



## NEW SALARY SURVEY SHOWS STRENGTHS OF MUSEUM FIELD, REVEALS FIVE YEAR GROWTH TRENDS IN KEY POSITIONS

**Commissioned Annually By The Association of Art Museum Directors,  
The Full Report, Which Includes Data From More Than 200 Museums  
Across North America, Will Now Be Available For Free**

New York, NY—June 29, 2017—The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) today released its [2017 Salary Survey](#), which includes responses from 219 museums in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and covers more than 50 different staff positions, from the director’s office to leadership and support positions in curatorial, education, advancement, communications, and security departments. The data shows that museums remain strong and stable workplaces: in 2016, the average median salary increased 3%, while in the preceding year it grew at a rate of 2.7%, exceeding the rate of growth for the U.S. as a whole. At the same time, responses indicate the importance of staff as institutional assets, with nearly two-thirds (64%) of responding museums stating that they spent between 41%–60% of their operating budget on payroll-related expenses—up from 57% in 2015.

Beginning with the 2017 Salary Survey, AAMD is making [the full report available for free as a download](#) via its website and as a service to the museum field and museum professionals. Developed in partnership with Stax Inc., a data driven consulting and advisory firm, the survey report looks at salaries and benefits data covering the period from 2011-2016, and includes geographic- and population-based benchmarking. The survey is part of a wider move by the Association over the last several years to support an increase in data-driven analyses of the museum field, such as with the [gender gap study](#), conducted with the National Center for Arts Research (NCAR) at Southern Methodist University, and AAMD’s own [Art Museums by the Numbers](#) reports.

“AAMD’s 2017 Salary Survey affirms how valuable our staff are to our institutions, and to the communities we serve,” said Lori Fogarty, Director and CEO of the Oakland Museum of California. “At the core of any art museum are people, from those who manage collections to those who install works of art, and from the security guards who ensure the safety of visitors to the curators and directors pursuing their vision to create compelling art experiences. Collecting, analyzing, and sharing this data supports our objectives of leadership in the field—and our commitment to increasing our collective understanding about art museums.”

Key takeaways from the report include a number of **data points about salaries**:

- Between 2011-2016, Chief Operating Officers (COOs) experienced salary growth at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.5%— about double the average rate across other museum positions.
  - This may reflect the increasing complexity of museum operations, which demands more skills and experience in the COO role.

- COOs also tend to be employed by larger museums: 60% of COOs are employed by museums with an operating budget in excess of \$10 million.
- Between 2011-2016, curatorial staff saw the second fastest growth in salaries, with average median incomes growing at a rate of over 4.6%.
  - The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) listed curators as highly in-demand professionals during the past 8-9 years, which may account for the strength of these positions in commanding salary increases.
  - However, the BLS also estimates the number of curators to grow by 8% in the period between 2014-2024.
- Positions related to information services or online content management also experienced growth in average salaries—likely reflecting the ongoing work by museums to build their social media and web presence and seek new opportunities to use digital tools to cultivate audiences.
  - For example, those in the job of Director of New Media experienced a 3.1% increase (Year-over-Year) in salary, on average, between 2015 and 2016.
- Between 2015-2016, museum directors experienced a 1.6% growth in median salaries—below the 3% average of all staff positions in the survey.
  - Over the five-year period 2011-2016, directors salaries grew at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 1.2%

The report also analyzed **benefits provided by museums**, revealing that:

- For non-director level employees, there was a considerable rise in Paid Time Off (PTO): the percentage of employees with tenure of less than 1 year being offered 2 weeks of PTO increased from 26% in 2012 to 63% in 2015.
  - This trend likely reflects a recognition that Millennials and younger employees highly value time off, making this an important benefit and necessary to remain competitive in hiring.
- 48% of museums offered non-director level executive staff reimbursements for acquiring or maintaining professional licenses—while only 42% of museums offered such benefits to director level staff.
- Meanwhile, directors are more likely to receive vehicle or housing allowances— indicative of the fact that higher level positions are often filled at the national level, requiring competitive benefits to encourage director-level staff to relocate.

“Stax was pleased to partner with AAMD on this effort. For anyone running a museum, on the board of directors or a patron, the data is critical to understanding your most valuable asset—the people required to ensure the vibrancy of the institution,” said Rafi Musher, Founder and CEO of Stax Inc. “The trends highlight an industry recognition of the increasing complexity of running a museum and making the arts available to the public, and the team you need to make it all happen.”

The 2017 AAMD salary survey had a response rate of 94%—compared to 92% the previous year—and received responses from 219 museums across North America. Data reflects the 2016 Fiscal Year for each reporting institution. The survey reflects metropolitan areas defined as metropolitan statistical areas and micropolitan statistical areas as of July 15, 2015, and population data has been updated to reflect 2010 U.S. Census counts. Canadian and Mexican metropolitan area populations were sourced from Statistics Canada and Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, respectively.

### **About Stax**

Stax Inc. is a global strategy consultancy serving private equity firms and corporations across a broad range of industries. The firm partners with clients to provide data-driven, actionable insights, helping management teams drive growth, enhance profits, increase value, and make better investment decisions. Founded in 1994, Stax has offices in Boston, Chicago, New York, and Colombo, Sri Lanka. For more information, please visit [www.stax.com](http://www.stax.com).

### **About AAMD**

The Association of Art Museum Directors advances the profession by cultivating leadership capabilities of directors, advocating for the field, and fostering excellence in art museums. An agile, issues-driven organization, AAMD has three desired outcomes: engagement, leadership, and shared learning. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at [www.aamd.org](http://www.aamd.org).

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