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positions: four in tax and four in audit.

Jason Bramwell • Oct. 03, 2023



Starting salaries for roles in tax services are projected to increase an average of 3.6% in 2024, while audit and assurance services will see starting salaries likely go up an average of 3.8% next year, according to a *CPA Practice Advisor* analysis of public accounting pay data provided by specialized staffing firm Robert Half.

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candidates and 60% noting that it gives their firm a competitive advantage.

While salaries are expected to rise in 2024, increases are likely to be more measured than in recent years, according to Robert Half.

“For some professionals, that might be a reason to look for other opportunities. This is not lost on hiring managers, many of whom continue to increase compensation to retain key staff and better compete for top talent in a tight hiring market,” Robert Half said in the salary guide.

CPA Practice Advisor analyzed starting salary projections from Robert Half's 2023 and 2024 salary guides to determine how much average starting pay is expected to increase next year for each of the eight positions featured. The results were:

Tax services

- **Senior manager/director:** 7.8%
- **Manager:** 0%
- **Senior tax associate:** 4%
- **Tax associate:** 2.8%

Overall average increase: 3.6%

Audit and assurance services

- **Senior manager/managing director:** 4%
- **Manager:** 9.4%
- **Senior associate:** 0.9%
- **Associate:** 1.1%

Overall average increase: 3.8%

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- associated with the role.
- **75th percentile:** Value to the organization goes far beyond the ability to perform normal job duties; has rare qualifications that enable consistent contribution in unique ways; ready for next career level when available.

Below are the projected starting salaries in public accounting for 2024, according to Robert Half (25th/50th/75th):

Senior Manager/Director Tax Services	\$124,500	\$159,500	\$192,000
Manager of Tax Services	\$92,750	\$112,750	\$131,000
Senior Tax Associate	\$67,250	\$83,250	\$93,250
Tax Associate	\$52,750	\$64,750	\$74,750
Senior Manager/Managing Director, Audit/Assurance Services	\$121,500	\$150,250	\$174,250
Manager, Audit/Assurance Services	\$90,000	\$106,250	\$124,750
Senior Associate, Audit/Assurance Services	\$57,750	\$72,750	\$82,750
Associate, Audit/Assurance Services	\$49,000	\$60,500	\$69,500

Source: Robert Half

Below are the starting salaries for each of the eight public accounting roles in the 2024 salary guide, listed by percentile, compared with 2023’s starting salary projections from Robert Half (2023 -> 2024) so we can see how big the starting pay increases are expected to be by position and by percentile (in parenthesis):

Senior manager/director tax services

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- 50th percentile: \$112,750 -> \$112,750 (0%)
- 75th percentile: \$131,000 -> \$131,000 (0%)

Senior tax associate

- 25th percentile: \$65,250 -> \$67,250 (3.1%)
- 50th percentile: \$78,500 -> \$83,250 (6%)
- 75th percentile: \$90,500 -> \$93,250 (3%)

Tax associate

- 25th percentile: \$51,250 -> \$52,750 (3%)
- 50th percentile: \$63,000 -> \$64,750 (2.8%)
- 75th percentile: \$72,750 -> \$74,750 (2.7%)

Senior manager/managing director, audit and assurance services

- 25th percentile: \$116,750 -> \$121,500 (4.1%)
- 50th percentile: \$144,500 -> \$150,250 (4%)
- 75th percentile: \$167,500 -> \$174,250 (4%)

Manager, audit and assurance services

- 25th percentile: \$80,000 -> \$90,000 (12.5%)
- 50th percentile: \$100,000 -> \$106,250 (6.2%)
- 75th percentile: \$114,000 -> \$124,750 (9.4%)

Senior associate, audit and assurance services

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- **50th percentile:** \$59,750 -> \$60,500 (1.2%)
- **75th percentile:** \$68,750 -> \$69,500 (1.1%)

“Fewer college students are graduating with accounting degrees, making it especially hard for public accounting firms to find entry-level candidates. Competition for experienced talent is also an issue, as many public accounting employees leave for corporate jobs with more manageable workloads. Audit and bookkeeping professionals at all levels are also in high demand,” Robert Half said in the salary guide. “Successful strategies for landing skilled accountants include offering competitive salaries and allowing staff to work from home at least a couple of days per week. Managers in public accounting are typically more open to remote and hybrid work options than those in other segments of finance and accounting. Firms that don’t allow staff to work off-site tend to struggle most with hiring.”

Accounting • Payroll

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