

Frequently asked questions

1. What is benchmarking?

Benchmarking is the structured process to assess one organization's performance against a group of other organizations, in order to establish a reference point or best practice. The goal of benchmarking is to identify potential areas of improvement to implement within the organization and to identify trends. An organization can benchmark cost, quality, processes, financial and human capital performance. An organization can also benchmark against a group of similar or dis-similar organizations depending on the outcome desired.

The HR metrics service is a Human Resources benchmarking service designed to assist organizations in assessing the performance of their human capital relative to other organizations by province, by sector, industry, location and more.

2. Why should I use the HR metrics service?

This is the first metrics service based in Western Canada. It is also the most innovative and cost effective service in Canada. You will receive highly accurate data, on a quarterly basis enabling you to target, track and compare your human resources investments like never before.

Offered through your non-profit Human Resources associations, the goal of this service is to progress the profession by providing useful and accurate data.

This metrics service, which is the only one to offer quarterly benchmarking and an HR dashboard, is available online for easy access to information and streamlined submissions of data. This service is offered in conjunction with other HR Metrics resources such as how-to articles in HRVoice.org and workshops.

The service is open only to pre-screened organizations who sign a commitment to data quality, which is not a requirement of many online surveys. Access and a password will only be available to these organizations.

All organizations receive a copy of the HR Metrics Standards & Glossary outlining the data definitions to follow when submitting data, so that organizations can have comparable or apples-to-apples, results.

There is a high level of support offered to participating organizations – you'll receive a copy of the User Guide and Survey Worksheet to complement the HR Metrics Standards & Glossary and Interpretation Guide already available on the website. Phone and email support is also available to answer your individual questions. All organizations receive a 1 hour online demo of the survey and survey tools.

The service price, designed with smaller organizations in mind, is competitive. BC HRMA and HRMAM members are rewarded with a discounted price.

3. Where does the benchmarking data come from?

Benchmarking data is compiled from all organizations participating in the survey. The organizations included in each subset (i.e. sector or industry) will be based on the responses each organization provided at the time of survey submission.

4. Can I trust the data quality?

Yes, you can!

The online survey is protected and is not accessible by the general public. Only pre-screened organizations receive the URL and are required to use a personalized username and password. All participating organizations sign a contract to ensure they are committed to submitting quality data within the required timelines. BC HRMA and HRMAM require all participating organizations to guarantee the quality of their data to 95 per cent or greater level of accuracy. As an HR community, we are aiming to increase data quality over time and can only achieve that by committing the time and resources to make it happen.

Within the survey itself, there is an initial data validation tool checking your responses from behind the scenes.

Finally, all organizations receive a copy of the HR Metrics Standards & Glossary outlining the data definitions to follow when submitting data. Once data is submitted, the HR Metrics team audits each organization's data prior to releasing any benchmarking report.

All of these factors ensure that we have the highest possible data quality and therefore the most accurate benchmarks.

5. Would my organization's data be secure?

The database is protected by three layers of security which is the same process used to protect the personal data of BC HRMA members. BC HRMA hosts the HR Metrics Service and its data security obligations are outlined in the [Governance Policies](#).

6. What is a "data point" and why do you refer to it as a "question"?

Each HR metric is calculated using a series of data. For example, the following data points are needed to measure Turnover:

- Count of Resignations
- Count of Retirements
- Count of Involuntary Terminations
- Headcount

The online survey is designed as a question and answer format for ease of understanding. For example, "How many permanent employees were working for the organization at the end of the quarter?" is used to prompt participants for total headcount.

7. How many questions are in the survey?

There are about 120 questions or data points in the survey. If you answer each one, it will result in 95 metrics. **You are only required to submit 20 data points to participate in the metrics benchmarking survey.** For details, please refer to "Required Data for Submission", found on the HR Metrics Service Overview [Page](#).

8. How much time does it take to gather and submit the required data?

Participating organizations have told us that takes an average of 30 hours to complete the first survey. That includes set-up time to learn the data definitions, create the proper reports, ask coworkers for data, create a data collection process, and document. When you've got all your data ready, it takes up to 30 minutes to enter the data online.

Subsequent surveys are completed much more quickly as the data collection process and reports are already in place. Currently organizations report between 3 and 6 hours per quarter to participate.

9. What should I do if my organization doesn't have all the minimum required data available?

To maintain the integrity of the benchmarking data, unfortunately you cannot participate in the survey at this time.

10. Will anyone else see my organization's data?

Benchmarks will only be provided where the sample size is five or more organizations. This will avoid situations where an organization may be identified by their unique data. Where we do not have data from five organizations the metric will not be calculated. This step is hard coded into our reporting process and therefore not subject to human error. Participating organizations will not be publicly identified without their express permission.

11. How long does it take to receive my organization's benchmarking report?

To allow sufficient time for data auditing and ensure data quality, reports will be distributed up to four weeks after the survey closes. See the ["Survey Timelines"](#) section for the specific dates.

12. Who can I compare against?

At the close of each survey, you will have the option to compare against the Province(s) and sector(s) of your choice:

Province(s)

- British Columbia and/ or Manitoba

Sector(s)

- Business - privately owned
- Business - publicly owned
- Cooperative
- Crown Corporation
- Government
- Institutions
- Not-for-Profit

Survey participants will receive one additional report on an annual basis with the comparison group of their choice: organization sector, industry, size, or location. Comparison is limited by the number of organizations in the database. You cannot compare against a group which has less than five members.

13. Is my contact and organization information going to be sold to external vendors?

No, the organizational information in our database will be treated with the utmost respect and no specific data about an organization will be passed to any third party. The only people that will see your calculated metrics are you and the staff who run the HR metrics service.

Please note that as part of your provincial association membership you will receive a range of communications including some third party advertising. This communication is independent from the metrics service.

14. Can the HR metrics service staff help my organization interpret my results and recommend action?

As part of a non-profit professional association, the HR metrics team does not provide consulting services. However, you will want to use the knowledge resources available as part of your membership, such as subscribing to the HRVoice.org newsletter, attending a workshop, conference, or webinar.

15. How did you develop your metrics standards and glossary?

There are several measures which are commonly understood, such as Revenue per FTE. Those measures appear in the glossary.

For measures where the methodology varies across the board, the formulas were developed by scanning which formulas were easiest to track and provided the most reliable assessment of the HR function.

Our standards are a collection of the most common and useful metrics from all commonly published sources with additional measures or adjustments made to improve the scope or value of the measures included.