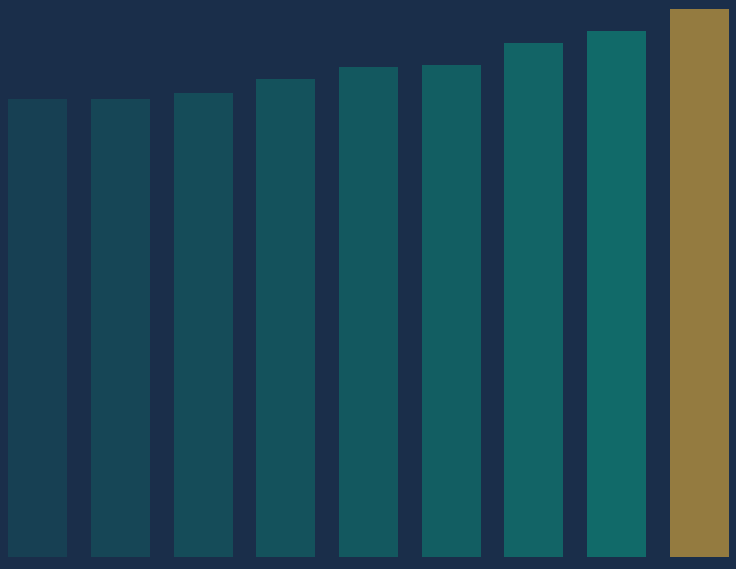
CauseComp

RESEARCH

How Wide a Nonprofit Pay Range Runs

Expert-Level Pay Is 1.89 Times Entry-Level Pay in the Median Role



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AT A GLANCE

Across 681 roles in CauseComp's workforce benchmarks, the Expert level of the median role sits 1.89 times its Entry level, and 263 of the roles (38.6%) run 2.0 times or wider. The width depends on the job, from 1.71 times for two families (clinical and health care; facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades) to 2.55 times for arts, media, legal and sales roles.

Updated November 8, 2026

1.89	76%	1.55
Expert-to-Entry ratio, median role BLS OEWS May 2025	Entry level as a share of Career, median role BLS OEWS May 2025	Market 75th over 25th percentile, median role BLS OEWS May 2025

01 Management is the family where wide ranges are the rule: 29 of 34 roles (85.3%) run 2.0 times or wider, against 47 of 281 (16.7%) in facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades.

02 In clinical and health care the middle half of roles runs from 1.56 to 2.47, a span of 0.91, against 0.26 in technology, engineering and science.

03 Weighted by jobs instead of counting each role once, the overall median Expert-to-Entry ratio is 1.78, and the order of the families changes: clinical and health care roles are narrowest (1.50) and management roles widest (2.49).

04 Across all industries, roles that run narrower than the median role hold 60.6% of the jobs in the 681 roles.

05 The market's own middle half spans at least 1.5 times in 393 of 681 roles (57.7%).

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In CauseComp's workforce benchmarks the Expert level of the median role sits 1.89 times its Entry level, and the Entry level sits at 76% of the Career (median) level. The width differs by role family, from 1.71 times for two families (clinical and health care; facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades) to 2.55 times for arts, media, legal and sales roles. Data: 681 roles with enough national data; BLS OEWS May 2025 reference period.

> **This is range width, not a return to experience**
>
> Read this first
>
> The five levels mark points along the range the market pays for the same job, from a point low in the range to a point high in it. The gaps between them show how wide that range is. The figures are also modeled: BLS does not report nonprofit employers separately, so the nonprofit view is CauseComp's modeled reference population, not a survey of nonprofit employers.

Ranges differ by job family

Arts, media, legal and sales roles have the widest range, with a median Expert-to-Entry ratio of 2.55. Two families tie as the narrowest, at 1.71: clinical and health care, and facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades. The measure is the Expert-to-Entry ratio: the Expert level median divided by the Entry level median of the same role. A ratio of 2.00 would mean the Expert level is twice the Entry level.

The ratio differs by role as well as by family: across all 681 roles the middle half sits between 1.64 and 2.18 (Exhibit 4). Of the 681 roles, 263 (38.6%) run 2.0 times or wider, so for almost four roles in ten the Expert level is at least double the Entry level, while 46 roles (6.8%) run under 1.5 times. Very wide roles are the minority: 84 roles (12.3%) run 2.5 times or wider and 29 (4.3%) run 3.0 times or wider.

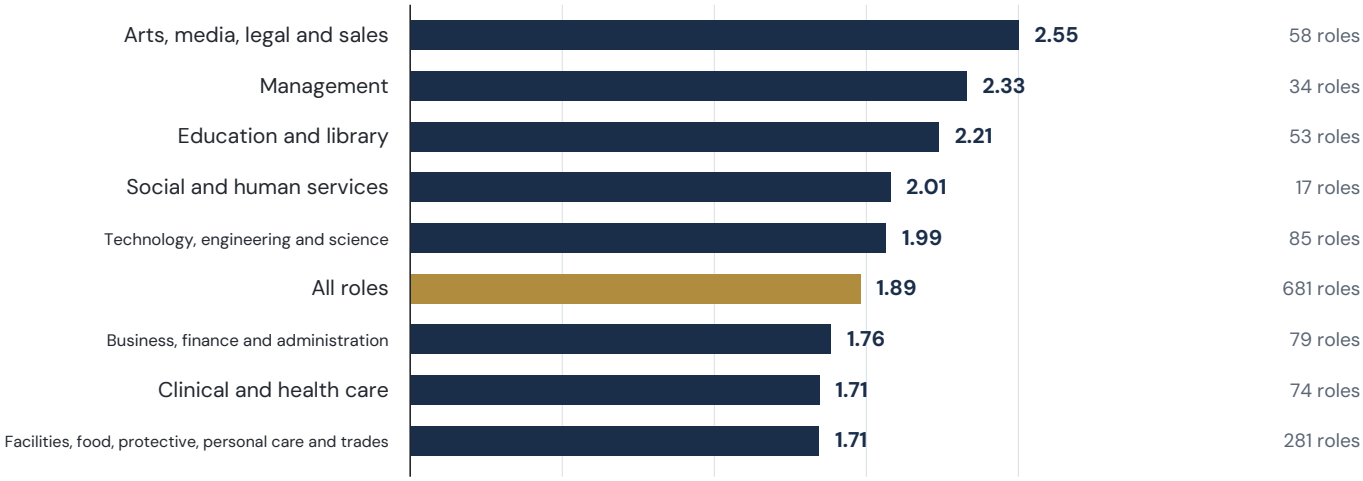
Management is the family where wide ranges are the rule: 29 of 34 roles (85.3%) run 2.0 times or wider, against 47 of 281 (16.7%) in facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades. Arts, media, legal and sales follows, with 44 of 58 (75.9%), and education and library with 37 of 53 (69.8%). Social and human services, the family with the fewest roles, has 9 of 17, and technology, engineering and science 41 of 85 (48.2%); business, finance and administration has 30 of 79 (38.0%) and clinical and health care 26 of 74 (35.1%). In facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades, 27 roles (9.6%) run under 1.5 times.

Clinical and health care pairs many of the widest roles with some of the narrowest. It holds 12 of the 29 roles across all families that run 3.0 times or wider, all of them physician and surgeon roles, and 11 roles that run under 1.5 times, many of them aide and assistant roles, so its family median of 1.71 hides both ends. The arts, media, legal and sales family mixes legal and media roles with sales roles, where pay can include commission, and with a few roles that have very long upper tails, such as athletes.

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EXHIBIT 1

Across roles the median Expert-to-Entry ratio is 1.89; across role families it runs from 1.71 times (two tied families) to 2.55 times (arts, media, legal and sales roles)



Expert level median divided by Entry level median, the median across roles in the family

	EXPERT-TO-ENTRY RATIO, MEDIAN ACROSS ROLES	ROLES
Arts, media, legal and sales	2.55	58 roles
Management	2.33	34 roles
Education and library	2.21	53 roles
Social and human services	2.01	17 roles
Technology, engineering and science	1.99	85 roles
All roles	1.89	681 roles
Business, finance and administration	1.76	79 roles
Clinical and health care	1.71	74 roles
Facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades	1.71	281 roles

Source and notes: Each role counts once; the bar is the median of the role ratios in the family, not a median across workers. Expert-to-Entry ratio: the Expert level median divided by the Entry level median of the same role. National, nonprofit view. Source: CauseComp Workforce benchmarks, BLS OEWS May 2025.

EXHIBIT 2

Of the 681 roles, 263 run 2.0 times or wider: 29 of 34 (85.3%) in management, against 47 of 281 (16.7%) in facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades

ROLE FAMILY	ROLES	RATIO 2.0 OR WIDER	SHARE OF ROLES	RATIO UNDER 1.5	ENTRY BELOW 70% OF CAREER	ENTRY ABOVE 80% OF CAREER
All roles	681	263	38.6%	46	135	234
Arts, media, legal and sales	58	44	75.9%	1	33	8
Management	34	29	85.3%	1	14	1
Education and library	53	37	69.8%	0	15	9
Social and human services	17	9	–	0	1	4
Technology, engineering and science	85	41	48.2%	0	19	3
Business, finance and administration	79	30	38.0%	6	12	34
Clinical and health care	74	26	35.1%	11	25	30
Facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades	281	47	16.7%	27	16	145

Source and notes: Each cell counts roles, each role once, whatever its employment; the share is the count over the roles in the family. A cell that counts fewer than 10 roles rests on few roles. A share is not shown where the count is under 10 (social and human services, 9 of 17). National, nonprofit view. Source: CauseComp Workforce benchmarks, BLS OEWS May 2025.

Where each level sits against the Career level

Across roles, Entry is 76% of Career and Developing 88%, while Advanced is 120% and Expert 144%. Entry is below 70% of Career in 135 roles (19.8%) and above 80% in 234 (34.4%). In arts, media, legal and sales, 33 of 58 roles have Entry below 70%; in facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades, 145 of 281 have it above 80%, so for about half of those roles the Entry level sits within a fifth of the Career level.

EXHIBIT 3

Across roles, the median Entry level is 76% of the Career level, Developing 88%, Advanced 120% and Expert 144%

ROLE FAMILY	ROLES	ENTRY	DEVELOPING	CAREER	ADVANCED	EXPERT
All roles	681	76%	88%	100%	120%	144%
Arts, media, legal and sales	58	69%	84%	100%	129%	166%
Management	34	70%	85%	100%	125%	160%
Education and library	53	72%	86%	100%	124%	158%
Social and human services	17	76%	88%	100%	122%	151%
Technology, engineering and science	85	73%	86%	100%	122%	147%
Business, finance and administration	79	78%	89%	100%	118%	141%
Clinical and health care	74	79%	89%	100%	117%	136%
Facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades	281	80%	90%	100%	117%	136%

Source and notes: Each cell is the median, across the roles in the family, of that level's median divided by the same role's Career median. National, nonprofit view. Source: CauseComp Workforce benchmarks, BLS OEWS May 2025.

The market's own middle half

BLS publishes the 25th and 75th percentiles of each role's pay. For the median role the 75th percentile is 1.55 times the 25th. The market's own middle half spans at least 1.5 times in 393 of 681 roles (57.7%). It spans at least 2.0 times in 48 (7.0%).

The market's middle half is narrowest for facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades roles (1.44) and widest for arts, media, legal and sales roles (1.89). Weighted by jobs instead of counting each role once, the overall median Expert-to-Entry ratio is 1.78, and the order of the families changes: clinical and health care roles are narrowest (1.50) and management roles widest (2.49). Both weighted family figures lean on a few large roles. The page counts roles because a pay structure sets one range per job.

Across all industries, roles that run narrower than the median role hold 60.6% of the jobs in the 681 roles. Across all industries, 31.3% of all jobs in the 681 roles are in roles that run 2.0 times or wider, against 38.6% of roles, so the roles where most people work run a little narrower than the typical role.

Families differ in how alike their roles are. In clinical and health care the middle half of roles runs from 1.56 to 2.47, a span of 0.91, against 0.26 in technology, engineering and science. In technology, engineering and science the middle half of roles sits between 1.90 and 2.16, so the family figure is a fair guide to its roles. In clinical and health care the family median of 1.71 is a weak guide to any one role, and arts, media, legal and sales spans 0.81; in those families the roles do not share a width.

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EXHIBIT 4

For the median role the market's 75th percentile is 1.55 times its 25th, and the Expert-to-Entry ratio runs from 1.64 to 2.18 across the middle half of roles

ROLE FAMILY	ROLES	MARKET 75TH OVER 25TH	25TH PCT. OF ROLES	MEDIAN ROLE	75TH PCT. OF ROLES	WEIGHTED BY JOBS
All roles	681	1.55	1.64	1.89	2.18	1.78
Arts, media, legal and sales	58	1.89	2.05	2.55	2.86	1.94
Management	34	1.76	2.13	2.33	2.47	2.49
Education and library	53	1.68	1.92	2.21	2.40	1.83
Social and human services	17	1.59	1.88	2.01	2.20	1.93
Technology, engineering and science	85	1.62	1.90	1.99	2.16	2.04
Business, finance and administration	79	1.49	1.59	1.76	2.15	1.78
Clinical and health care	74	1.46	1.56	1.71	2.47	1.50
Facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades	281	1.44	1.58	1.71	1.92	1.67

Source and notes: Market 75th over 25th: the role's published OEWS 75th percentile divided by its 25th, median across the roles in the family. The Expert-to-Entry columns summarize the ratios of the roles in the family, one per role. Weighted by jobs: the lower weighted median of the Expert-to-Entry ratio, each role weighted by its OEWS national employment, all industries (not nonprofit employment). National, nonprofit view. Source: CauseComp Workforce benchmarks, BLS OEWS May 2025.

One family shapes the overall median. Facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades is 281 of 681 roles (41.3%) and 38.9% of the jobs. Without it the median role runs 2.05 times rather than 1.89; leaving out any other single family keeps it between 1.84 and 1.90.

What this means for range design

The width of the market differs by job, as the exhibits above show. They describe the spread of national market pay for a role, which includes differences between employers and places, not only between people in one job, so most single salary ranges will be narrower. HR and finance leads can read them as a guide to which role families need relatively wider or narrower ranges, not as a target spread for any range. Two readings follow.

- **Match the family, then the role.** The market is widest in management, where 29 of 34 roles (85.3%) run 2.0 times or wider, and in arts, media, legal and sales, where 44 of 58 roles (75.9%) do; it is narrowest in facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades, where 47 of 281 roles (16.7%) do. Ranges for the first two are the ones most likely to need extra room.
- **Set clinical and health care ranges role by role.** The middle half of its roles runs from 1.56 to 2.47 times, so the family figure is a weak guide to its roles.

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Whether to match the market's width is a policy choice, covered in how to set nonprofit salary ranges. For pay levels rather than widths, see the 2026 nonprofit compensation report. CauseComp's full Workforce product, with the nonprofit and private-sector toggle and metro data, is included in Professional; see plans and pricing.

How we built this

We started from federal wage data for 681 roles with enough national data: the BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics survey (OEWS), reference period May 2025. Each role is read at CauseComp's five career levels in the national nonprofit view, with no state, field or budget size selected, and counts once, whatever its employment. Role families combine the BLS major occupation groups into eight families. BLS does not report nonprofit employers separately, so the nonprofit view is modeled, not a survey. The page prints ratios, counts and shares, not dollar figures, and does not use Form 990 data. Job counts are OEWS national employment, all industries. The full method is on the methodology page.

(a) The nonprofit view is modeled. An organization's own pay for a role can sit anywhere in, above or below the range.

(b) A family figure is a median across roles, each counted once whatever its employment; weighting by jobs changes the order of the families (Exhibit 4). A family with few roles is less stable, and the social and human services family has the fewest, 17. A count that rests on fewer than 10 roles shows a pattern, not a rate.

(c) Ratios are shown to two decimal places or the whole percent; treat differences of a few hundredths between families as ties. The thresholds in the counts (1.5, 2.0, 2.5 and 3.0 times; 70% and 80%) are round numbers chosen for reading, not breakpoints in the market. BLS publishes relative standard errors for mean wages, not for these percentile ratios.

(d) Some roles have a very long upper tail, such as physicians and athletes, and much wider ratios. A family median does not depend on how wide those roles run, only on how many sit above the middle.

(e) This analysis is research, not legal or tax advice; organizations should consult their advisors on their specific facts.

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APPENDIX

Frequently asked questions

How wide is a nonprofit salary range from entry level to expert?

In CauseComp's workforce benchmarks the Expert level of the median role sits 1.89 times its Entry level, and the middle half of roles sits between 1.64 and 2.18. Of 681 roles, 263 (38.6%) run 2.0 times or wider. The width differs by role family, from 1.71 times for two families (clinical and health care; facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades) to 2.55 times for arts, media, legal and sales roles.

What is an entry level nonprofit salary compared with the median?

Across roles the median Entry level sits at 76% of the Career (median) level. Entry is below 70% of Career in 135 of 681 roles (19.8%) and above 80% in 234 (34.4%). It is a median across roles, not a guideline for any one role or organization. This page prints ratios, not dollar figures; the Workforce tool gives the figure for a role.

Which nonprofit jobs have the widest pay ranges?

Arts, media, legal and sales roles have the widest range, with a median Expert-to-Entry ratio of 2.55. Two families tie as the narrowest, at 1.71: clinical and health care, and facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades. Management is next, at 2.33, and 29 of 34 (85.3%) run 2.0 times or wider, against 47 of 281 (16.7%) in facilities, food, protective, personal care and trades. Clinical and health care holds both very wide and very narrow roles, so its family median is a weak guide to any one role.

Do the levels show a return to years of experience?

No. Each level is a point in the range for a role, so the gaps between levels show how wide the range is. This page does not estimate what an added year of experience is worth, and its ratios are not a raise or tenure schedule.

Are these figures for nonprofits?

They are modeled for nonprofits. BLS does not report nonprofit employers separately, so the nonprofit view is CauseComp's modeled reference population, not a survey of nonprofit employers.

Does the ratio change by state or by the size of the organization?

This page reports national widths, one per role, and does not report them by state, field or organization size. BLS publishes wage percentiles for each state and metro area, and the Workforce tool prices a role for a place.

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Benchmarks for your organization

Free to cite with attribution. The full Workforce product, with the nonprofit and private-sector toggle and metro data, is included in Professional.

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