Wages and salaries as a portion of total compensation has been declining (from 67% to 63%), as health insurance and defined benefit retirement costs have risen. A fourth component of total compensation — other benefits — has stayed relatively unchanged at 15%-16%.

While there has been volatility in individual components of compensation, total compensation has stayed fairly consistent, averaging about a 2% increase in employer costs per year.

Some factors contributing to the differential in compensation may be the types of positions reflected in the various pools of employees (e.g., entry-level/retail vs. skilled/management), the tendency to outsource or automate more routine, lower-skilled tasks (e.g., landscape maintenance), or the increasing prevalence of those with a college degree among government employees (e.g., police officers with a degree in criminal justice).

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