

WageScape

State of Pay · What employers are advertising this quarter

HOSPITALITY · Q2 2026

The role that hires the most has the least agreement on price.

1.91× Cook's band

Cook posted 929,425 times nationally this quarter — more than any other Hospitality role — and also carries the widest pay band in the vertical, \$16,972–\$32,426 (P25–P75). Housekeeper and Dishwasher, by contrast, have converged to about 1.35×.

Postings analyzed: Apr 1 – Jun 30, 2026 · Government comparison: BLS OEWS May 2025

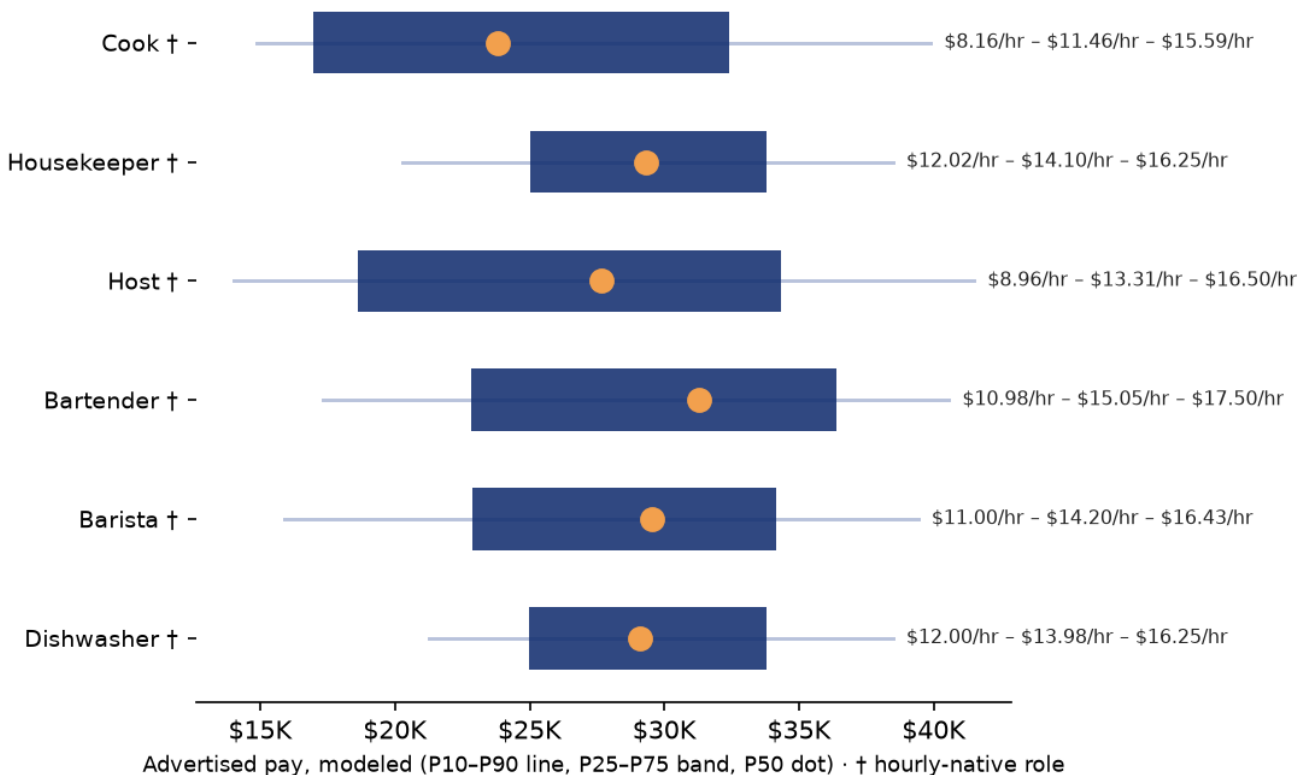
n = 2.3M postings · 6 core roles · 328K hiring companies · listing-weighted · WageScape / MarketTrak

Pay levels are modeled from postings and directional — structure (spread, premiums, geography) is the signal. BLS check and method inside.

HOSPITALITY · THE PAY SPECTRUM · ADVERTISED, Q2 2026

No role has one market rate

The pay band, role by role — P25 / P50 / P75



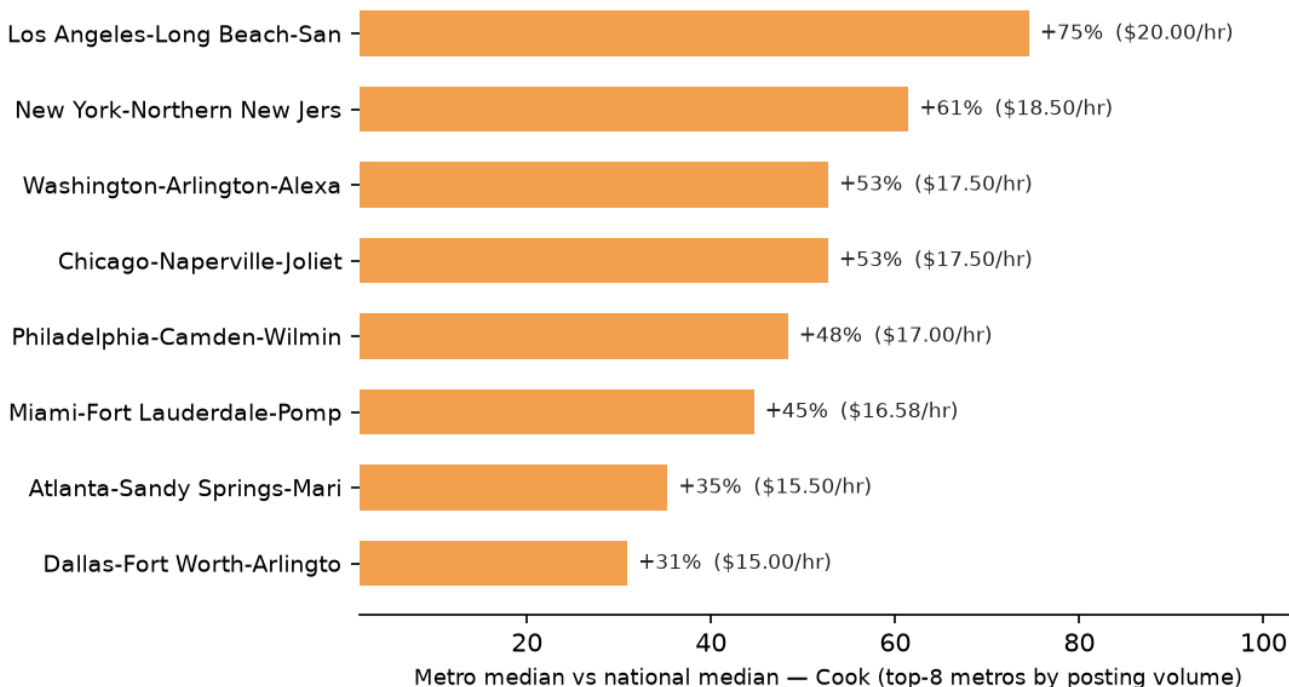
Three structural reads

1. The widest band: Cook. P75 (\$15.59/hr) pays 1.9× P25 (\$8.16/hr). A single “market rate” for this role is a fiction — set bands, not points.
2. The tightest band: Housekeeper (1.4×). Here the market HAS converged — posting outside \$12.02/hr–\$16.25/hr is a deliberate strategy, not noise.
3. Where the band skews: Cook’s midpoint sits low in its band — the top half is 1.3× as wide as the bottom. Employers bidding above midpoint have room to run; the stretch to \$15.59/hr is where offers differentiate. Position reqs against the skew, not just the midpoint.

HOSPITALITY · GEOGRAPHY & DEMAND

The same job does not pay the same everywhere

Where the market pays differently — Cook



Across the top-8 posting markets, the Cook median runs from \$15.00/hr (Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington) to \$20.00/hr (Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana) — a 33% geographic gap inside one role, this quarter. Demand is deep: 929K Cook postings from ~132K hiring companies.

What comp teams should do this quarter

- Benchmark to the band, not the point. Quote \$8.16/hr–\$15.59/hr for Cook, and decide deliberately where in the band each req should sit.
- Localize before you match. A national median mis-prices Cook by up to 33% depending on metro — in premium metros, benchmark to the metro band, not the national band.
- Check your reqs against this quarter's floor. If a posting sits below P25, you are recruiting exclusively from the bottom quartile of advertised offers — make that a decision, not an accident.

The BLS check — we show our work

Every advertised median, next to its government benchmark. Postings measure the hiring market, not the incumbent one: hourly postings quote base starting rates — before differentials, overtime and tenure — and salaried posting cohorts skew junior. Advertised medians therefore typically sit below BLS; the gap is information, not error.

Role	WageScape P50	BLS median	Δ	BLS occupation
Cook †	\$11.46/hr	\$17.98/hr	-36.3%	Cooks, restaurant
Housekeeper †	\$14.10/hr	\$17.07/hr	-17.4%	Maids and housekeeping cleaners
Host †	\$13.31/hr	\$15.00/hr	-11.3%	Hosts and hostesses, restaurant, l
Bartender †	\$15.05/hr	\$16.51/hr	-8.8%	Bartenders
Barista †	\$14.20/hr	\$15.00/hr	-5.3%	Fast food and counter workers
Dishwasher †	\$13.98/hr	\$16.74/hr	-16.5%	Dishwashers

BLS figures: OEWS May 2025 national medians (bls.gov); * = May 2024, latest published for that occupation. † hourly-native role, both figures per hour. Deltas computed from the printed values.

Methodology

Source: WageScape / MarketTrak — advertised-posting data aggregated from public job postings. Period: Q2 2026 (single quarter; no period-over-period comparisons are made in this report). Sample: 2.3M postings across 6 core hospitality roles, 328K hiring companies. National figures are listing-count weighted across metros. Every role is reported as a P25 / P50 / P75 spectrum (P10–P90 in charts); we never publish a lone median. Pay levels are modeled from postings (disclosed wages are rare); hourly-native roles are quoted per hour (annualized at 2,080 hours in charts). Structural signals — spread ratios, role premiums, metro differentials, demand concentration — are ratio-based and robust to level bias. Aggregates only; no individual compensation is shown. Every figure reproduces from a saved, dated query snapshot.

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