

THE 2012 HDI SUPPORT CENTER SALARY REPORT

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More than 70 percent of the technical service and support industry expects to be hiring in the next twelve months, either filling positions as they become open or expanding to create new positions. Recent HDI research has confirmed that there is a war for talent underway, and that organizations are having difficulty filling support positions with qualified employees. Compensation is one of the challenges organizations face when seeking new talent.

In 2011, 34 percent of support centers were anticipating salary increases within the year. In 2012, this is down slightly to 32 percent; two percent expect a salary decrease in the next twelve months, while 55 percent expect salaries to remain about the same.

The 2012 survey results indicate that salaries have increased by an average of two percent since 2011 (based on US data). However, even with this small increase, current average salaries are closer to the lower end of the salary range than the higher end for most positions. For example, the salary for a level 1 support professional ranges from \$35,132 (average low end) to \$48,815 (average high end). Yet the average current salary for level 1 support is \$41,048, which is \$925 less than the midpoint of the salary range. For every position, with the exception of support center manager and director, the current average salary is closer to the lower end of the salary ranges reported.

In this report, average salaries (US data) are broken out for each position by the size of support center (based on number of customers supported). Consistent with previous years, the results revealed that smaller support centers (fewer than 2,000 customers) pay more at each staff level, though director-level salaries do not appear to be related to support center size. Average US salaries are also broken out by the type of support the support center provides (internal only, external only, or blended) and the region of the United States in which the support center is located.

THE FIFTY STATES FALL INTO THREE REGIONS, AS FOLLOWS:

WEST: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington

CENTRAL: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

EAST: Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, DC, and West Virginia

Consistent with previous years, support staffs located in the western region are typically paid more than those in the central and eastern regions.

The number-one factor that determines salary increases for call screener/dispatch, customer service representatives, and level 1 support is customer service skills. Customer service skills drop to the number-two spot, after quality of work, for level 2 support and desktop support technicians. For level 3 support, customer service skills make the top-five list, but are beaten out by technical knowledge, quality of work, increased job responsibilities, and technical certifications. For team leads and above, management and leadership skills are the top factors influencing salaries.

In 58 percent of support centers, managers receive bonuses, compared to 40 percent for support staffs. An additional four percent of support centers will be adding bonuses in the next twelve months; six percent are increasing bonuses, while nearly four percent (3.5%) are decreasing or eliminating them. Most organizations (76%) base manager bonuses on the company or organization's performance, while 60 percent base them on individual performance. Department/team performance is also used to determine bonuses for both staff and management (50% and 40%, respectively), though this practice is less common.

This report focuses on compensation practices for the technical service and support industry. The data includes all survey responses, except where specific salary amounts are reported. All compensation amounts are reported for US data only and in US dollars.

SUPPORT CENTER JOB TITLES AND DEFINITIONS

CALL SCREENER/DISPATCH: This position collects information from the customer, including contact information and details about the incident or service request, and then routes the ticket to level 1 support or another appropriate contact. Call screeners/dispatchers differ from level 1 support in that they are not expected to resolve problems or answer questions.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE: The customer support professionals who receive and handle customer inquiries, most often for nontechnical issues. They are expected to provide answers to common questions, perform routine procedures to resolve a high percentage of inquiries, and route more-complex issues to a higher level of support.

LEVEL 1 SUPPORT/SUPPORT CENTER ANALYST: The frontline technical support professionals who receive and handle tickets. These professionals are responsible for providing customers with information, restoring service, providing specific services, and escalating tickets to a higher level of support. These individuals are typically technical generalists.

LEVEL 2 SUPPORT: The technical support professionals who handle tickets that are escalated from level 1. These professionals require greater technical skills and/or access rights than level 1 support personnel. They are typically technical specialists and may also be responsible for participating in root cause analysis of problems. (Does not include desktop support technicians, who are reported on separately in this survey.)

DESKTOP SUPPORT TECHNICIAN: The technical support professionals who respond to tickets escalated by the support center that are related to customer equipment; additional skills, knowledge, tools, or authority are required. They may resolve incidents remotely, at the user's location, or via equipment returns. Responsibilities may include hardware and software deployments, moves, adds, and changes.

LEVEL 3 SUPPORT: The technical support professionals who build, maintain, and/or enhance technical products and services. These professionals are typically "engineer"-level staff. They are involved when the ticket cannot be resolved by either level 1 or level 2, and when there is high business impact or urgency. Level 3 support is commonly either an internal engineering/development team or an external vendor.

SUPPORT CENTER TEAM LEAD: The technical support professionals who oversee the day-to-day activities of a team of support staff. These professionals serve as the communication link between the team and the manager, as a coach or mentor to support staff, and are often the first point of internal escalation within the support center. Other possible titles include coordinator, supervisor, or senior analyst. (Previously referred to as support supervisor.)

SUPPORT CENTER MANAGER: The management professionals who manage a team of support center analysts and/or team leads while executing the operational and tactical plans of the support center and satisfying customer and business needs. Their responsibilities may include recruiting and hiring, monitoring and managing performance, monitoring and reporting metrics, and ensuring that process are followed and service levels are met. Other possible titles include help desk manager or service desk manager. This position typically reports to the support center director (defined below).

DIRECTOR OF DESKTOP SUPPORT: The management professionals who manage a team of desktop support technicians and/or team leads while executing the operational and tactical plans of desktop support and satisfying customer and business needs. Responsibilities may include recruiting and hiring, monitoring and managing performance, monitoring and reporting metrics, auditing, and approving purchases.

SUPPORT CENTER DIRECTOR: The management professionals who are responsible for leading the support organization as a whole, rather than a specific support center. Their responsibilities may include overall service delivery, strategic direction, business alignment, financial accountability, and performance reporting. In addition to the support center(s), this person may also oversee other departments involved in technical support, such as desktop support. Other possible titles for this position include senior director, senior manager, or vice president. Support center managers report directly to this individual. (Previously referred to as director of support.)

TOP FIVE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE SALARY INCREASES FOR EACH POSITION:

CALL SCREENER/DISPATCH



CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE



LEVEL 1 SUPPORT



LEVEL 2 SUPPORT



DESKTOP SUPPORT TECHNICIAN



LEVEL 3 SUPPORT



SUPPORT CENTER TEAM LEAD



SUPPORT CENTER MANAGER



DESKTOP SUPPORT MANAGER

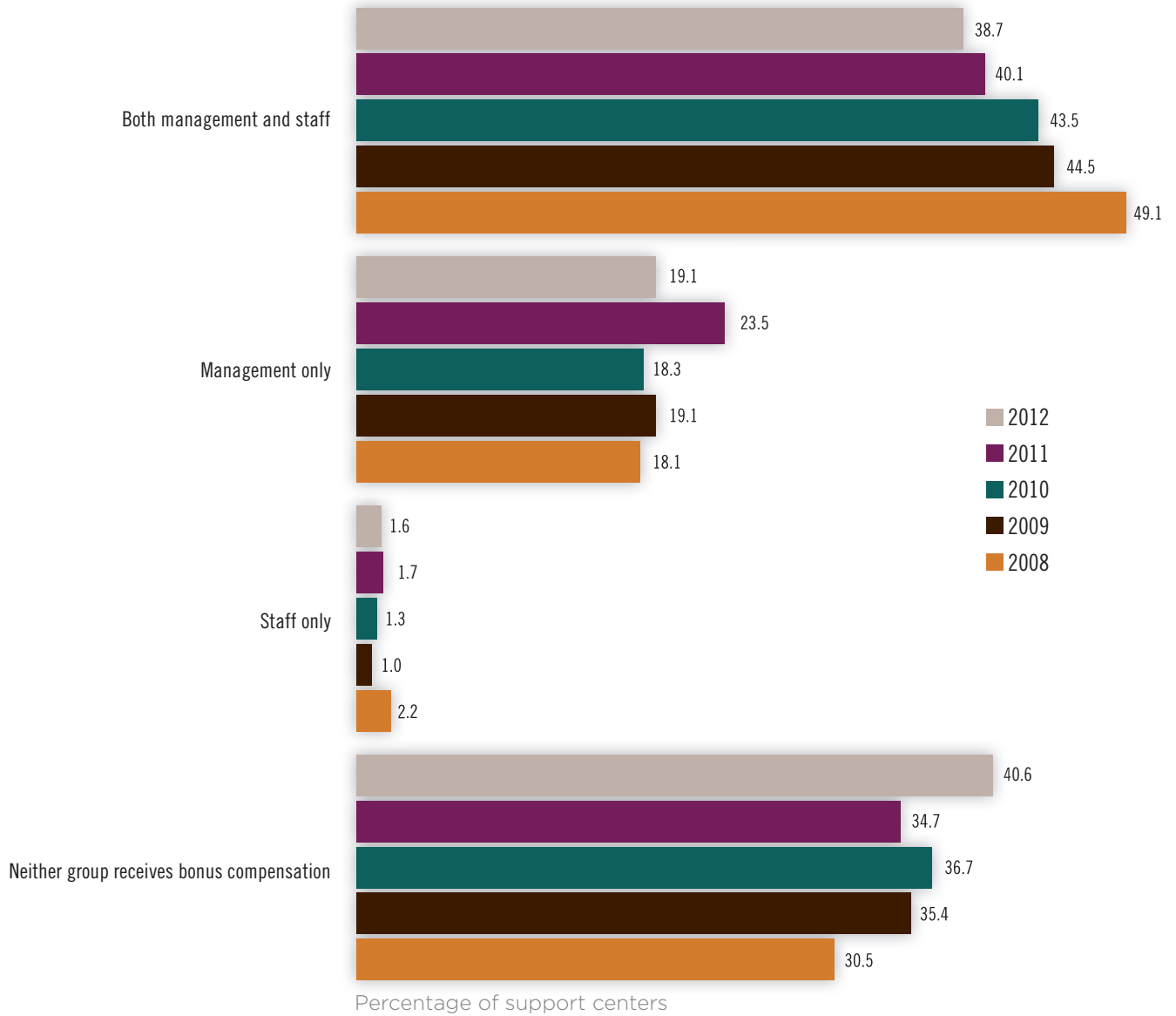


SUPPORT CENTER DIRECTOR



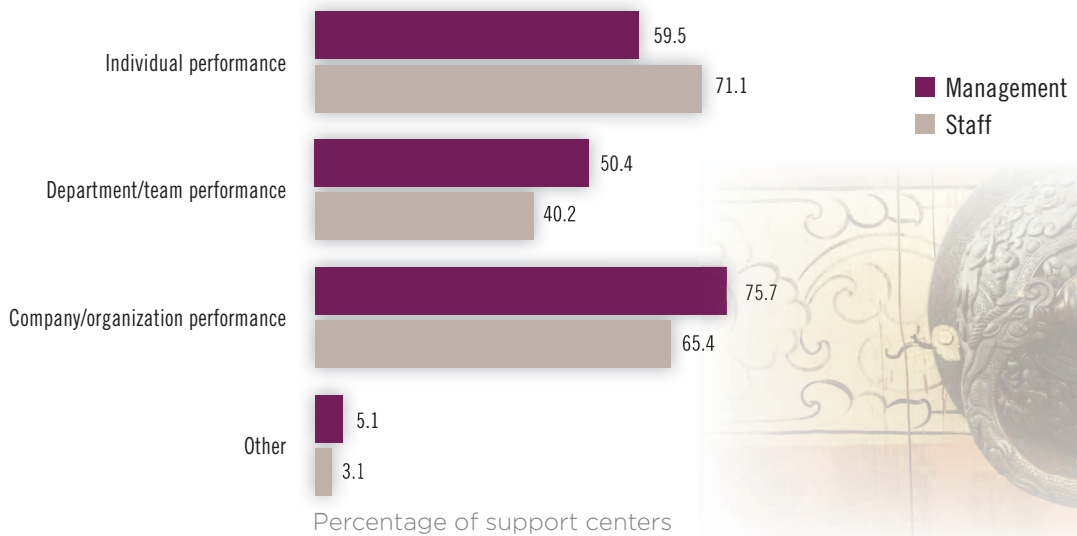
Percentage that selected each factor

BONUSES ARE ISSUED TO:



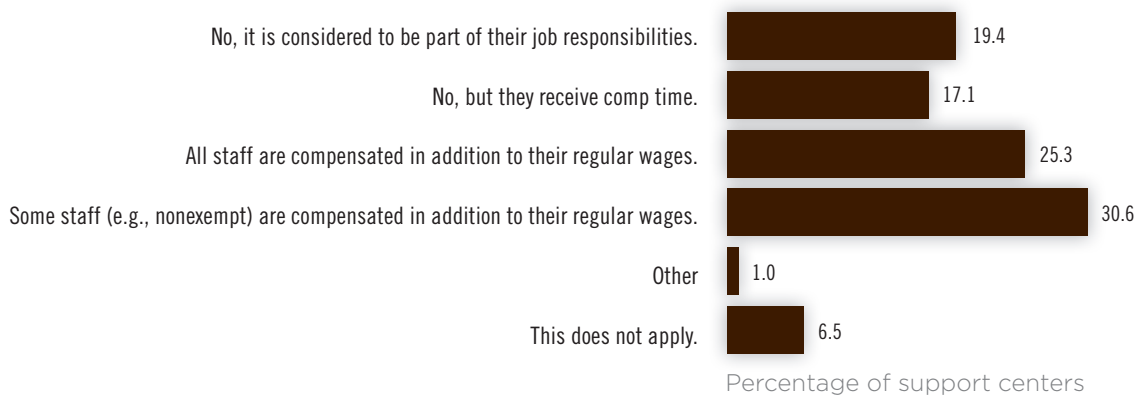
OF THOSE ORGANIZATIONS THAT OFFER THEM, BONUSES ARE BASED ON:

(RESPONDENTS WERE ALLOWED TO SELECT ALL APPLICABLE OPTIONS.)





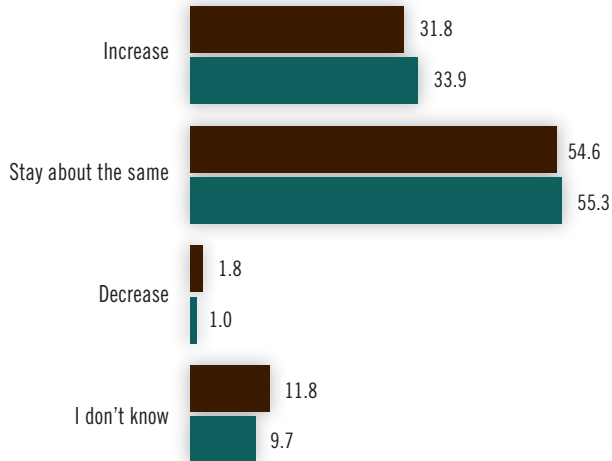
PERCENTAGE OF SUPPORT CENTERS THAT PROVIDE MONETARY COMPENSATION FOR WORK PERFORMED OUTSIDE OF AN EMPLOYEE'S NORMALLY SCHEDULED WORKING HOURS (E.G., ON-CALL COVERAGE, HOLIDAY COVERAGE, ETC.):



SUPPORT CENTER COMPENSATION PLANS FOR THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS:

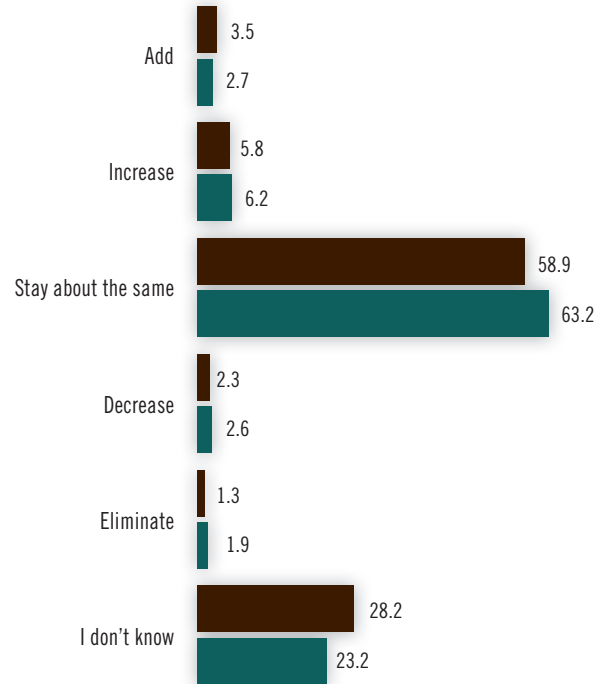
■ 2012 ■ 2011

SALARIES



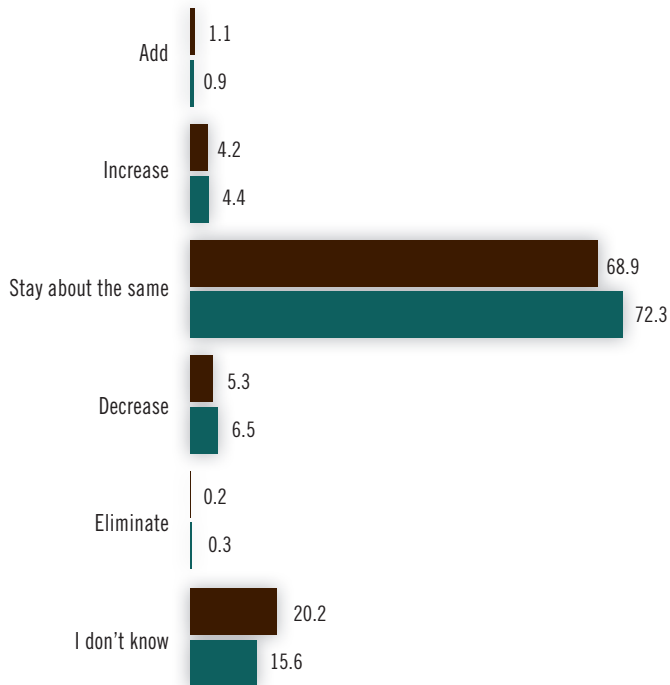
Percentage of support centers

BONUSES



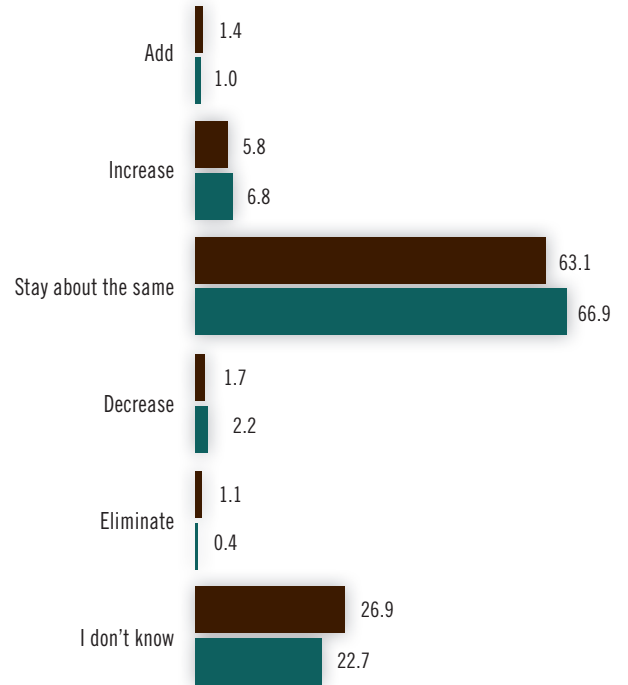
Percentage of support centers

BENEFITS



Percentage of support centers

PAY DIFFERENTIALS



Percentage of support centers

AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARIES (US DATA ONLY):

JOB LEVEL	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	Average Annual Salary Range		CURRENT AVERAGE SALARY
		LOW END	HIGH END	
Call Screener/Dispatch	78	\$29,236	\$38,954	\$33,344
Customer Service Representative	108	\$32,229	\$44,899	\$37,343
Level 1 Support	459	\$35,132	\$48,815	\$41,048
Level 2 Support	357	\$42,275	\$58,735	\$49,655
Desktop Support Technician	281	\$40,946	\$56,567	\$48,080
Level 3 Support	241	\$53,046	\$73,516	\$62,922
Support Center Team Lead	312	\$51,909	\$68,339	\$59,520
Support Center Manager	411	\$68,277	\$88,965	\$79,209
Desktop Support Manager	135	\$67,587	\$89,034	\$78,181
Support Center Director	228	\$88,226	\$117,407	\$103,632

AVERAGE CURRENT SALARY BY REGION (US DATA ONLY):

	EAST	CENTRAL	WEST
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	274	388	87
Call Screener/Dispatch	limited data	\$31,871	limited data
Customer Service Representative	\$37,886	\$37,069	limited data
Level 1 Support	\$40,721	\$39,678	\$48,799
Level 2 Support	\$48,952	\$48,469	\$57,202
Desktop Support Technician	\$48,513	\$47,483	\$51,142
Level 3 Support	\$64,327	\$61,414	\$64,946
Support Center Team Lead	\$59,625	\$56,386	\$71,604
Support Center Manager	\$81,179	\$76,250	\$86,820
Desktop Support Manager	\$82,568	\$73,887	limited data
Support Center Director	\$108,263	\$97,103	limited data



CURRENT AVERAGE SALARY BY SIZE OF CUSTOMER BASE (US DATA ONLY):

	Small (fewer than 2,000 customers)	Medium (2,000–10,000 customers)	Large (more than 10,000 customers)
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	200	255	211
Call Screener/Dispatch	limited data	limited data	limited data
Customer Service Representative	limited data	\$38,941	\$33,250
Level 1 Support	\$43,862	\$41,867	\$39,341
Level 2 Support	\$52,831	\$50,836	\$47,854
Desktop Support Technician	\$49,443	\$48,210	\$46,177
Level 3 Support	\$64,514	\$63,082	\$62,012
Support Center Team Lead	\$68,293	\$58,595	\$56,538
Support Center Manager	\$84,259	\$78,472	\$77,095
Desktop Support Manager	limited data	\$78,923	\$78,217
Support Center Director	\$102,500	\$101,748	\$102,772

CURRENT AVERAGE SALARY BY TYPE OF SUPPORT (US DATA ONLY):

	Internal only	External only	Blended
NUMBER OF RESPONSES	273	47	234
Call Screener/Dispatch	limited data	limited data	\$32,744
Customer Service Representative	limited data	limited data	\$37,282
Level 1 Support	\$41,436	\$40,068	\$41,596
Level 2 Support	\$48,330	\$50,657	\$50,988
Desktop Support Technician	\$49,124	limited data	\$47,308
Level 3 Support	\$62,075	limited data	\$64,068
Support Center Team Lead	\$61,349	\$58,380	\$58,637
Support Center Manager	\$82,031	\$80,416	\$76,924
Desktop Support Manager	\$80,816	limited data	\$77,215
Support Center Director	\$107,298	limited data	\$99,377

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