

BY Katie Chang

A First Look at Land Trust SALARIES AND BENEFITS IN 2013

The results are in. Drawing on a cross-section of land trusts nationwide, the 2013 Land Trust Salaries and Benefits Survey shows both steady progress and tremendous gains, with a few areas for improvement.

Overall, salaries for land trust personnel have kept pace with inflation and in some cases seen modest increases. On average, executive directors of land trusts are earning \$84,035 per year, up 3.8% from the inflation-adjusted \$80,989 reported in 2010. Most executive director salaries, however, were in the \$70,000 to \$79,999 range, for a median salary of \$75,283 (see graph).

Consistent with the results in previous years, executive directors of land trusts with larger operating budgets tended to earn higher salaries. Those who led organizations with budgets of at least \$2 million earned, on average, more than three times the average salary of those with budgets less than \$100,000.

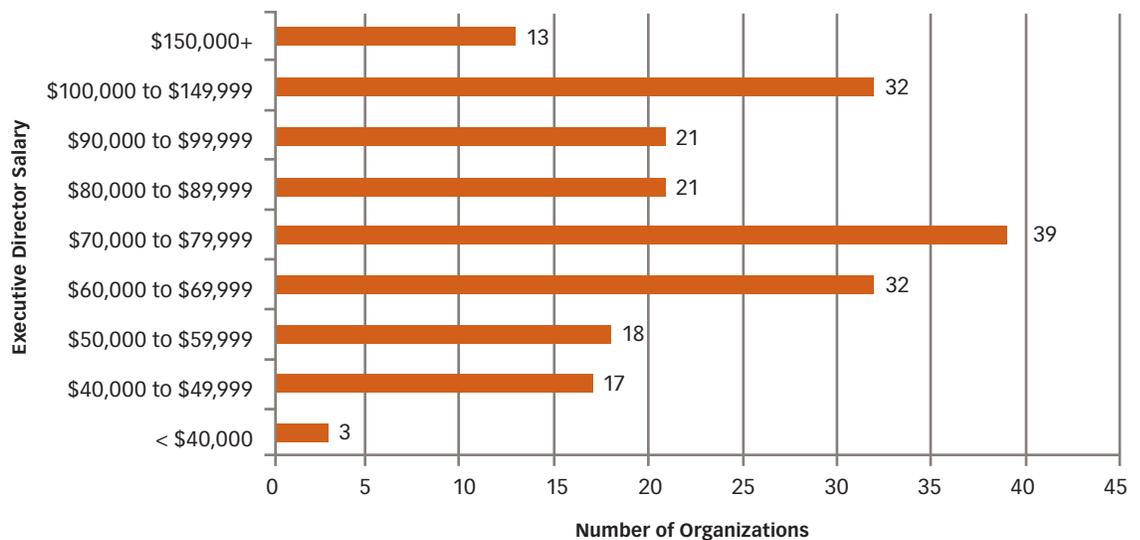
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For all other staff positions, overall salaries generally remained level compared with 2010, outpacing inflation by 1%. Organizations at all budget levels recognize the importance of retaining valued staff, with 96% of respondents providing annual wage increases for their employees.

Beyond salaries, land trusts are increasingly investing in the physical and long-term financial health of their staff. The number of organizations offering benefits such as health insurance and retirement benefits has increased:

- Reversing a steady decline from 2002 to 2010, the percentage of respondents providing medical insurance to their employees increased for the first time in more than a decade—from a low of 62% in 2010 to 81% in 2013.

Full-Time Executive Director Salary





- The percentage of respondents offering retirement plan options to their employees also increased significantly—from 55% in 2010 to 74% in 2013. Organizations with budgets under \$500,000 tended to offer a Simple IRA or SEP plan, while larger organizations were more likely to offer a 403(b).
- The number of organizations making contributions to employees' retirement plans has grown as well. Of the organizations offering retirement benefits, 65% make contributions to employee plans—usually at 3% of the employee's salary.

There remain areas for improvement which, while not unique to land trusts, present challenges to a more equitable and inclusive picture of community-based land conservation. The wage gap between female and male executive directors remained unchanged at 89%. The land trust community also clearly lacks racial diversity, identifying 97% of staff as white.

First conducted in 2000 and previously updated in 2010, the Land Trust Salaries and Benefits Survey is the only comprehensive source of staff compensation data exclusively for the land trust community. The survey was open to all land trusts that reported having at least one full-time, paid staff member in the 2010 National Land Trust Census, and the Land Trust Alliance received 211 completed responses, representing about 37% of staffed land trusts.

To read the full report, visit www.lta.org/salarysurvey.

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