



HOW SAN FRANCISCO PAYS ITS WORKFORCE: A DECADE OF INSIGHTS*



Created by Fatima Masoud





PROBLEM

The City of San Francisco faces challenges in ensuring fair and efficient employee compensation across departments. Pay disparities, rising overtime costs, and inconsistent benefits allocation can affect workforce satisfaction and strain public budgets.



WHY THIS TOPIC MATTERS

- Employee compensation is the city's largest expense
- Overtime and benefits can strain the budget
- Understanding patterns helps future planning



AUDIENCE



1 City administrators and finance departments

2 HR and policy makers focused on pay fairness

3 Citizens interested in government spending transparency



DATASET OVERVIEW

- 1,036,789 employee records
- Years: 2013–2024
- Real payroll data from the City of San Francisco
- Includes salary, overtime, benefits, and job details





COMPENSATION STRUCTURE

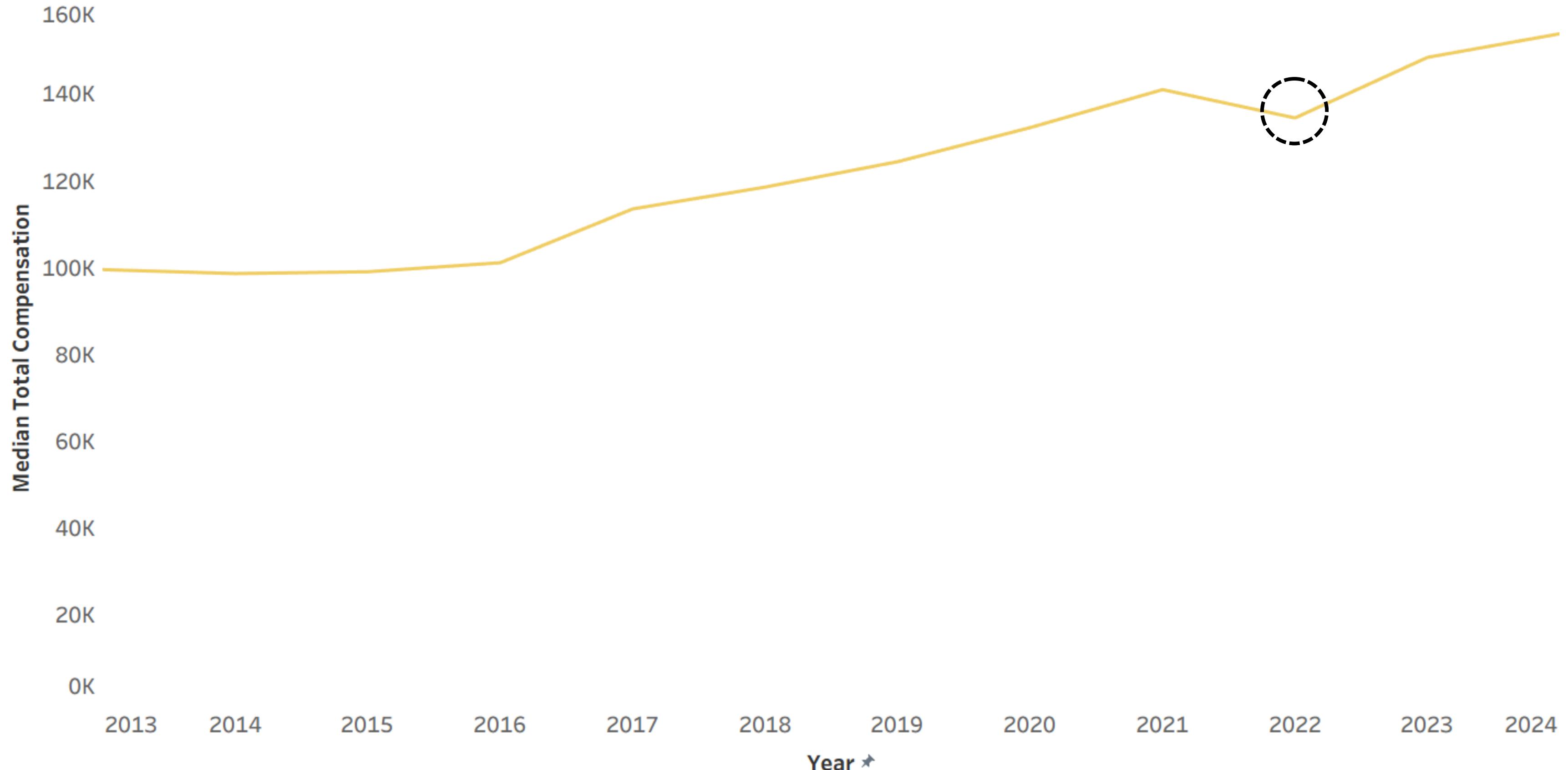
Employee compensation includes:

- Salaries (base earnings)
- Overtime (extra hours worked)
- Benefits (health, retirement, etc.)
- Total Compensation = Salary + Benefits +
Additional Pay

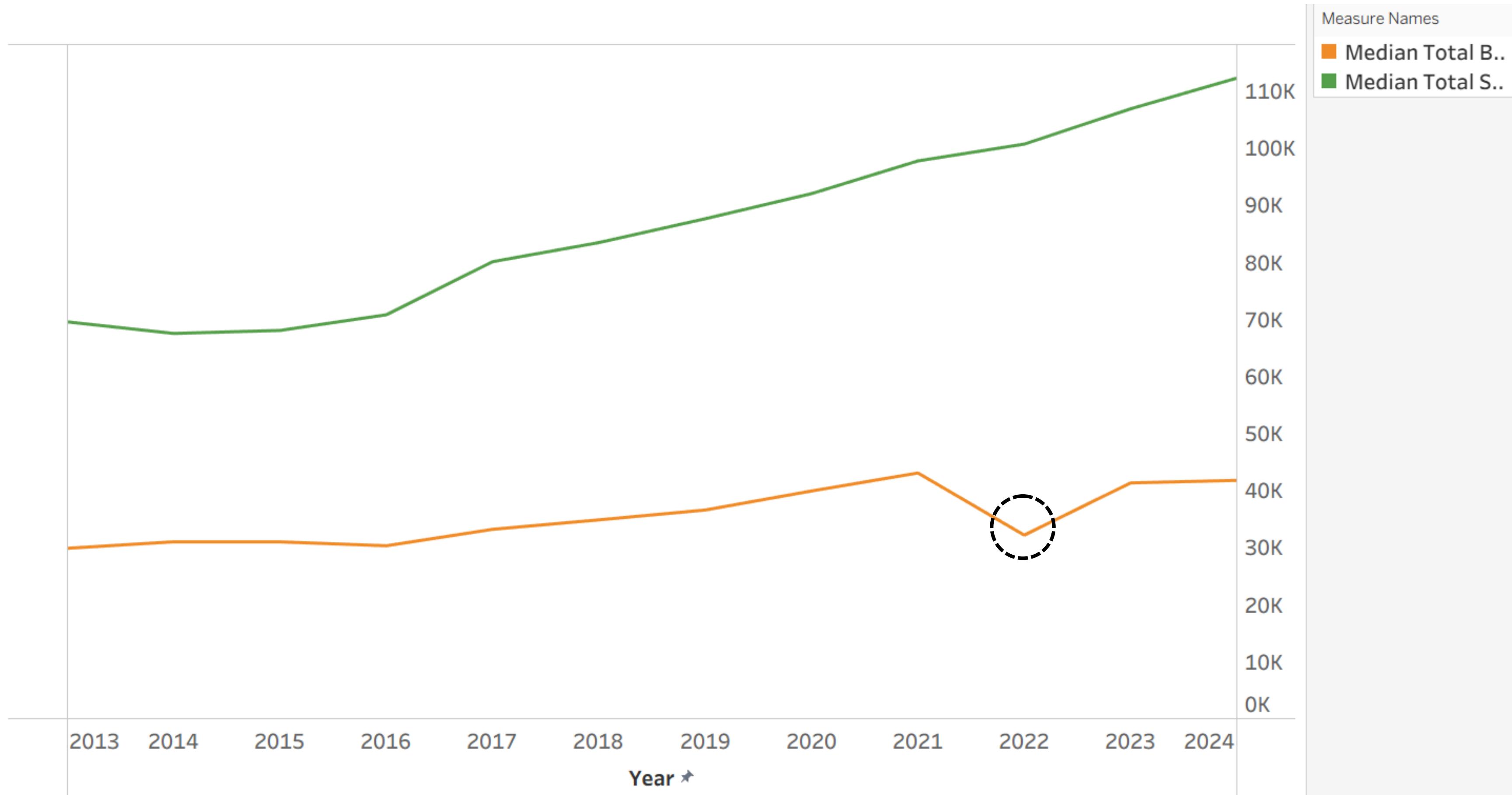


Components of compensation

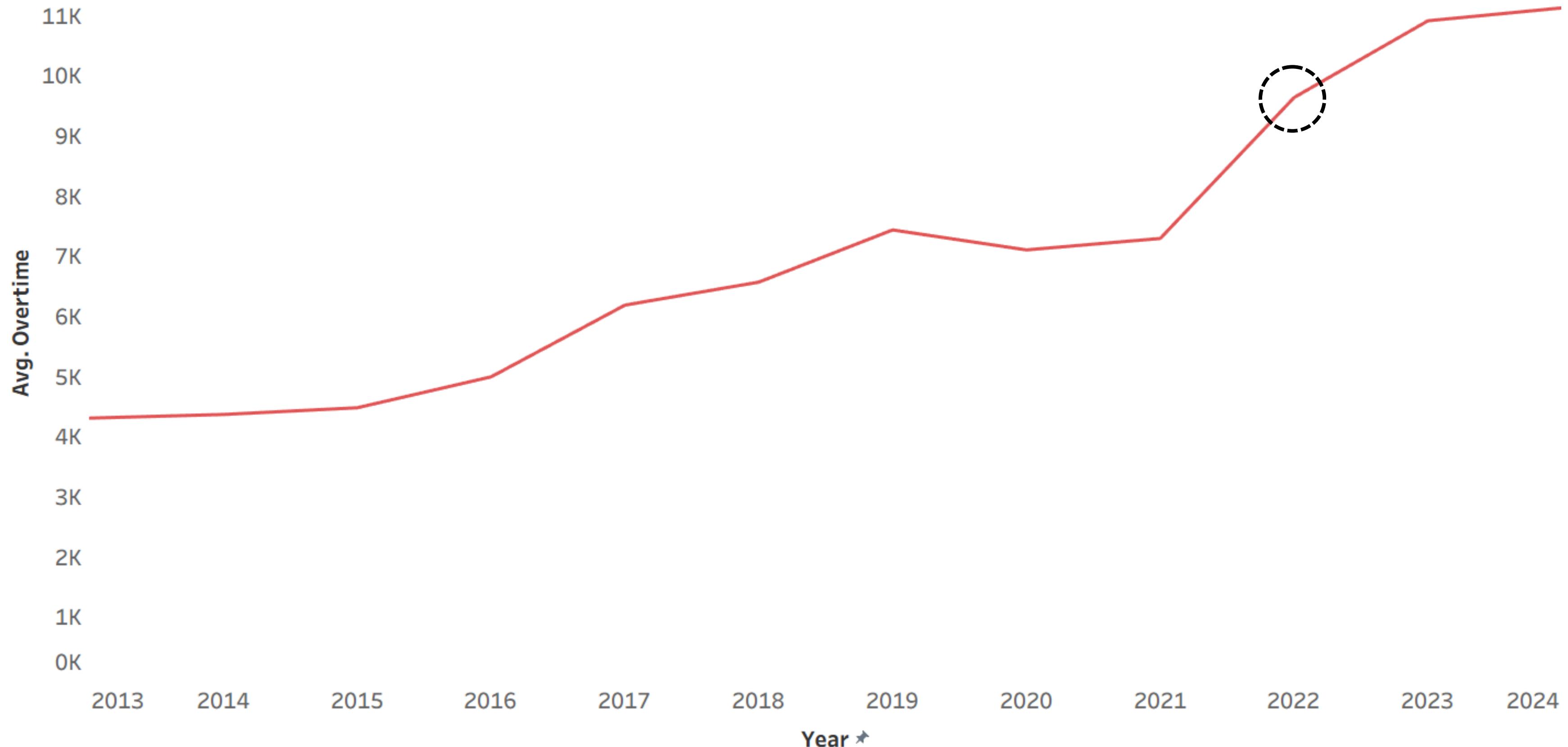
A steady Rise With Minor Disruptions



Salaries Rise Steadily and Benefits Slow Down



Drop in 2020–21 and Increase in 2022



Why These Components Matter



Salary = stable

Benefits = slow - moving

Overtime = Volatile



Hierarchy



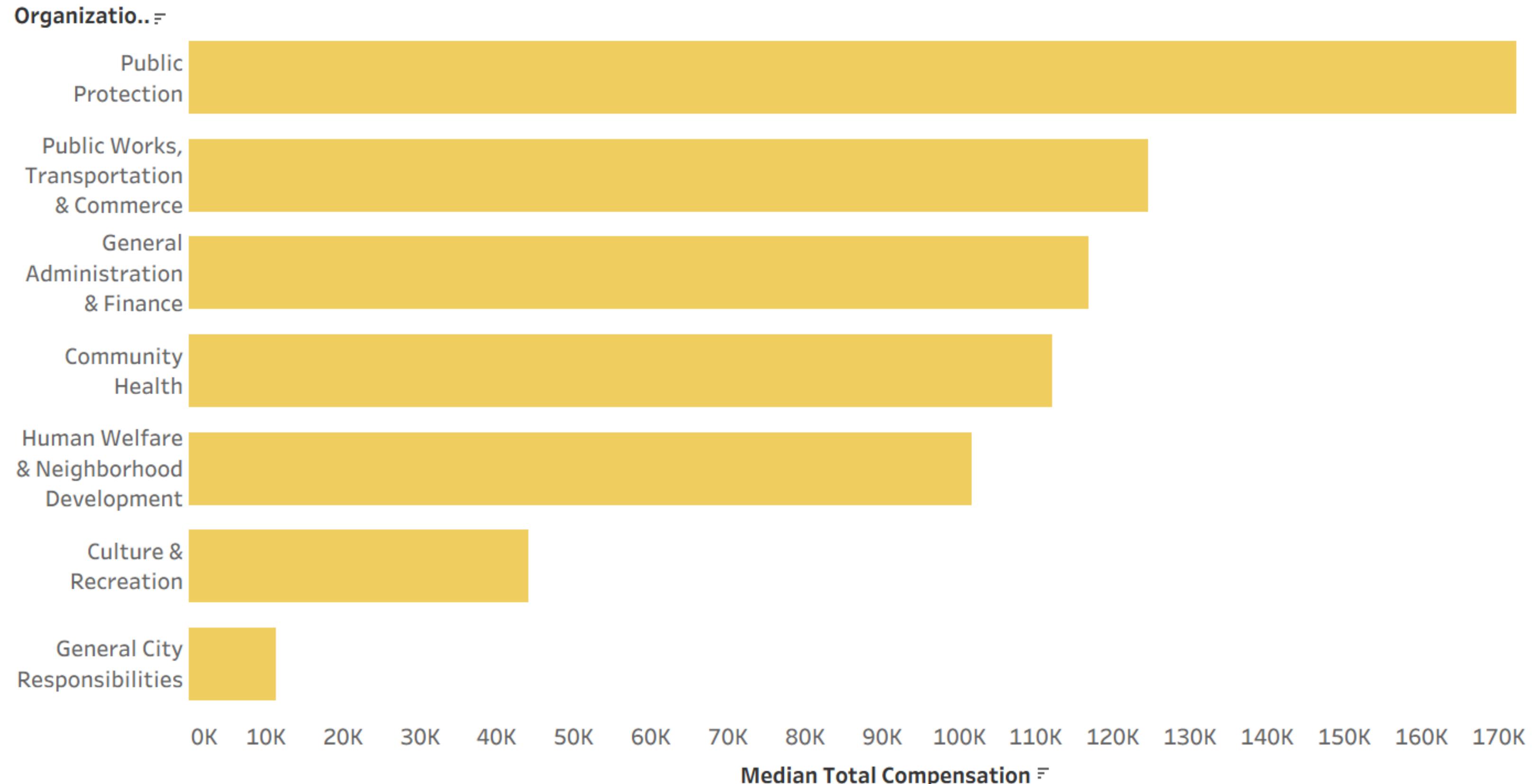
organization
Group

ORGANIZATION GROUPS

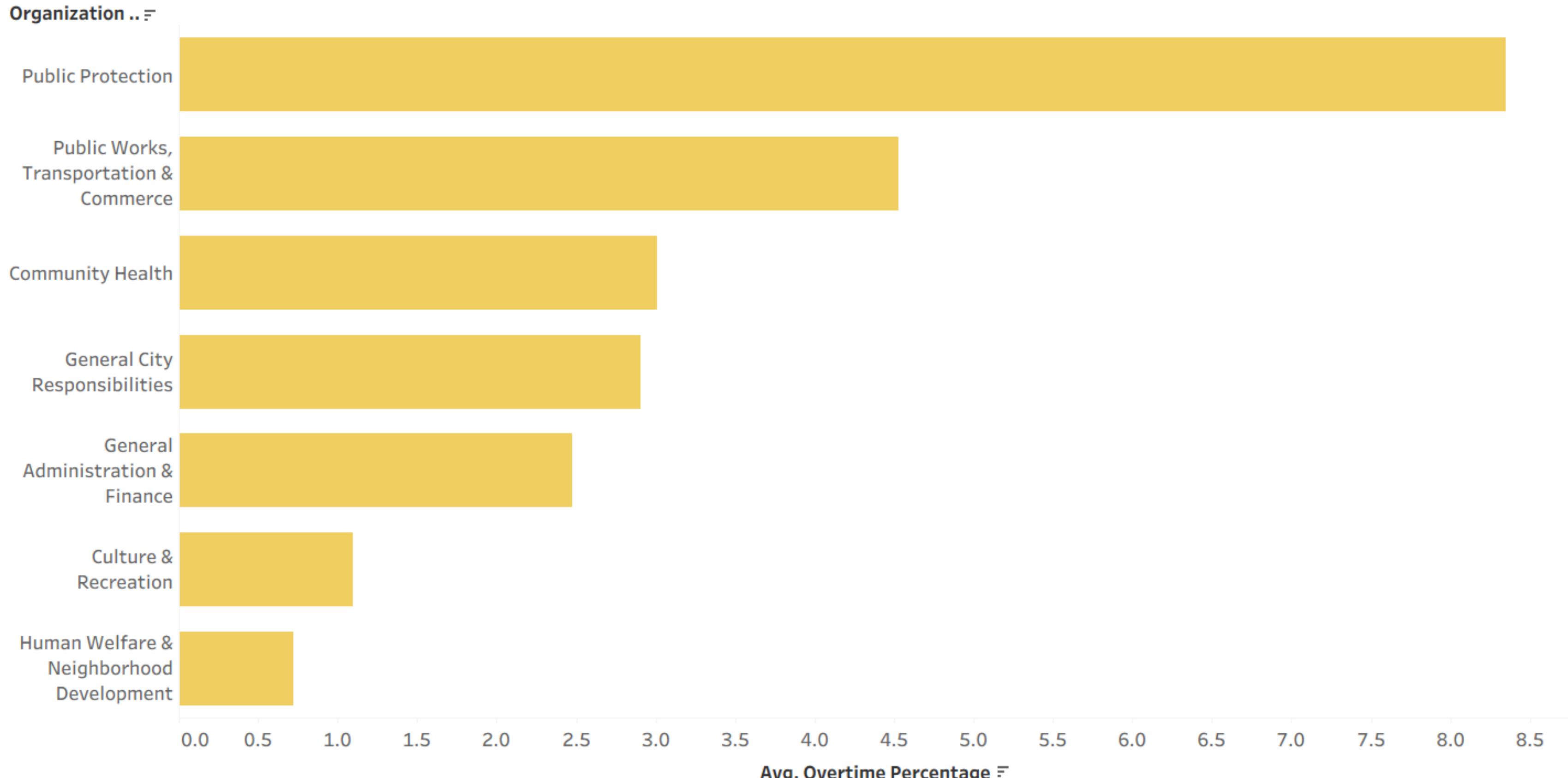
OVERVIEW

- Community Health
- Culture & Recreation
- General Administration & Finance
- General City Responsibilities
- Human Welfare & Neighborhood Development
- Public Protection
- Public Works, Transportation & Commerce

Public Protection Dominates All other Groups



Public Protection is Overtime-heavy



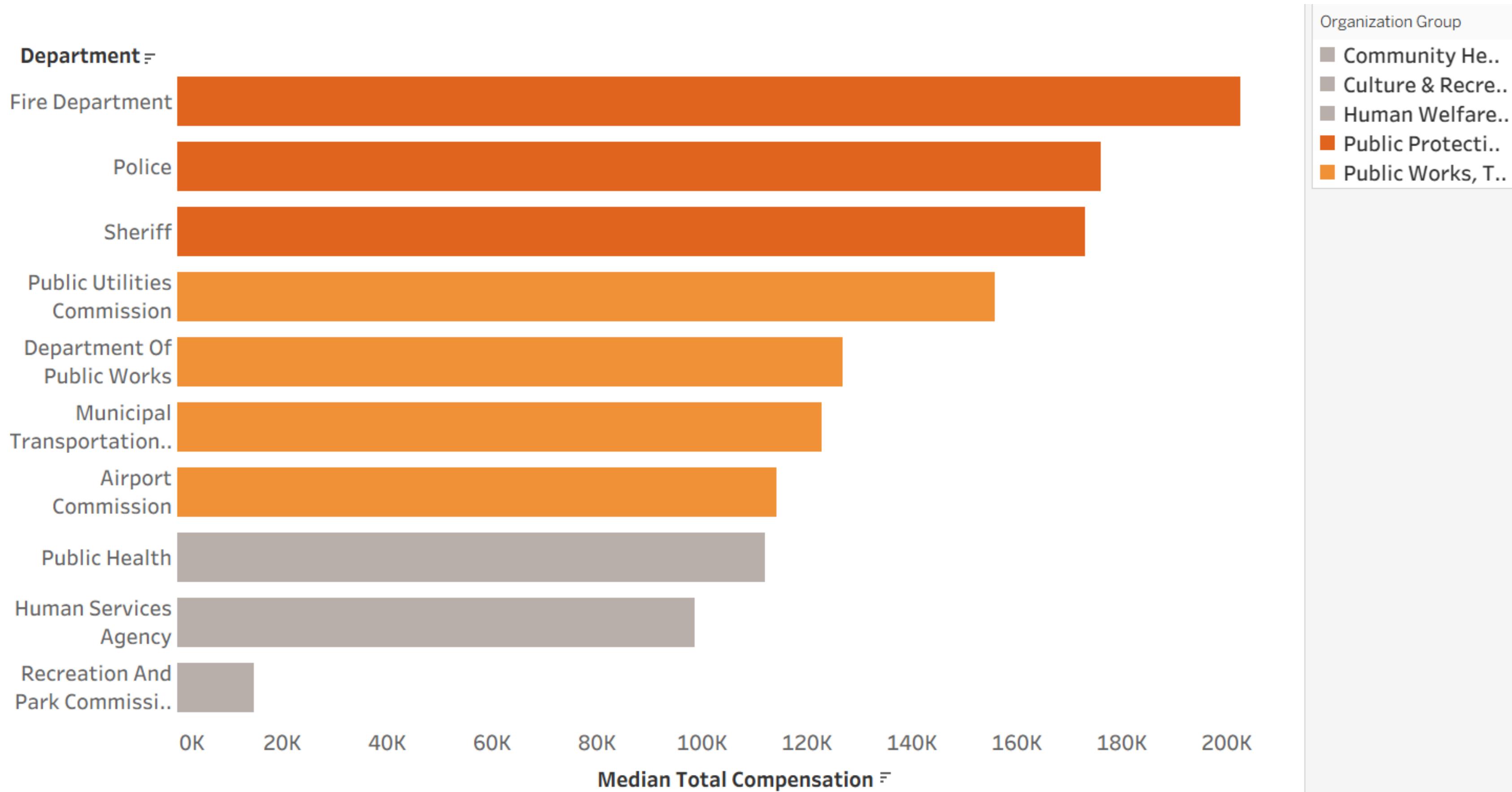


INSIGHT

City-wide changes weren't uniform. Public Protection and a small set of groups drove most fluctuations in costs and overtime.

Department

Public Protection Remains On Top



High ratio = Salary-Heavy / Low Ratio = Benefit-Heavy

Department =

Committee

Invest & Infrstr..

Cleanpowersf

Wastewater

Enterprise

Public Utilities

Bureaus

Gsa - Public

Works

Law Library

Children &

Families Comm..

Gsa - City Admin

Treasurer/Tax

Collector

Child Support

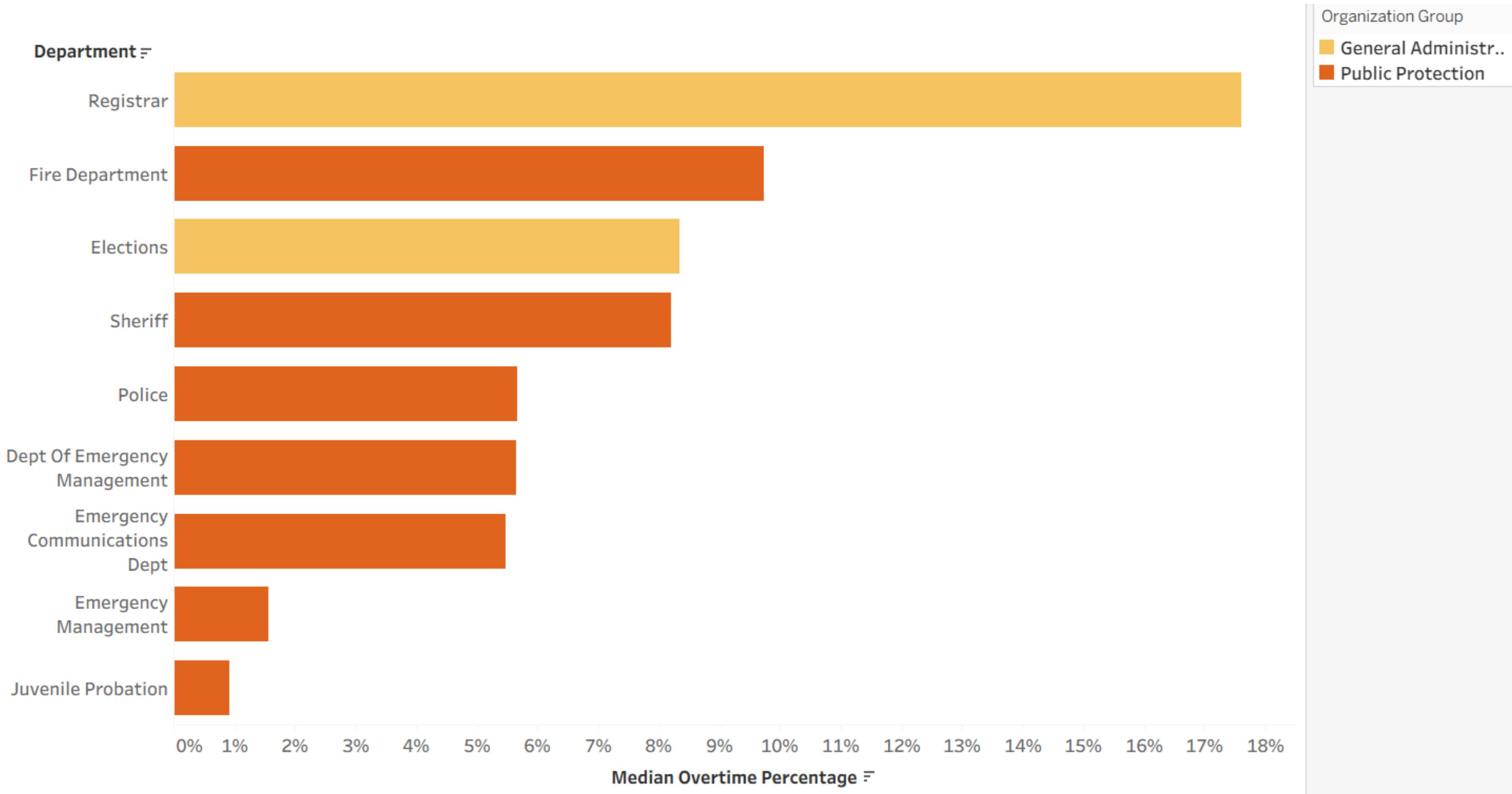
Services



0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0 1.2 1.4 1.6 1.8 2.0 2.2 2.4 2.6

Median Pay to Benefit Ratio =

Pinpointing Overtime Hotspots





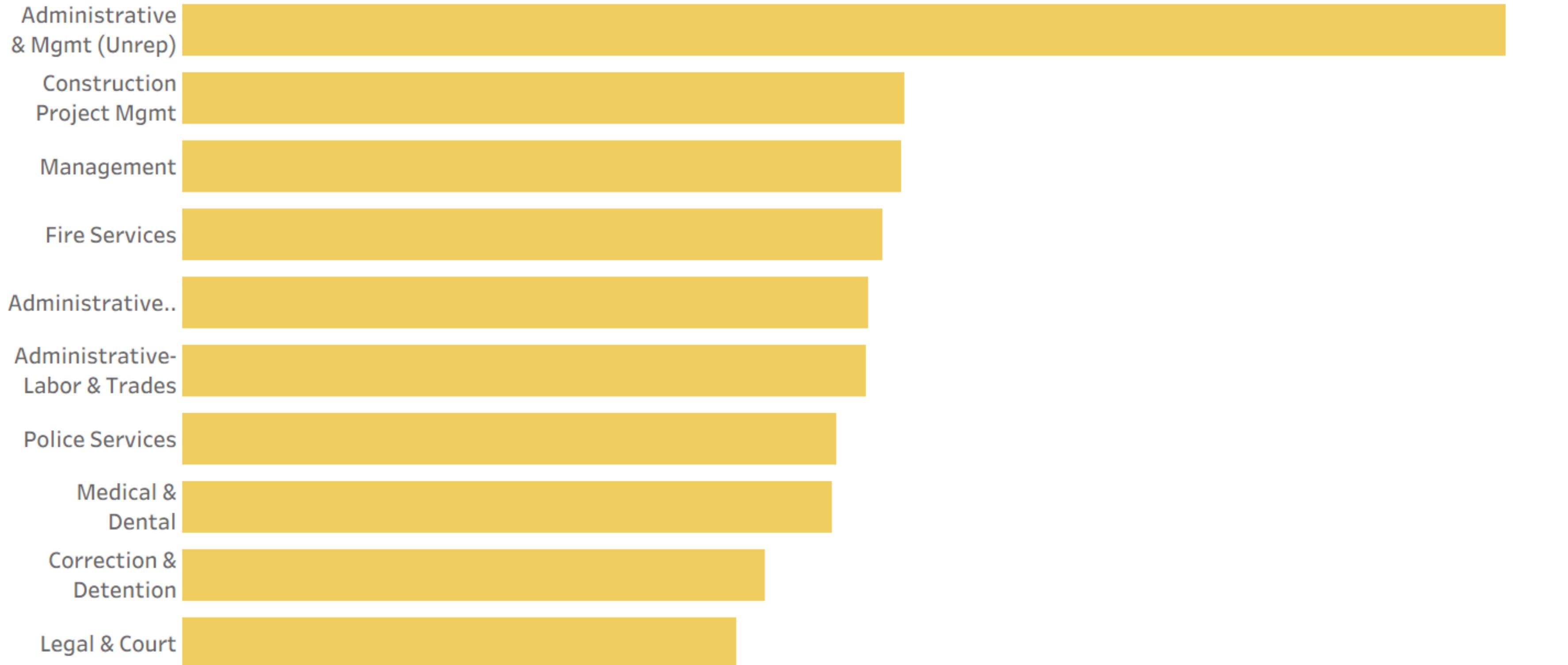
Across departments, the same pattern appears:
A small number of high-pressure, high-overtime departments



Job Families

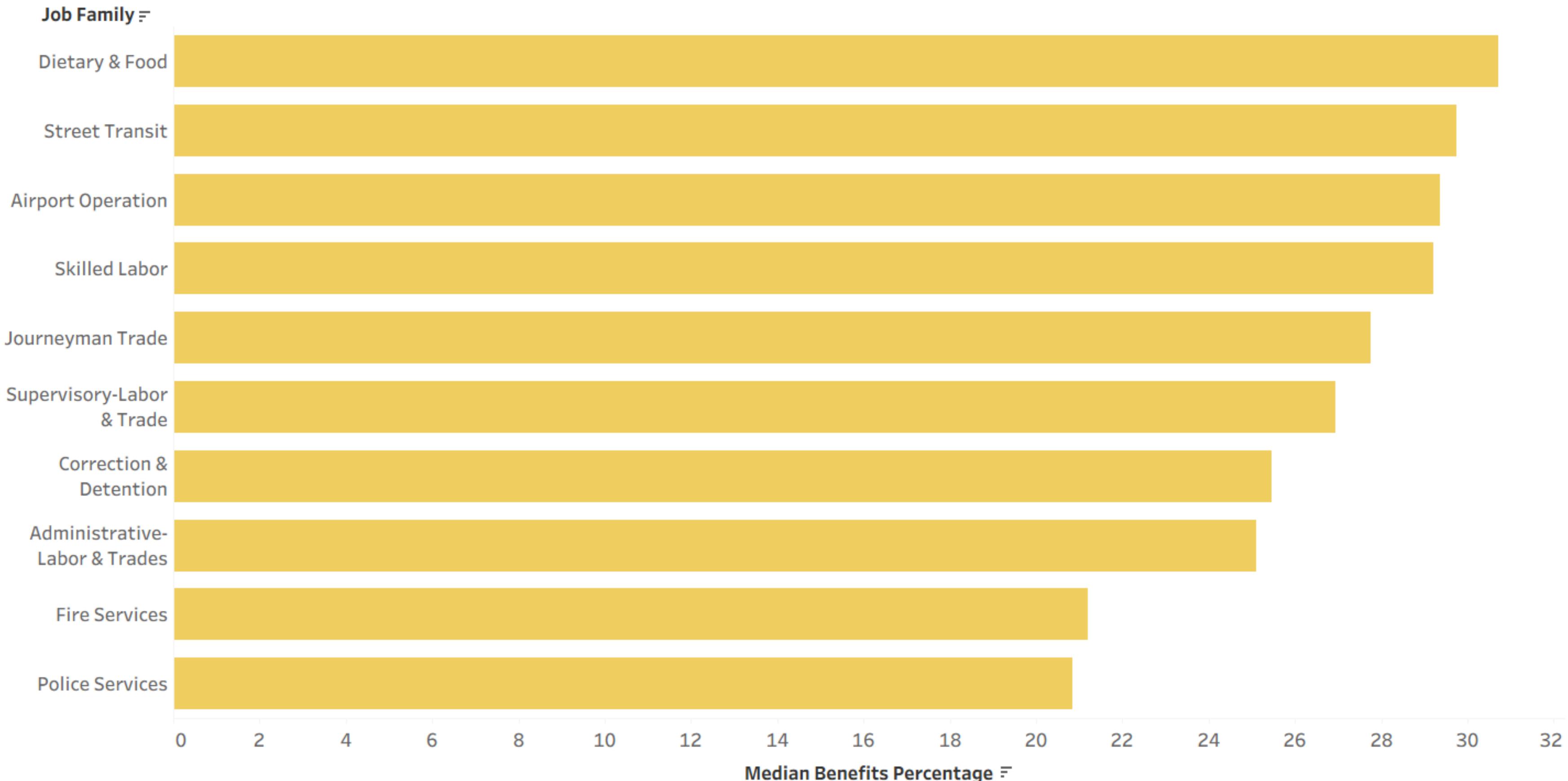
Management Roles Are On Top

Job Family =

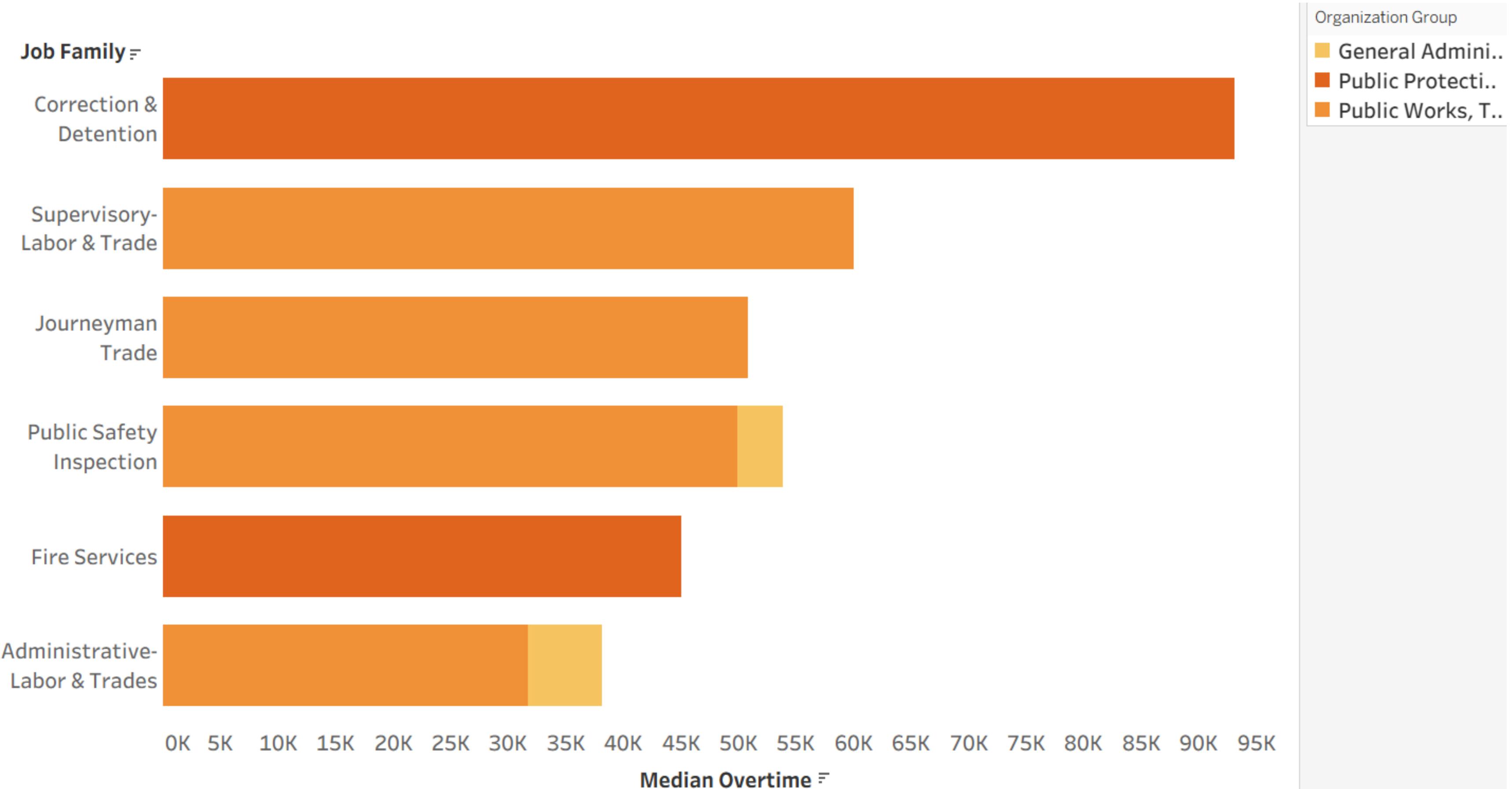


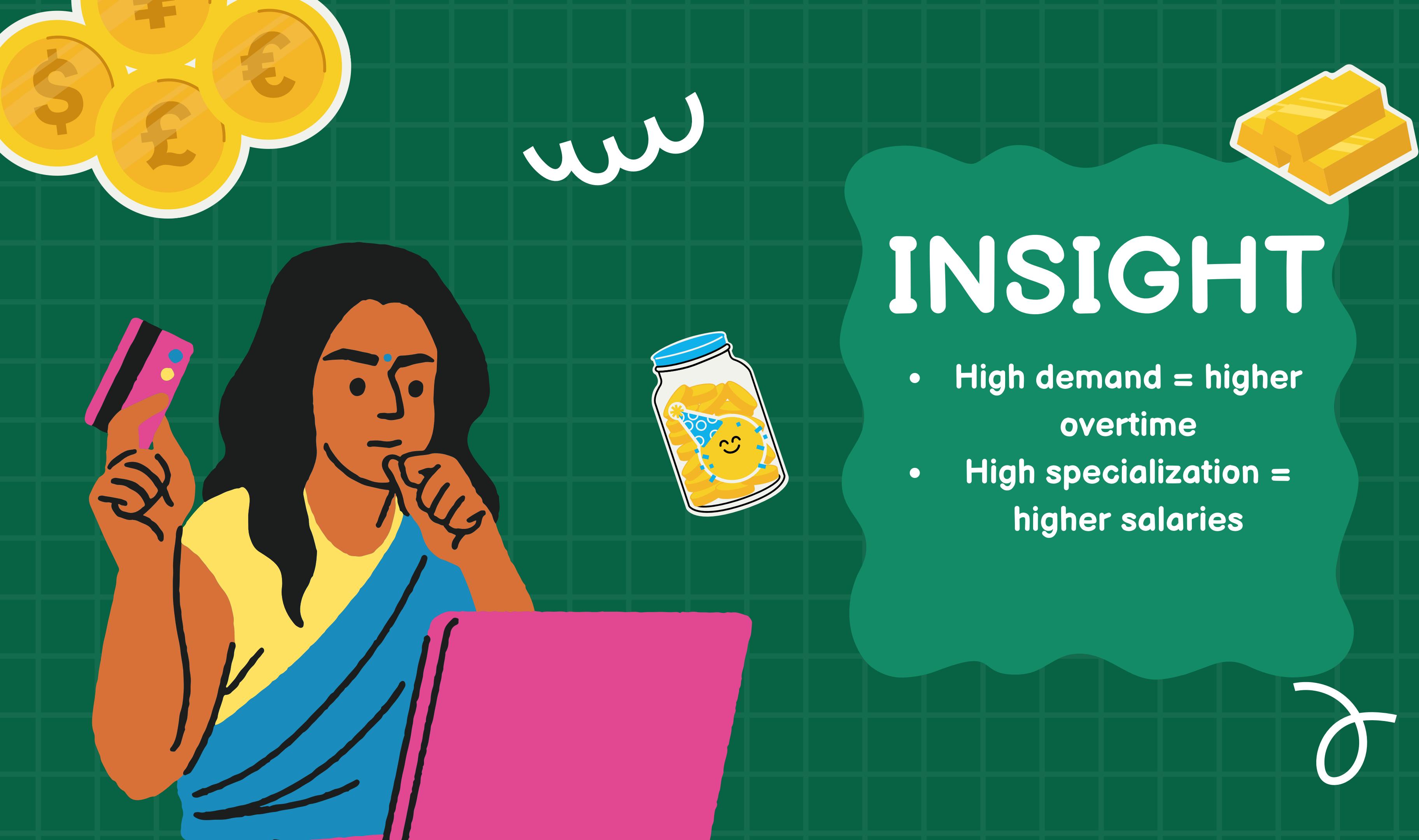
Median Total Compensation =

Benefits % Change: The Job Families



High Overtime = High Demand & Pressure



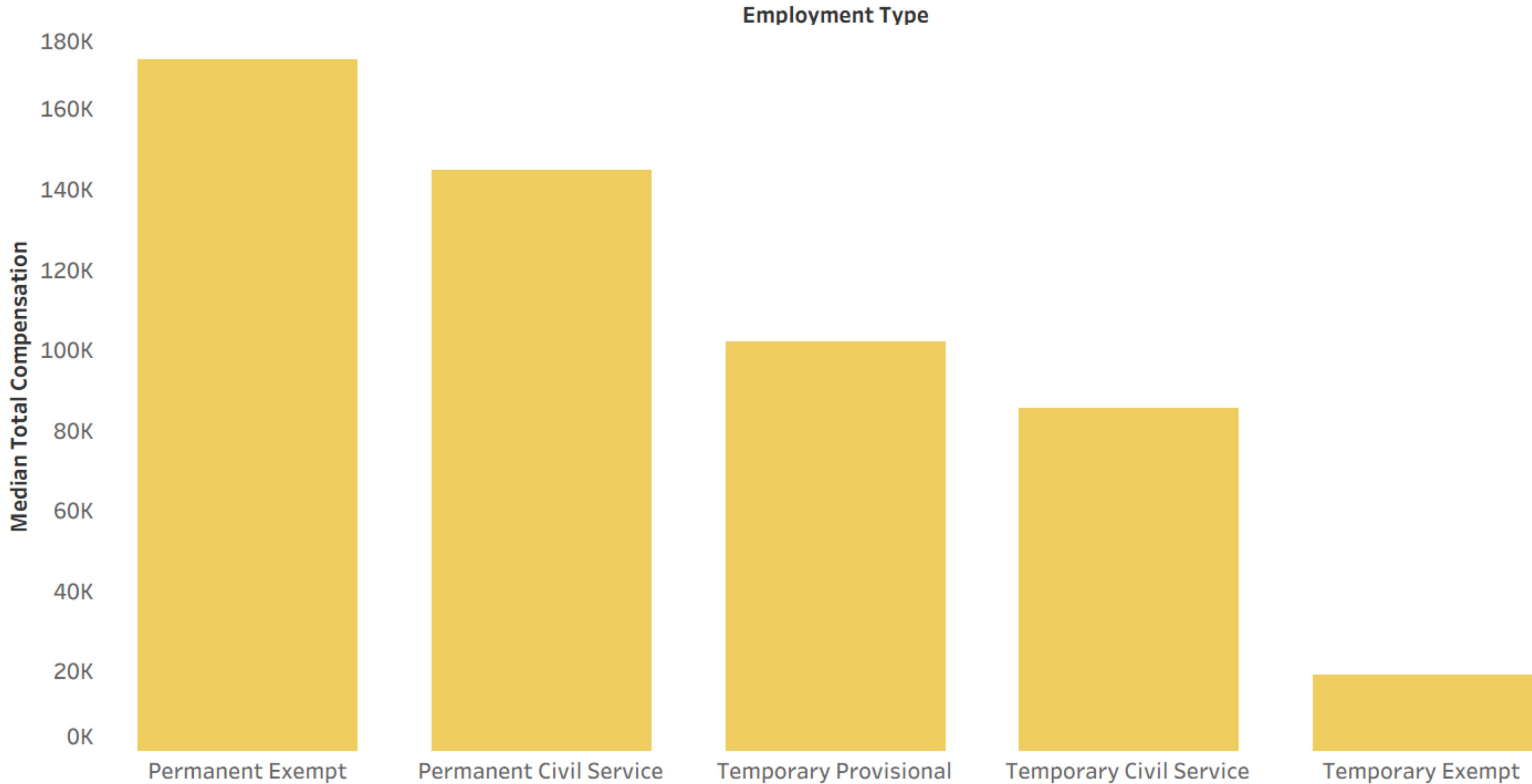


INSIGHT

- High demand = higher overtime
- High specialization = higher salaries

Employee Type

A Clear Gap Between Permanent and Temporary Roles





INSIGHT

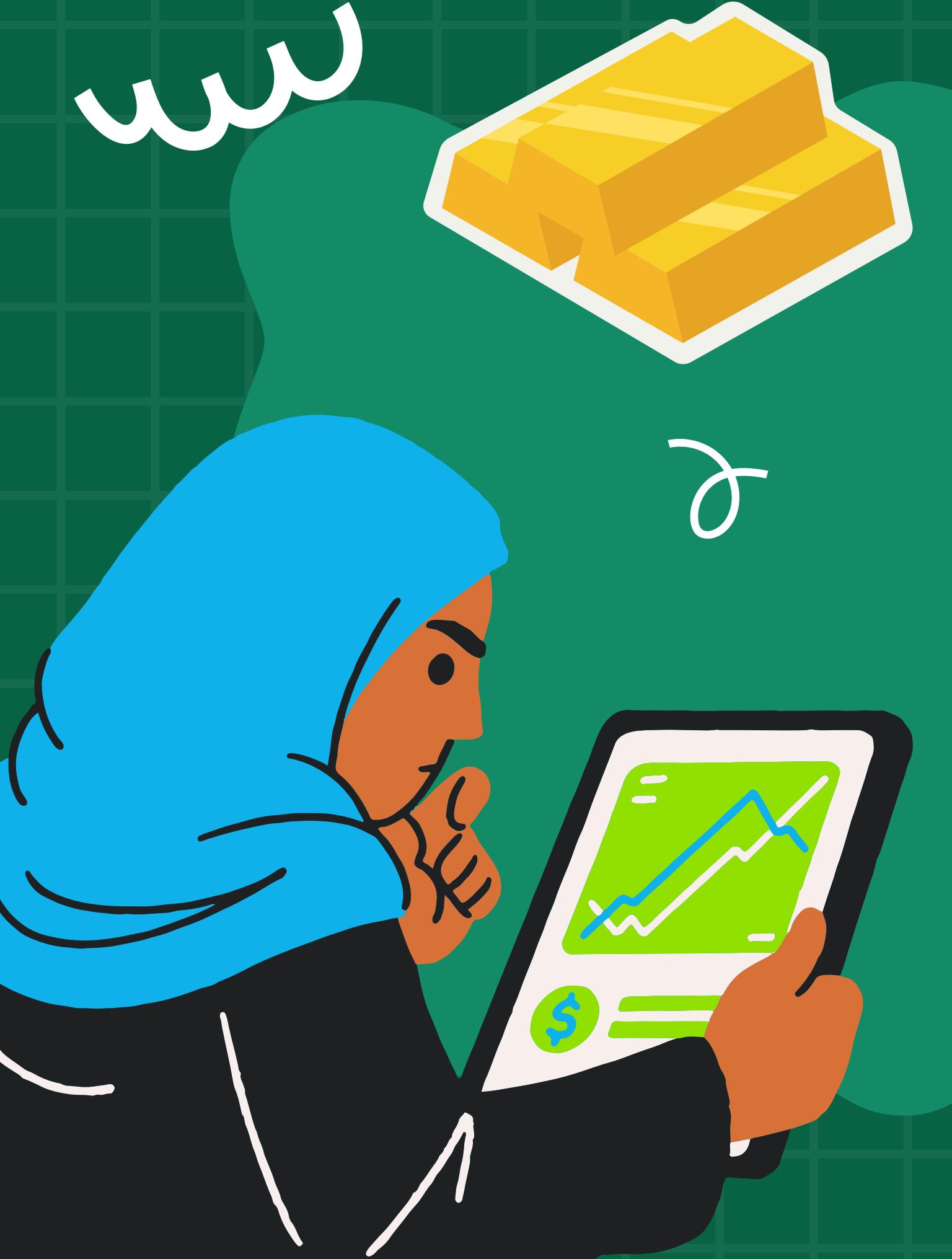
Temporary workers rely
more on base salary
compared to permanent
workers

FINDINGS

- A fragile balance between salary, overtime, and benefits
- Heavy dependence on a few high-pressure departments
- A decline in benefit value
- Growing reliance on overtime to maintain essential services
- Inequalities between worker types

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce overtime volatility by strengthening staffing in high-demand departments
- Rebalance benefits where reductions created unintended pay inequities.
- Close the compensation gap between temporary and permanent staff to reduce turnover risk
- Raise Temporary workers salary by 75%
- Boost Benefit packages for high risk high demand roles





CONCLUSION

By understanding these patterns, the city can build a more stable, fair, and future-proof compensation system.

THANK YOU



Reference

Overtime % = Overtime / Total Salary

Benefits % = Benefits / Total
Compensation

Pay-to-Benefit Ratio = Salary / Benefits

