

## **2009 APA Salary Survey Master's-level Respondents**

Daniel Michalski, MPA, Ariel A. Finno, Jessica L. Kohout, PhD, and  
Marlene Wicherski  
APA Center for Workforce Studies -- October 2009

---

This report is produced by the Center for Workforce Studies (CWS) in the Science Directorate of the American Psychological Association (APA). We are grateful for the support of Norman B. Anderson, Ph.D., Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of the APA and Steven Breckler, PhD, Executive Director, Science Directorate.

Most importantly, we would like to thank those members of the Association who took the time to respond to the survey, and for their many comments on the survey itself and on their own employment experiences. The APA's ability to provide current national data on the salaries of psychologists and other workforce questions hinges on the participation of the members in surveys such as this.

This brief report contains salary information on master's-level respondents, analyzed by position and years of experience when numbers of participants were sufficient for analysis (minimum N=5). Given the small N size, caution should be exercised in data interpretation. Where possible, tables are provided.

### **Methodology**

In June of 2009 the *2009 APA Salary Survey* obtained 458 valid responses from master's-level participants working in full-time positions. The online version of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) requested the following information: employment setting, type of position, hours per week spent in the position, total years of work experience, total annual earned income, full time salary or net income, zip code of employment setting, and demographic information. Four rounds of email reminders were sent to nonrespondents.

Ninety-six percent (N = 11,246) of the eligible respondents to the 2009 APA Salary Survey were at the doctoral level and were employed full time, while only 3.4% (N = 458) were at the master's level and were employed full time.

Women represented more than two thirds of the master's degree respondents (68%) to the 2009 APA Salary Survey. Individual private practice and business or industry settings were the most prevalent (each 11%), followed by consulting firms (7%), group psychological practice (6%), and elementary/secondary schools (4%). As to activity, forty percent were employed in direct human service positions and 21% worked in applied psychology positions.

## **Caveat**

All data are reported as 11-12- month salaries with the exclusion of faculty positions and academic employment settings, which are reported as 9-10- month salaries. To calculate 11-12-month equivalent, multiply by 11/9.

The data reported below reflect only those participants employed in full-time positions. For those in independent private practice full time is defined as 30 hours per week or more. For those in all other positions, full time is defined as 35 hours per week or more.

## **Faculty Positions**

Thirty respondents reporting a master's as their highest psychology degree worked in faculty positions. Two-year colleges represented 43% of the employment settings for this population. The majority of respondents (29%) reported their rank as lecturer/instructor, followed by full-professor (25%), associate professor (18%), assistant professor (14%), and other faculty positions (11%). Four percent of masters-level faculty reported that academic rank was not applicable to their position.

The mean salary (9-10- month salary period) was \$54,134 (SD=25,364) and the median salary was \$45,000. The first and third quartiles were \$36,818 and \$65,000 respectively; with an average of 13 years of work experience for master's degree individuals holding a faculty position.

## **Research Positions**

For the twelve respondents who reported working in research positions, 17% were employed in university research centers or institutes, private research organizations or labs (17%), businesses or industries (excluding consulting firms) (17%), and other non-profit organizations (17%). Other employment settings for masters-level researchers included psychiatry departments of medical schools, private general hospitals, consulting firms, and government research organizations or labs.

The mean salary was \$57,382 (SD=\$20,934) while the median salary was \$57,500. The first and third quartiles were \$38,300 and \$63,500, respectively. The average years of work experience for master's degree APA members with research positions was seven.

## **Administration of Research Positions**

There were 11 respondents employed in administration of research positions. Business or industry represented 36% of the employment settings for this population, followed by university research centers or institutes (18%).

The mean salary was \$86,562 (SD=\$64,493) and the median was \$66,960. First and third quartiles were \$53,550 and \$94,000, correspondingly. The average years of work experience for this group was thirteen.

### Direct Human Services Positions

The most prevalent employment for master’s-level APA Salary Survey participants were in direct human services (N=132). The overall mean salary reported for master’s-level direct human service positions was \$52,322 (SD=\$26,441) and the median salary was \$45,000. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quartiles were \$35,836 and \$62,147, respectively.

Table 1 shows the salary data for master’s- level respondents in direct human service positions by years of work experience.

**Table 1**  
**Direct Human Services Positions:**  
**Masters-level, 11-12-month Full-time Salaries and Years of Work Experience: 2009**

Years of Work Experience	Median	Q1	Q3	Mean	SD	N
5 years or less	\$37,500	\$31,792	\$43,000	\$36,978	\$10,005	32
6-9 years	\$45,500	\$36,705	\$63,232	\$51,304	\$21,013	14
10-14 years	\$45,500	\$30,500	\$52,750	\$44,771	\$17,227	20
15-19 years	\$62,934	\$48,500	\$79,500	\$66,506	\$20,267	13
20-24 years	\$49,000	\$31,770	\$80,750	\$60,884	\$47,061	10
25-29 years	\$55,000	\$39,298	\$85,000	\$63,926	\$29,882	15
30+ years	\$58,000	\$40,000	\$86,000	\$63,204	\$30,607	21

Source: 2009 APA Salary Survey. Compiled by the APA Center for Workforce Studies, October, 2009.

Within direct human service positions, the most common employment settings for individuals with a master’s degree were individual private practice (N=30) or group private practice (N=18). These were followed by community mental health centers, specialized health service settings, elementary or secondary schools, non-profit organizations, and local government agency settings.

Those with a master’s degree in individual private practice settings reported mean and median salaries of \$60,395 (SD=\$39,741) and \$49,500, respectively. Those in group private practices reported similar mean and median salaries of \$60,984 (SD=\$26,279) and \$49,000, in that order.

## **Clinical Psychology Master's Degree**

Forty-six respondents who work in direct human service employment settings with master's degrees in clinical psychology provided salary data. The majority of these individuals worked in individual private practice or group psychological practice, followed by specialized health service centers. Overall, the average years of work experience for this group was 15 years.

The mean salary for those with a clinical master's degree in direct human service settings was \$52,001 (SD=\$24,011) with a median salary of \$44,000. The first quartile was \$38,000 and \$68,000 for the third quartile.

Those with less than 10 years of work experience (N=17) earned a median salary of \$39,000 while those with more than 20 years of work experience (N=13) earned a median salary of \$44,000.

Participants working in individual private practice settings with a clinical master's degree had a mean salary of \$49,400 (SD=\$27,537) and a median salary of \$40,500.

## **Counseling Psychology Master's Degree**

Forty-one participants who worked full time in direct human service provider positions earned their master's degree in counseling psychology and reported an average of 16 years of work experience. Similar to those holding a master's degree in clinical psychology, the majority of these individuals also worked in individual private practice settings, followed by community mental health centers.

The mean salary for this group was \$53,295 (SD=\$28,366) and a median salary of \$47,000. Respectively, the first and third quartiles were \$36,000 and \$62,934. Those with less than 10 years of work experience (N=12) earned a median salary of \$39,260 while those with more than 20 years of work experience (N=14) earned a median salary of \$78,000.

Nine participants working in individual private practice settings with a counseling psychology master's degree earned a median salary of \$55,000.

## **School Psychology Master's Degree**

Among the 7 respondents with master's degrees in school psychology who provided direct human services, the mean salary was \$60,057 (SD=\$26,962) with a median salary of \$57,000. The first quartile salary was \$38,837 while the third quartile was \$72,750. This group had an average of 25 years of work experience, with 5 of the participants reporting more than 23 years of experience.

As expected, most individuals with a master's degree in school psychology who provide direct human services were employed in elementary or secondary school settings, followed by individual private practice.

### **Other Psychological Subfields providing Direct Human Services**

The remaining 38 master's participants employed in direct human service positions obtained their degrees in subfields other than clinical, counseling, or school psychology. Overall this group had an average of 16 years of work experience. The mean salary was \$50,467 (SD=\$27,723), with a median salary of \$43,000. The first and third quartiles were \$35,000 and \$60,500 correspondingly. The most common employment settings were group psychological practice (N=8) and individual private practice (N=5).

More than one third of respondents (37%) had worked less than 5 years and had a mean salary of \$36,536 (SD=\$12,827) and a median salary of \$36,000.

Eight participants working in group psychological practice settings earned a median salary of \$47,500, while the median salary for those working in individual private practice settings was \$70,000.

### **Administration of Human Services Positions**

Twenty-seven master's-level participants were working in administration of human services positions with an average of 17 years of work experience. Employment settings for this group varied slightly more than for other employment positions. The most popular settings included community mental health centers and other human service settings, state government agencies, and local government agencies.

The mean salary for these participants was \$61,009 (SD=\$18,011) and the median was \$54,000. For this group, the first quartile was \$47,250 and the third quartile was \$80,000.

### **Applied Psychology Positions**

The second most prevalent employment for master's-level survey participants was in applied psychology positions (N=93). The overall mean salary reported for those in applied positions was \$101,053 (SD=\$65,215) and the median salary was \$80,000. The 1st and 3rd quartiles were \$64,250 and \$112,000, respectively.

Table 2 shows salary data for master's level respondents in applied psychology positions by years of work experience.

**Table 2**  
**Applied Psychology Positions:**  
**Masters-level, 11-12- month Full-time Salaries and Years of Work Experience: 2009**

Years of Work Experience	Median	Q1	Q3	Mean	SD	N
5 years or less	\$68,500	\$58,000	\$80,125	\$72,593	\$21,589	34
6-9 years	\$75,000	\$65,000	\$96,000	\$89,257	\$42,574	19
10-14 years	\$106,000	\$62,000	\$112,000	\$92,727	\$33,529	11
15-19 years	\$129,000	\$99,000	\$167,500	\$134,000	\$37,905	6

Source: 2009 APA Salary Survey. Compiled by the APA Center for Workforce Studies, October, 2009.

Note: Data are only reported on groups where N>=5.

Within applied positions, the most common employment settings were business or industry (N=38) and consulting firms (N=26). These were followed by federal government agencies, local government agencies, and self-employment.

### **Applied Psychology (Industrial/Organizational Psychology) Positions**

Fifty-four respondents reported working full time in applied psychology positions and identified themselves as currently in an industrial/organizational psychology subfield. Most popular settings for this group were business, government, consulting firms, or self employment. With an average of 12 years of work experience, those in industrial/organizational positions had a mean salary of \$103,977 (SD=\$49,806) and a median salary of \$91,500. The first and third quartiles were \$72,250 and \$134,000, in that order.

Mean salaries for those working in business or industry settings (N=19) was \$96,084 (SD=\$33,544) while the median salary was \$85,000. The average years of work experience for this group was 10 and the first and third quartiles were \$75,000 and \$112,000, respectively.

Consulting firm positions (N=15) had a mean salary of \$93,796 (SD=44,759) and a median salary of \$77,000. The mean years of work experience for this group was 13 and the first and third quartiles were \$65,000 and \$144,000, correspondingly.

For those employed in all types of government settings (i.e. federal, state, and local) (N=8) the mean salary was \$86,293 (SD=\$28,713) while the median salary was \$82,675. The total mean years of work experience for this group was 9 and the first and third quartiles were \$63,000 and \$108,000, respectively. (Please note that salaries for most government positions are in the public realm and accessible.)

Self-employed positions (N=5) had the highest mean salary of all applied psychology positions with a mean salary of \$184,000 (SD=76,354) and a median salary of \$190,000. They also had the largest mean years of work experience for this sub-group, at 17 years. The first and third quartiles were \$115,000 and \$250,000 respectively.

### **Applied Psychology (Other Psychology Subfields) Positions**

Thirty-nine respondents identified their full-time employment position as an applied psychology field other than industrial/organizational psychology. The mean salary was \$94,043 (SD=\$80,909) and a median of \$65,175. The average years worked was 8 and the first and third salary quartiles were \$55,225 and \$101,500 respectively. Those in business/industry settings (N=17) reported a median salary of \$74,000, while those working in consulting positions (N=7) reported a median salary of \$100,000.

### **Other Administrative Positions**

Twenty-four respondents identified themselves as employed in other administrative positions. Within this group, 5 participants worked in business or industry (excluding consulting firm or research organization) settings. Overall, the group had a mean salary of \$88,674 (SD=\$44,737) and a median salary of \$79,800. The first and third quartiles were \$52,000 and \$118,000 respectively.

### **Additional Resources**

The Center for Workforce Studies has full reports and tables available for review on <http://research.apa.org/>.

Further salary data including 2009 salary data for psychology doctoral level employment settings and subfields can be found at <http://research.apa.org/salaries09.html>.

2007 salary data is available for psychology masters and doctoral degree individuals by employment setting and subfield in *Salaries in Psychology 2007* (Li, Wicherski, and Kohout, 2008) (<http://research.apa.org/salaries07.html>).

The *2008-2009 Faculty Salaries in Graduate Departments of Psychology* (Wicherski, Finno, and Kohout, 2009) includes detailed salary tables for graduate level faculty within psychology departments of the United States and parts of Canada (<http://research.apa.org/facsals0809.html>).

Additionally, the *2003 Report of the Medical School/Academic Medical Center Psychologists Employment Survey* (Pate and Kohout, 2004), a collaborative effort between The American Psychological Association's (APA) Center for Workforce Studies and the Association of Medical School Psychologists' (AMSP) Executive Committee reported national-level employment and salary data on psychological personnel employed within medical school settings and is available for downloading (<http://research.apa.org/amsp/2003/index.html>).

Finally, additional employment and salary data for individuals with a master's degrees in psychology and related disciplines are available in the *2002 Master's, Specialist's, and Related Degrees Employment Survey* (Singleton, Tate, and Kohout, 2003). The report presents information on the employment and educational experiences of a sample of 2001 and 2002 graduates with master's and specialist's degrees in psychology. It also provides information on demographic characteristics and explores data such as employment status, perception of the job market, starting salaries and other relevant characteristics (<http://research.apa.org/mes2002contents.html>).

**Appendix-2009 APA Salary Survey  
(following page)**

---

## APA 2009 Salary Survey

### 1. Welcome Page

---

**Welcome to the *APA 2009 Salary Survey*! Please be assured of complete confidentiality. No information will be released on any individual. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.**

**If you have any questions or comments about this effort please contact the APA Center for Workforce Studies (CWS) at 1-800-374-2721 ext. 5980 or email [SalarySurvey@apa.org](mailto:SalarySurvey@apa.org). Thank you for your participation!**

### 2. Present Employment

---

1. Present employment. Please read options carefully.

- I am currently working/employed in a SINGLE position
- I am currently working/employed in TWO OR MORE positions
- I am retired but STILL working
- I am retired and NOT working
- I am unemployed
- I am on a postdoctoral fellowship
- I am a student, NOT on a postdoctoral fellowship
- Other, please specify

### 3. Employment Setting

---

**Employment Setting. Please indicate your PRIMARY employment setting as a two digit code. Please scroll down to see a complete list of employment setting codes. (PRIMARY SETTING IS THE ONE IN WHICH YOU SPEND THE MOST TIME)**

University (not medical  
or independent professional school) Settings

- 01 Psychology department
- 02 Education department
- 03 Business school or department
- 04 Other academic department or unit
- 05 Management or administrative office
- 06 Student counseling or services center
- 07 Research center or institute
- 24 Professional school of psychology,  
University based
- 09 Other university setting

Four-year College Settings

- 11 Psychology department
- 12 Education department
- 13 Business school or department
- 14 Other academic department or unit
- 15 Management or administrative office
- 16 Student counseling or services center
- 17 Research center or institute
- 19 Other four-year college setting

Other Educational Settings

- 21 Two-year college
- 22 Medical school, psychiatry department
- 23 Medical school, other than psychiatry  
department
- 28 Independent professional school of psychology
- 29 Professional schools not listed above  
(e.g., law, nursing)
- 25 Elementary or secondary school
- 26 School system district office
- 27 Other educational setting (e.g.,  
vocational or special education)

Private Practice Settings

- 41 Individual private practice
- 42 Group psychological practice
- 43 Primary care group practice

Organized Human Service Settings

- 31 Public general hospital
- 32 Private general hospital
- 33 City/county/state psychiatric hospital
- 34 Not for profit, private psychiatric hospital
- 36 For profit, private psychiatric hospital
- 35 VA medical center
- 37 Military hospital (e.g., Air Force)
- 71 Rehabilitation facility
- 47 Counseling or guidance center

5. Type of position. Please select the ONE category that best describes the type of position you hold in your PRIMARY employment setting (as indicated in Question 2). You may be involved in several different types of work activities; however, your employment position can usually be described by ONE of the following categories. (PRIMARY POSITION IS THE ONE IN WHICH YOU SPEND THE MOST TIME)

- FACULTY POSITION.** Includes teaching and/or research activities appropriate to your academic setting. (Including being chair of a department).
- EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION.** Includes college or university administrative positions (such as provost or dean) although you may have a faculty appointment. Does not include department chair. Also includes superintendent of school district or other administrative position related to education.
- RESEARCH.** Includes basic or applied research in any field. Includes non-faculty research positions, work in a laboratory or research institute in government or private setting.
- ADMINISTRATION OF RESEARCH.** Includes managing a research organization or program. Although you may not be directly involved in research design, data collection, and so forth, your primary responsibility is administering research activities, including the supervision of research personnel.
- DIRECT HUMAN SERVICES.** Includes direct clinical services, counseling or guidance, or school psychological services, consultation, assessment.
- ADMINISTRATION OF HUMAN SERVICES.** Includes managing a program of human services. Although you may be directly involved in human service activities including supervising human service personnel and trainees.
- APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY.** Includes the practice of industrial/organizational psychology, personnel selection or assessment, systems or equipment design, organizational consultation, analysis or training.
- OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION.** Includes management or administration in a business, government setting, or non-profit organization that cannot be described as the direct administration of educational, research, human service, or applied psychology activities. Often this type of position is related to psychology such as the administration of a government program to fund psychological research. Includes policy or program development, or review, personnel administration, budgeting.
- OTHER POSITION.** Includes any position that cannot be reasonably assigned to the above categories (e.g., sales, publishing, secondary school teacher). Please specify

Please indicate your faculty rank

- Full Professor
- Associate Professor
- Assistant Professor
- Lecturer/Instructor
- Other Faculty Position, please specify:

5. Income and Years Work

## Experience

---

**Total Annual Earned Income.** Indicate your total GROSS annual earned income from all professional activities, including full-time and part-time positions, summer teaching or research, royalties, consulting and honoraria, etc. (e.g. 46000 or 88000)

Annual Gross Income
\$ <input type="text"/>

**Salary or Net Income from PRIMARY Position and Setting ONLY.** If you hold a salaried position, please indicate the current amount of salary from this position (e.g., the salary for academic year 2008-2009 or calendar year 2009). If you are employed in a self-employed position or independent practice, indicate your NET income (i.e., your total income after deducting office expenses) from the PRIMARY position for the previous 12 months. (e.g. 46000 or 102000)

Annual Net Income
\$ <input type="text"/>

6. Is the salary/net income reported above for a 9-10 month period or 11-12 month period?

- 9-10 months  
 11-12 months

7. Total Years Work Experience. Generally, this would be the number of years since receipt of highest degree.

However, exceptions are:

- A period of one or more years since receipt of highest degree when you did not work.
- Work experience at professional level before receiving highest degree.
- Since highest degree, there has been a major change in your specialty field such that prior work experience is irrelevant to present employment

8. Indicate the number of hours per week you spend in your PRIMARY position.

9. What is the ZIP CODE of your PRIMARY employment setting?

## 6. Demographic Information

---

10. What is the highest degree you have earned?

Ph.D

Psy.D

Ed.D

Master's

Other (please specify)

11. What is your ethnic heritage? *(Please check all that apply.)*

African-American/Black

American Indian/Alaskan Native

Asian

Caucasian/White

Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

Hispanic/Latino(a)

Other (please specify)

If your ethnic heritage is American Indian Alaskan Native, please specify the name of enrolled / principal tribe.

If your ethnic heritage is Asian or Pacific Islander, please check the appropriate groups below.

- Chinese
- Korean
- East Indian
- Japanese
- Vietnamese
- Other

If you are Hispanic / Latino (a), please check the appropriate groups below.

- Cuban
- Mexican
- Puerto Rican
- South / Central American
- Other

12. Are you a person with a disability?

- Yes
- No

Please indicate your disabilities using the following categories. *(Please check all that apply.)*

- Physical/Systemic Disability (e.g., lupus, MS, CP)
- Hearing Impairment or Deafness
- Visual Impairment or Blindness
- Cognitive Disability (e.g., learning disability, post stroke)
- Psychiatric Disability (e.g., depression, bi-polar disorder)

Other, please

specify