



## 2025 Salary Guidelines

### OVERVIEW

The National Young Farmers Coalition (“Young Farmers” or “the Coalition”) depends on talented, dedicated, and passionate staff to achieve our mission. We strive to shift power and change policy to equitably resource the next generation of farmers AND create internal systems and structures that support the effectiveness, wellness, and longevity of our staff. As a collective, we embrace the fact that our work is complex, emotionally demanding, and both personally and professionally fulfilling. It also forces us to regularly interrogate the tension between the collective mission and impact of our organization with our own individual needs and desires related to personal impact, compensation, and career development.

With this in mind, our Salary Guidelines defines our shared values as a community and articulates how those shared values translate into concrete policies for staff. While we generally seek to foster a feeling of abundance and community, we also acknowledge that we operate in a resource-constrained environment. This document thus aims to provide clarity and transparency into the values aligned design principles we use to make decisions about resource allocation. While we recognize that these guidelines will be contingent on funding and the financial position of the organization, the philosophy outlined below attempts to articulate our compensation and talent strategies for the coming year.

### 1. Our Compensation Philosophy

How salary is determined at Young Farmers is a direct reflection of the [organization's values](#). While our organizational values are represented throughout these guidelines, the most salient are:

- **Tenure/Institutional Knowledge** (*Gracious & Celebratory*) - We believe that the longer staff stay at Young Farmers, the deeper their expertise and relationship to our farmers. We celebrate and honor our long-term staff by providing an avenue to stay at the Coalition by applying an adjustment to salaries for staff who have worked at the organization for 5 years in any role (includes lateral moves and promotions).
- **Competitive Compensation** (*Intentional & Sustainable*) - We know that to recruit and retain our talented staff we must offer pay that is competitive. In some cases, the market compensates some roles more than others and our compensation reflects this reality in order to attract and retain strong candidates and employees with expertise in these fields. Additionally, we recognize areas where the market undervalues foundational work taking place at this Coalition, namely organizing. Our compensation program attempts to mitigate this reality in order to demonstrate the value we recognize in organizing work. With all these factors in mind, we aim to offer comparable compensation for all staff at the same level and strive to benchmark our roles as close to 50th percentile (market median), as our budget allows.
- **Internal Transparency** (*Transparent & Direct*) - These guidelines express our commitment to transparency and fair compensation across the organization. We believe that access to information is a way to distribute power and leads to better decision-making. Relating to advancement, we want opportunities to be clear and open to all staff, and for staff to have clear, written guidelines to which we can hold ourselves accountable.
- **Annual Evaluation** (*Adaptable & Dynamic*) - We update the Compensation Guidelines regularly using national survey data that reflects the continuous increase in cost of living, along with feedback from staff. As such, staff salaries generally increase annually, and improvements are made that aim to address staff's concerns.

## 2. Determining Factors for Job Levels

This section outlines the five job levels at the organization. It aims to clarify the increasing responsibilities as staff advance, and provide transparency on the role of leadership positions. There are currently five “levels” at the organization - these levels correspond to a set of uniform responsibilities across the organization. These responsibilities are determined as key priorities required to achieve the organization’s strategic plan.

<b>Level 1</b> <i>Associate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Executes team work plans and manages routine job processes, individual priorities are set by supervisor</li><li>• Directed on most aspects of the work, contributes to planning and collaboration and efforts to align work culture with organizational values</li><li>• No responsibility for overarching organizational strategy design but participates in annual planning, budgeting, and aligns work with strategic plan and values</li><li>• Supports team work plans, sets individual priorities with support from their manager, directed on collaboration with other teams</li><li>• Offered opportunities but not required to participate in strategic plan, staffing, board, and development decision-making or evaluation processes</li><li>• Has input into the budgeting process, supports budget drafting and implementation, coordinates payment of invoices, and ensures expenses are properly classified and accounted for in their team’s budget tracker</li><li>• No staff management responsibilities, can serve as a project owner to their team</li></ul>
<b>Level 2</b> <i>Manager</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Directed on some or most aspects of the work, work on specific projects can sometimes be independent based on area expertise</li><li>• Responsible for the implementation of our strategic plan and accountability to our organizational values with colleagues</li><li>• Supports and co-manages team work plans, able to set individual priorities with guidance, and collaborate across teams effectively</li><li>• No responsibility for overarching organizational strategy design, annual planning, or evaluation processes but may play a role in their development as support to team leadership</li><li>• Drafts program budgets, supports quarterly budget forecasting, and responsible for tracking spending within approved budgets</li><li>• Weighs in on strategic plan, staffing, board, and development decision-making processes as needed, can serve as a manager of staff, often serves as a project owner</li></ul>
<b>Level 3</b> <i>Associate Director</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work is primarily independent, may assume a lead role for the team or work group, setting an example for collaboration</li><li>• Responsible for the implementation of our strategic plan and accountability to our organizational values with members of their team</li><li>• Helps determine new workflows and team initiatives, is responsible for setting individual and team priorities</li><li>• Begins to lead overarching organizational strategy design, significantly contributing to annual planning, budgeting, and evaluation processes</li><li>• Drafts program budgets, supports quarterly budget forecasting, understands the specific resource needs of their program area and how programs are funded, and responsible for tracking spending within approved budgets</li><li>• Often includes staff management responsibilities, and may sometimes advise leadership on strategic plan, staffing, budget, board, and development decision-making</li></ul>
<b>Level 4</b> <i>Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Works autonomously, goals and problem-solving strategies are aligned with the strategic plan</li><li>• Responsible for ensuring program and process compliance, efficiency and equity efforts are executed in alignment with the strategic plan goals</li><li>• Required to be familiar with and ensure 501(c)(3) compliance for their program or department</li><li>• Provides thought leadership and area expertise, executes on organizational strategy and planning, directs collaboration by setting individual and team priorities</li><li>• Leads and executes overarching organizational strategy design, annual planning processes, and budget management</li><li>• Manages program budgets; leads the development of program budgets and forecasts, understands the specific resource needs of their program area and how their programs are funded, drafts and manages restricted and multi-year grant budgets, reviews actual performance against budgets quarterly, and timely communicates budgetary issues with the Finance Director and Executive Team.</li><li>• Responsible for the implementation of our strategic plan and accountability to our organizational values with members of their team</li><li>• Advises executive leadership on major organizational decisions, and serves as a problem-solving partner to other managers on staff</li><li>• Always includes staff management or advisory responsibilities, often overseeing a team of 2+ staff</li></ul>
<b>Level 5</b> <i>Executive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Has complete autonomy over work prioritization, serves as communication between ED(s), the Board, and staff about organization-level decisions</li><li>• Responsible for ensuring the organization’s compliance, efficiency, and performance is executed in alignment with the requirements of a 501(c)(3) and with the strategic plan</li><li>• Serves as a model for organizational leadership by setting organizational and guiding departmental priorities and holding major organizational decision-making responsibilities</li><li>• Oversees and evaluates overarching organizational strategy design, annual planning, budgeting, and accountability processes</li><li>• Responsible for the organization’s fiscal management, ensuring the organization meets its annual fundraising goals and budget expectations</li><li>• May serve as an area specialist, providing guidance and sharing knowledge as necessary to direct the decision-making of the organization’s leadership team</li><li>• Always includes staff management responsibilities, serves as problem-solving partner for other managers on staff, especially members of the leadership team</li></ul>

### 3. National Young Farmers Compensation Structure: 2025

			BASE		TENURE	
			Annual Salary	Hourly Wage	Annual Salary	Hourly Wage
Level 1 Associate	A	Field / Campaign Organizers, Associates, Coordinators	\$59,410	\$28.56	\$63,910	\$30.73
	B	Roles that are required to DC-Based	\$68,428	\$32.90	\$72,928	\$35.06
	C	Roles that are required to be in CA	\$72,990	\$35.09	\$77,490	\$37.25
Level 2 Manager	A	Managers	\$72,672	\$34.94	\$77,172	\$37.10
	B	Roles required to be in DC or CA	\$80,098	\$38.51	\$84,598	\$40.67
Level 3 Associate Director	A	Associate Director	\$82,750	\$39.78	\$87,250	\$41.95
	B	Roles required to be in DC or CA	\$86,888	\$41.77	\$91,388	\$43.94
Level 4 Leadership	A	Directors	\$101,846	\$48.96	\$106,346	\$51.13
	B	Roles required to be in DC And market based adjustment for positions with 25% higher median benchmark (Finance Director and Development Director)	\$106,939	\$51.41	\$111,439	\$53.58
Level 5 Executive	A	Deputy Director	\$127,500	\$61.30	\$132,000	\$63.46
	B	Co-Executive Directors	TBD - Co-ED salaries are set by the Young Farmers Board of Directors			

### 4. Salary Setting Process & Salary Factors

This section outlines the process by which Young Farmers determined salaries and wages for staff. The section provides transparency on the process by which we decide salaries. In other words, each employee’s salary is set with reference to the factors below at the time of hire. These guidelines will be followed except when in conflict with state or federal legal requirements.

#### 4.1. Benchmarking Salaries Approach

Salaries for each level are calculated every 2-3 years using data from organizations that are similar in sector and size. Our 2023 guidelines were based on data from Salary.com’s Comp Analyst tool for civic and environmental advocacy nonprofit organizations with operating revenues of \$5M-\$10M and 25-50 employees. This data was supplemented with data from PNP Staffing Group’s 2022 Nonprofit Salaries and Staffing Trends report and the 2022 Nonprofit Times Salary Report (available from the Operations Team upon request), as well other public salary data from comparable organizations. We strive to offer 50th percentile (market median) for each level compared to similar roles at similar size nonprofits.

With financial constraints of our budget, we have prioritized reaching the 50th percentile for Level 1 and 2 staff based on our belief that all staff should earn a living wage. We also benchmark our salaries at all levels every 2-3 years against salary data from organizations that are similar in sector and size. Based on benchmarking to salary data from organizations that are of similar sector and size, Young Farmer’s salary levels were set at the following percentiles in 2023:

- Level 1 and 2 salaries were at or above the 50th percentile, or median, of market.
- Level 3 was benchmarked at the 30th percentile of market.
- Level 4 and 5 were generally set at or under 25th percentile of market.

We take this progressive approach to ensure that our salaries are most competitive (relative to peers) for Level 1 and 2 staff and acknowledge that salaries are comparably less competitive for staff at higher levels.

In 2024 and 2025, we implemented a 3% cost of living adjustment to all base salaries due to budgetary constraints with the exception of Level 5A which was adjusted in 2025 due to significant market misalignment.

## 4.2. 2025 Considerations

Our guidelines attempt to balance the considerable impacts of inflation on rising costs of living with the financial sustainability and budgetary realities of the Coalition. To achieve this balance, Young Farmers set a 3% increase to base salaries (e.g., national salaries) across all levels in 2025

Historically, we re-benchmarked roles every year in order to ensure that we were keeping up with the market. However, the changes we made each year based on benchmarking were effectively mirror cost-of-living increases. Given that benchmarking is an in-depth process that takes up significant organizational time and resources, and we may have limited budget to increase to median each year, we have elected to implement cost-of-living increases each year as needed and re-benchmark all roles every two to three years. For staff, the “impact” on salaries will be very similar - you will still continue to receive annual adjustments that acknowledge cost-of-living/inflation.

## 4.3 Grouping Roles by Levels

We know that wage gaps exist nationally along lines of race and gender identity, and that these gaps are often patterned by function (eg. tech, data, and finance roles are typically paid more and skew towards men, etc). With this in mind, we group roles by level in order to ensure that staff who take on similar levels of responsibility receive comparable compensation. We use the average of market benchmarks for all roles at a given level to determine the salary at that level. While we won't be able to match every salary across roles at every single one of our peer organizations, we believe that our compensation structure is competitive across functions and levels, especially when considering our generous benefits and time off offerings.

## 4.4 Location Based Adjustments

Our guidelines include sub-levels to account for high costs of living in California and DC for roles that **require** staff to reside in those areas. As opposed to our national/remote staff, certain policy or organizing roles are based in CA and DC, two areas of specific cost-of-living and cost-of-labor considerations. As such, we offer adjustments for staff in these roles. For all other staff, we offer a single, competitive national salary structure and give them autonomy to live where they choose.

## 4.5 Bilingual Pay Adjustment

**Bilingual Roles:** Starting in 2024, roles that require proficiency in a second language are eligible for a base salary increase of \$4,500 compared to equivalent roles at the same level. Young Farmers offers additional compensation to staff in bilingual roles to acknowledge the unique skillset and translation work required in certain positions to achieve Young Farmers mission. The following policies are relevant to bilingual positions:

- **Determination:** Bilingual roles are designated by the Operations team, in conjunction with department heads and managers. For a role/employee to be qualified for the bilingual pay adjustment, all of the following criteria must be met:
  - Proficiency in a second language related to a specific community or campaign at Young Farmers
  - Demonstration that a skilled staff member could not be successful in the ongoing (eg. weekly) core functions of the role without second language proficiency. If we were hiring for this role, bilingualism would be listed as a ‘must have’, not a ‘nice to have’ (per our hiring manual processes).
  - Demonstration that other approaches (eg. contracting for translation services) are unlikely to support the long-term success or sustainability of the program
  - The role requires bilingual skills in at least 15% of their overall job function and work time
- **Selection Process:**
  - For existing employees and roles, managers will review their teams’ role responsibilities and determine if the role meets the above criteria. Employees should discuss with their managers during 1-1 check ins if they believe their role qualifies. Bilingual roles are designated by the Operations team, in conjunction with department heads and managers. If approved by the department head and Operations team, the staff member's job description will be updated during the all-staff job description review process in January to include ‘bilingual required’, and add relevant bilingual and translation responsibilities in the job description. Once reviewed and approved by the operations team, the employee's pay designation will be adjusted in paychex, and back-dated to January 1st 2024.
  - Roles and programs may change over time, so managers will have the opportunity to review their team's roles for qualification each year during the job description review process.
  - In hiring processes for new roles, the manager will assess if the role meets the above criteria. If so, bilingual roles will be designated on the job description and job posting as “bilingual required”.
  - New applicants for bilingual positions will be given the opportunity to identify as second-language proficient and given an aptitude assessment as part of the application process.
  - See FAQ at the end for additional information on assessment factors

## 5. Implementation Details

### 5.1 Timeline

- Salary adjustments will be implemented by the operations team through the drafting of pay rate adjustment letters (and offer letters where appropriate) for 2025. We will not decrease any existing salaries for employees who remain in the same role who are currently above our pay scale.
- The operations team will send offer letters to managers and staff in early January with signatures required by January 17, 2025. If you have any questions about your or your report's eligibility for tenure, reach out to the Operations team.
- Promotions and part/full time change decisions are communicated after the annual performance evaluation process and once the next year's budget has been approved by the Board of Directors. Submitting requests does not guarantee approval and decisions will be made at the discretion of the Co-EDs. Please review the 2024 YF Talent Guidelines for additional information on the promotion process and part/full time change requests.
- In 2022 the tenure adjustment was changed from 4 years to 5 years. Staff who were hired prior to January 1, 2022 will receive their tenure adjustment on the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their hire date if they did not receive a level change or the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their hire date if they did receive a level change. Staff hired on or after January 1, 2022 will receive their tenure adjustment on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their hire date, regardless of whether they receive a level change. Tenure adjustments will be implemented by the operations team with a pay rate adjustment letter to acknowledge the increase in pay rate.

**Salary exempt minimums:** If an employee lives in a state with a salary exempt minimum requirement, and their salary falls below that minimum, that employee will receive an adjustment to meet the minimum salary.

The pay scale is based on a 40-hour per week schedule. Compensation for hourly employees directly correlates to annual salaries (e.g., \$56,000 annual salary equates to 26 pay periods of 80 hours each - or an hourly wage of \$26.92/hr).

## 6. Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: What should I do if I feel I am being asked to do work above my salary level?**

**A:** Like most things, we encourage you to speak first with your manager if you have concerns about working above your job level. Before this conversation, you may want to consider existing Young Farmers resources and frameworks. Review the salary level guidelines - what about your current work does/does not fit into the guidelines for your level? Consider your individual goals and metrics for the year (including any professional development or "stretch" goals) - how do these fit into the guidelines? While some of the key activities may look similar at different levels, the distinction may lie in the degree of coaching, guidance, and direction given by their manager. It is expected that at higher levels, work becomes more self directed and requires less frequent guidance from a manager

Another consideration is whether the work that is perceived to be at a higher level is constant (on ongoing requirement of your role) or temporary (stepping up to support strategy or project management for a specific short term project or amidst a staffing gap). If temporary, the manager should acknowledge the staff's outsized contributions and work to right size their scope as soon as possible. If constant, the manager, and if necessary the Leadership Team Member and Operations, should work with the staff to right size the scope of responsibilities. That may involve shrinking the scope of your work plan/goals.

**Q: How is staff feedback incorporated in the annual evaluation and updates of the Salary Guidelines?**

Each year we work to collect feedback on our Salary Guidelines through staff surveys in order to address staff's needs and concerns. In 2023 we gathered stakeholder input in two ways ahead of drafting the 2024 Salary Guidelines:

- Detailed interviews from **8 representative members** of the Young Farmers team
  - Members were selected to represent a cross-section of the Young Farmers team by function, tenure, organizational level, and personal background (race, gender id, etc).
  - Interviews were conducted by our compensation consultant in late July 2023 using a standardized interview format and questions.
- A survey with the same questions was sent to all members of the Young Farmers team. 50% of staff (26 out of 52 total staff) participated in the survey.

While we can never address all feedback shared due to financial constraints and conflicting perspectives, the organization aims to continuously improve its Salary Guidelines to incorporate areas of concern elevated by multiple staff. Such feedback has resulted in several changes each year including bilingual pay adjustments, new Talent Guidelines, and more details added to responsibility levels. Ultimately, the Co-Executive Directors are responsible for final approval of all changes to the Salary Guidelines, and no changes will be made to Salary Guidelines after their annual release in December.

**Q: Do all bilingual staff receive a pay adjustment?**

**A:** No, only staff serving in a designated bilingual role are eligible. While we recognize that many staff may be bilingual, you only receive a pay adjustment if you are bilingual in a position that has been formally designated as requiring dual-language skills.

**Q: Why is being bilingual the only “unique skill” that receives additional compensation?**

**A:** Many staff bring diverse and valuable skills, life experiences, and competencies to their roles that sometimes fall outside of core responsibilities and ‘must haves’ for the roles. We celebrate and value these skills, and we believe that there is something unique about bilingual skillsets that allow us to advance our mission across diverse communities. With this in mind, we designate a threshold that ensures an equitable implementation of salary adjustments that are driven by organizational need.

**Q: What if I sometimes use my second language in the workplace?**

You may be asked to translate infrequently in meetings, or you may be asked to take notes, or send a follow up email - all of these things fall into the basket of “role flexibility” that we can all expect to experience at work. If this work/requests become too frequent or you believe matches the criteria listed in bilingual role requirements, please discuss with your manager and/or the operations team.

**Q: I’m bilingual and infrequently need to translate in meetings - when should I translate myself and when should I hire a translator?**

**A:** This is likely a matter of professional judgment based on the stakes/formality of the meeting, the degree to which you feel the need to be a “full” participant, and your confidence to be able to translate effectively for all parties. If you aren’t sure, we recommend speaking with your manager.

**Q: Is the bilingual policy retroactive? I’ve been informally translating for my team for the last year - will I be compensated?**

**A:** No, we do not apply compensation policies retroactively. However for roles determined to be eligible for bilingual pay adjustments during the job description drafting (February), the employee’s pay designation will be adjusted in paychex, and back-dated to January 1st.

*These Guidelines are not a contract and do not confer any contractual or quasi-contractual rights on employees of the Coalition. These Guidelines may be terminated or changed in whole or in part at any time, with or without notice, at the sole discretion of the Coalition.*

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