



Remote Salary Matrix Data Completeness Checks

Minimum Recommendations

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Introduction

Pre-audit data completeness checks are a remote process used to check that the data entered into the Salary Matrix is complete and in the correct format. This is a valuable step, prior to an audit, as it helps identify anomalies and common errors in Salary Matrix data. Interviews are typically held with facility managers from a sample of facilities to review anomalies and discuss areas for improving data entry. This helps the facility managers to make corrections and be better prepared when an audit takes place.

Remote data completeness checks do not replace the need for on-site audits that are necessary to verify calculations of living wage gaps. On-site audits are able to look deeper into the information and to triangulate the data through a combination of ground observation, record checks, and worker interviews. The input of workers, in particular, is the critical aspect of living wage gap verification.

This document describes the minimum data checks that should be done to ensure that facility managers understand how the data is used to calculate living wage gaps, and help them identify inaccuracies in the data entry. Additional questions will likely need to be asked, in follow-up to the answers receive. Remote data completeness checks are ultimately a conversation between the interviewer and the facility manager, which will require iteration and follow-up questions.

Interviews generally take 2 hours on average.

Getting Started

It is always helpful to begin by clearly explaining the purpose of the Salary Matrix remote data check exercise. Explain that it is not intended to replace on-site audits, but can support facility managers and reduce the time needed during field audits.

Interviewers should review Salary Matrices ahead of the interviews in order to identify and flag anomalies for further investigation. It is also important to review and understand local legislation and, if possible, relevant CBAs to better understand the conditions under which facilities' payment structures are developed.

It is important to have the Salary Matrix open for reference during the discussion. We recommend to more or less follow the structure of the Salary Matrix during the interviews, though some back and forth between Salary Matrix sections is natural and often necessary.

Each situation is unique, and the judgement and intuition of the interviewer will help guide the questioning. The goal is to gain a good understanding of how the facility compiled the information in the Salary Matrix; determine if it was done correctly according to the Salary Matrix User Manual, FAQ and living wage principles; and ultimately to help the facility understand where corrections are needed prior to an audit.

We suggest that interviewers keep notes of all of the agreed upon adjustments that should be made to the Salary Matrix data. This way you can share the list with the facility management, in writing, following the interview. It is also a good idea to make note of any issues that were either unresolved or raised additional questions, which you deem important for further investigation during field audits.

Minimum data check points

General Information

1. Ask the facility representative(s) to describe and show you their human resource management system. How do they identify workers and record information on remuneration? How and where did they obtain the necessary information to fill out the Salary Matrix? Ask any additional questions that you feel will help you gain a solid understanding of their system.
2. Check whether the GPS location match the written location of the facility.
3. Ask the facility specifically if they have any permanent, temporary, casual or contract workers that are not already listed in the HR Information Tab. If workers are missing, ask the facility to add them to the Salary Matrix following the interview. *It is not uncommon for facilities to leave out casual or occasional labour.*

Production Information

4. If the 'Total Annual Production' does not make sense, given the 'Total Area of Production' on the on the 'Basic Information' Tab, check that the annual production is accurate. If it is, and the worker numbers seem low, find out if there is any mechanization which would reduce the expected number of workers. If not, ask about temporary/seasonal, casual or contract workers that may be missing from the Salary Matrix and suggest corrections as needed.
5. If the seasons do not add up to 12 months, ask if there are any workers on the payroll during the missing months. If so, ask the facility to include the missing months as a separate season and provide the information for those workers. If not, leave it as is.

In-kind benefit information

6. Check that in-kind benefits follow the Principles of Living Wage (detailed in the e-learning materials) and the guidance provided in the User Manual.
7. Confirm that housing is family housing (seasonal worker housing or bunk housing is not valued toward a living wage). Confirm that food is full meals and not snacks. Confirm that education and healthcare benefits are beyond what workers would otherwise receive for free through national education and healthcare systems.
8. Ask facility managers if there is any co-payment by the worker and if so, confirm that this has been deducted from the total value.
9. Determine whether in-kind benefits are just for workers or workers' families, or if they are benefits that could be used by communities beyond the worker/workers' families. Check that the math has been done correctly, based on the answer.
10. Check that in-kind benefits are properly assigned to workers based on the different types of worker contracts.

Payroll Information

11. If the facility used job categories (as opposed to listing each individual worker separately), remind the facility representative(s) that a job category may only consist of workers who do the same task, are paid the same, and have access to the same in-kind benefits. Confirm that this is the case for the job categories that they created.
12. Check that the job categories separate permanent, temporary and casual workers into separate job categories.
13. Ask if any workers are contracted through a third-party. If workers are contracted, confirm that these workers are also included in the Salary Matrix, and ask if there is a fee levied on the worker in order to be employed (e.g., by a hiring agency). If so, confirm that the fee has been deducted from pay in the Salary Matrix.
14. Check if there are multiple work areas listed in the Salary Matrix? If not, ask for clarification as to why only one work areas was used to confirm that all workers are represented.
15. Check that both men and women workers are properly represented.
16. Check that the base rates of pay were entered, excluding any bonus or additional payments or premiums for work performed beyond the legal standard workweek or 48 hours, whichever is lower (sometimes called surplus or overtime pay).
17. Check that the facilities have entered the actual, tracked, hours worked by employees (time in and time out). Keep in mind that the Salary Matrix can only function properly if the actual hours worked are properly entered.
18. Check the source of the information which was used to fill out the 'Average Units per Day' vary by job category and compare to the Salary Matrix.
19. Check the source information for the 'Average Total Hours/Day'. Double check that the hours are based on real time records (If hours per day are uniform, this is a red flag). If not, the Salary Matrix will not be appropriate for this facility.
20. Clarify difference between different seasons, if seasons are applicable.
21. Check that bonuses follow the Principles of Living Wage and the guidance provided in the user manual.
22. Check that bonuses only include amount earned relative to regular working hours, excluding any overtime pay.
23. If 'Other Bonuses' were filled in, find out what these bonuses are and make sure that they follow the guidelines provided in the User Manual and FAQ.

Benchmarks

24. Check that the living wage benchmark used is for the same year as the Salary Matrix data.