

By Judy Krysik, MSW, Ph.D.

ASU School of Social Work



IN COOPERATION WITH THE ASU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

2007 NASW AZ Salary & Benefit Survey

Background to the Survey

Salary is one factor that is known to influence the recruitment and retention of professional social workers. In the 2004 NASW national survey of licensed social workers, higher salary was reported as one of the most important factors that would influence a job change. This finding was consistent among Hispanic/Latino, non-Hispanic white, black/African American, and female and male licensed social workers. The purpose of the 2007 NASW AZ survey was to provide a descriptive benchmark to assess trends in salary and benefits over time and across regions. The survey also provides information for prospective employers, employees, and social work students.

Of the 640 members sampled for the NASW AZ survey, 465 responded, yielding a 72.6% response rate. The response rate to the NASW AZ survey was high compared to that of similar surveys. For example, the response rate to the 2004 NASW workforce survey was 49.4% (Whitaker, Weismiller, & Clark, 2006). A sample of 465 members from the total membership of 1,892, provides 95% confidence that the results of the survey are accurate within plus or minus 3.95 percentage points. Of those surveyed, 258 responded by Internet and 207 responded by telephone. Telephone surveys were conducted from April 2nd through May 3rd, 2007 and access to the Internet survey was open from March 29th to April 24th.

Of the 465 NASW AZ members surveyed, 118 or 25% were not employed in social work at the time of the survey. Of the 118 members not employed in social work, 41 were employed in a non-social work related position, and 77 were not employed for other reasons such as retirement, educational leave, searching for employment, poor health, or they were engaged in dependent care that prohibited employment. The remaining analysis relates to the 347 NASW AZ members who were employed in social work positions at the time of the survey. Demographically, the sample of 347 closely mirrors the NASW AZ membership. The sample was:

78.9% female

85.1% white, 5.3% Hispanic, 2.9% black, 2.9% Asian/Pac. Islander, 2% Native American
57.4% from Maricopa County

23% from Pima County, and 19.5% from other regions of the state

72% were 45 years of age or older and 54.4% had been in social work 16 + years

Employment Characteristics

- 81.2% of the 347 respondents had one employer and 8.8% had two or more employers.
- 38.7% were employed in the private, for profit sector
- 40.2% were employed in the private, non-profit sector
- 5% were employed with the federal government, 5.6% with state government, 6.5% with local government, and 1% with the military.
- 3.2% reported primary employment with a university or college
- The most frequently cited focus of primary employment:
Mental health: 36.8%
Medical health: 13.9%
Family services: 8.9%
Child welfare: 6.5%
Hospice: 5.6%
Addictions: 4.7%
Aging: 4.7%

Special Points of Interest

- *Salary influences the recruitment and retention of professional social workers*
- *The NASW AZ member workforce survey is highly accurate thanks to a 71.6% response rate.*
- *25% of the NASW AZ membership is not employed in social work positions*
- *Only 69.3% of NASW AZ members employed in social work are year-round, full-time employees*
- *69% of those employed in social work are in positions that have certification or licensure requirements*
- *25% are in positions that require work in rural locations*
- *33.8% are required to work weekends or shift work*
- *23% report employment-related safety issues*
- *16.1% are required to speak Spanish or a language other than English*

Wage and Benefit Findings

Annual Gross Wages or Salary - Full-time Workers Only (n = 237)

Less than \$15,000 – 0.4%
 \$15,000 – \$19,999 – 0.4%
 \$20,000 - \$24,999 —
 \$25,000 - \$29,999 – 2.6%
 \$30,000 - \$34,999 – 6.0%
 \$35,000 - \$39,999 – 10.6%
 \$40,000 - \$49,999 – 20.0%
 \$50,000 - \$59,999 – 22.6%
 \$60,000 - \$69,000 – 12.8%
 \$70,000 - \$79,000 – 7.7%
 \$80,000 - \$99,000 – 10.6%
 \$100,000 + - 6.4%

Education and salary are significantly related as expected, but weakly ($r = .21$)

Benefits - Full-time Workers Only (n = 237)

Health insurance—85.8%
 Dental insurance—80.2%
 Life insurance—77.1%
 Pension—75.1%
 Tuition reimbursement—58.7%
 Cell phone or reimbursement—51.2%
 Continuing ed. Reimbursement—67.5%
 Flexible work hours—66.7%
 Paid family leave 52.7%

“Although salary is probably better than what I can find in the rest of the market, I have noticed a steady decrease in the amount of benefits. That is, I am having to pay more for health insurance and getting less in vacation benefits and reimbursement for CEUs and professional membership fees. The result is, that although I am earning more, I have a net decrease in salary because I have to pay so much in premiums and incidentals that I did not have to pay before. I hope that trend gets some attention, if it is true for my other colleagues” (NASW AZ survey respondent)

Income Differences—Gender, Licensure, and Region

Examining year-round, full-time employed social workers, men earn significantly more than women.

There were no statistically significant differences in the following comparisons, however the trends were in the expected direction. Failure to achieve statistical significance may be due to the way in which income was measured. Rather than specify a \$ amount, respondents were

asked which income category best described their annual gross wages or salary from all social work positions held.

Year-round, full-time social workers who are licensed earn more on average than those who are not, but the difference is not statistically significant.

Years of practice and income are significantly related with more years related to greater income, the relationship is moderate ($r = .46$)

Positions that require a license are higher paid than those that do not require a license, but the difference is not statistically significant.

Salary and wages are higher in Maricopa County compared to Pima County and all other areas of the state combined, but the difference is not statistically significant.

Income Differences by Employment Sector and Role

For those with year-round, full-time employment, income from all social work employment from highest to lowest was ranked by sector of primary employment as follows:

1. University/college/military
2. Local government
3. Private, for-profit (incl. Private practice)

4. Federal government
5. Private, not-for-profit
6. State government-non-academic

Social workers employed year-round, full time in an administrative role earned significantly more than social workers employed in only a direct service role (case manager or counseling/psychotherapy).



Additional analyses from the NASW AZ salary survey will be published in the NASW newsletter.