



Compensation Report  
November 2022  
csa.org

A Special Report Commissioned by The Chief of Staff Association

# 2022 Chief of Staff Compensation Report



# Foreword

| Trent Smyth AM

Welcome to The Chief of Staff Association's 2022 Compensation Report.

Well established in the military and political sectors, the position of chief of staff is a relatively recent but rapidly spreading role elsewhere. As the professional association for chiefs of staff we have members all over the world, in educational organisations, professional service firms, startups, nonprofits, and charities, as well as in all branches of the military and other institutions.

However, the chief of staff role is still not well understood or recognised as a step (or destination) on a traditional career path. Indeed, as this report shows, there are many people who are performing the role of chief of staff but with a very different title. Discussions with our members have revealed that there may be internal political reasons for this, and some believe that they can be more effective when their own reporting lines and responsibilities are perceived as blurred.

Nevertheless, such ambiguity does not make recruitment or career planning easy, either for the potential employer or aspiring chief of staff. And because there is typically only one chief of staff in a division or business unit (and sometimes only one in the whole organisation), there are few opportunities to make comparisons.

This is why we have introduced our survey to establish a benchmark for the profession's compensation expectations and reference points for the length and type of job experience that most often serve as a background to the role.

As it is the first survey of its type, we were deliberate in asking a small number of quantitative questions, to which 244 of our members responded. In future years we plan to build on these questions to create a broader picture of the chief of staff role, and to identify the forces that will shape the development of the profession in years to come.

We welcome your thoughts on the findings of this survey and your input into the questions that we might ask in future years. When you have had a chance to digest the contents, please do join the discussion on LinkedIn using the hashtag #CSACompensationReport.

With many thanks to all who took part,

Trent Smyth AM



Chief Executive Officer  
The Chief of Staff Association

## About the Survey

The survey was conducted between 1 July 2022 and 1 August 2022.

All members of the Chief of Staff Association were invited to follow a link to an online questionnaire (see Appendix). The questionnaire was anonymous and completed by 244 members.

The raw data was independently analysed by Radius Insights and their analysis passed back to the Chief of Staff Association for further commentary.

The currency used throughout the report is US Dollars unless otherwise stated.

## Headline Findings



**\$185,100**

Average compensation of a chief of staff.



**30%**

Percent of chiefs of staff earn \$250,000 or more.



**\$245,800**

Healthcare/pharma is the highest paid sector.



**34%**

Percent of chiefs of staff are unsure if they are compensated fairly.

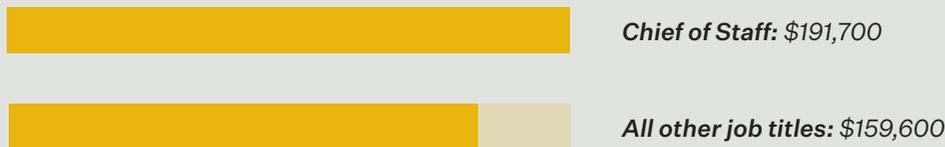
\* The figures are in reference to total compensation, which includes salary and any additional compensation (i.e., bonus).

## 1. Effect of job titles on chief of staff compensation

### The chief of staff

Respondents with a “chief of staff” job title reported significantly higher compensation than those without the title.

#### Total average compensation by job title

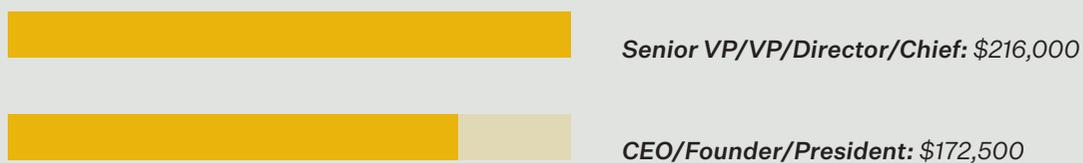


### The principal

The survey asked respondents to specify their principal's job title in order to interrogate whether there is a correlation between compensation and reporting structures.

The mean compensation of the chief of staff is highest where the principal holds the job title Senior Vice-President, Vice-President, Director, or Chief- (but not Chief Executive).

#### Total average compensation by principal's job title



This difference may suggest that large organisations are more likely to have chiefs of staff who report to executives at the VP/Director level.



82% of the chiefs of staff reporting to a Senior VP/Director/VP/Chief principals work in a company with more than 250 employees

In our survey, 82% of the chiefs of staff reporting to a Senior VP/Director/VP/Chief principals work in a company with more than 250 employees, with nearly half (45%) of these in companies with more than 5000 employees.



45% of chiefs of staff reporting to a Senior VP/Director/VP/Chief principals work in companies with more than 5000 employees.

In contrast, 70% of chiefs of staff reporting to a CEO/Founder/President were in organisations sized at 11–1000 employees.

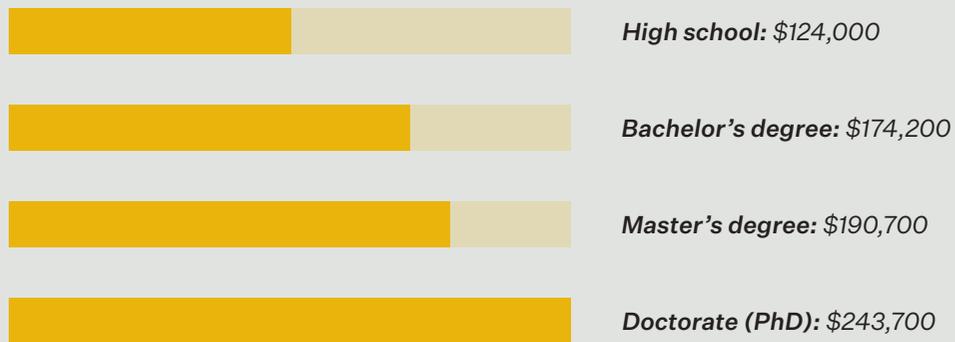


70% of chiefs of staff reporting to a CEO/Founder/President were in organisations sized at 11–1000 employees.

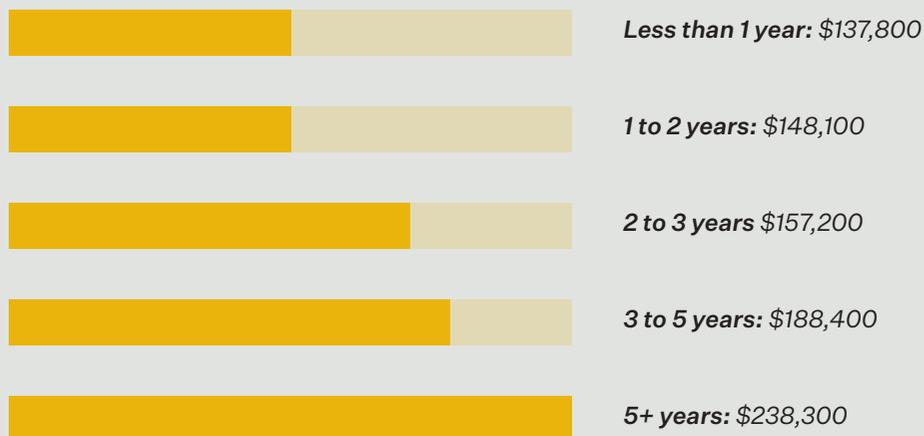
## 2. Effect of education and experience on chief of staff compensation

The survey responses show a steady increase in average compensation commensurate with education, experience in the chief of staff role, and tenure in their current roles.

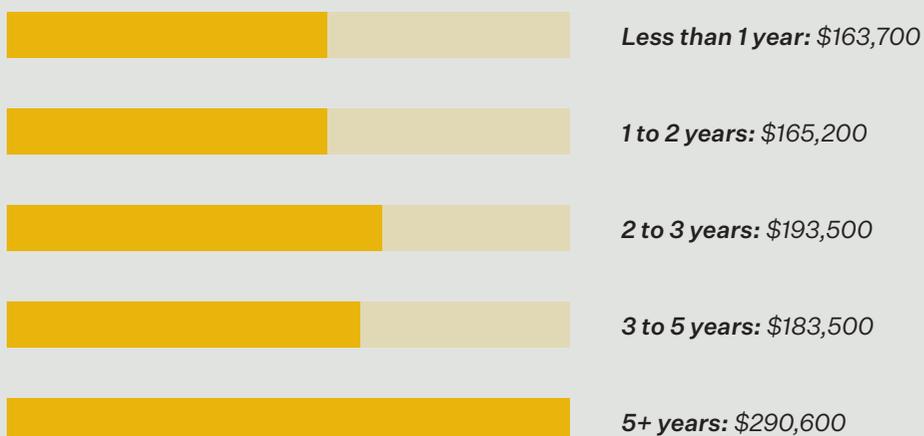
*Total average compensation by education level*



*Total average compensation by years of experience*



*Total average compensation by tenure*

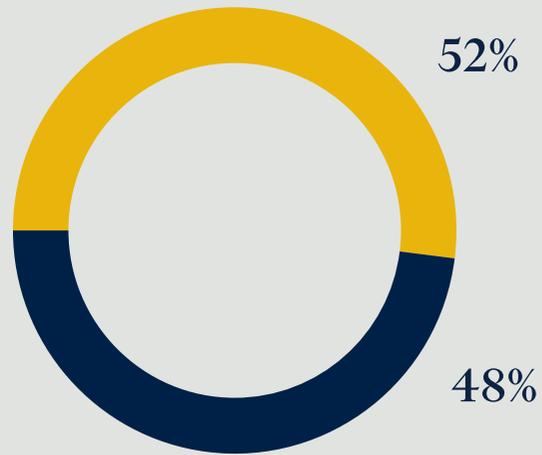


### Hiring process for survey respondents

The hiring process for chiefs of staff is fairly evenly split between internal promotion and an external recruitment process.

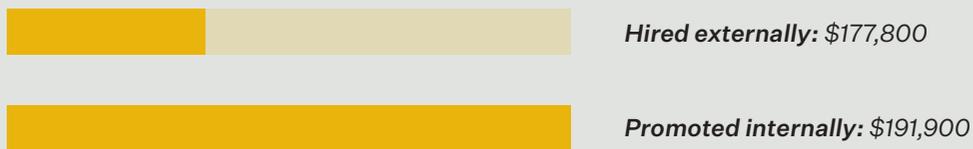
Promoted internally: 52%  
Hired externally: 48%

Respondents who had been hired externally for their current role typically have more years of experience. For those promoted internally, the amount of previous experience varies.



### Total average compensation by hiring process:

Notably, respondents who were promoted internally have a higher average compensation than those who were hired externally.



## 3. Effect of location on chief of staff compensation

Survey responses show higher average compensation in North America than in the rest of the world.

### Total average compensation by region

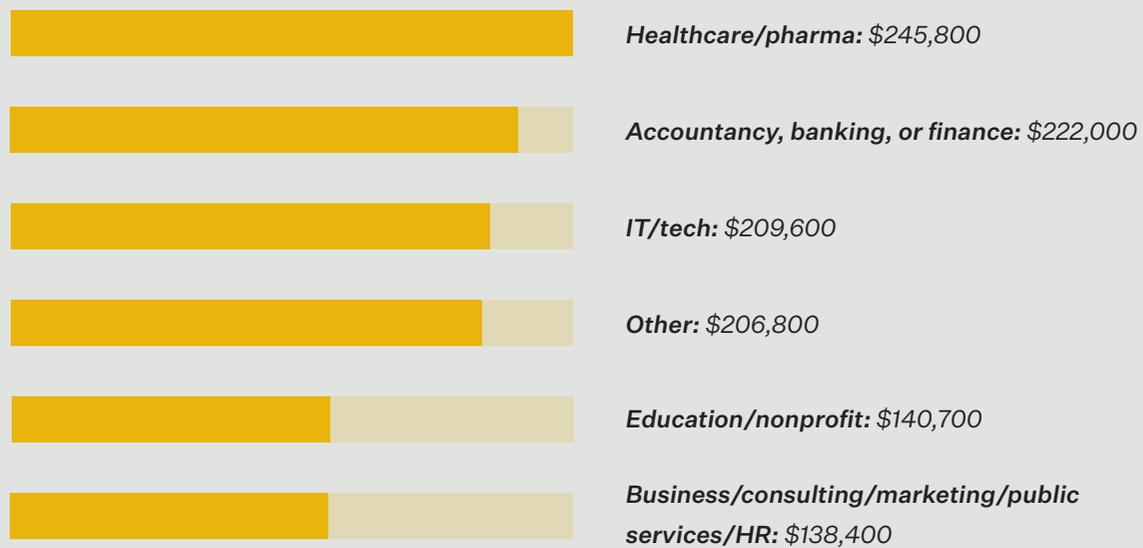


A more detailed analysis by region reveals that Asia has the highest average compensation (\$229,000). However, the sample is small and 8 of the 15 respondents from the region are employed in the two highest-paid sectors – tech and ‘other’. The majority of North American respondents are employed in the tech, education, and business sectors. While tech is a higher-paying sector on average, the other two are lower.

#### 4. Effect of sector on chief of staff compensation

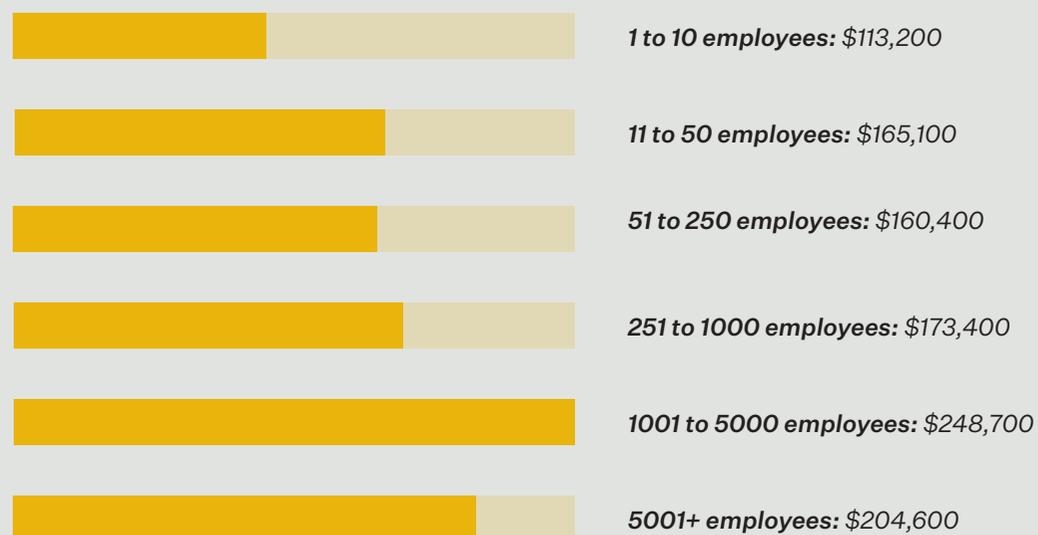
According to our survey results, the highest-paying sectors for chiefs of staff are accountancy, banking, and finance; IT and tech; and healthcare and pharma.

Total average compensation by sector



Typically the top three highest paying sectors also tend to comprise a greater proportion of large companies. Our survey results suggest a general correlation between company size and the average compensation of the chief of staff.

Total average compensation by company size



# Appendix

## Questionnaire

### Position and Experience

1. What is your job title? (As per your contract)

- Chief of Staff
- Deputy Chief of Staff
- Official Secretary (Political or Vice-Regal)
- Other

2. What is your Principal's job title?

3. How did you come to be in your current role?

- Promoted internally
- Hired externally

4. How long have you been in your current role?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 3 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 5+ years

5. How many years of experience do you have in a chief of staff or equivalent role?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 3 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 5+ years

6. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

- High School
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctorate degree (PhD)

### Salary and Compensation

7. Where do you live?

City:

Country:

8. Where is your office?

City:

Country:

9. What is your working status?

- Office
- Hybrid
- Remote

10. Please indicate your current annual salary (USD)

11. In addition to your salary, do you receive alternative compensation?

- Yes
- No

12. I am compensated fairly relative to my local market.

- Agree
- Disagree
- I am unsure

## Organisation

13. Which sector do you work in?:

- Accountancy, Banking or Finance
- Business, Consultancy or Management
- Computing or IT
- Creative Arts or Design
- Energy and Utilities
- Engineering or Manufacturing
- Environment or Agriculture
- Family Office
- Healthcare
- Hospitality or Events
- Law
- Law Enforcement and Security
- Leisure, Sport or Tourism
- Marketing, Advertising or PR
- Media or Digital
- Military
- Not-for-profit
- Property or Construction
- Public Services or Administration
- Recruitment or HR
- Retail
- Sales
- Science or Pharmaceuticals

- Tertiary
- Transport or Logistics

14. What size is your company measured by number of employees?

- Self-employed
- 1-10 employees
- 11-50 employees
- 51-250 employees
- 250-1000 employees
- 1001-5000 employees
- 5001+ employees