

Cold Water Volunteer Fire Department

Executive Director / CEO

EIN 566062579

NC · NTEE M24

FY ending 2024-06-30

June 9, 2026

This analysis benchmarks the total compensation of **Tom Blackwelder, Executive Director / CEO** (\$13,311) against **every comparable organization** that fit the selection criteria — **45** in total — drawn systematically from IRS Form 990 filings, not a hand-picked subset.

Compensation sits at approximately the **49th** percentile of comparable organizations within the typical range

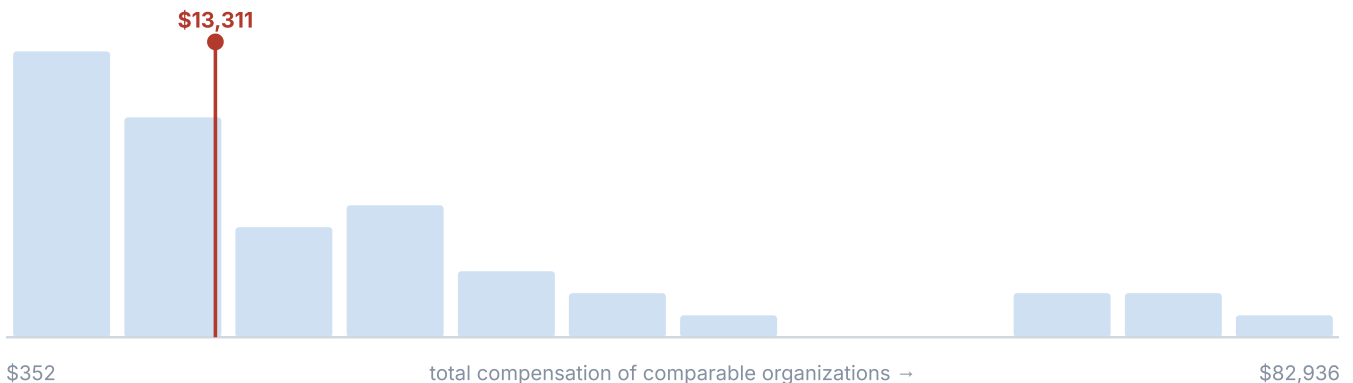
Benchmarked executive: Tom Blackwelder — reported title “PRESIDENT”, a **direct title match** to the Executive Director / CEO role.

How comparable organizations were selected

SECTOR	Organizations sharing the subject's NTEE classification (M24).
BUDGET	Total revenue between \$321,580 and \$719,956 — 0.67x to 1.50x the subject's \$479,971 (the band tightens as size grows).
GEOGRAPHY	Same NTEE sector (M24) + NC + budget 0.67–1.5x revenue.

45 organizations qualified on sector, size, and geography → **45** within the band form the benchmarked peer set.

Distribution of comparable compensation



\$1,860	\$6,340	\$14,029	\$24,205	\$56,984	\$13,311
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● Comparable organizations

Each figure is Form 990 Part VII columns D + F (reportable pay plus other compensation and benefits; column F may include amounts from related organizations), normalized to NC cost of living (BEA RPP, 2023) and to its filing year (CPI-U); the reported amount is on each linked 990.

ORGANIZATION	STATE	REVENUE	MATCHED TITLE	COMP (REPORTED)	COMP (ADJUSTED)	FY
Fire District 28 Inc	NC	\$468,115	Chief	\$68,549	\$68,549	2024
Holly Grove Fire Department Inc	NC	\$495,181	Vice President	\$36,210	\$35,277	2025
Central Alexander Fire Department	NC	\$463,632	Chief/ex Off	\$24,845	\$24,205	2025
Parkton Fire And Rescue Inc	NC	\$462,628	Fire Chief	\$5,760	\$5,760	2024
Central Fire Department Of Davidson County Inc	NC	\$505,044	Secretary	\$2,003	\$1,951	2025
East Nash Volunteer Fire	NC	\$511,286	President	\$14,400	\$14,029	2025
Ronda Community Vol Fire Dept Inc	NC	\$442,014	Member	\$7,800	\$7,800	2024
Seagrove Rural Volunteer Fire Depart	NC	\$524,577	Fire Chief	\$352	\$352	2024
Caldwell Fire Department Inc	NC	\$524,624	Chief	\$35,844	\$35,844	2024
South Stokes Volunteer Fire	NC	\$525,099	Treasurer	\$4,342	\$4,342	2024
Lowell Volunteer Fire Dept	NC	\$433,397	Fire Chief	\$22,921	\$22,921	2024
Creedmoor Volunteer Fire Department	NC	\$426,446	Assistant Fire Chief	\$8,400	\$8,648	2023
Little River Fire Department Inc	NC	\$422,636	Vice President	\$5,369	\$5,528	2023
Shanghai Volunteer Fire Department	NC	\$544,791	Chief	\$11,554	\$11,895	2023
Number Seven Volunteer Fire Department Inc	NC	\$551,081	Chief Board Member	\$6,908	\$6,730	2025
County Line Volunteer Fire Dept	NC	\$554,294	Director	\$14,200	\$14,619	2023

ORGANIZATION	STATE	REVENUE	MATCHED TITLE	COMP (REPORTED)	COMP (ADJUSTED)	FY
Leaksville Volunteer Fire Dept	NC	\$402,463	Secretary	\$40,636	\$41,836	2023
Arlington Fire & Rescue Inc	NC	\$567,224	Sec-tres.	\$1,800	\$1,800	2024
Beeson Crossroads Fire & Rescue Inc	NC	\$572,360	President	\$3,311	\$3,311	2024
Watkins Community Volunteer Fire	NC	\$576,199	Fire Chief	\$13,029	\$13,029	2024
Deep Branch Volunteer Fire Department Inc	NC	\$382,825	Member	\$6,158	\$6,340	2023
Winterville Rescue & Ems Inc	NC	\$577,346	Asst Chief	\$33,258	\$32,401	2025
Cedar Grove Fire Department Inc	NC	\$379,270	Fire Chief	\$67,083	\$67,083	2024
Franklin Community Volunteer Fire Dept Inc	NC	\$583,772	Fire Chief	\$15,000	\$15,000	2024
Tabernacle Volunteer Fire Department Inc	NC	\$588,439	Chief	\$913	\$940	2023

Comp (reported) is the figure on each organization's Form 990 (columns D + F); **Comp (adjusted)** normalizes it to NC cost of living and 2024 dollars. Click any organization to verify the figure on ProPublica.

■ Methodology

Comparable organizations were drawn from electronically filed IRS Form 990 returns and matched on sector (NTEE code), budget (a size-adaptive revenue band that tightens as the organization grows), and geography (same-state first, broadening only when too few peers qualify); every organization within the band forms the peer set. To compare fairly across regions and years, peer compensation is normalized to NC cost of living (BEA Regional Price Parities, 2023) and to the subject's filing year (CPI-U). The figure benchmarked is Form 990 Part VII, Section A, columns D + F — reportable pay plus other compensation, benefits, and deferred amounts (column F may include amounts from related organizations) — with the chief executive matched by role. Related-organization amounts (column E) and institutional trustees are excluded. Full methodology: peerbasis.org/methodology.

■ Sample, role match & sensitivity

PEER COUNT 45 organizations. Compensation range \$352–\$82,936; filing years 2023–2025.

SIZE BASIS Matched on total revenue (\$479,971); for reference, expenses \$386,023 and assets \$1,577,449.

ROLE MATCH Tom Blackwelder, reported title "*PRESIDENT*", benchmarked as Executive Director / CEO. The title maps directly to this role.

OUTLIERS 5 peers fall outside 1.5× the interquartile range — consider whether any reflect one-time payments (severance, deferred-comp payouts).

Sensitivity — the subject's percentile under alternative compensation definitions:

BASIS	SUBJECT PERCENTILE
Total compensation (D + F), cost-of-living + inflation adjusted — the PeerBasis default	49 th
Total compensation (D + F), as reported (no adjustments)	49 th
Reportable pay only (column D), adjusted	47 th
All sources (D + E + F), adjusted	49 th

If the percentile moves materially across these definitions, the result is sensitive to methodology choices, and the board should weigh which basis best fits its facts.

● **Rebuttable presumption of reasonableness · 26 CFR 53.4958-6**

Compensation paid by a tax-exempt organization is presumed reasonable — shifting the burden to the IRS — when three requirements are met. This report supplies the comparability data for the second. The board should record the following in its minutes *concurrently* with its decision:

Draft board minutes – executive compensation

1. The compensation of the Executive Director / CEO (Tom Blackwelder) was approved in advance by [the Board / Compensation Committee], composed of members with no conflict of interest with respect to the arrangement.
2. Prior to its determination, the authorized body obtained and relied upon appropriate comparability data, namely the PeerBasis Compensation Comparability Determination dated June 9, 2026, comparing compensation against 45 similarly situated organizations (Same NTEE sector (M24) + NC + budget 0.67–1.5× revenue).
3. The authorized body determined that total compensation of \$13,311 is reasonable (approximately the 49th percentile of comparable organizations) and documented the basis for this determination concurrently, on [date], by a vote of [__ for / __ against].

Sources: IRS Form 990 e-file data (apps.irs.gov); IRS Business Master File (NTEE classification). Every figure traces to an original public filing — click any organization above to verify it on ProPublica. PeerBasis is a service of Prismind Analytics; its [methodology is published](#), was commissioned for independent adversarial review, and discloses its own limitations. This report is comparability data to support a board's good-faith determination under IRC 4958; it is not legal or tax advice. Generated by PeerBasis on June 9, 2026.