

City & County High Compensation Survey data discussion item for 8/20/2026

An existing statutory reporting requirement allows for tabulation of a Local Government High Compensation Survey that will be especially useful to the Compensation Council for prescribing state agency salaries every two years.

471.701 SALARY DATA (established in 2005)

A city or county with a population of more than 15,000 must annually notify its residents of the positions and base salaries of its three highest-paid employees. This notice may be provided on the home page of the primary website maintained by the political subdivision for a period of not less than 90 consecutive days, in a publication of the political subdivision that is distributed to all residents in the political subdivision, or as part of the annual notice of proposed property taxes prepared under section [275.065](#).

A preliminary scan of the required reporting indicates that compliance is frequently fulfilled by posting on the easily accessed primary city or county website – and these postings likely remain in place far longer than the 90-day minimum. For instance, [Hennepin County lists the job titles and salaries on its website](#), but the City of Minneapolis (as of July 2026) does not – although salary ranges are posted. One of the smallest cities required to report, [Northfield](#), posts the names, job titles and salaries on its website.

For survey comparison purposes, data collected from cities and counties could be aggregated by population range into two categories (number of each statewide is listed in parenthesis) without the need to identify localities individually:

Counties - Large: 150,000+ (9) / Mid-sized: 15,001-150,000 (~47)

Cities - Large: 75,000+ (10) / Mid-sized: 15,001-75,000 (~65)

The essential survey information helpful to the Compensation Council is the job title and salary. There would be no need for the report to list names of the particular political subdivisions, nor names of individuals (such as the optional listing of personal names Northfield employs). While it is helpful to obtain as much of this public high-compensation data as possible, collecting even a relatively small portion of the total amount of public data available will be very useful for purposes of comparison with similarly credentialed state agency heads. The most useful information will come from the largest cities and counties – and most of the effort should be focused on collecting data from the relatively small number (19) of local units listed under the Large Counties / Cities categories.

Initial administrative activities to gather and store baseline data and contact information (where needed) will be somewhat labor intensive, but subsequent maintenance of the lists for future biennia will be far simpler. The agency administering the survey would determine the amount of data and time to be devoted to the project using staff or interns, if available. An agency capable and willing to provide data collection, maintain the list, and distribute the survey should be enlisted.

From a state Compensation Council perspective, the best biennial timing for aggregating into the finalized survey report would be in January of the odd year (starting in 2027), allowing the Compensation Council to analyze results while typically meeting during the February-April odd-year time frame when state agency head salaries are prescribed.

Anne Finn, chief Intergovernmental Relations officer at the League of Minnesota Cities, and various LMC staff members were especially helpful in responding, and assisting in narrowing options as presented in this draft proposal.

Source: James Robins (Compensation Council member)