

2025 Public Procurement Compensation and Retention Report

Key Findings

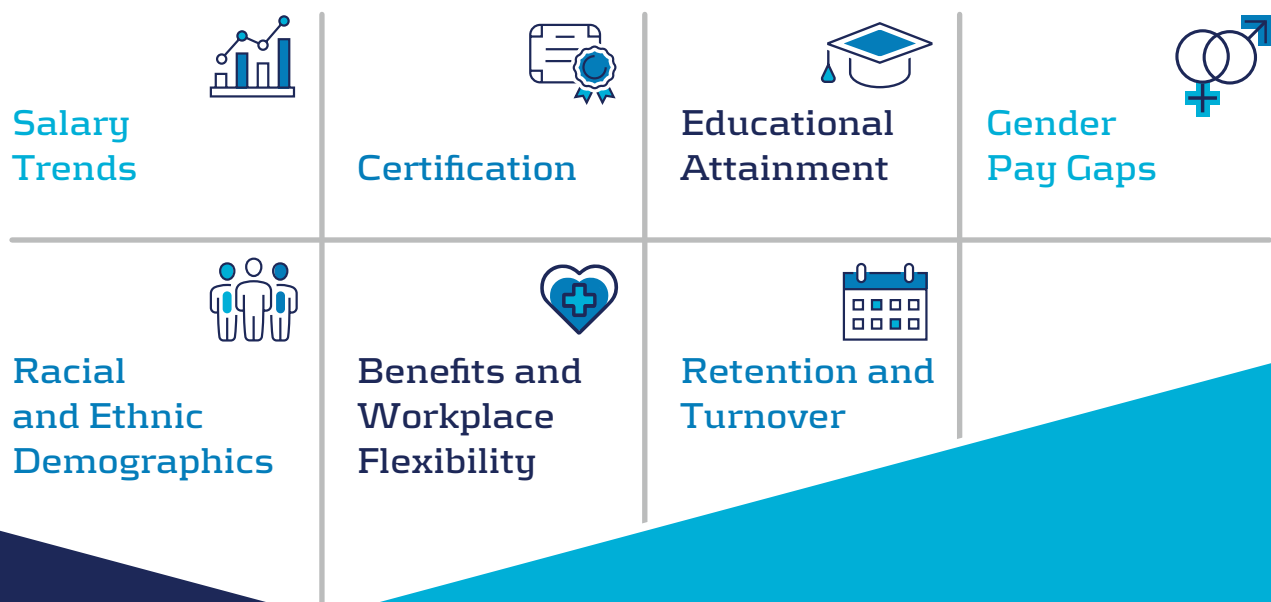


Introduction

The 2025 NIGP Compensation and Retention Survey and Report represents the eleventh installment of NIGP's long-standing effort to provide an authoritative and comprehensive examination of compensation, certification, educational attainment, demographics, and retention in the public procurement profession. Since its inception in 2003, this survey has become an essential tool for understanding trends and benchmarking across the field. Authored by Dr. Mohamad G. Alkadry of the University of Connecticut, the 2025 edition continues this tradition, drawing from both individual and agency-level survey data. This dual approach ensures that the findings capture both the perspectives of procurement professionals and the institutional realities shaping compensation and retention across government entities of all sizes and types.

In this report, responses were solicited from approximately 11,000 NIGP professionals, of whom 3,110 responded, and of which 2,545 were deemed usable for analysis. These responses span the breadth of the public procurement landscape, including federal, state, and local governments, as well as specialized entities such as utilities, school districts, and counties. Importantly, since 2020, the survey has merged individual-level and agency-level datasets, providing a richer and more integrated picture of the profession.

The key findings of this report are organized into seven major themes: salary trends, certification, educational attainment, gender pay gaps, racial and ethnic demographics, benefits and workplace flexibility, and retention/turnover. Each theme reveals both progress and persistent challenges, underscoring the dynamic nature of the public procurement field in the face of shifting workforce expectations, demographic changes, and evolving organizational needs.



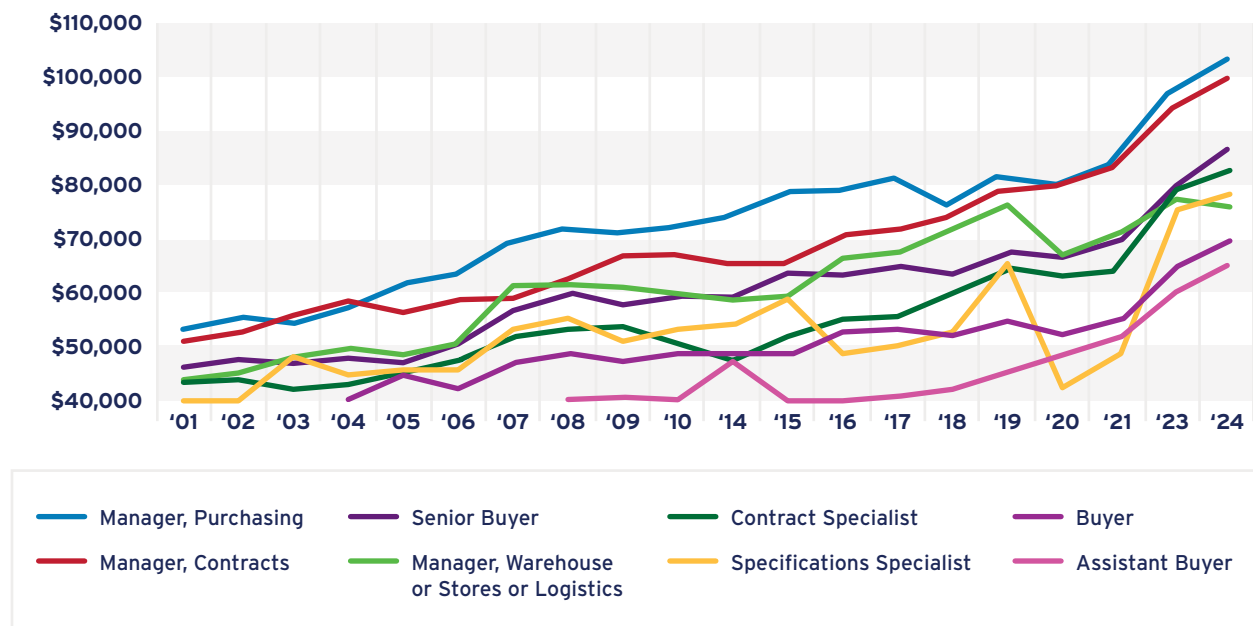


Salary Trends

A Two-Decade Trajectory of Growth

The trajectory of salary growth across procurement positions from 2001 through 2024 illustrates the profession's steady advancement and growing recognition of its strategic importance within government. Over this period, salaries across virtually all roles rose significantly, reflecting both inflationary adjustments and the increasing professionalization of procurement functions.

Salary Trend for Professional Ranks



Assistant Buyers, often among the entry-level positions in the profession, experienced the largest relative salary increase at an impressive 110% since 2001. This growth suggests both an effort to ensure competitive entry-level wages and a recognition of the pivotal role that these professionals play in supporting procurement operations. Buyers and Senior Buyers also experienced substantial increases, with salaries growing by 89% and 88%, respectively. These increases demonstrate how mid-level professionals have benefited from the heightened value placed on procurement expertise.

The overall average salary across all positions in 2024 was \$93,312, an increase from \$87,055 in 2023. This year-over-year growth highlights the continued momentum of salary adjustments even within a relatively short time frame. Such growth not only reflects market dynamics but also signals organizational commitments to attracting and retaining skilled professionals in a competitive labor market.

These salary trends collectively point to a profession that has experienced substantial upward mobility over two decades. They also suggest that procurement is increasingly being recognized as a strategic function within government, rather than merely a transactional or administrative role.



Certification

Building Professional Identity and Standards

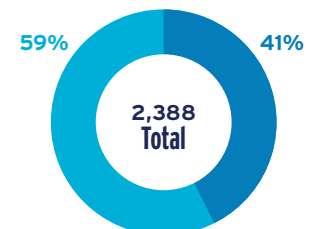
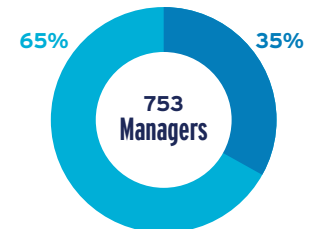
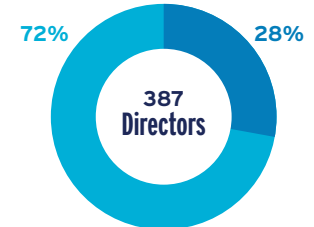
One of the defining features of the public procurement profession is the emphasis placed on certifications, which serve as markers of professional identity, expertise, and commitment to ethical practice. The 2025 survey reveals that 58% of all respondents hold a procurement-specific certification. This majority presence of certified professionals underscores the centrality of continuing education and credentialing in the field.

The distribution of certifications varies by role. Directors report the highest rates, ranging between 60-75%, reflecting both the expectations of leadership and the likelihood of long-term investment in professional development. Managers follow closely, with certification rates of 56-65%, indicating strong participation at the mid-level. Among non-managerial professionals, certification remains robust though slightly lower: Senior Buyers report a 57% certification rate, Contract Specialists 54%, and Buyers 44% (Report, p. 20).

	Does Not Hold Certifications	Holds Certification	Total
Director, Materials Management	40%	60%	30
Director, Purchasing and XX	31%	69%	122
Director, Purchasing	25%	75%	235
Manager, Purchasing)	35%	65%	610
Manager, Contracts	36%	64%	127
Manager, Warehouse or Stores or Logistics	44%	56%	16
Senior Buyer/Contracting Officer	43%	57%	448
Buyer	56%	44%	504
Specifications specialist	78%	22%	18
Contract specialist	46%	54%	252
Assistant buyer	54%	46%	26
Stores Technician	50%	50%	2
Receiving Technician	0%	100%	1
Fixed Assets Technician	0%	100%	1
Expediter	50%	50%	2
Administrative Assistant	66%	34%	29
Total	42%	58%	2,423

The consistent rise of certification over time signals an ongoing professionalization of the field. Certifications not only validate technical expertise but also communicate a shared set of values and standards across the profession. They serve as a unifying thread across diverse government entities, enabling procurement professionals to benchmark themselves against national standards while also strengthening mobility within the profession.

The findings suggest that organizations are increasingly valuing certification in recruitment and promotion decisions, further incentivizing individuals to pursue credentials as part of their career trajectory.



■ Does Not Hold Certifications
■ Holds Certification

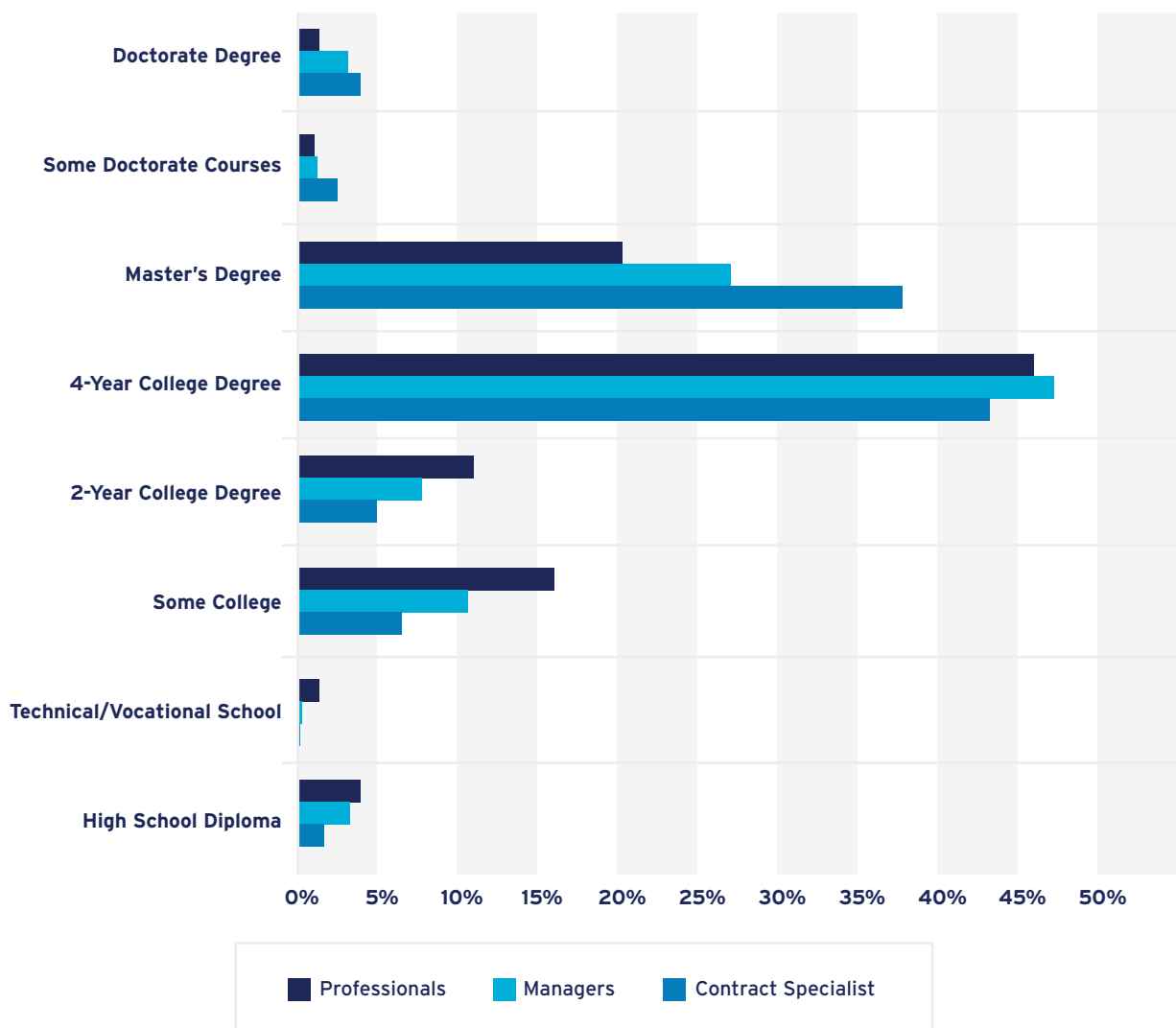


Educational Attainment

High Standards Across the Profession

Education appears to play a major factor in public procurement as well. We looked at educational attainment of directors, managers and professionals like buyers, senior buyers and contract specialists. Overall, about 75% of respondents have a four-year or higher degree (87% of directors, 79% of managers and 69% of professionals), and 38% of directors, 27% of managers and 20% of professionals held a master's degree or higher. As can be expected, degrees are most common for managers and directors, and it becomes more critical as professionals become managers or directors.

Educational Attainment of Public Procurement Professionals



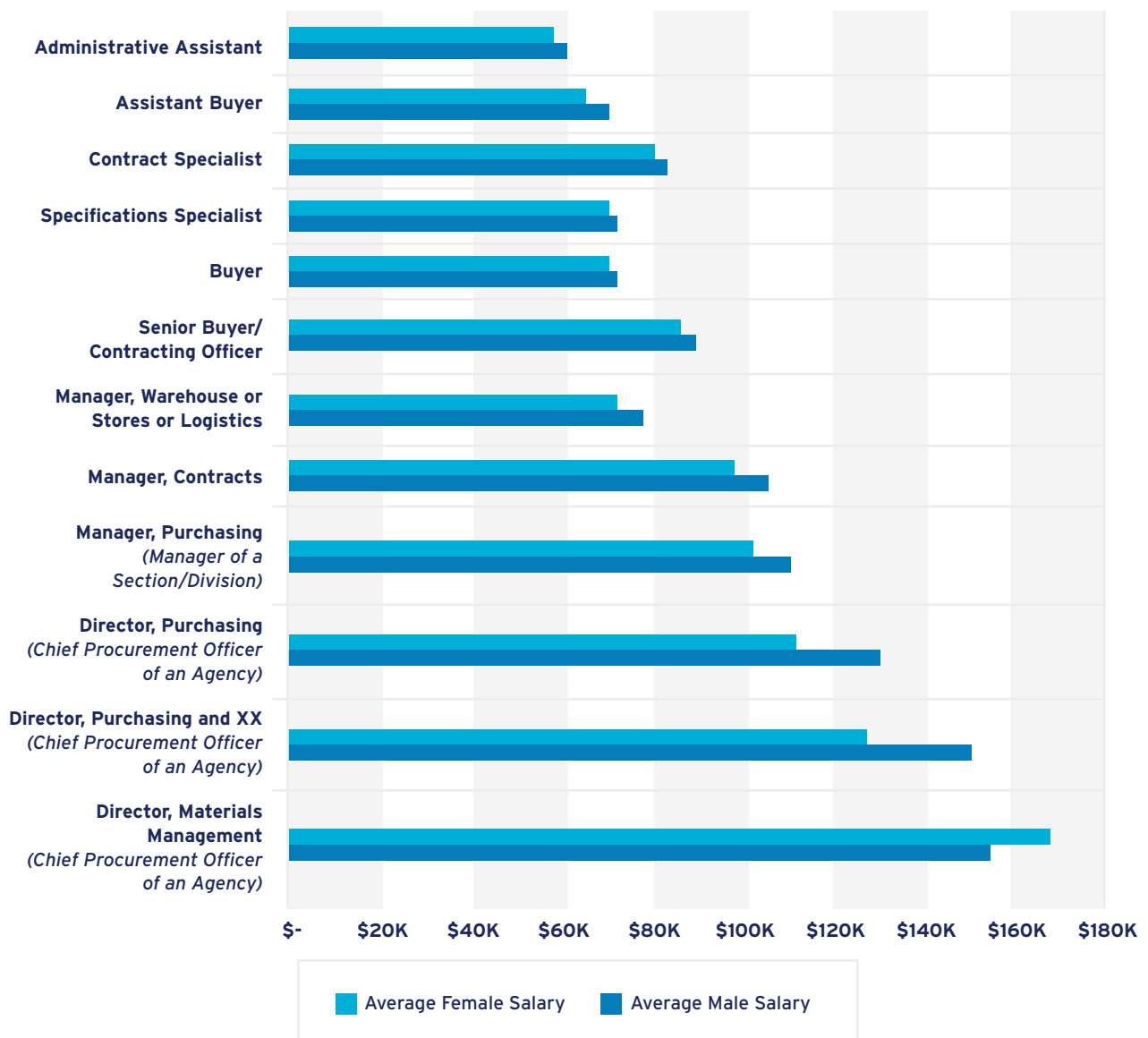


Gender Pay Gaps

Progress and Persistent Inequities

Despite progress in professionalization, gender-based pay disparities remain an enduring feature of the procurement landscape. The 2025 survey reveals that women earn, on average, \$11,704 less than men, equating to 88% of male earnings. This overall gap reflects structural inequities that, while narrowing over time, remain consequential for career advancement and economic security.

When examining position-specific data, disparities become more nuanced. For example, women serving as Director, Purchasing and XX earn 84% of what their male counterparts earn. Similarly, women in the role of Director, Purchasing earn 86% of male counterparts. These disparities at senior levels are particularly concerning, as they reflect gaps at the highest ranks of the profession where leadership responsibilities and compensation stakes are greatest.



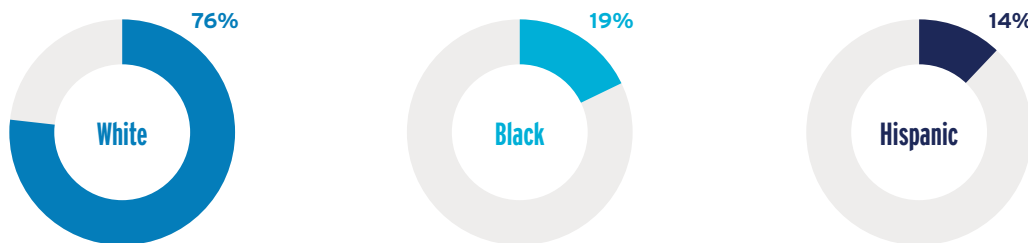
Notably, there are exceptions to this trend. Female Directors of Materials actually earn more than their male counterparts, at 109% of male salaries. This suggests that in certain specialized areas, women have achieved not only parity but advantage, though such cases remain rare.

Overall, while the data reveal incremental progress toward gender pay equity, they also underscore the persistence of disparities that require continued organizational attention. Strategies such as pay equity audits, transparent promotion processes, and targeted mentoring programs may help to close these gaps further.

Racial and Ethnic Demographics

Gradual Shifts in Representation

The racial and ethnic composition of the procurement profession reflects broader societal patterns while also revealing gradual shifts toward increased diversity. In the 2025 survey, respondents identified as 76% White, 19% Black, and 14% Hispanic. Compared to prior surveys, these figures represent slight increases in minority representation, suggesting a slow but positive trend toward greater inclusivity.



While these increases are encouraging, the data also highlight the continued predominance of White professionals within procurement. To build a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the communities it serves, further efforts may be needed in outreach, recruitment, and career advancement pathways for underrepresented groups.

As procurement increasingly intersects with issues of equity and community engagement, representation within the profession becomes even more critical. Diverse perspectives enhance organizational decision-making and strengthen the legitimacy of procurement processes, particularly in contexts where contracting and vendor relationships directly affect community outcomes.



Benefits and Workplace Flexibility

Supporting Retention and Engagement

The survey results make clear that compensation is only one dimension of workforce satisfaction; benefits and flexibility are equally critical in shaping retention and engagement. Nearly all respondents—over 99%—report receiving employer-sponsored retirement and health benefits. These benefits serve as foundational supports that distinguish public sector employment from many private sector alternatives.

In addition to retirement and health benefits, 91% of respondents report access to disability insurance, and 93% have flexible work options. Flexibility, in particular, has become an essential component of workplace satisfaction in the post-pandemic era, enabling employees to balance professional and personal responsibilities more effectively.

Childcare support, reported by more than 25% of respondents, represents another important dimension of employee benefits. While not universally available, this support can significantly influence the ability of employees—particularly women and caregivers—to remain engaged and committed to their roles.

The breadth of these benefits highlights the competitive advantage that public sector organizations hold in attracting and retaining talent. At the same time, the variations in access to certain supports, such as childcare, suggest areas where organizations may expand offerings to further strengthen workforce stability.





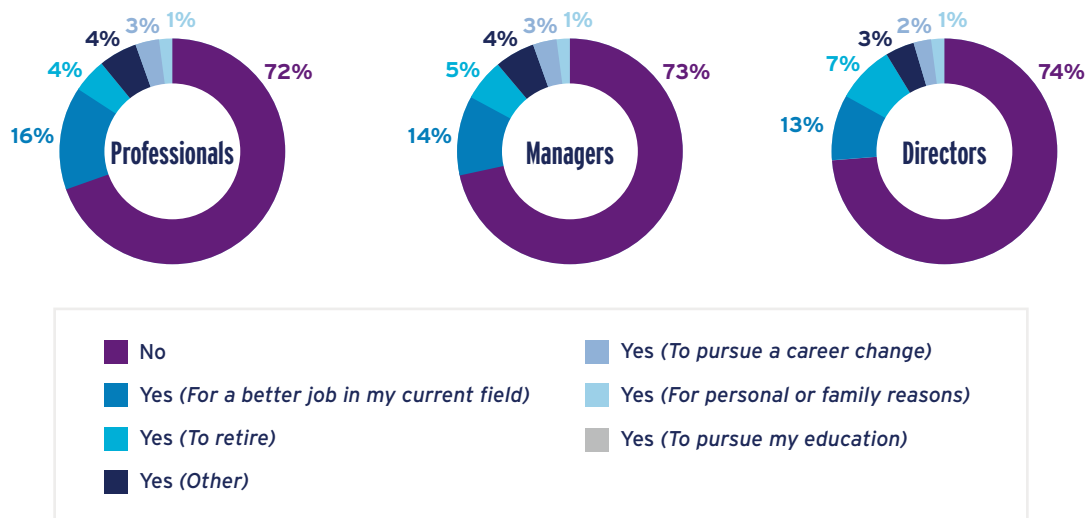
Retention and Turnover

Signs of Stability and Growth

Retention remains a central concern in public procurement, where workforce continuity directly influences organizational capacity and institutional knowledge. Encouragingly, the 2025 survey reveals positive trends in retention intent across roles.

Intent to stay in one's current role over the next 12 months has risen across the profession. Among Directors, 74% expressed intent to remain, up from 67% in 2022 (Report, p. 42). Managers reported 73% intent to stay, compared to 68% previously, while Professionals showed the most dramatic improvement, with 72% expressing intent to stay. This latter increase is particularly important, as professionals at the Buyer and Specialist levels often represent the pipeline for future leadership roles.

Intent to Stay in Current Role



These improvements suggest that a combination of competitive salaries, robust benefits, and greater workplace flexibility is contributing to enhanced retention. They also reflect the growing recognition of procurement as a rewarding and stable career path, offering both professional advancement and meaningful public service.



Conclusion

The 2025 NIGP Compensation and Retention Survey and Report provides a rich and detailed portrait of the public procurement profession at an important moment. Salaries have grown steadily across roles and certifications continue to shape professional identity. At the same time, gender and racial disparities highlight areas for continued progress, and robust benefits and improved retention rates point to the strengths of the profession.

Taken together, these findings depict a workforce that is increasingly professionalized, well-compensated, and engaged, yet still grappling with issues of equity and inclusion. For policymakers, agency leaders, and procurement professionals themselves, the data offer both affirmation of progress and a roadmap for future efforts to strengthen the profession.



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