



# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPENSATION TRENDS**

Presented by Bradley Ford

To the Texas Municipal Human Resources Association

5/8/2025

---



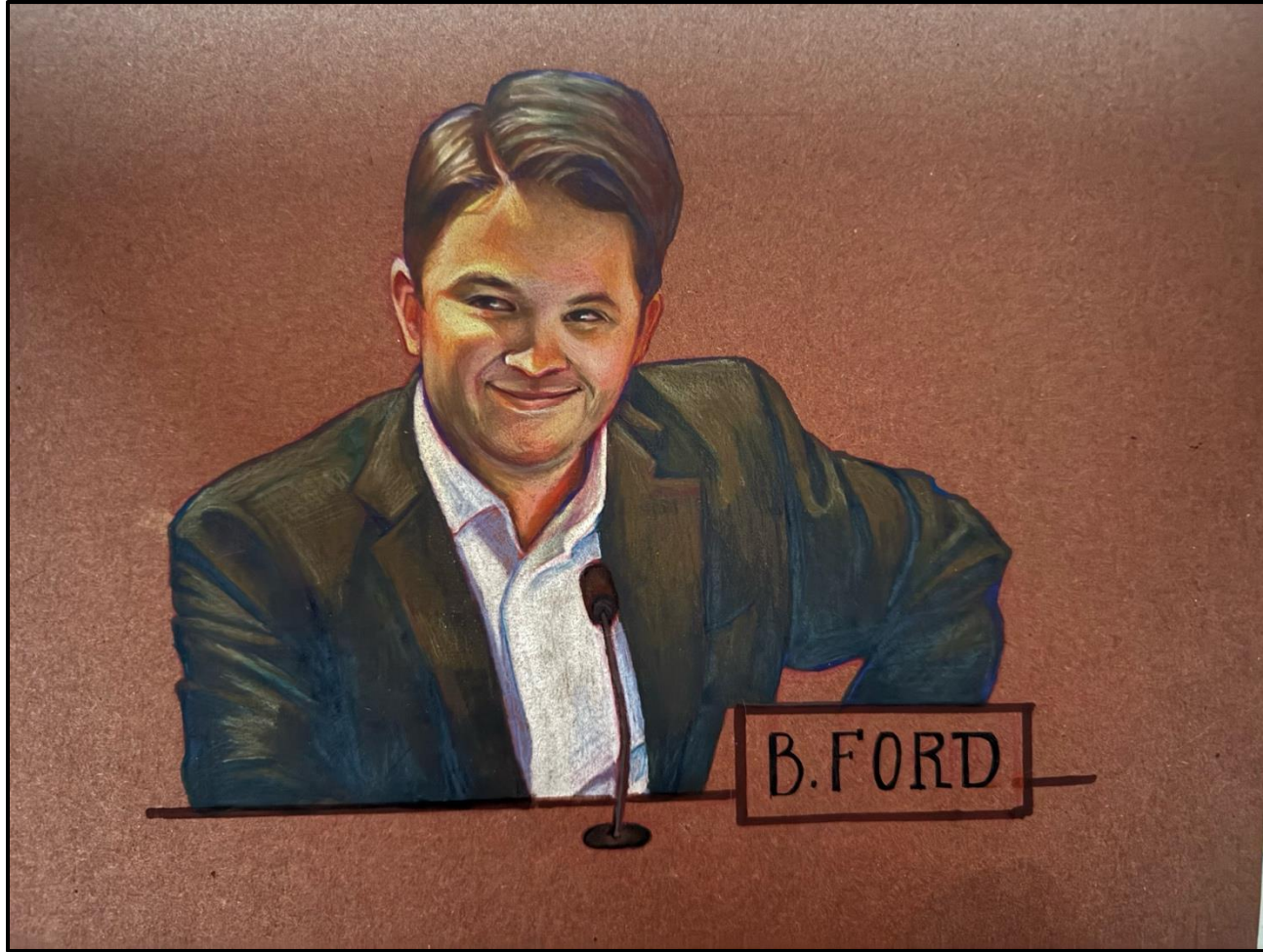
# AGENDA

Introduction

Discussion of Six Trends

Conclusion / Q&A





---

# INTRODUCTION

City Manager of Waco since 2020

Local Govt Leader since 2003

Own a boutique advisory firm on local government compensation called  
**Public Sector Talent Analytics**  
(Formerly City Compensation)

# A LITTLE ABOUT PUBLIC SECTOR TALENT ANALYTICS (FORMERLY CITY COMPENSATION)

## **Nation's Leading Database of Compensation**

We are tracking compensation at more than 3,000 local government entities.

Billions of local government compensation analyzed.

## **Texas Based Firm**

Tracking more than 300 cities in Texas and more than 125,000 jobs in local government.

Deep knowledge and ability to analyze never before seen trends in local government.

Now available in an online, interactive dashboard





# **Trend 1:** Macro-economic Conditions

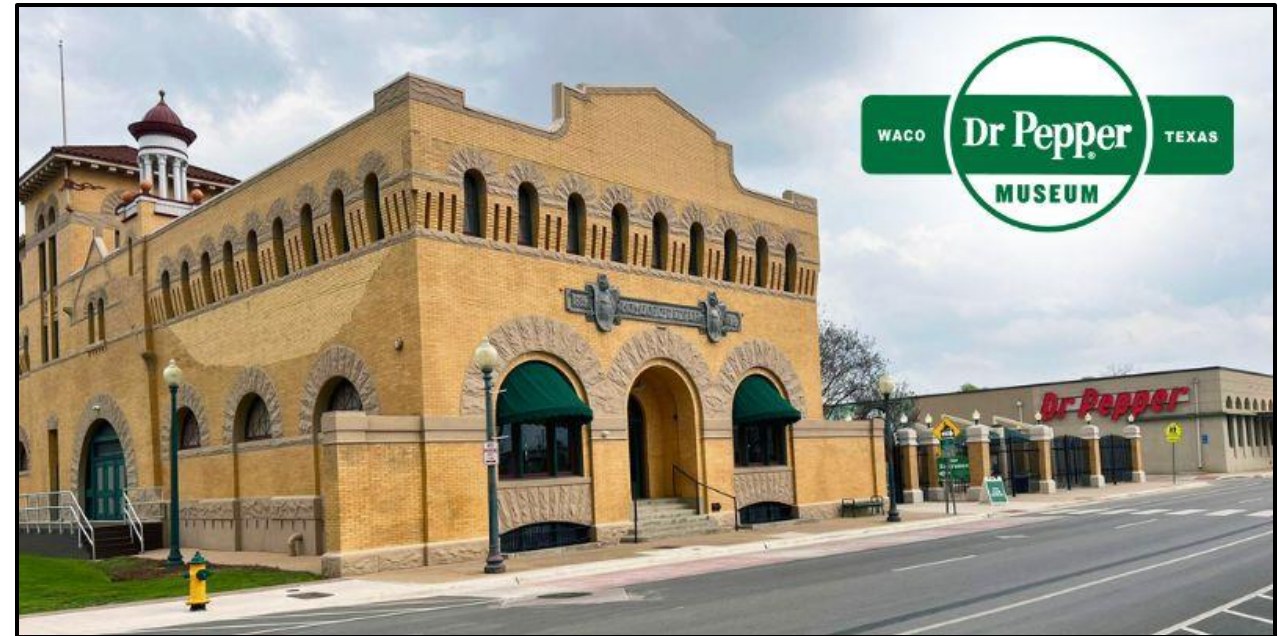
## **Candidate pool is limited by their existing mortgages<sup>1</sup>**

- 55% have mortgages under 4%
- 20% have mortgages under 3%

## **Candidates lack confidence in market<sup>2</sup>**

- Job Seeker Confidence down from 98.9 to 92.5 in Q1 2025 compared to Q1 2024
- Present Situation down 96.7 to 87.6 in Q1 2025 compared to Q1 2024

## **Government tends to lag private sector relative to job and wage changes**

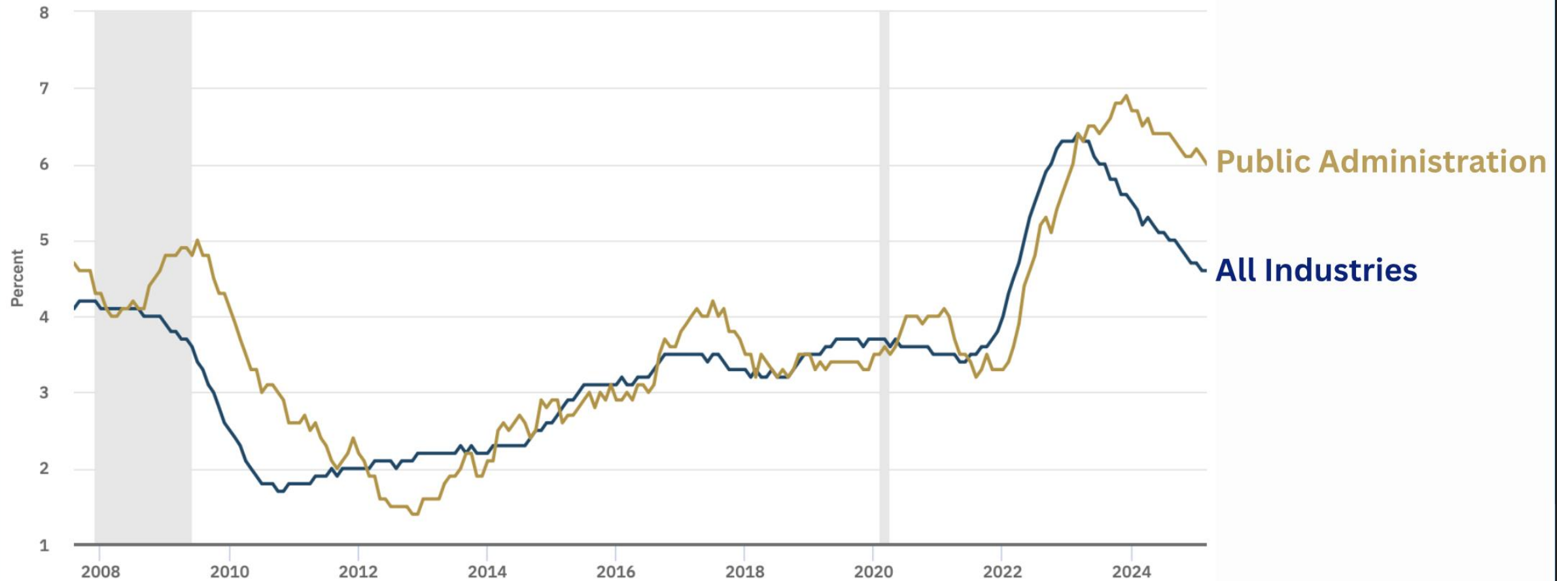


---

Source 1: Wolf Street Report on "Locked-In Homeowners", January 2025  
Source 2: ZipRecruiter Job Seeker Confidence Survey, First Quarter, 2025

## Wage Growth Tracker by Industry

12-month moving averages of median wage growth, hourly data



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, Wage Growth Tracker

# LOCAL & STATE GOVERNMENT

March 2025 compared to March 2024

**+17% Total Separations**

**-14% Job Postings**

**-8% Hiring**



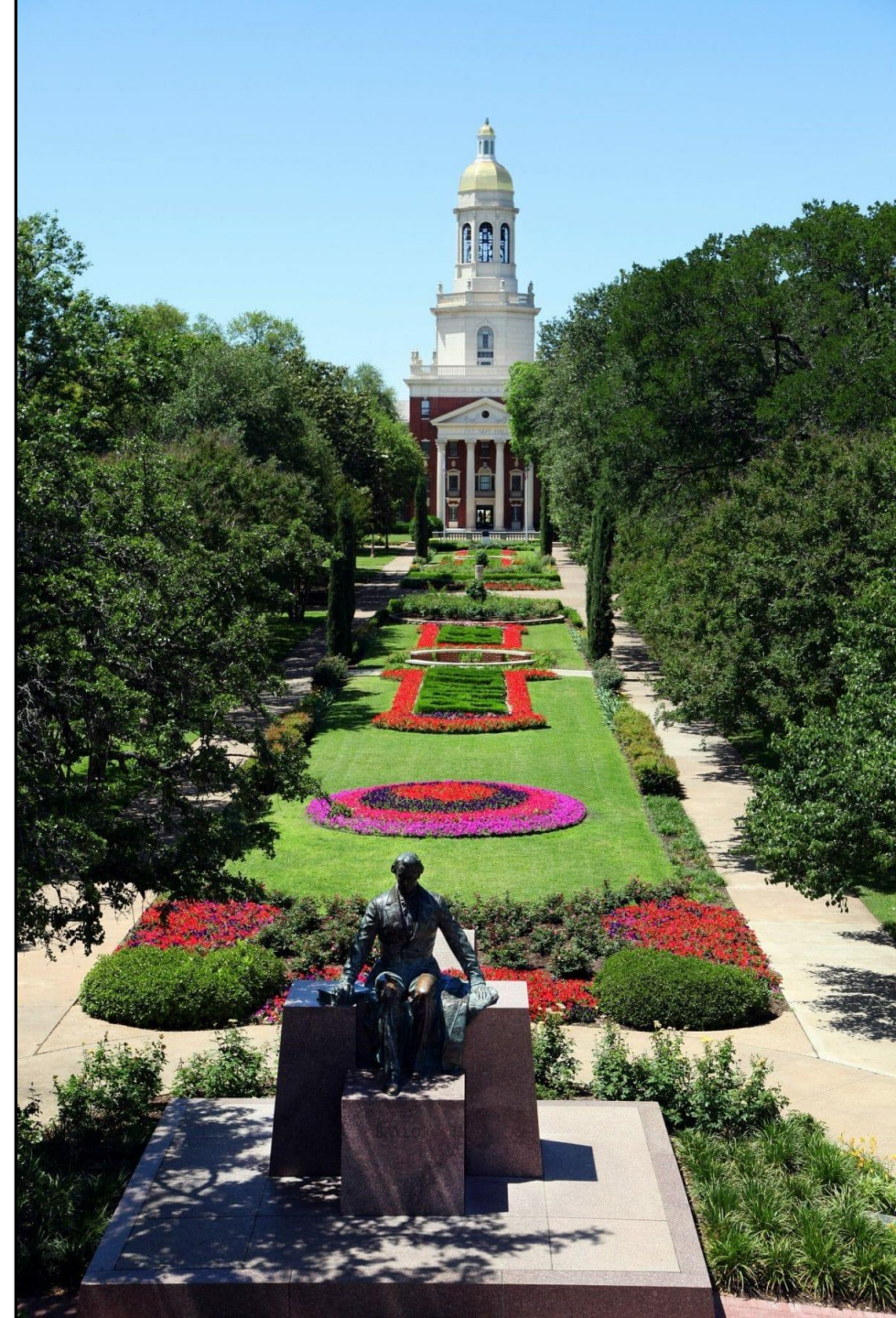
Source: JOLTS, filtered for Local and State Government (non-education) only



# Trend 2: Compensation Variances by Skill and Leadership Level

CATEGORY	2024 MEDIAN	2025 MEDIAN	YEAR-OVER-YEAR GROWTH
City Manager	\$229,000	\$241,129	6.2%
Police Chief	\$172,350	\$179,750	5.8%
Building Official	\$121,250	\$126,850	3.7%
Public Works Engineer	\$105,250	\$111,675	4.9%
IT Systems Engineer	\$95,250	\$101,300	7.2%
Animal Control Officer	\$37,650	\$39,250	2.7%
Fleet Mechanic	\$65,450	\$69,250	3.3%
Parks General Helper	\$29,500	\$31,200	2.9%

Source: <https://publicsectortalentanalytics.com>; Texas Cities only





# **Trend 3: Compensation Variances by Metro Area**

## **METRO AREA MEDIAN PAY COMPARISON FOR SELECTED POSITIONS IN TEXAS**

	Median Pay						
	D/FW	Houston	Austin	San Antonio	El Paso	Non Metro	Statewide
City Manager	\$ 260,490	\$ 237,787	\$ 244,296	\$ 224,203	---	\$ 178,215	\$ 241,129
HR Director	\$ 157,586	\$ 128,858	\$ 136,677	\$ 132,351	\$ 133,067	\$ 98,015	\$ 135,898
Librarian	\$ 62,129	\$ 62,656	\$ 61,752	\$ 63,079	\$ 56,850	\$ 54,282	\$ 60,282
Police Sergeant	\$ 116,346	\$ 108,468	\$ 111,450	\$ 94,369	\$ 104,548	\$ 79,803	\$ 107,584
Fire Fighter	\$ 81,243	\$ 71,240	\$ 82,350	\$ 73,250	\$ 62,689	\$ 50,240	\$ 74,632
Police Officer	\$ 91,247	\$ 76,453	\$ 84,350	\$ 81,350	\$ 78,364	\$ 65,450	\$ 84,580
Heavy Equip Operator	\$ 53,214	\$ 46,525	\$ 49,235	\$ 44,325	\$ 46,057	\$ 45,250	\$ 50,465

Source: <https://publicsectortalentanalytics.com>; Texas cities only

# **Trend 4:** Compensation Variances by Gender

## **CITY MANAGER**

MALE: \$225,000

FEMALE: \$184,500

## **FINANCE DIRECTOR**

MALE: \$163,250

FEMALE: \$139,750

285 of the 300+ job titles in local government we have deep data on have similar gender pay gaps

---

Source: <https://publicsectortalentanalytics.com>; Texas Cities only





# **Trend 5:** Appointed Official Contracts Discussion

## **CITY MANAGER**

ABOUT 70% HAVE CONTRACTS

## **CITY ATTORNEY**

ABOUT 40% HAVE CONTRACTS

## **CITY CLERK / SECRETARY**

ABOUT 5% HAVE CONTRACTS

---



Source: <https://publicsectortalentanalytics.com>; Texas Cities only

## **Trend 6:** Focused Attention on Executive Compensation and Transparency

### **TEXAS LEGISLATURE BILLS**

HB 901: PAY CAP AT GOVERNOR'S SALARY  
HB 948: POST EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS ON INTERNET  
HB 762: SEVERANCE PAY LIMIT OF 20 WEEKS

**POTENTIAL APPLICANTS WANT PAY TRANSPARENCY AS WELL**







# **WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN FOR 2025 AND 2026**

**Leadership Positions will continue to grow at 5% – 8%**

Department Heads like Police Chief, Fire Chief, Public Works, and IT at the highest rates of increase.

**High Skilled Positions will continue to grow at 4% – 9%**

IT Positions, Engineers, Mechanics, and Legal Professions at the highest rates of increase.

**Low Skill Positions compensation will grow at (or slightly above) the rate of inflation at 2%**

**A “one-sized fits all” strategy to workforce compensation is not advised**

# SUMMARY

**Trend 1:** Power Shift from Employee / Candidate to Employer / City with Separations being up and Job Postings and Hiring are down in Local Government

**Trend 2:** Higher Skill and Leadership Position Compensation Growing Faster than Low Skill and Non-Leadership Positions

**Trend 3:** Major Metro Areas are Paying a Premium for Talent at a rate of about 12% - 20%

**Trend 4:** Gender Pay Gap in Local Government is Still Present

**Trend 5:** Appointed Official Contracts Terms / Conditions

**Trend 6:** State Legislature Interested in Pay Transparency, as are Job Candidates







# THANK YOU

Download our latest Texas Trends Report free by registering here:



Find out more at:

[www.publicsectortalentanalytics.com](http://www.publicsectortalentanalytics.com)