

Compensation & Benefits Survey

OF THE DIETETICS PROFESSION



2024

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ISBN 978-0-88091-241-9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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Preface

Over the years, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (the Academy, formerly the American Dietetic Association) has received many requests from members for objective, reliable information about industry norms for pay and benefit levels for the nutrition/dietetics profession. Database surveys have been periodically conducted, providing generalized salary information for the major nutrition/dietetics practice areas. However, many wanted more specific information, and the concept of a salary survey by specific job title was suggested by members at the association's Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo™ in St. Louis, Missouri, in October 2001. A Salary Survey Work Group was formed shortly thereafter, with the Group's work culminating in the first Compensation & Benefits Survey, mailed in summer 2002. The ensuing report provided the most authoritative source ever for data on salaries, benefits, and work settings for core jobs in nutrition/dietetics.

To continue to provide this valuable resource to the profession, the Academy and Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) have funded updates of that original extensive survey in alternate years from 2005 to 2021 and most recently in 2024. To make this valuable resource even more accessible to practitioners, this full edition is available for purchase and download at www.eatrightPRO.org/salariesurvey (free to Academy members, for purchase to nonmembers). The package includes access to interactive salary calculation worksheets for both Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) and Nutrition and Dietetics Technicians, Registered (NDTRs), offering users an estimation of what practitioners with similar characteristics and similar situations earn, on average.

Current plans are for this survey to be conducted on a biennial basis. This authoritative source of data on salaries, benefits, and work settings will be an asset to practitioners and their employers in all major nutrition/dietetics practice settings, in addition to providing reference material for self-employed practitioners.

Acknowledgments

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics wishes to thank the 5,652 Academy members and nutrition/dietetics practitioners who responded to the *Compensation & Benefits Survey of the Dietetics Profession 2024*.

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1. Executive Summary

Continuing to serve the profession's needs, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics ("the Academy") has completed the eleventh administration of the landmark survey on compensation and benefits in the nutrition/dietetics profession that was first executed in 2002.

Methodology

The 2024 survey was conducted across a probability sample drawn from the population of domestic Academy members (N = 39,904) plus domestic nonmembers (N = 74,571) maintaining current registration as an RDN (Registered Dietitian Nutritionist or Registered Dietitian) or NDTR (Nutrition and Dietetics Technician, Registered or Dietetic Technician, Registered). To preserve confidentiality of response, an outside research firm was contracted to collect survey data via the Internet. Data was collected from March 11 through April 18, 2024.

The 2024 survey carries forward a key feature of prior efforts, presenting results not only at the level of registration (RDN, NDTR) or in the context of various practice areas, but also in terms of the specific jobs (including nontraditional jobs) nutrition/dietetics practitioners hold. Compensation data are thus now available for the specific jobs that account for an estimated 93% of employment in the field.

A total of 5,652 usable responses were received from the sample of 46,646 professionals – a 12% response rate.

Because the survey sample was stratified by registration type (RDN versus NDTR), Academy membership status (member versus nonmember), and by availability of email address (to determine the contact method for the survey), results have been weighted in tabulation to accurately reflect true population proportions.

Nutrition/Dietetics Employment

Twelve percent of respondents reported they are not currently employed or self-employed in a nutrition/dietetics-related position. Most survey

results are based on the 88% of respondents who indicated they are currently working in the field – "practitioners."

Practitioner Profile

Ninety-four percent of practitioners identify as female. Median age of practitioners is 40. Nineteen percent are 55 or older, while 32% are under 35. Seven percent indicated Hispanic heritage, and 9% indicated a race other than White (5% Asian, 2% Black/African American, and 1% American Indian or Alaska Native).

Fifty-seven percent of practicing RDNs hold master's degrees, and 4% doctoral degrees, as their highest level of attainment. Fifty-nine percent of practicing NDTRs hold a bachelor's degree or higher.

Thirty-six percent of practicing RDNs are members of the Academy, as are 23% of practicing NDTRs. Thirty-six percent of RDNs and 2% of NDTRs reported holding a state license/certification (not required in all states). Twenty-nine percent of RDNs and 14% of NDTRs hold one or more of the specialty certifications asked about (e.g., CDCES, CNSC, CDM, CFFP).

The typical (median) RDN practitioner has 12 years of work experience in nutrition/dietetics (excluding time taken off to return to school, raise a family, or work in other areas). The typical NDTR practitioner also has 12 years of work experience in nutrition/dietetics.

Employers

Eight percent of practitioners are self-employed (8% of RDNs and 2% of NDTRs); 37% work for a for-profit firm, 40% for a non-profit (other than government), 14% for the government (other than military), and less than 1% for the military.

The most common work settings for RDNs are inpatient acute-care facilities (24%) and ambulatory/outpatient care facilities (e.g., clinics, physician offices, etc.) (22%), followed

by social services/public health organizations (8%).

The majority of NDTRs work in one of three settings: inpatient acute-care facilities (31%), social services and public health organizations (18%), or long-term care facilities (16%).

Positions Held

Based on their selection of one most closely matching core position, nutrition/dietetics practitioners are employed or self-employed across a variety of primary practice areas:

Practice Area of Primary Position	RDNs	NDTRs
clinical nutrition – acute care/inpatient	42%	42%
clinical nutrition – ambulatory care	17%	1%
clinical nutrition – long term care	5%	8%
community and public health	7%	21%
management and executive leadership	10%	14%
consultation, business & industry, entrepreneur	8%	3%
education and research	5%	1%

Among RDN practitioners, the positions most commonly held include Clinical Dietitian (19%), Clinical Dietitian, Specialist – Renal (6%), and Outpatient Dietitian, General (6%).

Among NDTR practitioners, the positions most commonly held include Dietetic Technician, Clinical (41%), WIC Nutritionist (12%), Dietetic Technician, Long Term Care (6%), and Director of Food and Nutrition Services (5%).

Position Characteristics

Six percent of practicing RDNs and 3% of NDTRs indicated they are owners or partners in their practices. Twenty-one percent of practitioners overall are executives, directors, or managers, and another 15% are supervisors or coordinators.

Thirty-one percent of RDNs and 42% of NDTRs reported they directly or indirectly supervise employees. Twenty-two percent of RDNs and 29% of NDTRs reported managing a budget. Thirty percent of RDNs and 21% of NDTRs

characterized the majority of patients/clients they see as high nutritional risk.

The typical (median) practitioner has been in the reported position for five years.

RDN Compensation

Eighty-four percent of practicing RDNs reported working in their primary nutrition/dietetics-related position full-time and year-round. Because the prevalence of part-time employment can make salary comparisons difficult, compensation is reported in two ways: in terms of *hourly wage*, and in terms of *total cash compensation* (which includes not only salary but also earnings from bonuses, commissions, profit sharing, etc.). Hourly wage is assessed for all answering respondents; total cash compensation is examined only for those working full-time, year-round, and for at least one year in the position.

Among all practicing RDNs in all positions, the median hourly wage as of January 1, 2024 was \$37.98 per hour. If annualized ($\times 40$ hours/week $\times 52$ weeks/year), this equates to a full-time salary of approximately \$79,000 per year. Median total cash compensation for RDNs employed in the position full-time (year-round) for at least one year was \$80,400

As in prior surveys, these results are higher than the most current Dietitian and Nutritionist wage estimates published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). However, survey estimates are more current than that source, and BLS does not restrict its estimates to *registered* dietitians.

The 2024 median wage of \$37.98 per hour represents an increase from the 2021 median wage of \$33.65.

The range of RDN compensation is of interest:

	hourly wage	total cash
10th percentile (10% earn less)	\$28.32	\$60,000
25th percentile (25% earn less)	\$32.37	\$68,600
50th percentile (50% earn less)	\$37.98	\$80,400
75th percentile (75% earn less)	\$45.78	\$98,900
90th percentile (90% earn less)	\$56.41	\$124,900

Factors showing strong association with compensation levels for RDNs include number of years of experience, level of supervisory responsibility, budget responsibility, and practice area: community and inpatient positions tend to pay less, whereas management, education and research, and consultation/business positions tend to pay more.

NDTR Compensation

84% of NDTRs reported working in their primary nutrition/dietetics-related position full-time and year-round.

Among all practicing NDTRs in all positions, the median hourly wage as of January 1, 2024 was \$26.31 per hour; if annualized, this equates to a salary of approximately \$54,700 per year.

Median total cash compensation for NDTRs employed in the position full-time for at least one year was \$56,700.

The 2024 median wage of \$26.31 per hour (equating to \$54,700 annualized) represents an increase from the 2021 reported median of \$23.22.

NDTR compensation also spans a considerable range:

	hourly wage	total cash
10th percentile (10% earn less)	\$20.43	\$43,600
25th percentile (25% earn less)	\$23.38	\$50,000
50th percentile (50% earn less)	\$26.31	\$56,700
75th percentile (75% earn less)	\$33.05	\$70,500
90th percentile (90% earn less)	\$43.82	\$88,800

Factors showing strong association with compensation levels for NDTRs include number of years of experience, supervisory responsibility, and practice area.

Benefits

Nutrition/dietetics practitioners as a whole are offered a variety of benefits through their work:

	% offered
NET: any retirement benefit	86%
defined benefit plan (pension)	18%
defined contribution plan	81%
life insurance	80%
disability insurance (long- and/or short-term)	78%
accidental death & dismemberment AD&D)	70%
long-term care insurance	50%
business travel insurance	21%
high deductible medical insurance - for employees	69%
high deductible medical insurance - for dependents	68%
lower deductible medical insurance or managed care plan - for employees	74%
lower deductible medical insurance or managed care plan - for dependents	72%
dental insurance or group plan - for employees	83%
dental insurance or group plan - for dependents	80%
prescription drug benefit	73%
vision insurance or group plan	82%
healthcare reimbursement or flexible spending account	76%
retiree medical coverage	29%
NET: paid time off	86%
NET: benefits related to professional/career development	73%
NET: other benefits related to quality of work life	88%
NET indicates selection of one or more items in category	93%

Future Surveys

Current plans are for this survey to be conducted on a biennial basis. This authoritative source of data on salaries, benefits and work settings should prove to be an asset to practitioners and their employers in all major dietetics practice settings, as well as providing reference material for self-employed dietetics practitioners.