

SEN Compensation Philosophy and Guidelines

How SEN sets pay: competitive packages, transparent salary bands, and benefits that beat the national averages.

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I. Purpose

School Empowerment Network (SEN) aims to attract and retain the best talent by providing competitive compensation packages and transparent, well-defined pay scales. This guide serves as a resource for SEN leaders involved in staffing and compensation decisions, offering a clear understanding of the organization's approach. By establishing a consistent framework for compensation, SEN seeks to attract dedicated professionals who share its mission to empower local leaders to create high-performing schools centered around proven design principles, rigorous and engaging instruction, and caring relationships between students and staff.

II. Base salary and benefits

II.A. Base salary

The minimum starting base pay for each role will meet or exceed the 62.5th percentile of the market.

Market:

- For **PD, SD, ED, COO, CSO, and CEO**: the market is defined as a comparable role in the 2022 Guidestar Nonprofit Compensation Report.¹ National level; companies with revenues of \$5–10M.
- For **Program Associate, Program Manager & Senior Manager/Director of Program Strategy**: the market is defined as a comparable role in the Compensation Data Center of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). National level; companies with revenues of \$5–10M.

Given the above, SEN's compensation structure does not include performance bonuses. We assume that everyone will perform at a high level and have set the base compensation accordingly. SEN performance reviews are growth-oriented and not tied to any salary raises.

¹ The SEN Central Team has also analyzed the 2023 and 2024 GuideStar Nonprofit Compensation Reports and made slight adjustments to the salary bands (see Section III.C for more details).

II.B. Benefits

All SEN full-time employees are eligible for the following benefits:

II.B1. HEALTH BENEFITS

- SEN will pay for **90% to 100%** of employee-only medical, dental and vision coverage with a well-known, national health care provider, and will subsidize the majority of costs for an employee’s spouse and/or children.
- **Target:** SEN employer contributions to medical benefits will be at least 25% higher than the national average, as estimated by the KFF Employer Health Benefits Survey.²

See more details: SEN Medical Benefits Analysis — 2025.

II.B2. RETIREMENT BENEFITS

- SEN will match one dollar for every dollar contributed, up to **6%** of a staff member’s regular earnings.
- **Target:** SEN employer match will be higher than the national average.

SCHOOL EMPOWERMENT NETWORK 401K MATCH	401K MATCH NATIONAL AVERAGE ³
6.0%	4.6%

³ Vanguard, “How America Saves 2025,” page 21.

II.B3. PAID TIME OFF (PTO) BENEFITS

- Full-time employees are front-loaded with **20 PTO days per year** (prorated for a partial year; unused days may not be carried over from year to year). In addition, every year the company closes for **13 days** of observed federal holidays and breaks.
- **Target:** SEN’s vacation plan will match the 75th percentile of PTO days per year in a recent Paid Leave Benchmarking Report of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

II.B4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Professional Development Budget:** SEN will pay for attendance to conferences and other professional development and continuing education opportunities related to our work and mission. Employees do not take PTO while attending PD activities.
- **Target:** \$2,250/year per person. This amount will be adjusted periodically based on inflation rates and budget flexibility.

² The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) has sponsored the study since 1999. KFF works with NORC at the University of Chicago and Davis Research LLC to field and analyze the survey.

III. Salary bands

The SEN board approves all salary bands and makes updates and revisions every two or three years, depending on inflation rates, other labor market conditions, and periodic review of benchmark roles.

III.A. Direct Service Team

III.A1. BENCHMARK ROLES AND SALARY BANDS

	PROGRAM DIRECTOR	SENIOR DIRECTOR	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Benchmark role	Top Program Position		Top Education Position
Benchmark titles	Program Director/Coordinator · Executive Director of Programs · VP of Programs		Academic VP/Provost · Chief Learning Officer · Dean of Academic Affairs · Director of Educational Services · VP of HR and Training
Guidestar Nonprofit Compensation Report 2022 · Organizations between \$5 million and \$10 million			
10th percentile	\$103,415	\$103,415	\$101,707
25th percentile	\$115,875	\$115,875	\$118,097
50th percentile	\$136,067	\$136,067	\$143,845
62.5th percentile ⁴	\$148,397	\$148,397	\$160,980
75th percentile	\$160,727	\$160,727	\$178,114
82.5th percentile ⁵	\$176,986	\$176,986	\$199,271
90th percentile	\$193,245	\$193,245	\$220,428
Salary band ⁶	\$153,000 – \$177,000	\$177,000 – \$193,000	\$193,000 – \$220,000

⁴ Estimate: midpoint between 50th and 75th percentiles. ⁵ Estimate: midpoint between 75th and 90th percentiles. ⁶ For FY 2025–2026 the Program Director band was updated from \$148,000–\$177,000 to \$153,000–\$177,000, based on analysis of the 2023 and 2024 Guidestar Nonprofit Compensation Reports.

III.A2. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES AND SALARY BANDS — DIRECT SERVICE TEAM

Program Director • Program implementation • Team participation • Organizational participation \$153,000 – \$177,000	Senior Director • Program implementation • Program management: ensuring day-to-day meeting of expectations • Team leadership: responsible for the quality of team outcomes • Organizational participation and support on an initiative(s) \$177,000 – \$193,000	Executive Director • Program implementation • Programmatic design and executive oversight • Talent development • Strategic management • Business development & communications \$193,000 – \$220,000
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III.B. Operational Team

III.B1. BENCHMARK ROLES AND SALARY BANDS

	PROGRAM ASSOCIATE	PROGRAM MANAGER	SENIOR MANAGER OR DIRECTOR OF PROGRAM STRATEGY
Benchmark role	Program Support Specialist II and III		Non-Profit Program Manager
Benchmark description	Plans and coordinates one or more programs of a non-profit organization. Coordinates fundraising, budgeting, and community outreach efforts. Creates program materials, establishes staffing requirements, and ensures that the program achieves stated objectives.		Manages a team that coordinates the programs of a non-profit. Designs and implements programs that support the organization's mission, vision, and goals.
Experience	Typically 2–4 years of related experience	Typically 4–7 years of related experience	Typically 5 years of experience plus 1–3 years of supervisory experience
SHRM Compensation Benchmark Reports · Nonprofit organizations between \$5 million and \$10 million			
10th percentile	\$49,600	\$60,200	\$71,200
25th percentile	\$56,400	\$67,700	\$79,900
50th percentile	\$63,800	\$75,800	\$89,400
62.5th percentile⁷	\$68,100	\$81,450	\$95,200
75th percentile	\$72,400	\$87,100	\$101,100
82.5th percentile⁸	\$76,300	\$92,300	\$106,200
90th percentile	\$80,200	\$97,500	\$111,400
Salary band	\$68,000 – \$80,000	\$81,000 – \$98,000	\$95,000 – \$112,000

⁷ Estimate: midpoint between 50th and 75th percentiles. ⁸ Estimate: midpoint between 75th and 90th percentiles.

III.B2. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES AND SALARY BANDS — OPERATIONAL TEAM

Program Associate Manages the operational workflow of a team. Completes assigned duties with support and oversight from team leaders. Emphasis on: • Support to keep teams on track toward critical deadlines • Logistics management related to school visits, convenings, etc. • Data processing \$68,000 – \$80,000	Program Manager Similar duties to those of a Program Associate with minimum support and oversight from team leaders. • Full ownership of complex or cross-organizational projects • Coach support through tool creation • Complex data analysis • Potential to manage a colleague or two \$81,000 – \$98,000	Senior Manager or Director of Program Strategy Serve as a proactive thought partner to the ED. Emphasis on: • Codification and co-crafting of SEN’s standard approach and levers for execution • Advanced research and support of complex aspects of program implementation \$95,000 – \$112,000
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III.C. Central Team

III.C1. BENCHMARK ROLES AND SALARY BANDS

	COO	CSO	CEO
Benchmark role	Top Operations Position	Top Business Position	CEO / Executive Director
Benchmark titles	Chief Operations Officer · COO · Operations Director	Business Affairs Director · Business Devt. Director · Chief Devt. Officer	CEO · Executive Director · President
Guidestar Nonprofit Compensation Report 2022 · Organizations between \$5 million and \$10 million			
25th percentile	\$112,523	\$119,188	\$127,922
50th percentile	\$139,341	\$144,810	\$170,765
62.5th percentile	\$159,863	\$169,809	\$201,017
75th percentile	\$180,385	\$194,807	\$231,269
82.5th percentile	\$208,072	\$223,662	\$275,361
90th percentile	\$235,759	\$252,437	\$319,453
Salary band	\$160,000 – \$236,000	\$170,000 – \$252,000	\$201,000 – \$319,000

III.C2. CORE RESPONSIBILITIES AND SALARY BANDS — CENTRAL TEAM

Chief Operating Officer • Lead the development of SEN’s financial and cashflow management strategy • Provide analytical support to SEN’s management team • Drive the research and implementation of HR policies and practices to ensure consistency, and allow for flexibility and adaptability • Support the strategic planning process and implementation of new initiatives \$160,000 – \$236,000	Chief Strategy Officer • Work with the CEO to ensure a coherent strategy for implementing strategic priorities and for growth of the organization • Develop an integrated strategy for improved internal systems that align with our core beliefs • Support school and district partnerships; apply insights and learnings to improve desired outcomes and scale effective approaches to new contracts and different contexts \$170,000 – \$252,000	Chief Executive Officer • Overall strategic and operational responsibility for SEN’s staff, programs, expansion, and execution of its mission • Lead, coach, develop, and retain SEN’s Leadership Team • Ensure effective systems to track scaling progress and regularly evaluate program components, so successes can be effectively communicated to the board, funders, and other constituents \$201,000 – \$319,000
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IV. Salary increases and stipends

There are three ways annual compensation for full-time employees can increase:

1. Cost of living adjustments to base salary
2. Annual stipends to cover increased responsibilities beyond the role’s scope
3. Promotion to a title with a higher salary band

IV.A. Cost of living adjustments

SEN will seek to adjust all full-time employees’ base salary yearly in accordance with national inflation statistics. To avoid unanticipated or fiscally destabilizing adjustments, SEN will consider the average inflation rate of the previous three calendar years.

Eligibility: To receive a cost-of-living adjustment, employees must have been in their current position for at least 12 continuous months at the time the adjustment takes effect. This ensures that COLA increases reflect sustained service in a given role.

Example:

	COLA JUL '23	COLA JUL '24	COLA JUL '25	COLA JUL '26	COLA JUL '27*	COLA JUL '28*
Inflation, calendar year N-3	1.2%	4.7%	8.0%	4.1%	2.9%	1.9%
Inflation, calendar year N-2	4.7%	8.0%	4.1%	2.9%	1.9%	2.1%
Inflation, calendar year N-1	8.0%	4.1%	2.9%	1.9%	2.1%	2.1%
COLA effective July 1, year N	4.6%	5.6%	5.0%	3.0%	2.3%	2.0%

* Forecast: IMF US inflation forecast (February 2025).

Annual cost of living adjustments will be equal in amount across employees (versus an equal percentage of an individual's salary).

Example:

	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27
Avg. inflation (3 yr.)	2.6%	4.6%	5.6%	5.0%	3.0%
All-team salaries	—	\$3,139,161	\$3,321,937	\$3,663,080	\$4,199,100
All-team salary increase	—	\$144,401	\$186,028	\$183,154	\$125,973
SEN FTEs	—	19.8	20.8	21.8	23.8
Per-person salary increase	—	\$7,293	\$8,944	\$8,402	\$5,293

IV.B. Stipends for increased responsibilities

SEN stipend-eligible roles are:

- Program Director
- Senior Director
- Program Associate
- Program Manager
- Senior Manager/Director of Program Strategy

IV.B1. STIPEND GUIDELINES

SEN employees can get annual stipends by taking on projects that represent an additional workload that goes beyond expectations for their current role. Such projects are established by the CEO and Executive Directors to fulfill the team and organization's needs.

The stipend's hourly rate is calculated at the start of each fiscal year. For FY 2025–26 the maximum hourly rate is **\$80 per hour**. Stipend hours are limited to a maximum of **90 per year**, approximately constituting 5% of the standard annual workload.⁹

Any project involving stipends must include a detailed scope of work outlining expected deliverables and estimated hours. Stipends will be paid through the payroll system in the final payroll of the fiscal year, once all deliverables have been completed.

Managers must define and discuss stipend opportunities and responsibilities with the CEO before implementation. If the work extends beyond one year, the scope of work must be renewed. Stipend responsibilities will not automatically carry over, as team composition and needs may change from year to year.

Members of the Leadership Team are not eligible to receive salary stipends.

⁹ To promote greater engagement in DEI initiatives, the hours dedicated to these projects will not be included in the calculation of the annual 90-hour cap.