

## STUDY REVEALS COMPENSATION LEVELS FOR NONPROFIT INVESTMENT STAFF

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Performance-based compensation continues to be a key component of pay for investment staff at private foundations and university endowments, according to a recent study from research partner SullivanCotter.

The firm found that 87% of investment staff received incentive compensation in 2019, up from 82% the prior year, according to the Endowment and Foundation Investment Staff Compensation Survey Report.

For nonprofits with more than \$1.5 billion in assets, 93% offer incentive compensation, while 50% of nonprofits with less than \$1.5 billion offer incentive compensation, the report shows.

“Incentive compensation remains a prevalent and critical component of the investment office compensation package, where it’s typical for half of all cash compensation to be delivered through performed-based incentives,” said Not-For-Profit Practice Leader Nanci Hibschan, in an e-mail.

The key measures included in incentive plans included policy benchmark at 86% and individual or qualitative measures, at 89%. Peer group, total return and asset class were also noted as common measures.

Not surprisingly, investment outcome carried the largest weighting for investment staff, though the figure dropped from 73% for cios to 53% for investment associates. Additionally, performance over a three-year period was the most common measurement, at 56%, with one-year figures used by 16% of respondents.

“These incentive plans are largely based on the performance of the total assets under management but

recognize individual contributions as well,” Hibschan said.

The report also found that 7% of individuals received a promotional increase in 2019, compared to 8% in 2018, with the median increase also dropping to 18% from 23% over that time period.

On average, 7.3% of all nonprofit investment staff positions ranging from cio to investment analyst receive a promotional increase in their base salary year-over-year.

“We are seeing compensation of investment professional[s] increase at a pace faster than is typical for the not-for-profit market—an average of 4.4% for investment professionals vs. 3% overall,” Hibschan said. “This trend is driven by demand for talent across the sector, in particular as chief investment officer roles become vacant and are filled by the next generation of talent.”

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Private foundations and college or university endowments accounted for 25% and 45% of the 2019 respondents, respectively. The full survey results may be found on the firm’s website, [here](#).