduate fellowships in healthcare management. Respondents to the study were selected from ACHE's membership database and therefore are not a random, representative sample of all healthcare management postgraduate fellows.

*Percentages may not always total to 100 due to rounding*