CAO SALARY & COMPENSATION SURVEY

Examines status of 2017 compensation for municipal and county chief administrative officers, including annual base salary, other benefits, and compensation decision making.

Median Annual Base Salary

- **$135,551**
  - All CAOs
  - 5.0% from 2016

- **$134,875**
  - Municipal CAOs
  - 6.5% from 2016

- **$145,986**
  - County CAOs
  - 0.5% from 2016

Male CAOs: $136,309
Female CAOs: $133,438

Gender pay gap among CAOs is 2.1% on average, female CAOs were paid 97.9 cents for every dollar earned by male CAOs in 2017.

Benefits most often calculated uniquely for CAOs

- 80.3% Relocation benefits
- 69.0% Car allowance
- 53.3% Housing allowance

Retirement Benefits Received

- **Defined benefit retirement/pension benefits**
  - 2016: 79.4%
  - 2017: 80.5%

- **457 Employer retirement contribution**
  - 2016: 52.8%
  - 2017: 50.6%

- **401(a) or 401(k) Defined contribution employer retirement benefit**
  - 2016: 42.0%
  - 2017: 40.5%

Compensation Decision Making and Transparency

- 96.4% of responding CAOs reported that all decisions regarding their compensation package are made by the entire governing body.
- Nearly 9 out of 10 responding CAOs (89.4%) have an employment agreement or contract, and are also eligible for severance pay (89.2%).
- 57.4% of responding CAOs have evergreen employment agreements and about 1/4 have their agreement posted on their local government's website.
- Compensation transparency is on the rise. More than half (57.3%) of respondents' base salary information is publicly accessible on their local government's website, which is an increase from the 2016 level of 49.7%.

All information is from ICMA’s 2017 CAO Salary and Compensation Survey. Download the survey report at https://icma.org/documents/2017-cao-salary-and-compensation-survey