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## Industry Survey: Restaurant Labor Cost



Correctly judging the optimum number of staff to hire, and what they should be paid, is a significant challenge for the startup restaurateur. Getting it right is essential to the success of the restaurant. Likewise, misjudging these numbers can blow the budget and undermine your business plan.

In our survey, "**What Restaurants Pay for Staff and Management**", we asked respondents to tell us what they pay and how many staff they employ for their particular concept. We have grouped the results by several criteria in hopes of providing **meaningful comparisons** when it comes to seeing how your particular establishment (or concept-to-be) stacks up against similar operations.

Unlike our other surveys, we have enhanced our report by providing additional data, gathered from several industry statistical resources such as the [National Restaurant Association](#) and the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), that might help you in your quest to **accurately estimate your staffing needs** and cost.

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[Labor Cost as a Percentage of Sales](#)

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[Number of Staff Compared to Sales and Seats \(Full Service\)](#)

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[General Manager, Chef, and Kitchen Manager Salaries by Service Type](#)

Other tools to help you determine staffing needs include:

- [DOWNLOAD: Restaurant Schedule Template](#)
- [Restaurant Labor Scheduling Basics](#)
- [AUDIO: 13 Steps to Writing a Fool-Proof Schedule](#)

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## Survey Results: Pay Rates by Geographic Region

Pay rates vary from one geographical region to another. Cost of living, state minimum wage laws, other factors have a significant impact on pay scales for various jobs.

The **Bureau of Labor Statistics** conducts the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey semiannually. Wage estimates are calculated from the data collected and reported by industry, including the foodservice industry. The results are available to the public by going online to <http://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm>.

Our survey, however, was limited to [RestaurantOwner.com](http://www.restaurantowner.com) members, which are primarily independent restaurateurs. Unlike the OES survey, one of the questions we asked operators to answer is what they pay of salary and hourly wages before tip income for the following positions:

- **Annual Salaries** - General Manager, Chef/Kitchen Manager, Asst. Manager, Bookkeeper, Catering Director
- **Hourly Wages** - Waitstaff, Host, Bartender, Barback, Busser, Cashier, Line Server, Delivery, Sous Chef, Cook, Prep/Pantry, Dishwasher

We separated the pay rate results by geographical region. Simply click on the region to view responses.

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Geographic Regions					
Canada	North Central	Northeastern	Southern	Western	U.S.-Possessions
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Alberta	Illinois	Connecticut	Alabama	Arizona	Alaska
British Columbia	Indiana	Maine	Arkansas	California	Guam
Manitoba	Iowa	Massachusetts	Delaware	Colorado	Hawaii
New Brunswick	Kansas	New Hampshire	District of Columbia	Idaho	Puerto Rico
Newfoundland & Labrador	Michigan	New Jersey	Florida	Nevada	Virgin Islands
Northwest Territories	Minnesota	New York	Georgia	New Mexico	
Nova Scotia	Missouri	Pennsylvania	Kentucky	Oregon	
Ontario	Montana	Rhode Island	Louisiana	Utah	
Prince Edwards Island	Nebraska	Vermont	Maryland	Washington	
Quebec	North Dakota		Mississippi	Wyoming	
Saskatchewan	Ohio		North Carolina		
Yukon	South Dakota		Oklahoma		
	Wisconsin		South Carolina		

Tennessee  
Texas  
Virginia  
West Virginia

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## Pay Rates: Canada

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland & Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edwards Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Yukon

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Pay Rate Survey - Canada			
Annual Salaries	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
General Manager	\$29,000	\$46,500	\$60,000
Chef/Kitchen Manager	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$50,000
Asst. Manager	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$38,000
Bookkeeper	\$6,500	\$11,000	\$26,250
Catering Director	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hourly	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Waitstaff	\$6	\$7	\$8
Host	\$7	\$8	\$9
Bartender	\$6	\$7	\$8
Barback	\$7	\$7	\$8
Busser	\$7	\$8	\$8
Cashier	\$8	\$9	\$9
Line Server	\$6	\$7	\$7
Delivery	\$9	\$10	\$11
Sous Chef	\$12	\$13	\$14
Line Cook	\$9	\$10	\$12
Prep/Pantry	\$9	\$10	\$12
Dishwasher	\$8	\$8	\$9

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## Pay Rates: North Central Region

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

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Pay Rate Survey - North Central Region			
Annual Salaries	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
General Manager	\$32,000	\$45,000	\$60,000
Chef/Kitchen Manager	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$42,000
Asst. Manager	\$25,000	\$32,000	\$40,000
Bookkeeper	\$10,000	\$25,500	\$31,500
Catering Director	\$12,000	\$22,000	\$34,250
Hourly	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Waitstaff	\$2	\$3	\$3
Host	\$6	\$7	\$9
Bartender	\$5	\$6	\$7
Barback	\$5	\$5	\$6
Busser	\$5	\$5	\$7
Cashier	\$7	\$8	\$9
Line Server	\$4	\$6	\$9
Delivery	\$7	\$8	\$9
Sous Chef	\$11	\$12	\$15
Line Cook	\$8	\$9	\$10
Prep/Pantry	\$8	\$9	\$9
Dishwasher	\$7	\$7	\$8

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## Pay Rates: Northeast Region

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

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Pay Rate Survey - Northeastern Region			
Annual Salaries	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
General Manager	\$33,500	\$45,000	\$56,250
Chef/Kitchen Manager	\$31,500	\$40,000	\$50,000
Asst. Manager	\$29,000	\$35,000	\$37,000
Bookkeeper	\$12,000	\$20,000	\$30,000
Catering Director	\$18,750	\$32,500	\$38,750
Hourly	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Waitstaff	\$3	\$4	\$5
Host	\$7	\$8	\$10
Bartender	\$5	\$6	\$8
Barback	\$6	\$6	\$7
Busser	\$5	\$6	\$7
Cashier	\$8	\$8	\$8
Line Server	\$8	\$9	\$9
Delivery	\$5	\$5	\$6
Sous Chef	\$12	\$14	\$15
Line Cook	\$9	\$10	\$12
Prep/Pantry	\$8	\$9	\$10
Dishwasher	\$7	\$7	\$8

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## Pay Rates: Southern Region

Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia

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Pay Rate Survey - Southern Region			
Annual Salaries	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
General Manager	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$50,000
Chef/Kitchen Manager	\$25,000	\$36,000	\$40,000
Asst. Manager	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$35,500
Bookkeeper	\$6,000	\$15,000	\$23,750
Catering Director	\$18,500	\$25,000	\$31,500
Hourly	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Waitstaff	\$2	\$2	\$3
Host	\$6	\$7	\$8
Bartender	\$4	\$5	\$6
Barback	\$4	\$5	\$5
Busser	\$5	\$6	\$6
Cashier	\$6	\$7	\$7
Line Server	\$6	\$7	\$8
Delivery	\$5	\$6	\$8
Sous Chef	\$10	\$12	\$13
Line Cook	\$8	\$9	\$10
Prep/Pantry	\$8	\$8	\$9
Dishwasher	\$6	\$7	\$8

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## Pay Rates: Western Region

Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

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Pay Rate Survey - Western Region			
Annual Salaries	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
General Manager	\$32,000	\$45,000	\$60,000
Chef/Kitchen Manager	\$25,000	\$35,000	\$50,000
Asst. Manager	\$20,000	\$32,000	\$40,000
Bookkeeper	\$7,250	\$25,000	\$36,750
Catering Director	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$42,000
Hourly	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Waitstaff	\$4	\$6	\$7
Host	\$7	\$7	\$9
Bartender	\$6	\$7	\$8
Barback	\$6	\$7	\$8
Busser	\$6	\$6	\$7
Cashier	\$7	\$7	\$8
Line Server	\$7	\$8	\$9
Delivery	\$6	\$8	\$9
Sous Chef	\$11	\$12	\$15
Line Cook	\$9	\$10	\$11
Prep/Pantry	\$8	\$8	\$10
Dishwasher	\$7	\$7	\$8

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## Pay Rates: U.S. - Other

Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

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Pay Rate Survey - Other U.S.			
Annual Salaries	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
General Manager	\$47,500	\$51,000	\$54,000
Chef/Kitchen Manager	\$32,500	\$40,000	\$40,500
Asst. Manager	\$20,250	\$32,000	\$43,500
Bookkeeper	\$20,250	\$25,500	\$30,750
Catering Director	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000
Hourly	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Waitstaff	\$6	\$6	\$6
Host	\$7	\$7	\$8
Bartender	\$7	\$9	\$9
Barback	\$6	\$7	\$7
Busser	\$6	\$7	\$7
Cashier	\$8	\$9	\$9
Line Server	\$8	\$8	\$8
Delivery	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sous Chef	\$14	\$16	\$17
Line Cook	\$11	\$11	\$13
Prep/Pantry	\$9	\$9	\$10
Dishwasher	\$8	\$9	\$11

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## Survey Results: Labor Cost as a Percentage of Sales

Labor cost percentage is one of the most important measurements by which restaurateurs use to control costs. The following tables show the labor cost percentages reported by more than 500 respondents. The results have been divided into full service and limited service.

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Labor Cost as a Percentage of Sales			
Full Service	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Total Labor Cost (including benefits)	25%	31%	39%
Management	6%	9%	13%
Hourly - Front of House	5%	7%	10%
Hourly - Back of House	8%	11%	15%
Limited Service	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Total Labor Cost (including benefits)	22%	32%	38%
Management	7%	10%	15%
Hourly	15%	18%	23%

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## Staffing Levels By Position - Full Service Restaurants

The following table indicates the median # of staff employed by full service restaurants. The responses were grouped according to monthly sales volume.

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Median Staffing Levels - by Monthly Sales Volume					
Management	All Respondents	less than \$50,000	\$51,000 - \$100,000	\$101,000 - \$200,000	More than \$200,000
<a href="#">? # on staff</a>	3	2	3	4	5
<a href="#">? # of seats per</a>	44	40	46	50	40
<a href="#">? Monthly sales</a>	\$31,667	\$18,000	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$57,143
FOH-waitstaff	All Respondents	less than \$50,000	\$51,000 - \$100,000	\$101,000 - \$200,000	More than \$200,000
# on staff	10	5	9	15	24
# of seats per	12	16	13	11	9
Monthly sales per	\$8,333	\$6,000	\$9,286	\$9,167	\$14,667
FOH-bartenders	All Respondents	less than \$50,000	\$51,000 - \$100,000	\$101,000 - \$200,000	More than \$200,000
# on staff	3	3	3	4	6
# of seats per	43	37	50	43	43
Monthly sales per	\$33,333	\$12,500	\$30,000	\$39,500	\$57,143
FOH-host/hostess	All Respondents	less than \$50,000	\$51,000 - \$100,000	\$101,000 - \$200,000	More than \$200,000
# on staff	3	2	2	3	4.5
# of seats per	50	55	60	47	42
Monthly sales per	\$38,250	\$20,000	\$37,500	\$47,000	\$59,250
FOH-busser/barback	All Respondents	less than \$50,000	\$51,000 - \$100,000	\$101,000 - \$200,000	More than \$200,000
# on staff	3	2	2	3	8
# of seats per	50	51	60	43	30
Monthly sales per	\$37,250	\$22,500	\$33,333	\$45,625	\$40,000
FOH-line servers	All Respondents	less than \$50,000	\$51,000 - \$100,000	\$101,000 - \$200,000	More than \$200,000
# on staff	3	3	2	4	5.5
# of seats per	50	18	65	70	41
Monthly sales per	\$46,833	\$10,000	\$43,500	\$50,000	\$66,111

<b>FOH-cashier</b>	<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>less than \$50,000</b>	<b>\$51,000 - \$100,000</b>	<b>\$101,000 - \$200,000</b>	<b>More than \$200,000</b>
<b># on staff</b>	2	1.5	2	2	2.5
<b># of seats per</b>	60	65	60	82	55
<b>Monthly sales per</b>	\$50,000	\$24,500	\$45,000	\$75,000	\$112,500
<b>FOH-delivery</b>	<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>less than \$50,000</b>	<b>\$51,000 - \$100,000</b>	<b>\$101,000 - \$200,000</b>	<b>More than \$200,000</b>
<b># on staff</b>	2	1.5	2	2.5	3
<b># of seats per</b>	58	45	90	53	128
<b>Monthly sales per</b>	\$48,333	\$27,750	\$41,750	\$60,833	\$125,000
<b>BOH-Sous chef</b>	<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>less than \$50,000</b>	<b>\$51,000 - \$100,000</b>	<b>\$101,000 - \$200,000</b>	<b>More than \$200,000</b>
<b># on staff</b>	1	1	1	1	2
<b># of seats per</b>	85	75	85	100	98
<b>Monthly sales per</b>	\$70,000	\$30,000	\$65,000	\$110,000	\$168,333
<b>BOH-line cook</b>	<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>less than \$50,000</b>	<b>\$51,000 - \$100,000</b>	<b>\$101,000 - \$200,000</b>	<b>More than \$200,000</b>
<b># on staff</b>	4	2.5	4	6	9
<b># of seats per</b>	28	32	30	26	21
<b>Monthly sales per</b>	\$20,000	\$11,583	\$20,000	\$22,729	\$35,000
<b>BOH-prep/pantry</b>	<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>less than \$50,000</b>	<b>\$51,000 - \$100,000</b>	<b>\$101,000 - \$200,000</b>	<b>More than \$200,000</b>
<b># on staff</b>	2	1	2	3	4
<b># of seats per</b>	64	64	72	62	50
<b>Monthly sales per</b>	\$47,750	\$25,000	\$47,500	\$55,167	\$74,167
<b>BOH-dishwasher</b>	<b>All Respondents</b>	<b>less than \$50,000</b>	<b>\$51,000 - \$100,000</b>	<b>\$101,000 - \$200,000</b>	<b>More than \$200,000</b>
<b># on staff</b>	3	2	3	4	4
<b># of seats per</b>	47	40	48	50	50
<b>Monthly sales per</b>	\$33,333	\$16,667	\$30,000	\$44,500	\$78,333

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## General Manager, Chef, and Kitchen Manager Salaries By Service Type

Several factors influence the pay scale for general managers, chefs, and kitchen managers. The table below reflect salary ranges based on service type and number of seats.

Geography also has a large influence on pay scales. To view pay rates by geographic region [click here](#).

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General Manager Cost as a Percentage of Sales			
Service Type	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
All Respondents	2.6%	4.0%	6.1%
Full Service (less than 100 seats)	4.2%	5.6%	8.3%
Full Service (100-199 seats)	2.6%	3.3%	5.1%
Full Service (200 or more seats)	1.9%	2.5%	3.1%
Limited Service	4.1%	5.6%	7.3%

General Manager Salaries By Service Type			
Service Type	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
All Respondents	\$30,000	\$42,000	\$55,000
Full Service (less than 100 seats)	\$25,000	\$34,000	\$50,000
Full Service (100-199 seats)	\$35,000	\$45,000	\$53,500
Full Service (200 or more seats)	\$45,000	\$60,000	\$70,000
Limited Service	\$29,250	\$35,000	\$45,000

Chef and Kitchen Manager Salaries By Service Type			
Service Type	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
All Respondents	\$26,750	\$36,000	\$45,000
Full Service (less than 100 seats)	\$25,000	\$32,000	\$42,500
Full Service (100-199 seats)	\$28,000	\$36,000	\$45,000
Full Service (200 or more seats)	\$35,750	\$40,000	\$49,750
Limited Service	\$24,000	\$30,000	\$41,000

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