

# OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK HANDBOOK

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## Human Resources Specialists

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### Summary



The median annual wage for human resources specialists was \$67,650 in May 2023.

#### [Job Outlook](#)

Employment of human resources specialists is projected to grow 8 percent from 2023 to 2033, faster than the average for all occupations.

About 86,200 openings for human resources specialists are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Many of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

#### [State & Area Data](#)

Explore resources for employment and wages by state and area for human resources specialists.

#### [Similar Occupations](#)

Compare the job duties, education, job growth, and pay of human resources specialists with similar occupations.

#### [More Information, Including Links to O\\*NET](#)

Learn more about human resources specialists by visiting additional resources, including O\*NET, a source on key characteristics of workers and occupations.

# What Human Resources Specialists Do



Recruitment specialists may distribute information at job fairs or online.

Human resources specialists recruit, screen, and interview job applicants and place newly hired workers in jobs. They also may handle compensation and benefits, training, and employee relations.

## Duties

Human resources specialists typically do the following:

- Consult with employers to identify hiring needs
- Interview job applicants about their relevant experience, education, and skills
- Check applicants' references and backgrounds
- Inform applicants about job details, such as duties, benefits, and working conditions
- Hire or refer qualified applicants
- Run or help with new employee orientation
- Keep employment records and process paperwork

Human resources specialists often are trained in tasks for all disciplines of a human resources department. In addition to recruiting applicants and placing workers, human resources specialists help guide employees through human resources procedures and answer questions about an organization's policies. They sometimes administer benefits, process payroll, and handle associated questions or problems. Some specialists focus more on strategic planning and hiring than on administrative duties. They also ensure that all human resources functions comply with federal, state, and local regulations.

The following are examples of types of human resources specialists:

**Human resources generalists** handle all aspects of human resources work. Their duties include recruitment, compensation, benefits, training, and employee relations, as well as administering human resources policies, procedures, and programs.

**Recruitment specialists**, sometimes known as **recruiters** or "**talent acquisition specialists**," find, screen, and interview applicants for job openings in an organization. They search for applicants by posting listings, attending job fairs, and visiting college campuses. They also may test applicants, contact references, and extend job offers.

Some specialists focus on a certain area of human resources, such as retirement or training. For information about those who focus on an organization's wage and nonwage programs for workers, see the profile on [compensation, benefits, and job analysis specialists](#). For information about those who plan and administer programs that improve workers' skills and knowledge, see the profile on [training and development specialists](#).

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# Work Environment



Employment interviewers speak with applicants and ask them questions before referring them to appropriate jobs.

Human resources specialists held about 933,700 jobs in 2023. The largest employers of human resources specialists were as follows:

Employment services	16%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	14
Healthcare and social assistance	10
Government	9
Manufacturing	7

Some organizations contract recruitment and placement work to outside firms, such as those in the employment services industry or the professional, scientific, and technical industry.

## Work Schedules

Human resources specialists generally work in office settings. Some, particularly recruitment specialists, travel to attend job fairs, visit college campuses, and meet with applicants.

Most specialists work full time during regular business hours. Some work more than 40 hours per week.

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# How to Become a Human Resources Specialist



Human resources specialists must usually have a bachelor's degree in human resources, business, or a related field.

Human resources specialists typically need a bachelor's degree to enter the occupation.

## Education

Human resources specialists typically need a bachelor's [degree](#) in human resources, [business](#), [communications](#), or a related field.

By working in an internship during college, students gain relevant experience that may be helpful in competing for human resources specialist jobs. Internships in human resources departments may help prospective specialists to increase their understanding of the occupation and to network in an industry.

## Other Experience

Some positions require human resources specialists to have relevant work experience. Candidates may gain experience as human resources assistants ([information clerks](#)), [customer service representatives](#), or in related occupations.

Employers also may prefer to hire candidates who have experience in areas such as personnel recruitment, staff training and development, employee relations, and compensation and benefits. Candidates sometimes get this experience while in college, either through courses or by volunteering.

## Licenses, Certifications, and Registrations

Professional associations that specialize in human resources offer courses to enhance the skills of their members, and some offer certification programs. For example, the [Society for Human Resource Management](#) <sup>®</sup> (SHRM) offers the SHRM Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) and SHRM Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP), and the [HR Certification Institute](#) <sup>®</sup> (HRCI) offers a range of certifications for varying levels of expertise.

Certification usually requires that candidates pass an exam that covers human resources knowledge and asks candidates to apply their knowledge to different situations. Candidates for certification also typically need to meet minimum education and experience requirements.

Although certification is usually voluntary, some employers prefer or require it. Human resources generalists, in particular, may benefit from certification because it shows knowledge and professional competence across all human resources areas.

## Advancement

Human resources specialists who have a thorough knowledge of their organization and its personnel regulations may advance to become [human resources managers](#). Specialists may increase their chance of advancement by taking on new responsibilities or completing voluntary certification programs.

## Important Qualities

**Communication skills.** Listening and speaking skills are essential for human resources specialists. They must convey information effectively and respond to questions and concerns from employers, job applicants, and employees.

**Decision-making skills.** Human resources specialists must use sound judgment when reviewing applicants' qualifications or when working to resolve disputes.

**Detail oriented.** Specialists must pay attention to detail when evaluating applicants' qualifications, doing background checks, maintaining records of an employee grievance, and ensuring that a workplace complies with labor standards.

**Interpersonal skills.** Specialists continually interact with others and must be able to converse and connect with people from varied backgrounds.

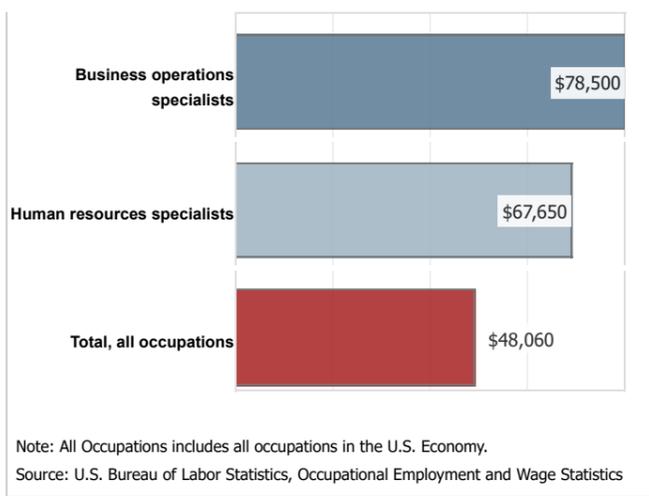
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# Pay

## Human Resources Specialists

Median annual wages, May 2023



The median annual wage for human resources specialists was \$67,650 in May 2023. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$42,900, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$121,800.

In May 2023, the median annual wages for human resources specialists in the top industries in which they worked were as follows:

Government	\$78,290
Professional, scientific, and technical services	78,260
Manufacturing	76,200
Healthcare and social assistance	60,340
Employment services	54,410

Some human resources specialists, particularly recruitment specialists, travel to attend job fairs, visit college campuses, and meet with applicants.

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## Job Outlook



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### Employment

Demand for human resources specialists is expected to be strong over the projections decade as more of these workers are needed to help meet strategic organizational priorities, such as employee engagement and retention, diversity and inclusion, and remote work and return to office.

Some companies may outsource human resources functions to organizations that provide these services, rather than directly employing human resources specialists.

### Employment projections data for human resources specialists, 2023-33

<b>Human resources specialists</b>
<b>SOC Code:</b> 13-1071
<b>Employment, 2023:</b> 933,700
<b>Projected Employment, 2033:</b> 1,007,900
<b>Change, 2023-33 (Percent):</b> 8
<b>Change, 2023-33 (Numeric):</b>

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

74,200

**Employment By Industry:**

[Get data](#)

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment Projections program

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## State & Area Data

### Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS)

The [Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics](#) (OEWS) program produces employment and wage estimates annually for over 800 occupations. These estimates are available for the nation as a whole, for individual states, and for metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. The link(s) below go to OEWS data maps for employment and wages by state and area.

[Human resources specialists](#)

### Projections Central

Occupational employment projections are developed for all states by Labor Market Information (LMI) or individual state Employment Projections offices. All state projections data are available at [www.projectionscentral.org](http://www.projectionscentral.org). Information on this site allows projected employment growth for an occupation to be compared among states or to be compared within one state. In addition, states may produce projections for areas; there are links to each state's websites where these data may be retrieved.

### CareerOneStop

CareerOneStop includes hundreds of [occupational profiles](#) with data available by state and metro area. There are links in the left-hand side menu to compare occupational employment by state and occupational wages by local area or metro area. There is also a [salary info tool](#) to search for wages by zip code.

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## Similar Occupations

This table shows a list of occupations with job duties that are similar to those of human resources specialists.

### [Compensation and Benefits Managers](#)

**Job Duties:**

Compensation and benefits managers plan, develop, and oversee programs to pay employees.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Bachelor's degree

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$136,380

### [Compensation, Benefits, and Job Analysis Specialists](#)

**Job Duties:**

Compensation, benefits, and job analysis specialists oversee wage and nonwage programs that an organization provides to its employees in return for their work. They also evaluate position descriptions to determine details such as classification and salary.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Bachelor's degree

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$74,530

### [Customer Service Representatives](#)

**Job Duties:**

Customer service representatives interact with customers to handle complaints, process orders, and answer questions.

**Entry-Level Education:**

High school diploma or equivalent

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$39,680

### [Human Resources Managers](#)

**Job Duties:**

Human resources managers plan, coordinate, and direct the administrative functions of an organization.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Bachelor's degree

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$136,350

### [Insurance Sales Agents](#)

**Job Duties:**

Insurance sales agents contact potential customers and sell one or more types of insurance.

**Entry-Level Education:**

High school diploma or equivalent

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$59,080

### [Labor Relations Specialists](#)

**Job Duties:**

Labor relations specialists resolve employee-management disputes and negotiate labor contracts.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Bachelor's degree

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$89,980

### [Public Relations Specialists](#)

**Job Duties:**

Public relations specialists create and maintain a positive public image for the clients they represent.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Bachelor's degree

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$66,750

### [Tax Examiners and Collectors, and Revenue Agents](#)

**Job Duties:**

Tax examiners and collectors, and revenue agents determine how much is owed in taxes and collect tax from individuals and businesses on behalf of the government.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Bachelor's degree

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$58,530

### [Training and Development Managers](#)

**Job Duties:**

Training and development managers plan, coordinate, and direct skills- and knowledge-enhancement programs for an organization's staff.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Bachelor's degree

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$125,040

### [Training and Development Specialists](#)

**Job Duties:**

Training and development specialists plan and administer programs that improve the skills and knowledge of their employees.

**Entry-Level Education:**

Bachelor's degree

**2023 Median Pay:**

\$64,340

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## Contacts for More Information

For more information about human resources careers and certification, visit

[HR Certification Institute](#)

[International Public Management Association for Human Resources](#)

[Society for Human Resource Management](#)

[WorldatWork](#)

### Occupational Requirements Survey

For a profile highlighting selected BLS data on occupational requirements, see

[Human resources specialists](#) (PDF)

### O\*NET

[Human Resources Specialists](#)

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**SUGGESTED CITATION:**

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, Human Resources Specialists, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/business-and-financial/human-resources-specialists.htm> (visited October 22, 2024).

U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS Office of Occupational Statistics and Employment Projections PSB Suite 2135 2 Massachusetts Avenue NE Washington, DC 20212-0001

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