

Executive compensation review

This document includes three categories of comparables for executive compensation at GiveWell, and a proposal for raising the salary of Elie Hassenfeld, GiveWell's Executive Director:

- **Foundations:** Private data drawn from a compensation survey of 131 foundations (2016 data)
- **Research not--for--profits:** Public data from the 990s of nine not-for-profit organizations conducting research and charity evaluation (2017 or 2018 data)
- **Academics:** Economics professors at the University of California, Berkeley (2016 data).
- **Open Philanthropy Project:** Open Philanthropy Project compensation information.

Compensation proposal: We propose total cash compensation of \$278,750 in addition to health insurance coverage of \$29,130. (GiveWell covers the full health insurance premiums for staff, their partners and all dependents)

Foundations

Note that we did not update this data for 2019. A manual spot check of several of the charities from this 2016 survey demonstrated that salaries have gone up but we did not feel there was a compelling enough reason to investigate the remaining charities or use the updated data. Below, we use the same data we showed last year: 2016 compensation data for foundations.

We have private data from a 2016 survey of 131 foundations by Lasnik--Broida Consultants, Inc. in collaboration with The Croner Company. Below is aggregate information about total compensation for CEOs among foundations with 16-50 employees.

CEO Compensation at Foundations with 16-50 employees (n = 52)			
	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>
Base pay	\$378,000	\$427,500	\$529,900
Total compensation	\$449,000	\$504,900	\$649,600

And here is the aggregate information about total compensation for CEOs among foundations with more than \$1.5 billion in assets.

CEO Compensation at Foundations with more than \$1.5 billion in assets (n = 36, overlaps with above)			
	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>

Base pay	\$561,000	\$671,500	\$763,100
Total compensation	\$675,600	\$781,100	\$981,500

Notes:

- None of these data are not adjusted for cost-of-living, although most of the foundations are based in large American cities.
- The 36 foundations surveyed with \$1.5 billion in assets or more had a median grants payout of \$124 million. We chose this tier because its median payout was the closest to GiveWell's money moved. GiveWell's estimate of total money directed to charities in 2017 is \$149,153,078.¹ The next tier down in the compensation survey we relied on had a median annual grants payout of \$32 million.

Research not-for-profits

In July 2019, we pulled the most recent available staff compensation information from nine research or charity-review-oriented not-for-profits: Innovations for Poverty Action, IDinsight, Evidence Action, Center for Global Development, Center for Effective Philanthropy, Urban Institute, Guidestar, Charity Navigator, and Results for Development.

Here are the summary statistics for the salaries of the president, CEO, or Executive Director at those organizations according to their 2017 or 2018 990s²:

Compensation for Presidents and/or CEOs at 9 orgs from 2017 or 2018 990s			
	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>
Base pay	\$200,524	\$238,499	\$426,172
Total compensation	\$214,198	\$269,159	\$427,547

Notes:

- We have not adjusted for cost-of-living.
- Details of this data are available in [Exhibit A](#).

Academics

Note that we did not update this section for 2019. Below is the same data we used in previous years.

We think that professors at UC Berkeley make for good comparisons because Berkeley is a well-regarded school (and therefore ought to give some indication of what sort of pay attracts

¹ Source: [GiveWell Metrics Report – 2017 Annual Review](#)

² Information for the Center for Effective Philanthropy and Charity Navigator is from 2018. All others are from 2017.

top tier intellectuals in a not-for-profit environment), is public (so salary information is publicly available), and is located in the Bay Area.

We believe that economics professors make the most appropriate comparison for Elie within this data set.

Below are summary statistics for the compensation of Berkeley economics professors in 2016.

Compensation for UC Berkeley economics professors in 2016 (n = 44)			
	<i>25th percentile</i>	<i>50th percentile</i>	<i>75th percentile</i>
Base pay	\$165,725	\$250,648	\$287,940
Total compensation	\$206,405	\$308,025	\$347,620

There were nine professors who received their BAs in 2004 or later (the year Elie graduated from college):

BA year	Gross Pay
2010	\$192,310
2010	\$204,869
2009	\$206,917
2008	\$204,721
2006	\$191,475
2005	\$195,633
2004	\$195,800
2004	\$227,380
2004	\$219,448

Note that professors typically have ~3 months per year, and ~1 day per week during the remaining months, for pursuing side engagements, including paid ones. Elie works full-time at GiveWell.

Open Philanthropy compensation

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Compensation proposal

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