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Introduction

The *ASAE Association Compensation & Benefits Study, 2020–2021 Edition* (ACBS) compares salaries and employment benefits for 75 positions at associations and other nonprofit organizations. This study is an important source of compensation information for chief executive officers, association personnel, and consultants in the association industry.

As with any research study, it is important to use the ACBS in conjunction with other similar resources. The number and characteristics of survey respondents as well as survey methodologies can differ significantly from one study to another, causing variation in the results. Using composite results from multiple sources can help account for some of these differences. Numerous such studies are currently available. It is useful to consult data from more than one source because different studies will draw from varied populations and use a range of research methodologies.

Methodology

Survey Instrument

The 2020 Association Compensation & Benefits Survey asked respondents questions about organizational characteristics, as well as information regarding compensation, salary administration, and staff and retirement benefits. Survey participants were also asked about CEO employment agreements, performance, and salary review practices.

The same information is also provided in this book. The survey results are contained in two publications, the *ASAE Association Compensation & Benefits Study, 2020–2021 Edition*, and the *Greater Washington Area Association Compensation & Benefits Study, 2020–2021 Edition* (GWACBS). All data reported within the GWACBS are a special subset of Washington, DC metropolitan area organizations that participated in the survey. Results are also available through ASAE's online interactive benchmarking platform, AssociaMetrics.

Data Collection

In March 2020, the ASAE research department sent survey invitations via email to survey contacts at 5,967 organizations. These contacts included member and nonmember CEOs, human resources, finance, administration, and operations staff. This group also included past survey participants and those who had previously purchased an ACBS product. The study was conducted using an online survey system that allowed multiple staff members from each organization to access the same survey instrument. All participants were required to register with the survey site to prevent unauthorized entry by any staff other than those designated as appropriate survey contacts.

Follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents throughout the survey period. The survey closed in June 2020. Data cleaning and follow-up with organizations missing information was continued until analysis began in July 2020.

All data reported in the *ASAE Association Compensation & Benefits Study, 2020-2021 Edition* reflect information reported by participants. When the accuracy of data appeared to be contradictory or unlikely, it was verified, when possible, by contacting the reporting organizations for clarification.

Response Rate

Of the 5,967 invited organizations, 605 submitted partial or completed surveys for an overall response rate of 10.1 percent.

Other Notes

Calculations with “Employee Benefits”

The term “employee benefits” is challenging to define as it varies across organizations due to the range of methods used to calculate the value of benefits provided. Summary data on employee benefits in this study are based on the best estimates of these organizations.

Definitions and Position Descriptions

Appendix A includes definitions of many of the terms found in this study. This clarification of terminology is meant to improve the understanding of and interpretation of data. Appendix B contains full descriptions of each of the 75 positions assessed in this study. Since job titles vary across organizations, the position descriptions will provide the most accurate basis for comparison.

Minimum Responses for Summary Calculations

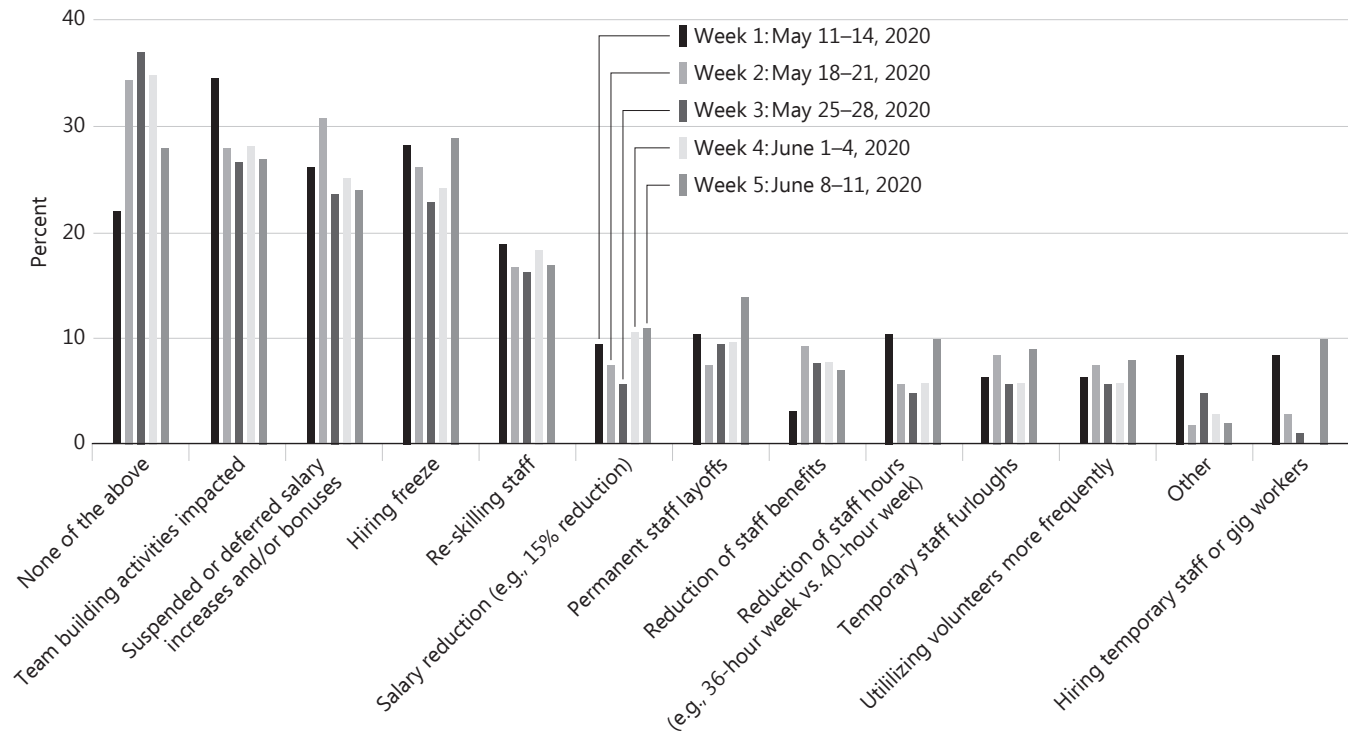
For purposes of confidentiality, if the number of respondents in a category is less than 5, no data are reported. An asterisk (*) is used to indicate instances where insufficient data is available. However, even without data, the number of organizations in a category in these occurrences can still provide information about the prevalence of specific positions.

Implications of a Pandemic

Survey respondents were asked to provide data that was effective February 1, 2020. After the survey was launched, the association industry along with every other industry worldwide faced unparalleled challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Associations were forced to convert face-to-face meetings, one of their largest revenue streams, to virtual or cancel altogether. Many associations were able to change on the fly and have their staff members work remotely. However, there were many businesses and industries, e.g., travel and hospitality, that were greatly affected and were forced to close or operate at much less than 100 percent capacity. At the time this report was published, it is unknown what the effect on the overall economy or the association industry will be, however we did collect the following data in a separate survey that you can consider in conjunction with the compensation and benefits data.

Figure i Operational Disruptions to Staffing and Staff Activities

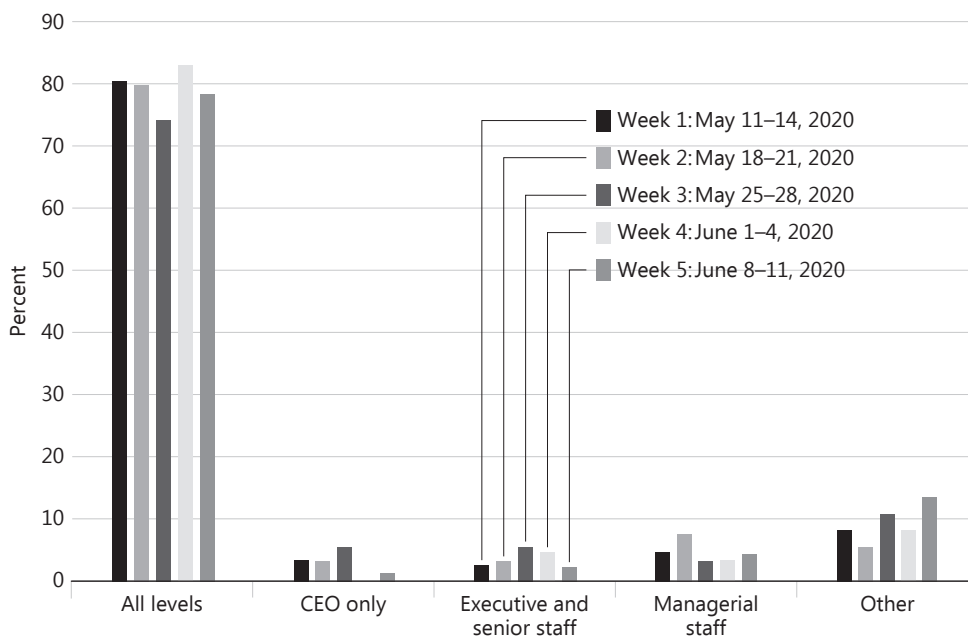
**What changes have occurred due to the global health crisis?
(Select all that apply)**



Source: Association Impact Survey, ASAE Research Foundation

Figure ii Personnel Estimated to Be Impacted Due to Operational Disruptions

What level in the association is subject to this change?



Source: Association Impact Survey, ASAE Research Foundation

Profile of Responding Organizations

This study benchmarks compensation and benefits offered to full-time employees in the association community. The responding organizations represent and serve many different groups of individuals, professionals, companies, institutions, and organizations. This section gives a demographic overview of responding organizations by organization type, total annual budget, total organization staff size, geographic scope, IRS classification, and industry/interest area.

Organization Type

As illustrated in Table I, the two largest responding groups were trade associations at 41.8 percent, and professional organizations at 50.4 percent. Professional organizations are comprised primarily of individual members, and trade association members are mainly made up of organizations. Organizations which defined themselves as neither a trade nor a professional organization made up the remaining 7.8 percent of respondents.

Table I 2020 Respondents by Organization Type

		N	Percent
Organization Type	Trade Association	253	41.8%
	Professional Association	305	50.4%
	Other	47	7.8%
Total Annual Budget	Under \$500,000	36	6.0%
	\$500,000–\$999,999	76	12.6%
	\$1,000,000–\$4,999,999	262	43.3%
	\$5,000,000–\$9,999,999	98	16.2%
	\$10,000,000–\$24,999,999	86	14.2%
	\$25,000,000 or more	47	7.8%
	Total Staff Size	10 or fewer	277
11–20		130	21.5%
21–50		116	19.2%
51–100		47	7.8%
101 or more		35	5.8%
Geographic Scope of Membership	Local	44	7.3%
	State	135	22.3%
	Regional	27	4.5%
	National	143	23.6%
	North America	61	10.1%
	International/Global	195	32.2%

Table I 2020 Respondents by Organization Type (continued)

		N	Percent
IRS Classification	501 (c)(3)	190	31.4%
	501 (c)(6)	372	61.5%
	Other	43	7.1%
Industry/Interest Area	Healthcare/Medical	124	20.5%
	Education	92	15.2%
	Construction/Housing	34	5.6%
	Science	29	4.8%
	Manufacturing	29	4.8%
	Real Estate	25	4.1%
	Financial	24	4.0%
	Government	15	2.5%
	Environment	15	2.5%
	Legal	14	2.3%
	Engineering	13	2.1%
	Utilities/Energy	12	2.0%
	Hospitality	12	2.0%
	Insurance	11	1.8%
	Entertainment/Art	10	1.7%
	Philanthropy/Charity	9	1.5%
	Other	137	22.6%

Total Annual Budget and Total Staff Size

The highest concentration of responding organizations were in the middle budget ranges, one million to \$4,999,999 and five million to \$9,999,999.

Respondents were most likely to have a staff of 10 or fewer (45.8 percent). Organizations with staff sizes of 11–20 and 21–50 each comprised 40.7 percent of the respondent pool. The remaining 13.6 percent had staffs of more than 50.

IRS Classification

The majority of participating organizations (61.5 percent) are 501(c)(6) organizations, a tax-exempt status that allows them to engage in lobbying and political activities. This distinguishes them from 501(c)(3) organizations, which have an IRS tax-exempt status, and generally serve an educational, research, professional, or philanthropic purpose. Although informative and educational briefings are allowed, these organizations typically do not lobby legislators on issues that affect their areas of concern. Just under a third (31.4 percent) of the responding organizations are classified as 501(c)(3) organizations. The remaining survey respondents have another IRS classification.

Industry/Interest Area

Consistent with ASAE's overall membership, the largest percentage of survey respondents were from associations that served healthcare professionals and organizations. Associations serving the education and the construction/housing industries had the second and third highest percentages of respondents. See Table I.

Geographic Region

The following geographic category definitions, by region and division, are from the U.S. Census Bureau. Of note is that the South Atlantic Division includes the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, which constitute the largest concentration of associations in the United States as well as the highest percentage of survey respondents in 2020.

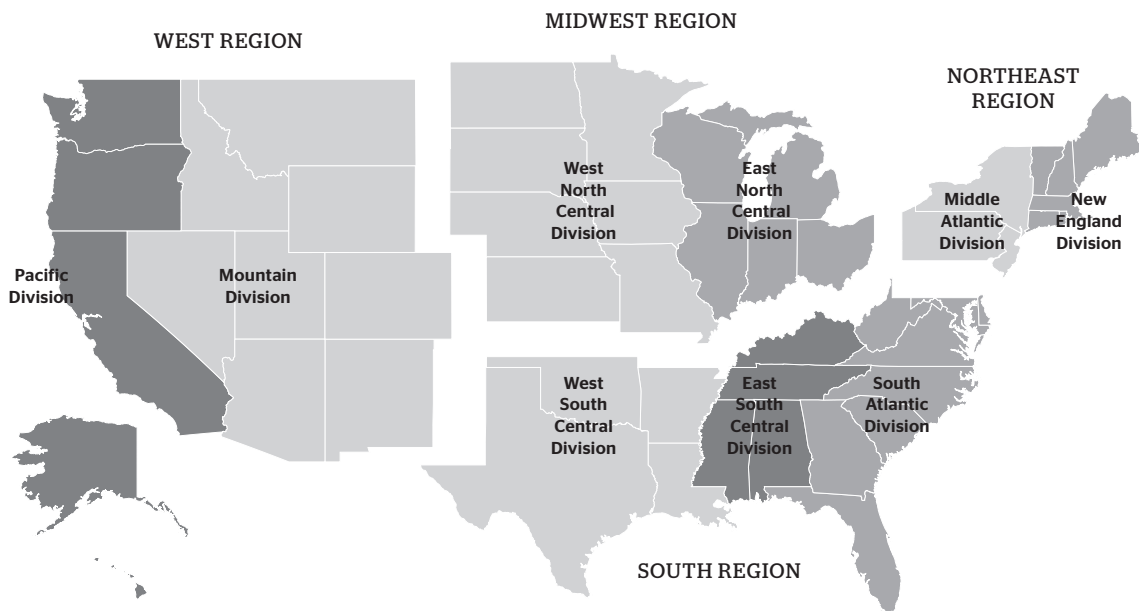


Table II Respondents by Geographic Region

		N	Percent
Census Region	South	302	49.9%
	Midwest	168	27.8%
	West	81	13.4%
	Northeast	54	8.9%
Census Division	South Atlantic	243	40.2%
	East North Central	118	19.5%
	West North Central	50	8.3%
	Pacific	49	8.1%
	West South Central	42	6.9%
	Middle Atlantic	37	6.1%
	Mountain	32	5.3%
	New England	17	2.8%
	East South Central	17	2.8%

Affiliated Entities

Over a third (37.0 percent) of responding organizations reported having no affiliated entities, many of the rest had more than one, including foundations, chapters/components, or at least one for-profit subsidiary.

Table III Affiliated Entities

	% of Respondents
At least one for-profit subsidiary	16.8%
A foundation	47.5%
Chapters/Components	29.8%
None of the above	37.0%