

# 2026 INSTRUCTIONS

## NSAA Annual Wage & Salary Survey

For anyone new to the NSAA Salary Survey, this annual research effort seeks to identify and report on the wages for the 245 most frequently used jobs in the US Ski Industry.

When filling out the survey, resorts are asked to identify which survey positions most closely match the positions used at their resort. Then report their employees' wages grouped by the survey's positions.

**DEADLINE:** All data is required on or before **March 7, 2026**, so it can be compiled and analyzed for publication to the NSAA Membership in early May.

As in prior years, the NSAA offers significant savings for participating resorts. Participants will receive the survey at a discounted rate of \$250 from the non-participant rate of \$600.

When completed please submit your data electronically by emailing your completed spreadsheet to [survey2026@sierraresearchassociates.ski](mailto:survey2026@sierraresearchassociates.ski). Please note that your completed file should be returned as an email attachment (saved in MS Excel format) so it can be processed accurately.

**GETTING STARTED:** This year's survey can be downloaded either from the [Sierra Research Associates LLC](https://www.SierraResearchAssociates.com) website ([www.SierraResearchAssociates.com](https://www.SierraResearchAssociates.com)) or from the [NSAA](#) website in the Member Services section.

The general process is to begin by downloading and renaming the survey file. It is important you include in your file name your resort and 2026 (for example: "SnowWhiteSkiArea2026.xls"). Once renamed save the file and close it completely. Then reopen the file to begin your work.

Critical to completing the survey are key questions on employment and labor metrics. The submission workbook now has three worksheets: resort data, employment and labor data, and job data.

The resort data needed to complete the first worksheet includes your resort's name, a parent company name if appropriate, contact information for the person filling out the survey. Additionally you will need your resorts annual skier visits for the last complete season, and uphill lift capacity in visitors per hour. These metrics are absolutely kept confidential, but needed to correctly aggregate your resort's data with similar sized ski areas. Please include a good phone number in case we need to verify any information.

The Employee and Labor Data worksheet begins with current season employee counts and VISA usage. It includes fields for entering the employee retention percentage, which reflects the proportion of the current workforce returning from the previous year. Additionally, it covers open positions that have been approved but not yet filled, the use of volunteers, and the use of employee housing.

After completing resort and employment/labor worksheets you should begin entering job specific information on the job data worksheet that you will find next.

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For each resort position with employees, enter the average wage, highest wage, and lowest wage. Also, indicate how well your job description matches the survey description and whether the position is hourly or salaried. Leave fields blank if you have no employees in a position.

Last, you are asked to note whether the wage rate you are reporting is the base amount for the job or if any incentive pay has been factored in for the wages reported. Normally resorts report just the base wages paid for each position.

If you find it helpful this spreadsheet can be printed and used for data collection before entering it into your submission.

If after input of position data there are warnings in any of the yellow boxes to the left on the survey, please respond accordingly. When each worksheet is complete, the yellow boxes to the right should be blank with no warnings. “

The due date for resort submissions this year will be March 7<sup>th</sup> with the final Wage and Salary report being available (through the NSAA Member Services group) in early May. If you have any questions, please contact us for help and we will be happy to assist.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES AND INFORMATION:**

**REPORTING FIELDS:** The survey input sheet for job data includes the number of incumbents, average hourly wage rate, lowest paid incumbent rate, highest paid incumbent rate, and a score (match code) from one to five for the level your position matches the description presented.

Please make sure all fields are filled out for each position reported. If there is at least one incumbent in a job code, please fill in all the GREEN boxes in the relevant row with the hourly wage (including low, high & average wage based on actual incumbents). Also include number of incumbents in the relevant purple box. Please do not fill in jobs that are UNPAID or have NO incumbents. If there is just one incumbent, please fill in the same wage for low, high & average wage.

**MATCH CODES:** The match criteria are used to show how closely your position matches a theoretical industry norm for a position based on the description provided. You should code a position at your own resort that you determine to be a close match as a “3”. A position of much less responsibility than the description as a “1” and a position of much greater responsibility as a “5”. You may use “2” and “4” respectively when a job is like the norm but not a match.

**PAY RATES:** This is a survey of actual paid hourly rates for the Ski Resort Industry. Please ensure that all information is accurate and complete for your resort and reflects current wage and salary rates.

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**HOURLY VS SALARIED PAY AND BASE PA VS INCENTIVE PAY:** Please report all wages and salaries as an hourly rate. The survey includes input boxes for you to indicate whether a particular job is normally paid for on an hourly or salaried basis at your resort. There are dropdown values for H (hourly) and S (salaried) that should be set to the correct value.

An additional entry captures whether your resort is reporting more than a base pay amount for the wages reported. Input boxes are included for showing if a job's wage information is reported in Base Pay, or if other forms of compensation have been included in the calculation of the reported wages. There are drop down values for B (base pay only) and I (base pay plus incentive pay) that should be set to the correct value.

**PREVAILING WAGE:** This survey includes expanded job descriptions for fourteen positions (see red tab on excel workbook for the full descriptions). These positions have more comprehensive descriptions to allow the data to be used for Prevailing Wage determination by resorts requesting J1 Visas through the Department of Labor. In addition to being surveyed with NSAA Membership, these positions will also be surveyed with approximately 150 non-NSAA Member resorts across the United States. For resorts interested in assistance in Prevailing Wage determination help we can refer you to appropriate attorneys that specialize in this work.

**VISA INFORMATION:** The survey includes collecting information on the employment of international employees in one of the US VISA Programs (H2B, J1, O1, and Q Visas). Please be sure to take a moment and review the Resort Info Input sheet and enter these important categories of information.

**HELP:** Should you have questions on completing the survey you can email Sierra Research Associates at [help2025@sierraresearchassociates.ski](mailto:help2025@sierraresearchassociates.ski) and a member of our team will contact you normally within 24 hours.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** As in all past surveys, Sierra Research Associates will keep your data strictly confidential and use it for consolidated reporting only. Data will only be published when it can be consolidated with three or more reporting resorts for a given job and resort category. The survey includes a more comprehensive statement on confidentiality in the last spreadsheet on the right with the red tab. The information is provided here as well.

Confidentiality:

**"The survey data requested and collected from both individual ski areas, as well as ski areas as part of a broader corporation, will be maintained strictly confidential by Sierra Research Associates LLC and NSAA. This survey data will only be used as part of broader, aggregated data set of ski area information that is compiled, analyzed, and published for industry use, and evaluated on either a state, regional, or national basis, or by size or other categories of business operations. This aggregated data will be published in various NSAA research publications and the NSAA Journal magazine. Sierra Research Associates LLC is the only entity that will have access to resort-specific data, and only authorized employees of Sierra Research Associates LLC will be permitted to access this data; NSAA's staff, directors, members, agents or contractors, will not be permitted to access underlying, resort-specific data. Unless compelled by statute, regulation, law, or any court of competent jurisdiction, resort-specific survey data obtained from a ski area (or ski areas as part of a corporation) that names**

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or identifies that ski area or corporation will not be released in any way by NSAA or Sierra Research Associates LLC —whether to other ski areas, the media, the general public, other research organizations, parties involved in disputes or litigation, or any other individual or entity—without express written authorization and consent from the ski area or corporation.

If any outside entity seeks such survey data, NSAA and Sierra Research Associates LLC will require that person or entity to make a request or demand of such data directly to the individual ski area or corporation. NSAA and Sierra Research Associates LLC emphasize that maintaining strict confidentiality of this survey data is absolutely critical for encouraging and ensuring comprehensive participation in collecting this information, and NSAA and Sierra Research Associates LLC understand that without safeguarding this survey data, ski areas would be unwilling to participate in research that is fundamentally essential for industry analysis, comprehension, strategy, growth, and/or government advocacy for the ski industry and NSAA members. Without guaranteeing the confidentiality of this data, it would jeopardize our ability to obtain accurate and comprehensive data and impede the collection and analysis of such data for use in the ski industry's research and resulting publications.

Furthermore, individual ski areas or corporations may enter into separate confidentiality or data protection agreements with NSAA or Sierra Research Associates LLC that separately outlines the terms and conditions of the use of such survey data. If NSAA or Sierra Research Associates LLC receives a request or demand of survey data for an individual ski area or corporation, NSAA and/or Sierra Research Associates LLC will notify the ski area or corporation in writing as soon as possible."

Again, thank you for your participation in this year's survey.

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