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SALARY GUIDE 2026

HR & Recruiting

What HR and recruiting people are asking to be paid, why they're looking, where they'll work, and how to hire them before you need them.

$85K
Typical ask for an HR Generalist

34%
Are looking because of a layoff or company change

92%
Would work hybrid

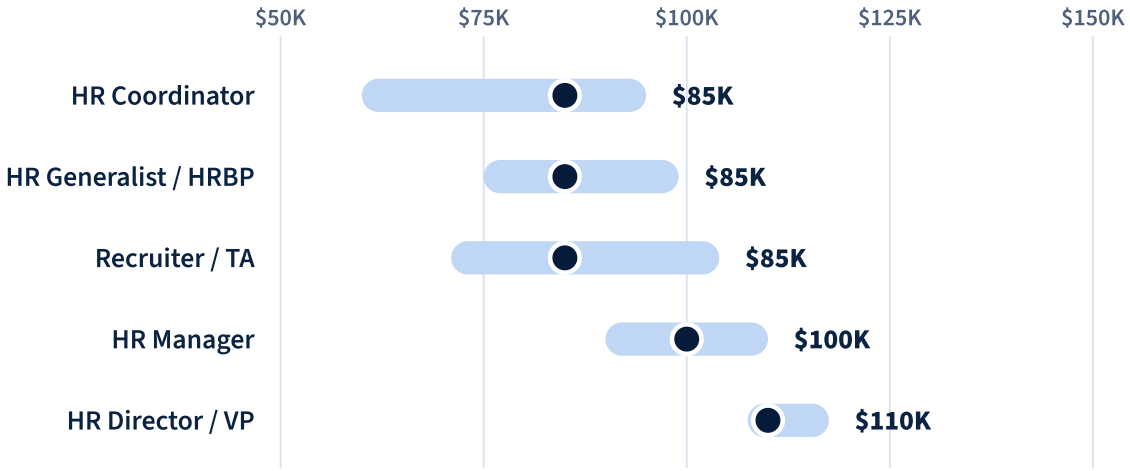
5%
Will only work remote

Built from 488 NorthPoint Search Group candidate questionnaires and job applications (January 2025 – October 2026) and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

PAY

What they're asking to be paid

Desired base salary, from 181 candidates who told us what they want in their next role. The bar is the middle half of answers. The dot is the typical ask (the median).



The lowest salary people say they'd accept sits close to what they ask for. An HR Manager asking $100K says the floor is about $100K. There isn't much room to come in low.

TITLE	ANSWERS	MIDDLE HALF	TYPICAL ASK	LOWEST THEY'D TAKE
HR Coordinator / Specialist	13	$60K – $95K	**$85K**	$75K
HR Generalist / Business Partner	98	$75K – $99K	**$85K**	—
Recruiter / Talent Acquisition	30	$71K – $104K	**$85K**	$70K
HR Manager	33	$90K – $110K	**$100K**	$100K
HR Director / VP	7	$107.5K – $117.5K	**$110K**	—

Government numbers for comparison

Median annual pay, metro Atlanta, May 2025 (BLS). These include every experience level, so they can run lower than what experienced candidates ask for.

Human resources managers	**$161,250**
Human resources specialists (incl. recruiters)	**$75,410**
Training and development specialists	**$71,330**
Compensation and benefits specialists	**$70,390**

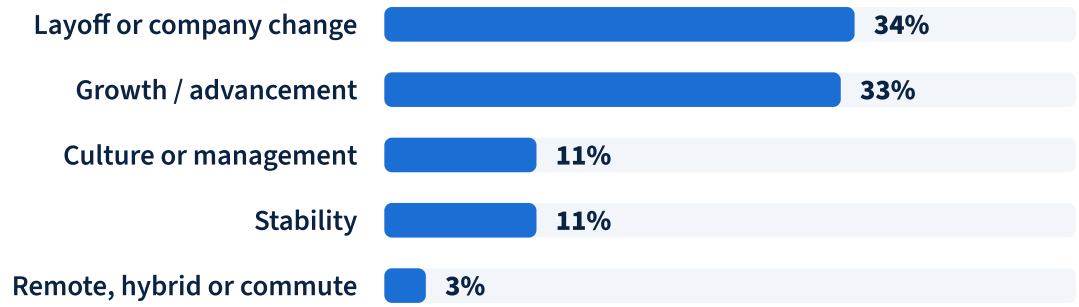
How to read this

Asking pay is base salary only, before bonus and benefits. Titles with fewer than 5 answers aren't shown. About 44% of candidates who gave a location are in Georgia; the rest are spread across the U.S.

WHY THEY MOVE

Layoffs put good people on the market

Why they're looking, from 212 candidates who answered in their own words.
Many gave more than one reason, so the bars add up to more than 100%.

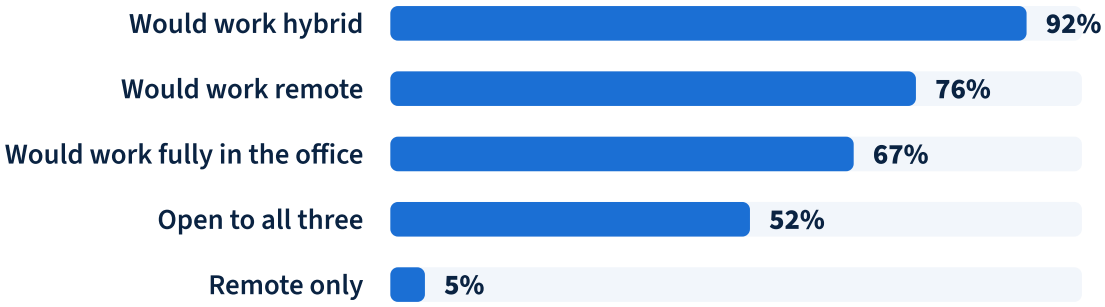


34% are on the market because of a layoff or a change at their company. Pay barely comes up. Another 33% want growth or a next step.

WHERE THEY'LL WORK

Hybrid works for almost everyone

From 236 candidates. They could pick every setup they'd accept.

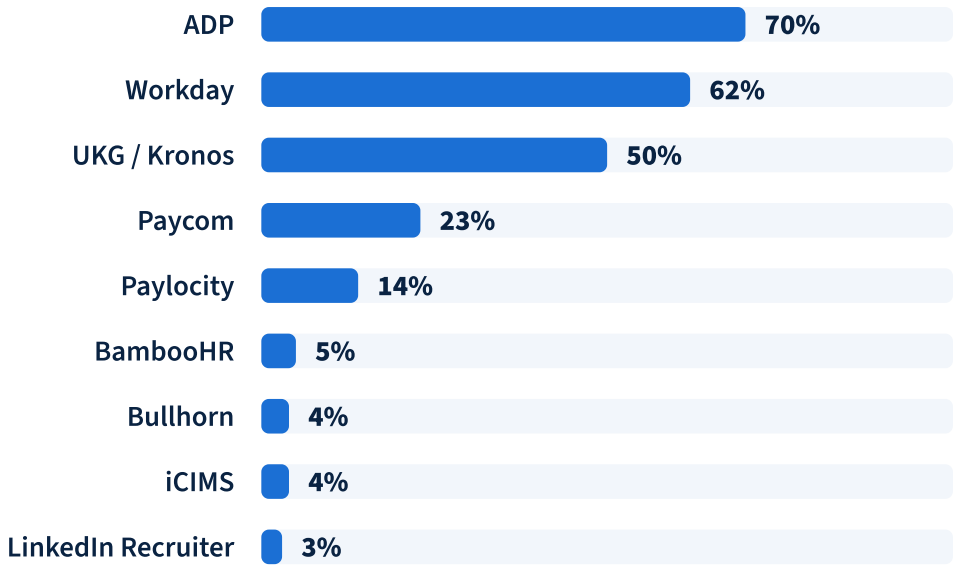


92% would work hybrid and 67% would work fully in the office. Only 5% will only work remote. You don't need a fully remote job to compete.

SYSTEMS

The software they know

HR, payroll and recruiting systems named by 195 candidates. Many know more than one.



ADP is the most common: 70% know it. Workday and UKG / Kronos follow at 62% and 50%. If you run something else, ask about it in your screening questions.

TURNOVER

How often people leave

Departures per 100 jobs in a year (all separations, 2025), from the BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey.

How long people stay

Median years with their current employer, January 2026 (BLS).

Management (incl. HR directors)	**6.1 years**
Business and financial operations (incl. HR and recruiters)	**4.6 years**
All occupations	**4.1 years**

What that means for a team of 10

At professional and business services employers, a 10-person HR team sees 5 or 6 departures a year. At the average private employer it's about 4. Either way, most of those openings are predictable.

A year is 12 times the average monthly rate. It counts departures, so one seat can turn over more than once.

WHAT TO DO

Five ways to hire better this year

1. **Price to the ask.**
   Put the middle-half range for the role in your job post. Candidates' floor is close to their ask, so low offers lose people.

2. **Move fast.**
   34% are looking because of a layoff or a change at their company. Good people are on the market now, and they won't be for long.

3. **Offer hybrid.**
   92% will work hybrid. Only 5% insist on remote.

4. **Screen for your system.**
   Ask about your HRIS and payroll system up front. Train the rest.

5. **Build the bench before you need it.**
   Turnover is predictable. Keep a short list of ready people behind every seat so the next resignation is a phone call, not a crisis.

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METHOD AND SOURCES

Pay, reasons, work setup and software come from screening questionnaires and job applications that candidates completed for NorthPoint Search Group between January 24, 2025 and October 1, 2026: 488 people, newest form per person. Pay figures are desired base salary for the titles shown; the middle half is the 25th to 75th percentile, rounded to $500. Groups with fewer than 5 answers are left out, and no individual answer is shown.

- BLS Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, 2025 annual averages (released March 13, 2026), Tables 20 and 22.
- BLS Employee Tenure, median years with current employer by occupation, January 2026, Table 6.
- BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, May 2025, Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA.