



Florida Head Start Association
Excellence. Advocacy. Leadership.



Florida Head Start
State Collaboration Office

Florida Head Start Compensation & Benefits Survey 2026 Key Findings

March 11, 2026

Key Takeaways

- Survey administered **Nov 13–Dec 15** by Whorton Research
- **27 completed surveys** out of 65 programs (**54% response rate**)
- Response rate consistent with 2023; below the **61% peak in 2020**

Participants will receive a 100-page report with:

- **40 pages** of narrative and graphics
- Compensation tables **for 60 key positions**, segmented by major organizational factors
- A guide for applying results to salary/wage scales

Florida 2025 Head Start Compensation & Benefits Study



Who Participated

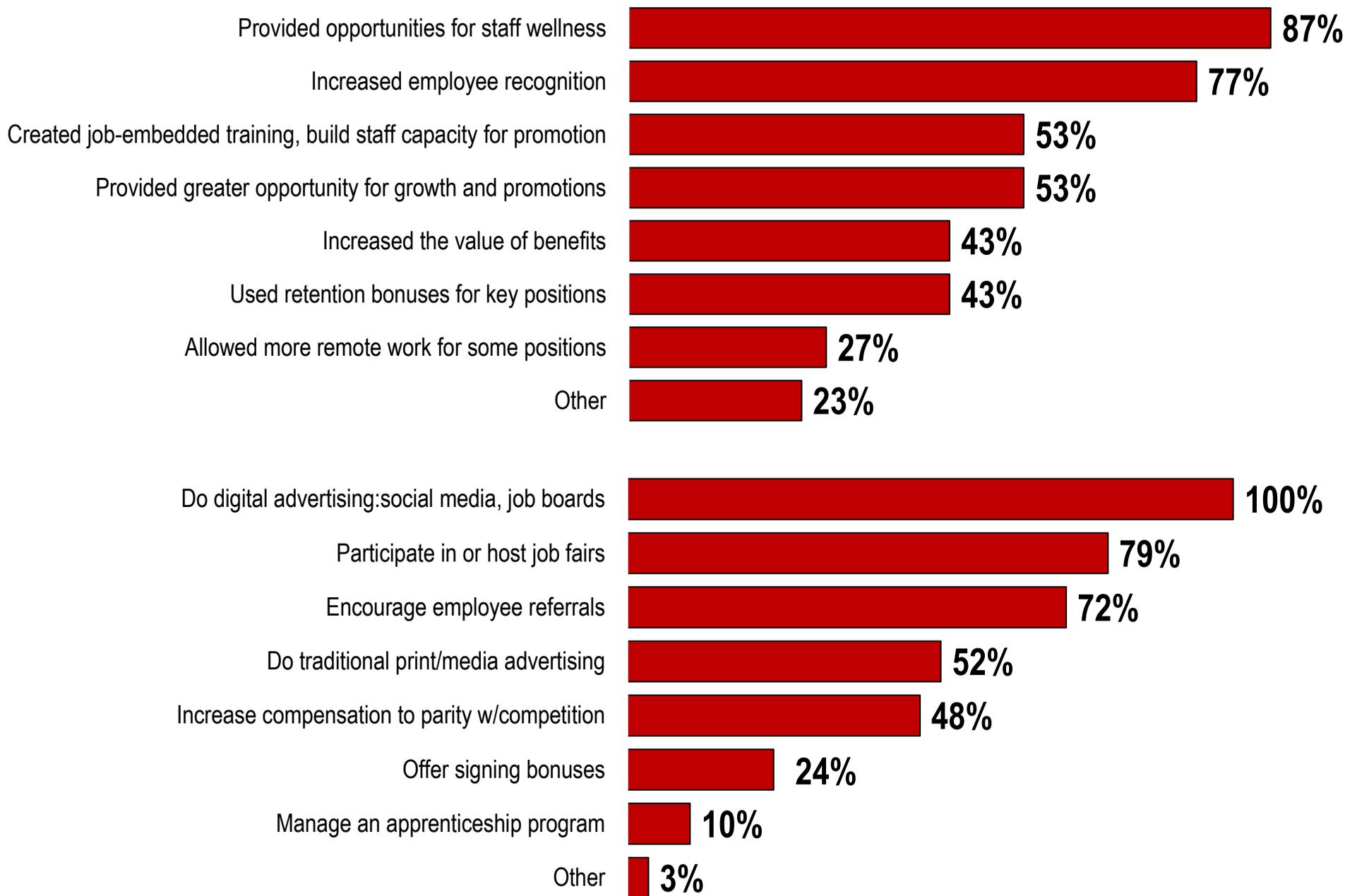
Respondent Profile

Location	South 40%, North (34%), Central (26%).
Demographics	Urban (57%), rural (51%), suburban (46%).
FTE staff	Mean 177/median 126: <75 (34%), 75-160 (34%), >160 (32%).
Students	Mean 892/median 391: 0-250 (34%), 251-625 (34%), >625 (32%).
Budget	Mean \$17.7MM/median \$9.5 MM: <\$5MM (34%), \$5-\$12.5MM (32%), >\$12.5MM (34%).
Program Type	Head Start (86%), EHS (77%), Nonprofit (60%), school district (37%), preschool (31%), child care (26%), community-based (20%, few seasonal, private, public agency, migrant, for-profit.
Unionized	Unionized (39%), non (61%).
Budget per FTE	Mean \$73,328/median \$60,870
Budget/student	Mean \$21,797/median \$16,416
Students/FTE	Mean 4.0/median 3.8

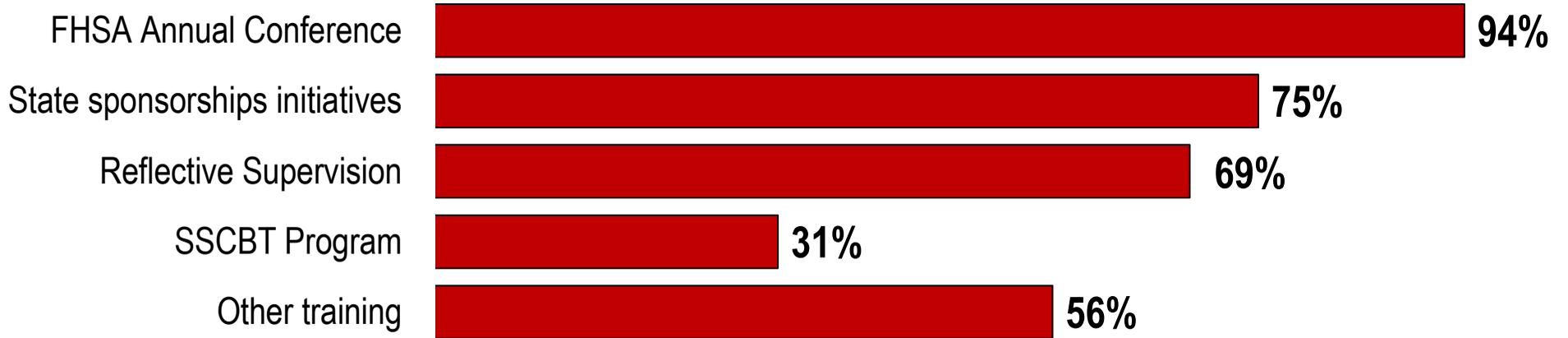
HR & Operational Metrics

Open Positions	Mean 5.3% currently open.
Re-hires	Mean 3.1%/median 2.0% left, returned, rehired.
Staff Size	45% increased over past few years (38% somewhat/7% sharply), 27% decreased (24% somewhat/3% sharply), 28% stayed the same.
Turnover	Mean 21.1%/median 19.0% instructional, 16.6%/12.1% non
Applications	31% applied to reduce funded enrollment, 21% to convert HS to EHS.
Bilingual Staff	13% pay a premium (median \$1.25/hour or 2% of wage).
Weeks open	Mean 44.1/median 50.5 weeks of annual operation.
Salary Increase	Mean 1.3%/median 1.0% across the board. Mean compares to 4.5%/3.5% in 2023 and 2.5%/2.0% in 2020.
Furloughs	34% lay off any teaching staff during summer, all those who do pay benefits through summer furlough for affected employees. 30% work a contract year. 80% can collect unemployment over furlough.
When annual grants begin	EHS: 35% August, 15% July, half spread across year. HS: 27% August, 20% July, 13% January, 40% other months.
Adjustments	August (38%), July (16%), September (13%), 33% other months.
Training Used	FHSA AC (94%), state sponsorships (75%), Reflective Supervision (69%), SSCBT Program (31%), other training (56%).

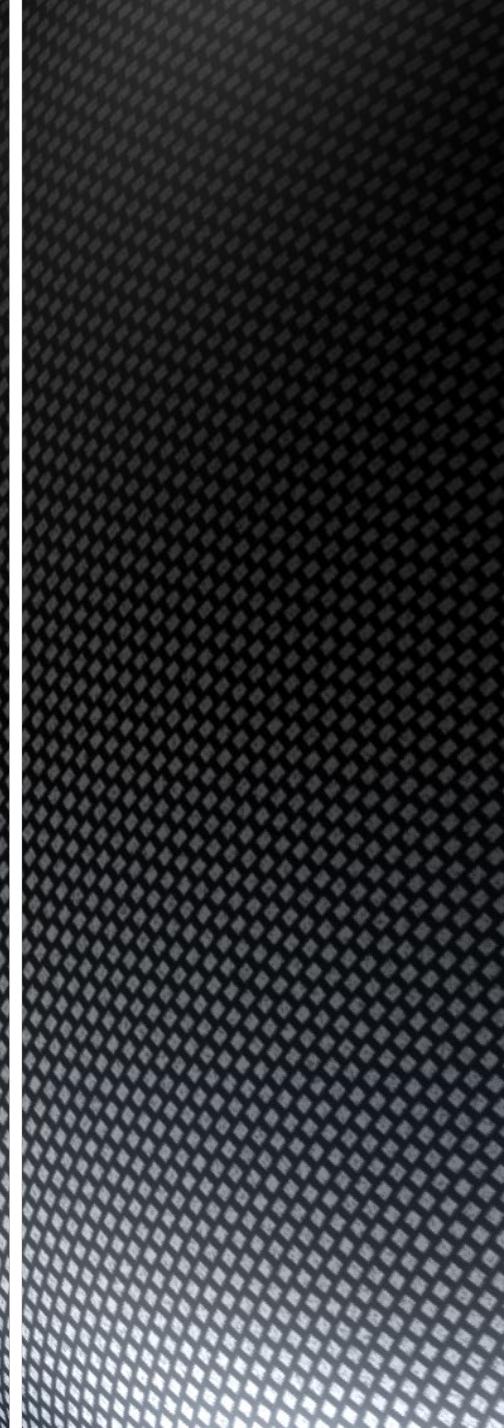
What Organization Did to Help Improve Retention, Recruitment



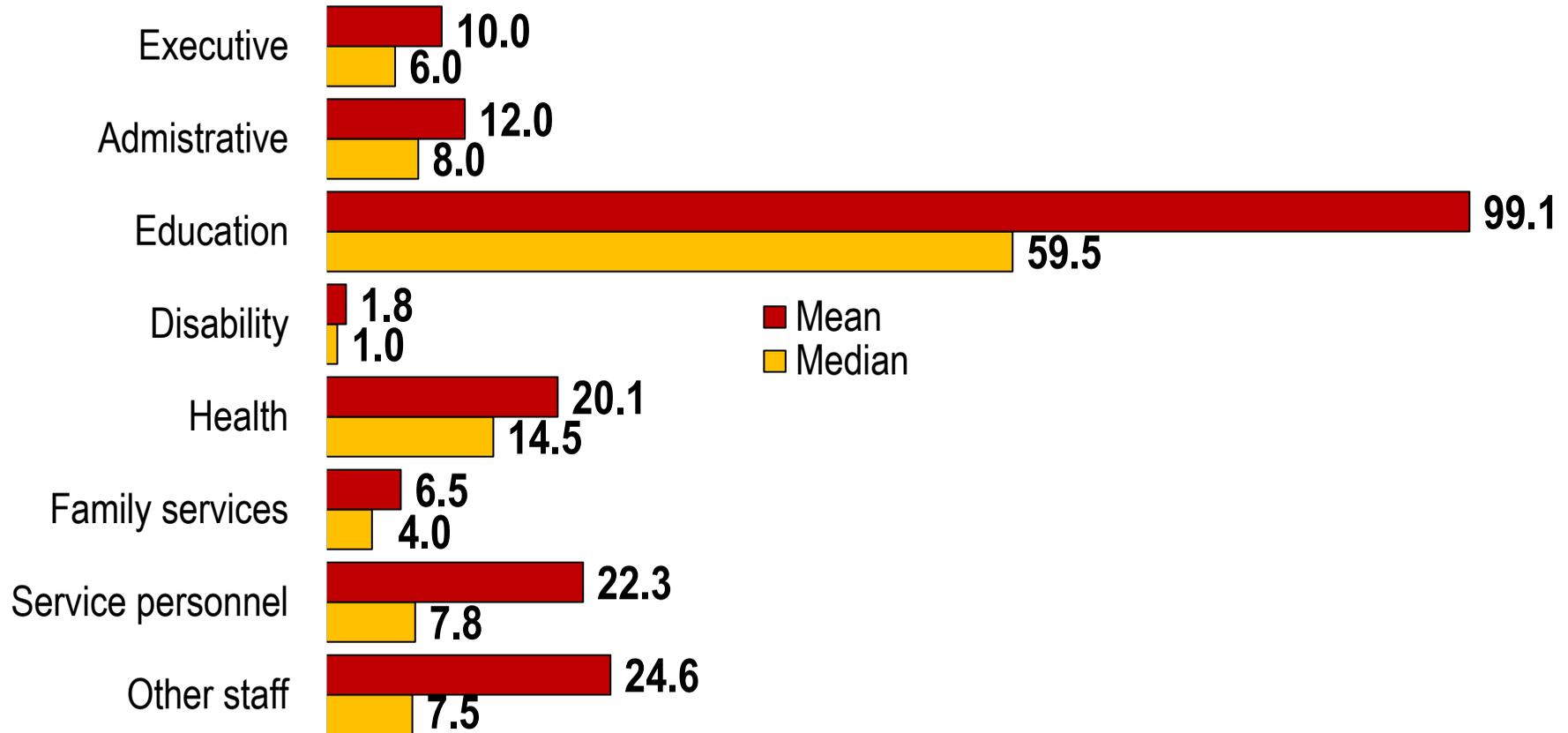
Types of Training Opportunities your Program Uses to Support/Build Staff Capacity



Staffing Structure: Select Categories



Staff in an Average Program, by Functional Area



Mean total: 177

Median/midpoint: 126

Staffing Structure, by Category

Education

3,468 staff (58% of total).

The most common positions are Teacher (Bach), Education Manager & Specialist, EHS Teacher: Center-based, Teacher Assistant CDA, Teacher (Assoc), each in 60% or more programs.

Service Personnel

780 staff (13.1%).

Facility Assistant/Maintenance Person, Cook, Custodian/Janitor in 40+%.

Family/Social Services

703 staff (11.8%).

Family Advocate/Worker, Family Services Manager (Bach), Disabilities Services Specialist/Coordinator, in 50+%.

Administrative

421 staff (7.1%).

Finance/Fiscal Clerk, Accountant, HR Director/Manager, and Executive Assistant/Secretary, AA, in 50+%.

Executive

352 staff (5.9%).

HS Program Director and Exec Director/Principal/CEO in >70%. Center Manager/Supervisor and CFO in 57% each.

Health Staff

227 staff (3.8%). Mental Health Serv Specialist/Coordinator, HS Manager, HS Coordinator, Nutrition Services Coordinator, each >40%.

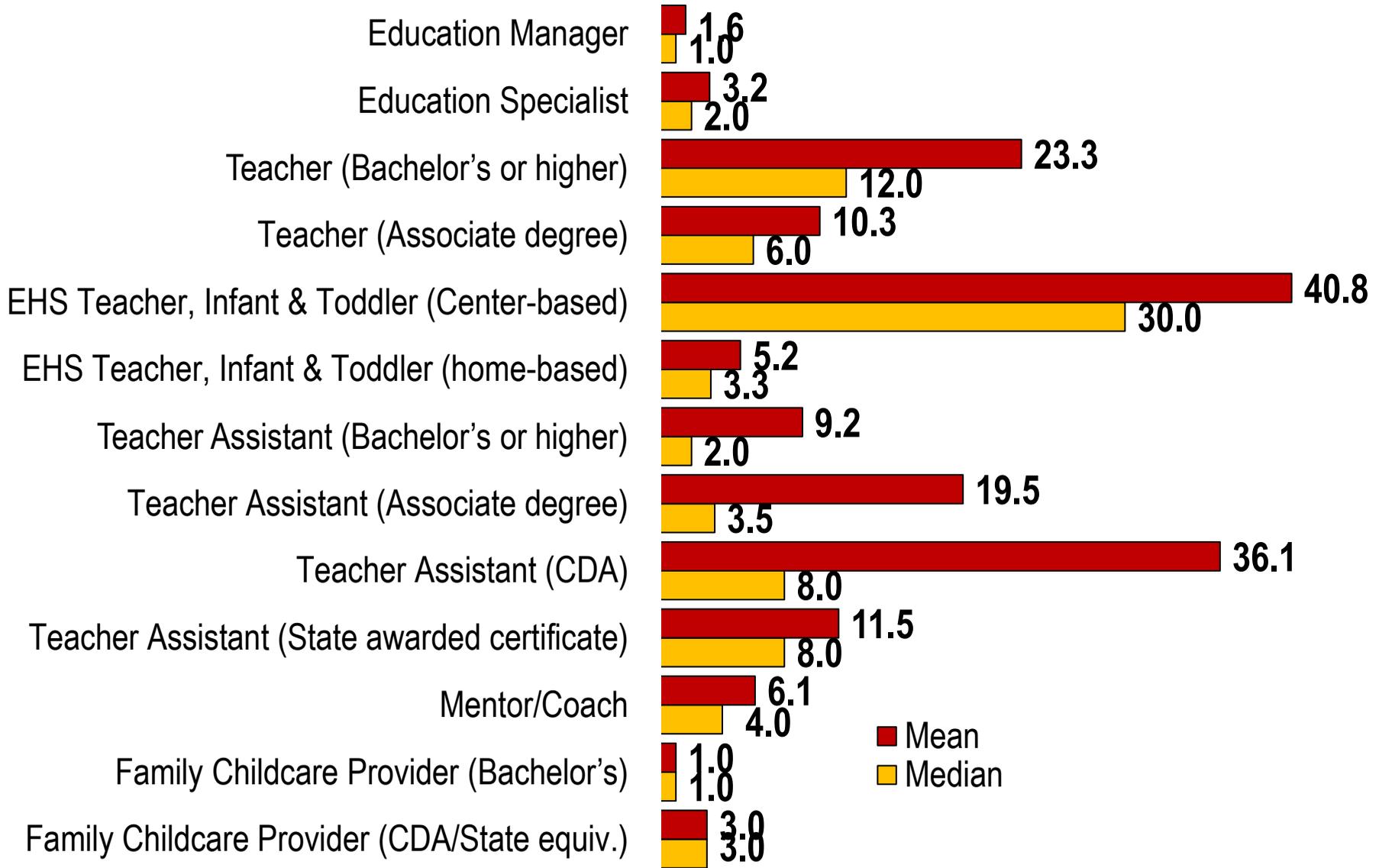
Disabilities Staff

61 (1.0%). Disabilities Services Manager in 46%.

Uncategorized

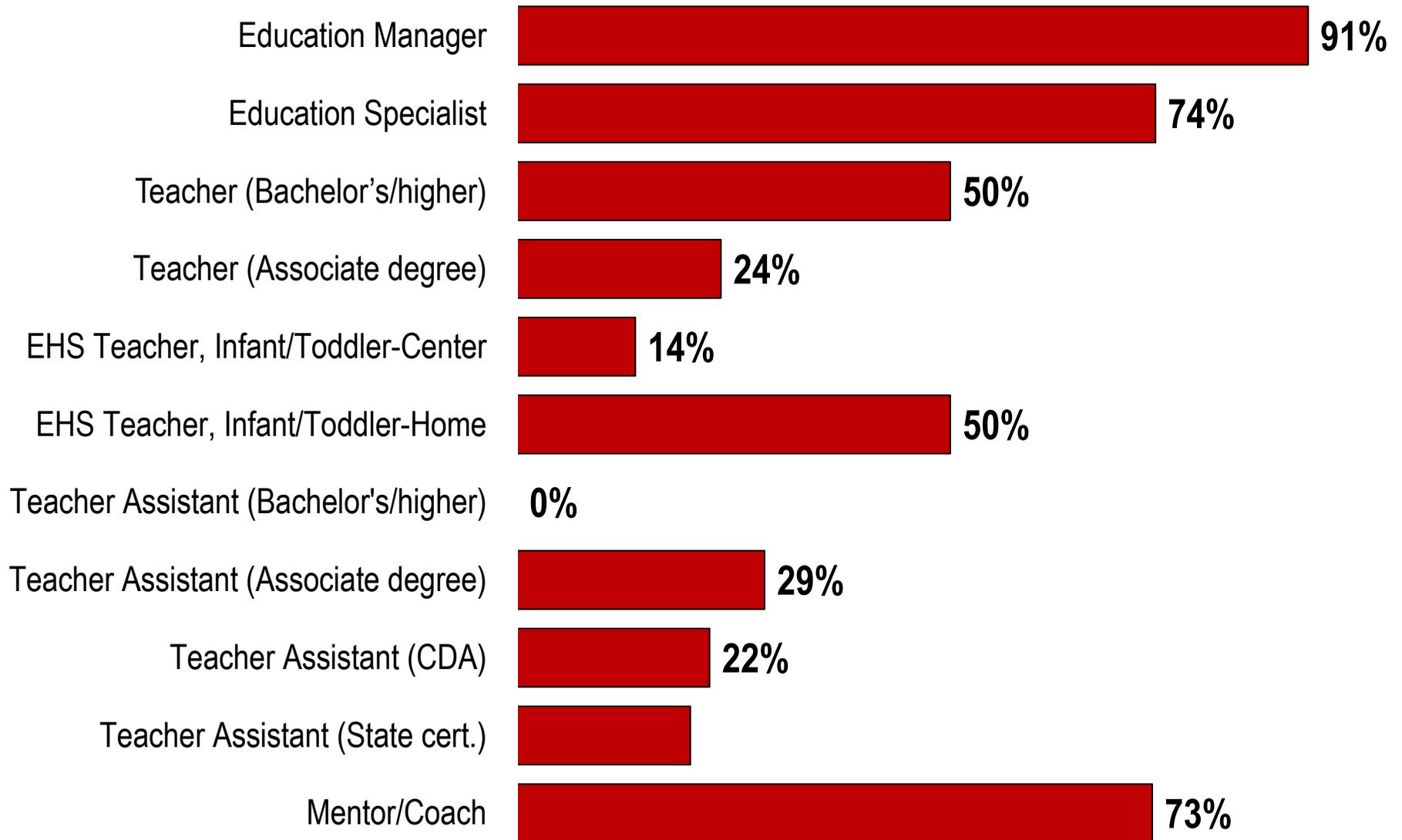
468 (7.9%). 54% of programs report other positions.

Full Time Education Staff



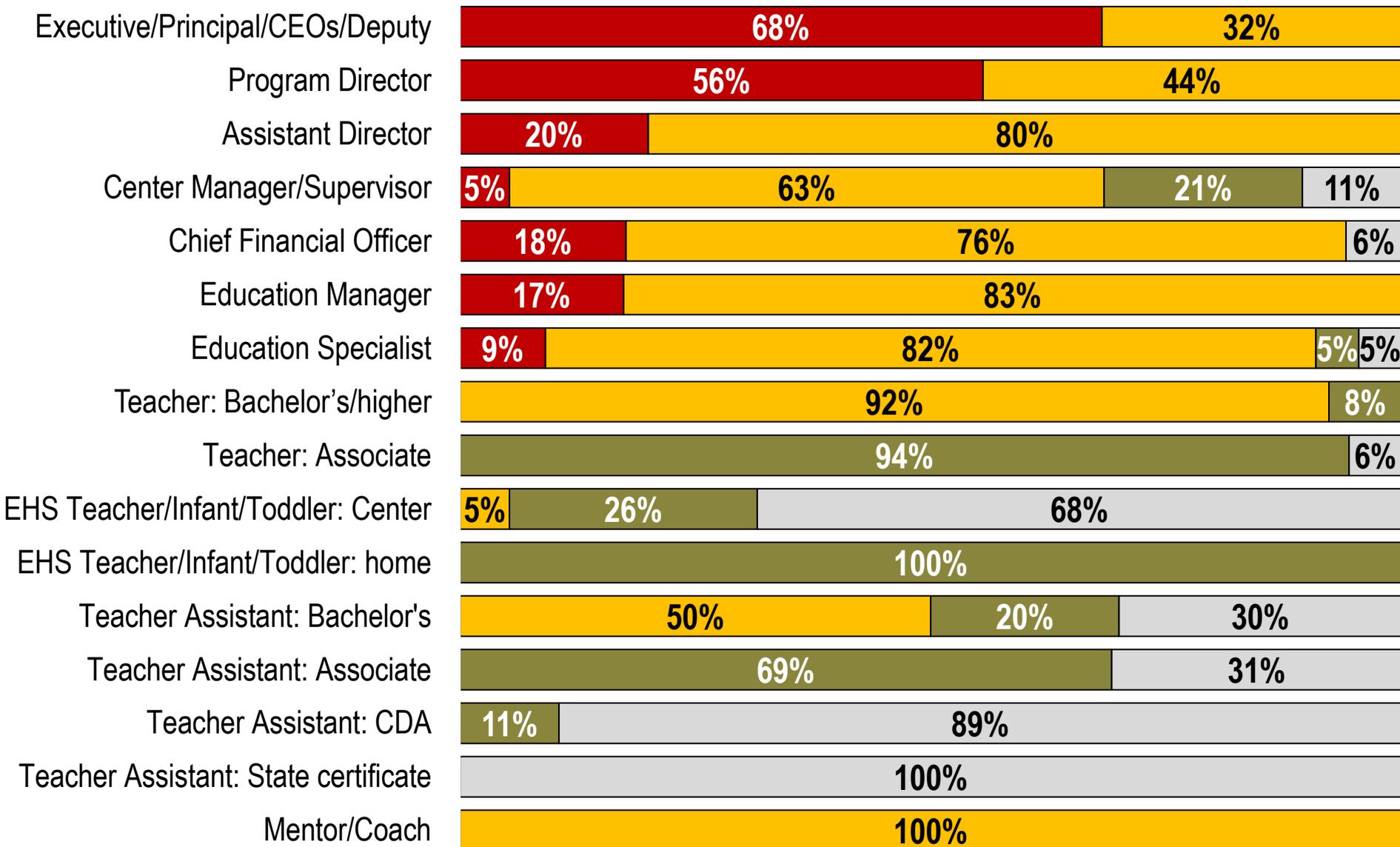
Education Staff: Paid by Annual Salary

■ Salary



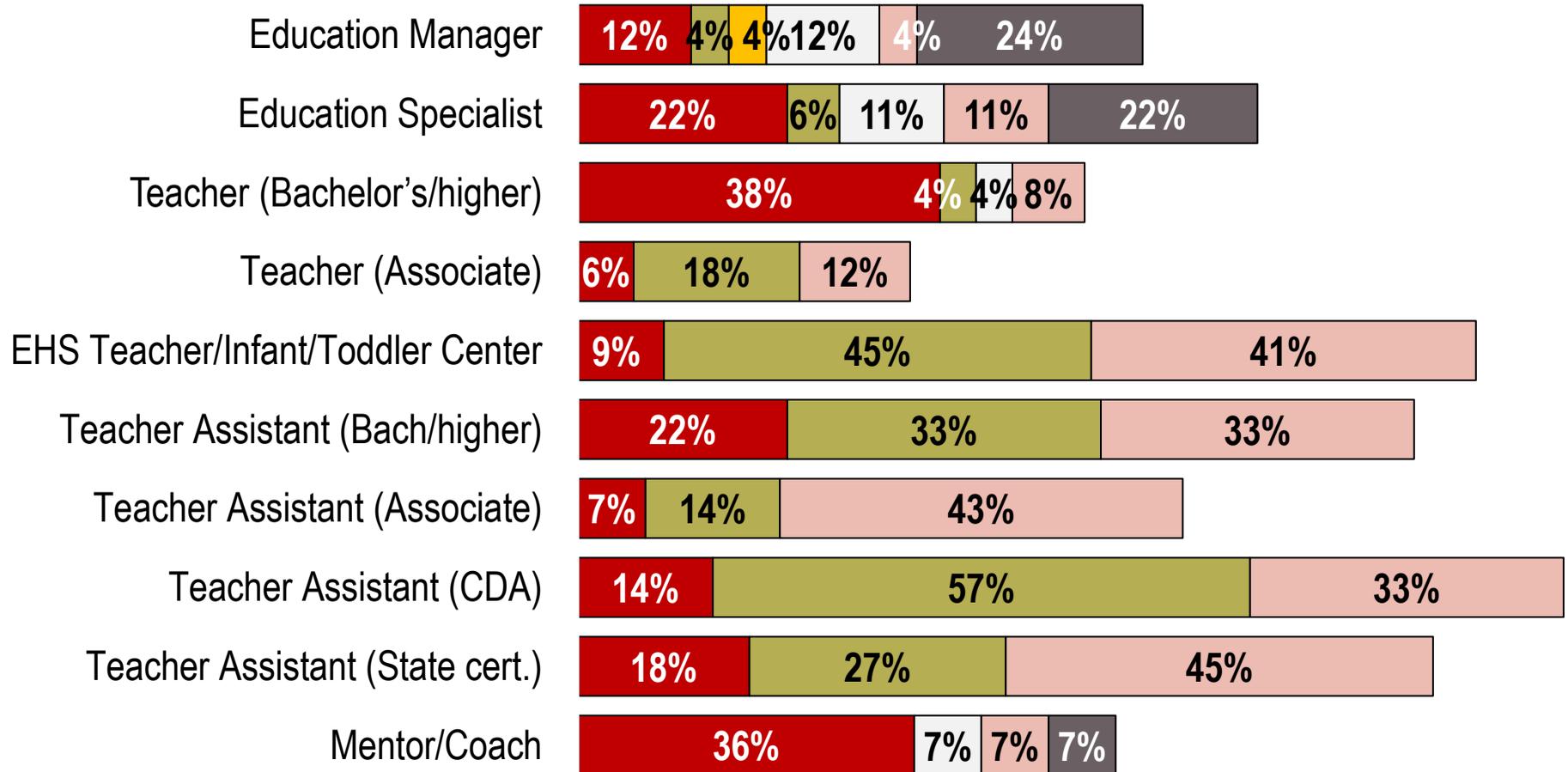
Education Level: Executive & Education Staff

■ Master's-higher
 ■ Bachelor's degree
 ■ Associate degree
 ■ H.S. diploma or GED

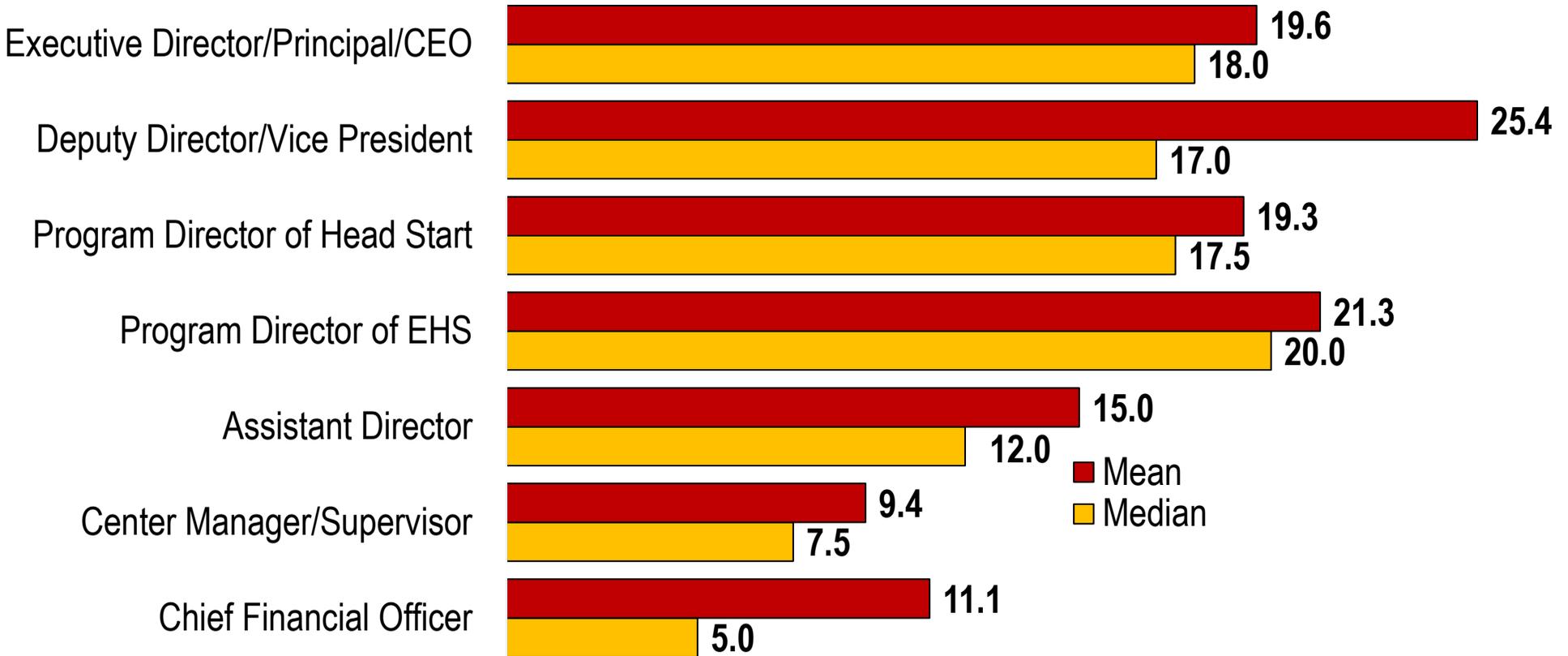


Certifications Held: Education Staff

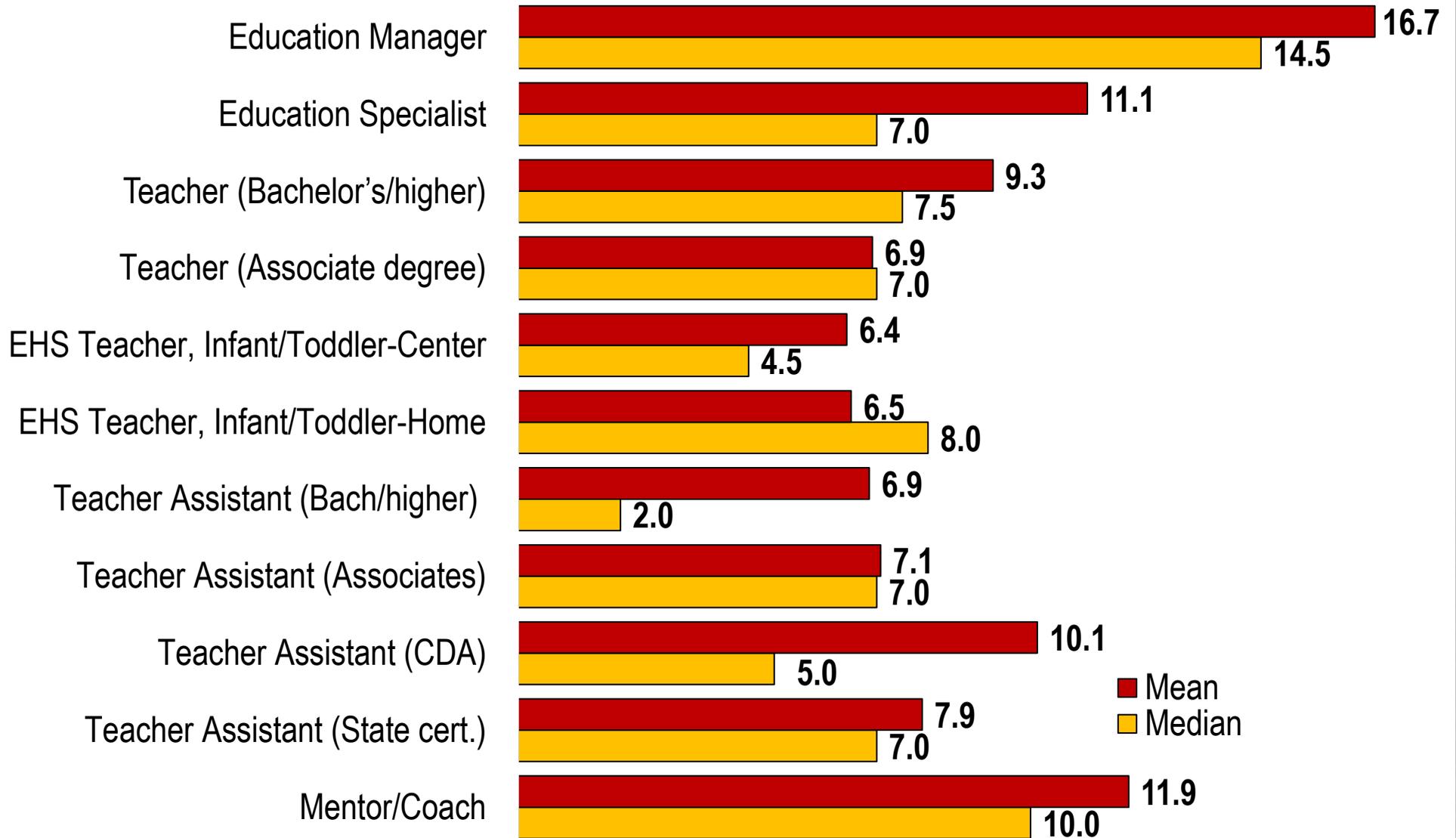
■ Temp/State Teach Cert
 ■ NCD Assoc.
 ■ Home Based cred
 ■ FL Dir Cred
 ■ FL Staff Cred
 ■ Educ Ad/Supe



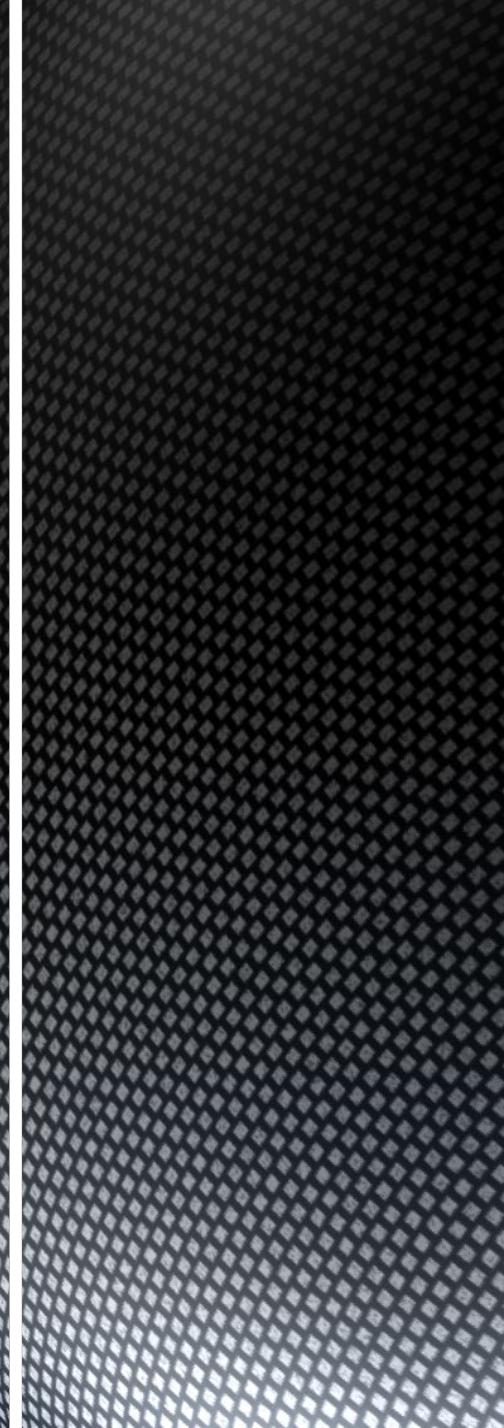
Executive Staff & Dept. Directors: Average Years in HS



Education Staff: Average Years in HS



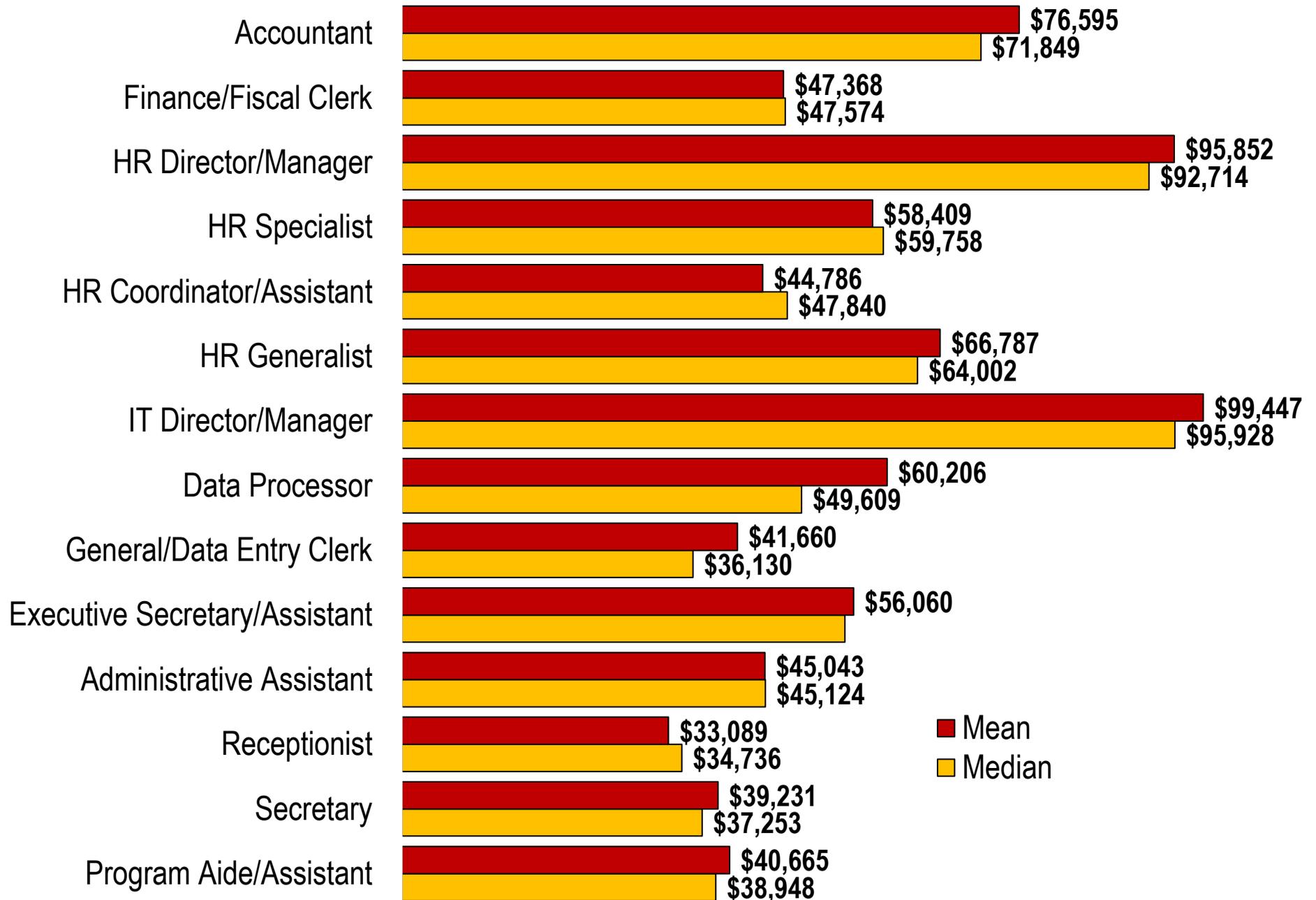
Compensation



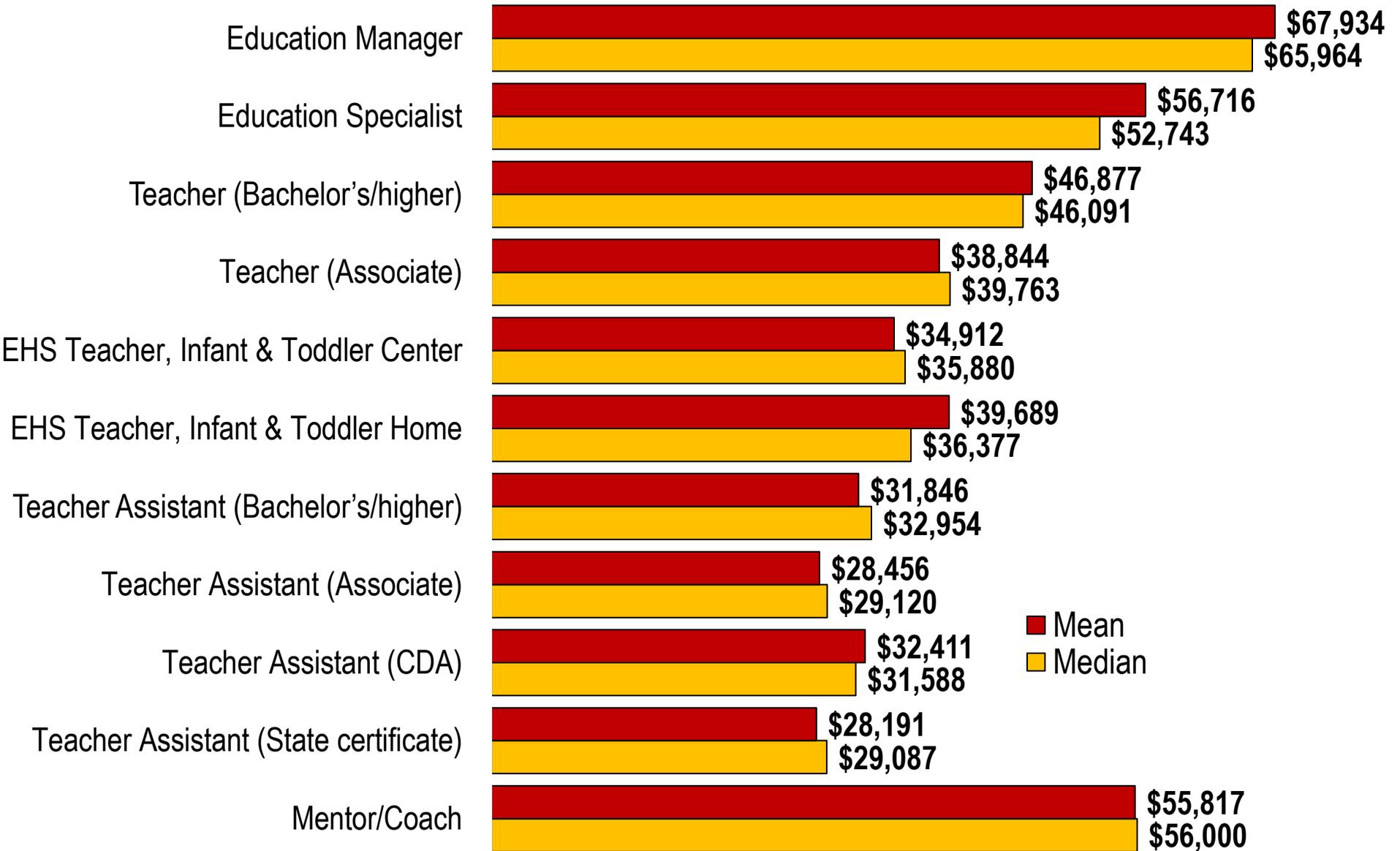
Executive Staff: Annual Salary



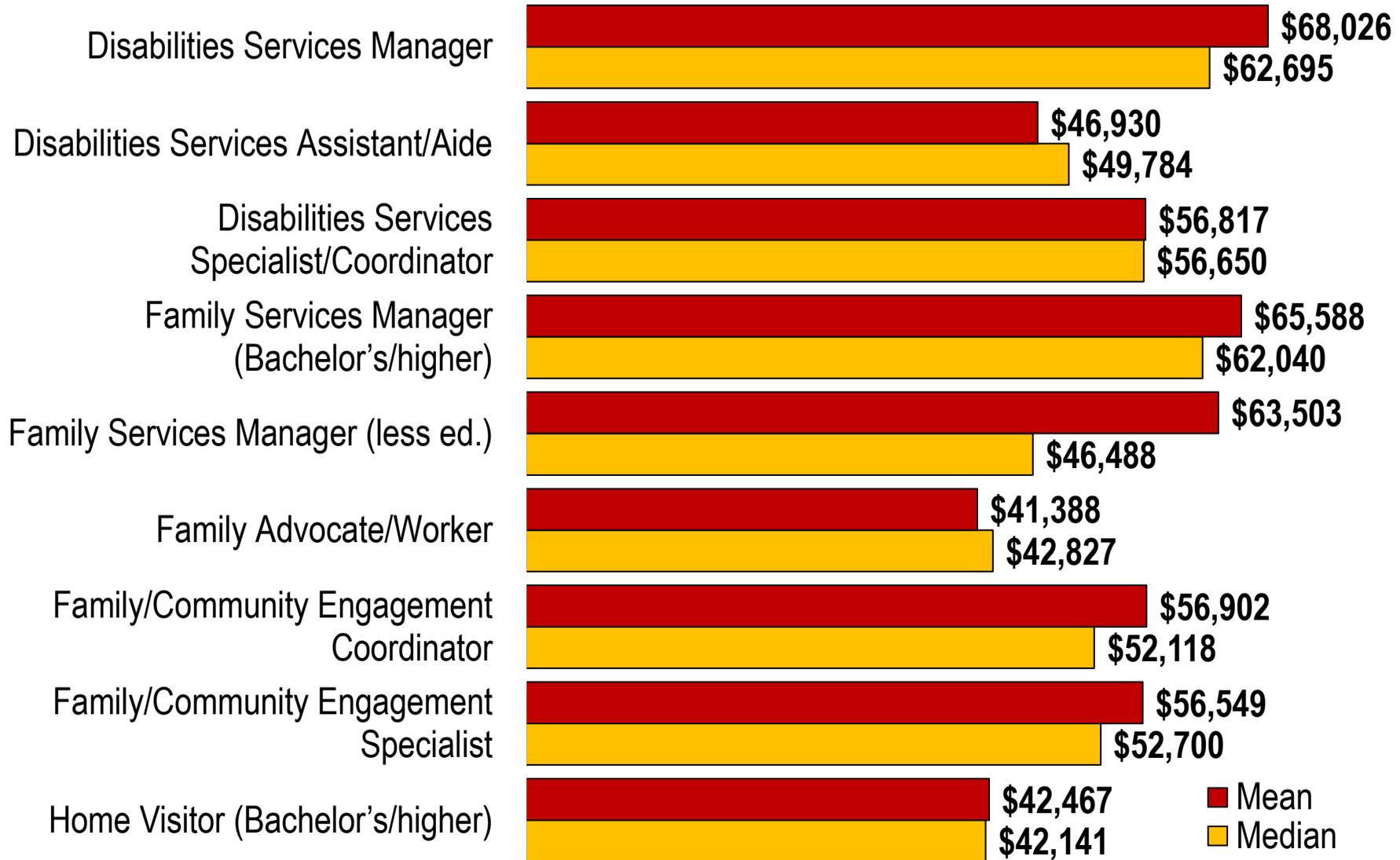
Administrative Staff: Salary



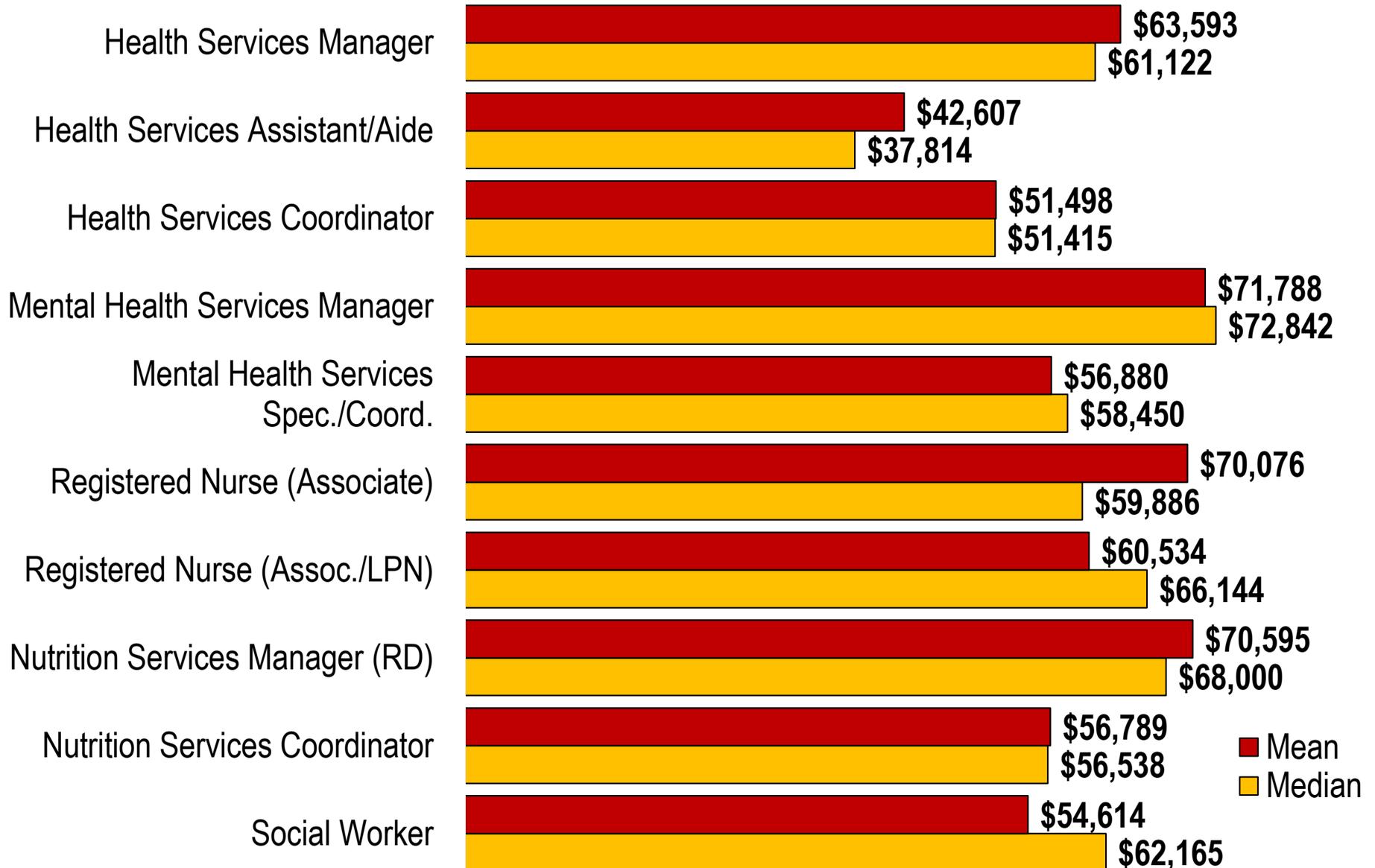
Education Staff: Salary



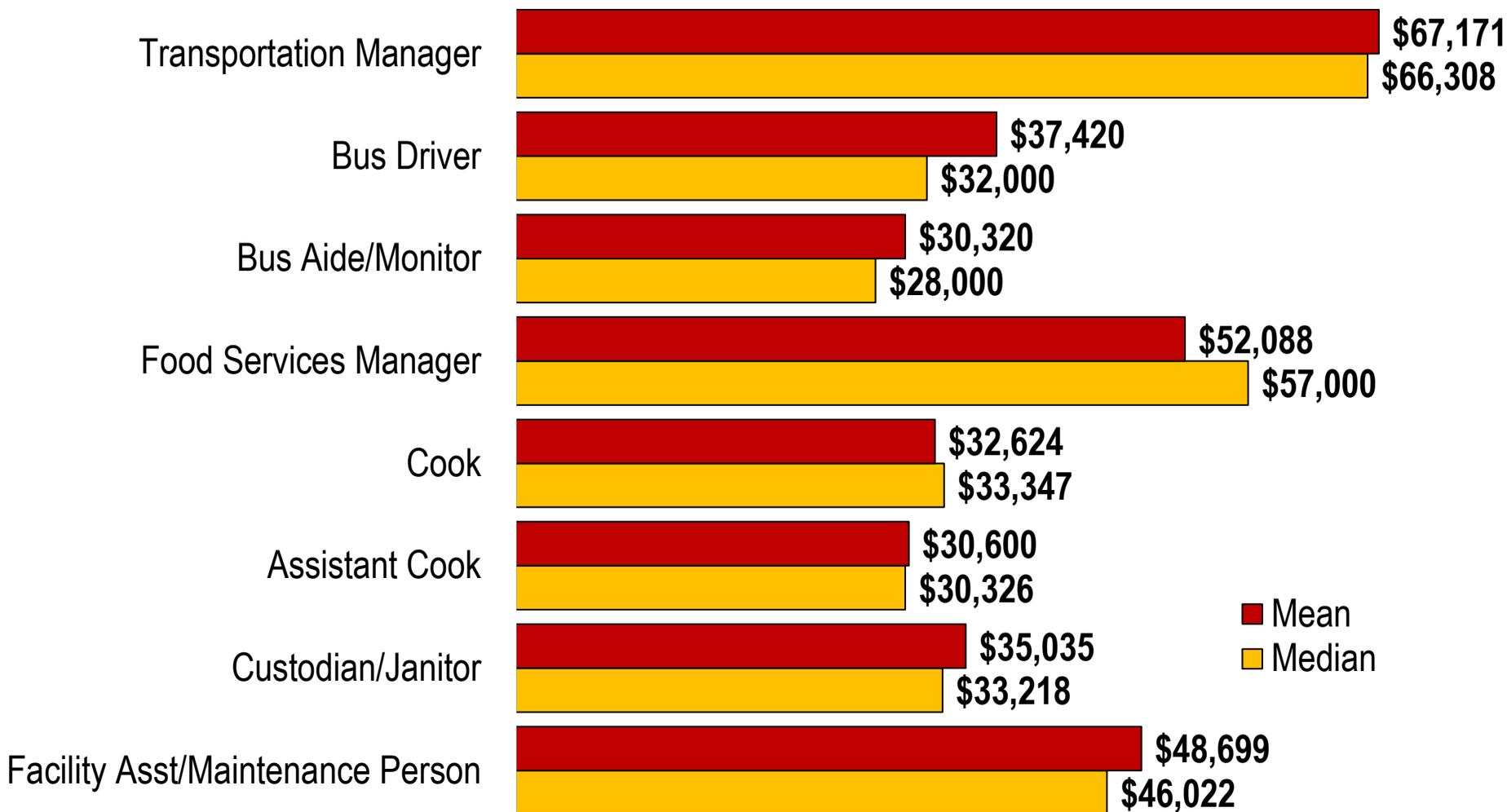
Social/Disabilities Services Staff: Salary



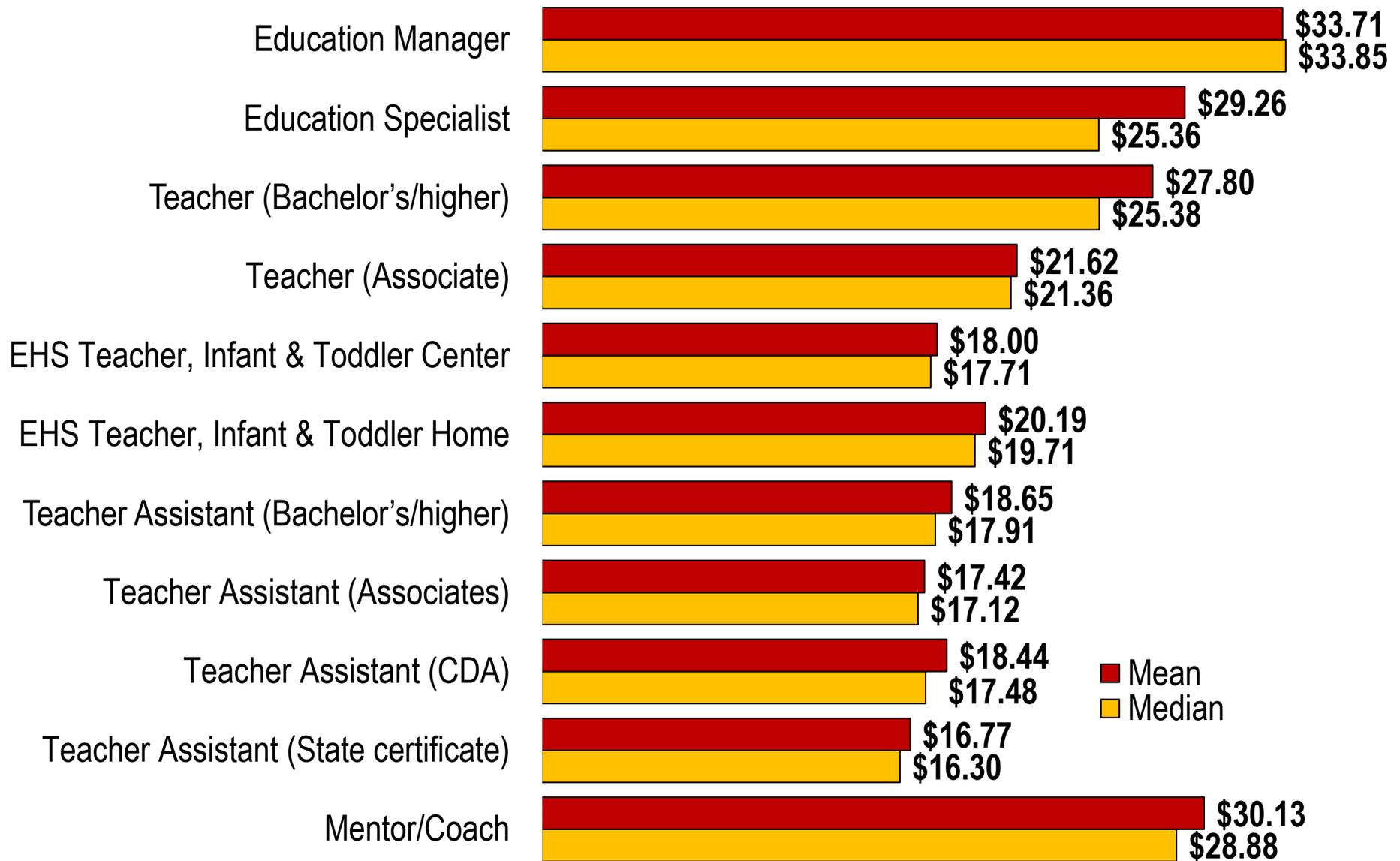
Health Staff: Salary



Service Personnel: Salary



Education Staff: Hourly Wage



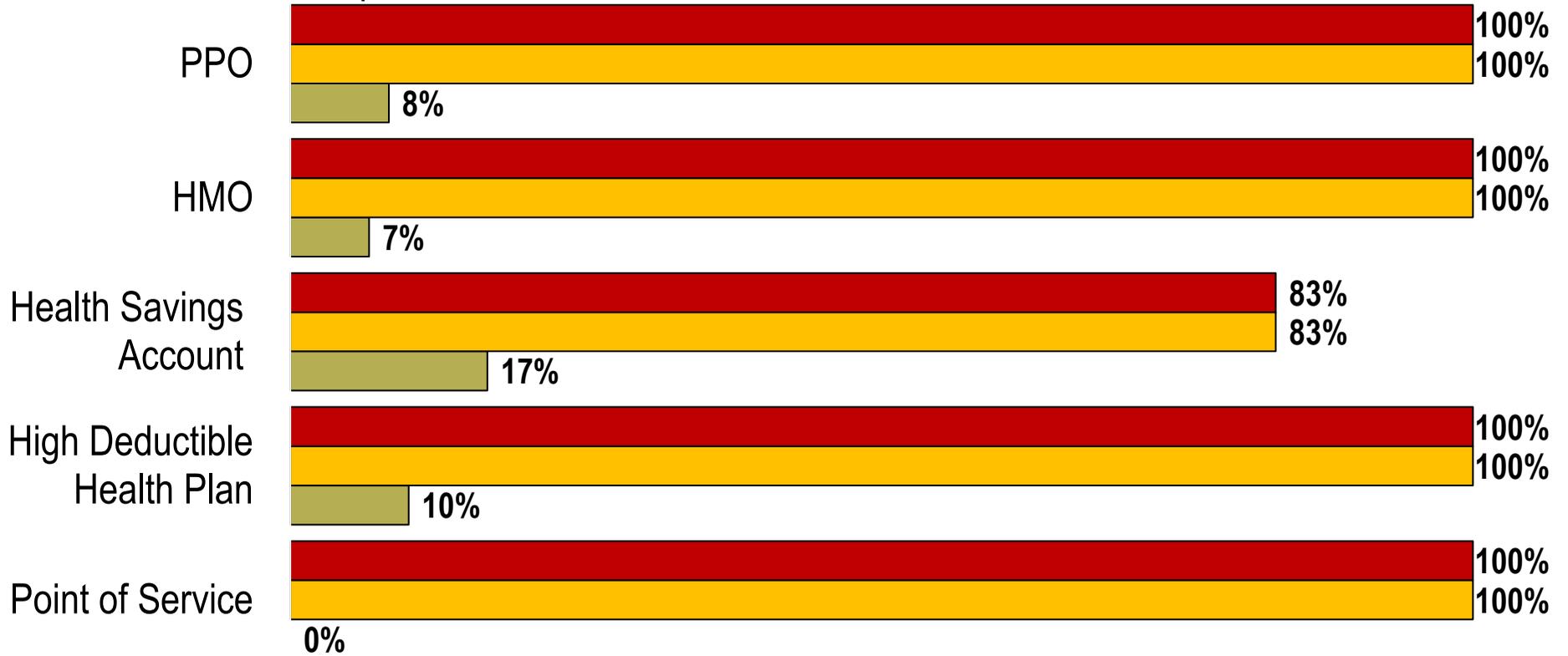
Benefits

Overview of Benefits

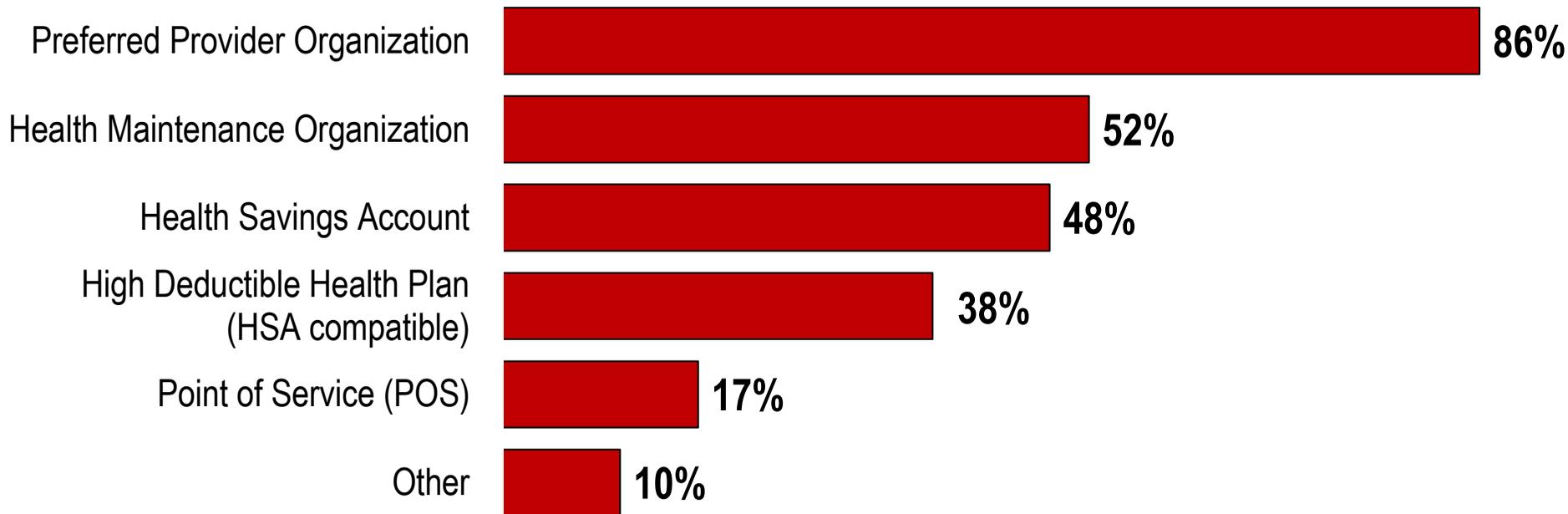
Employee Insurance, FT	Programs offer life (97%), medical (94%), dental (61%), vision (42%), long- (55%) and short-term disability (48%) insurance to their exec/mgrs. Other staff (FT teachers, other FT staff) are offered slightly less often.
Employee Insurance, PT	Programs rarely offer medical & life (19%), dental, vision, short/long-term disability (6% each) to PT year-round; none offer to PT seasonal.
Dependent/Family Insurance	Offer medical (55%), dental (42%), vision (35%), life insurance (32%) to exec/mgrs. Some offer medical to PT year-round (13%), none seasonal.
Retirement Plans	Matching (61%) or fixed (35%) 403(b) or 401(k) and/or pension (45%) FT. Match (56%/43%), fixed (19%/14%), pension (6%/14%) PT yr-round/seasonal.
Tuition Assistance	Offered by 66% of programs to other FT staff, 6% to PT seasonal.
Bonus	Offered by 29% to exec/mgt, 24% to other FT staff.
Paid Leave	At termination offered by 61% to exec/mgt, 31% to PT year-round staff.
Other Benefits (exec/mgt.)	EAP (74%), wellness (68%), work mobile (55%), parental leave (52%), license/credentials (52%), financial planning (45%), prof. member dues (48%), child care allowance (26%), external boards/committees (23%).
% of Budget	Employee benefits mean 18.7%/median 16.6% total budget.
Inflation	Total benefit cost ↑ 6.3% mean/4.9% median. Health ↑ 9.1%mean/4.7% med.
HI Participation	Mean 122 staff (61%) of total staff participate in program.
Deductibles	Individual mean \$2,750, family \$6,242 for largest health plan.

Coverage by Insurance Type

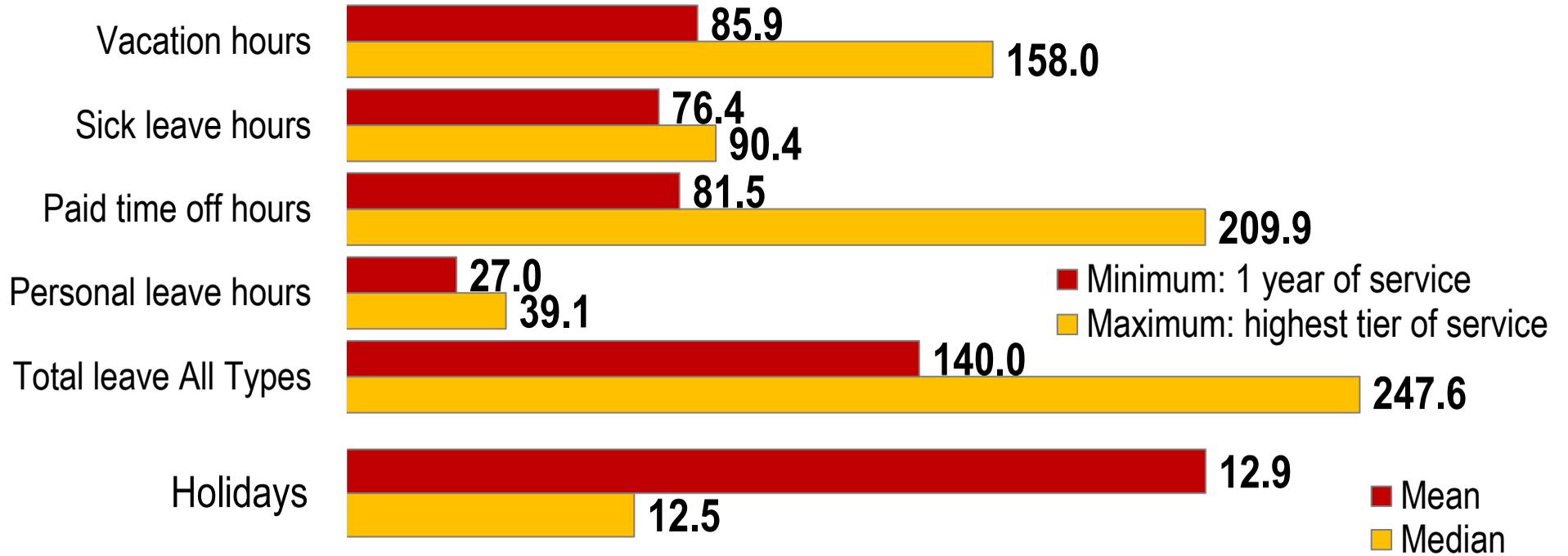
■ Spouse ■ Children ■ Other



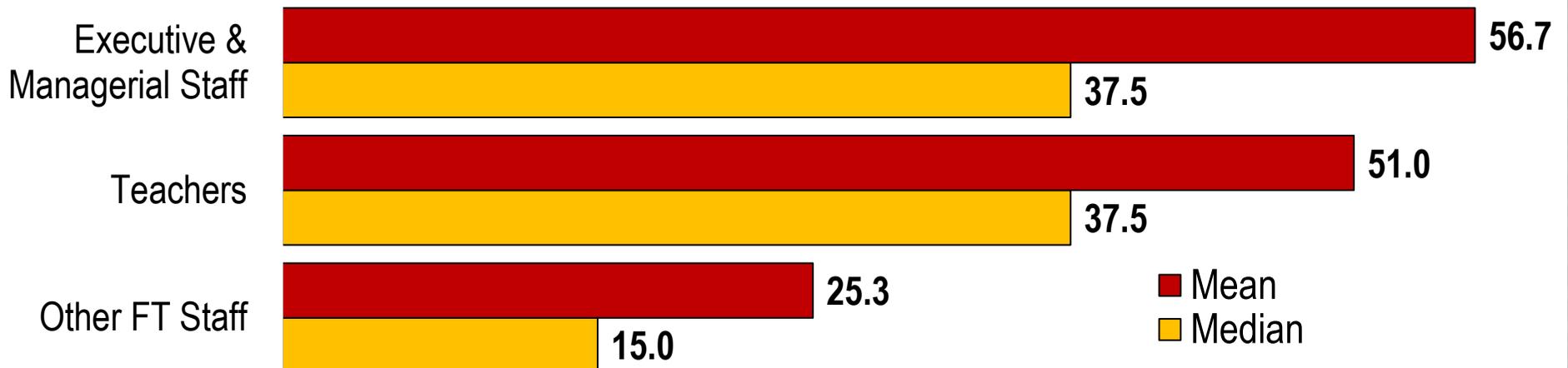
Types of Health Insurance Plans for Full-time Employees



Mean Hours of Leave: Vacation, PTO, Sick, and Total



Maximum Days of Paid Leave Offered at Termination



The background is a complex marbled paper pattern. It features swirling, organic shapes in shades of burnt orange, muted teal, and off-white/cream. The lines are intricate and fluid, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is reminiscent of traditional hand-marbled paper used in bookbinding.

The End