

COMPENSATION AND BEYOND



ENHANCING SUPPORT FOR
COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS
IN NEW YORK CITY

**ALL DUE
RESPECT**

Contents

I. Introduction	3
A. Who is this for?	4
B. How to use this tool	4
II. Context	5
A. Trends across the field	6
B. Zoom in: Organizing in the City	6
C. Data and methodology	10
III. State of Play: Compensation and Benefits	11
A. Compensation	12
Key findings on salaries and wages	12
Cost of Living	12
Compensation culture	14
B. Benefits	16
Professional development and education	16
Workplace resources	17
Flexibility	18
Wellness	18
C. What comes next	19
IV. What to consider as a...	20
Director who wants to develop or change compensation policies	21
Director who is trying to raise funding for personnel needs	25
Organizing manager who wants to better support their direct reports	27
Organizer who is considering a new job	30
Funder who wants to support their grantees	32
Conclusion	34
APPENDIX I	35
Data and methodology	36
Key numbers and takeaways	37
A. Nonprofit NY 2024 Compensation Study	37
B. New Jobs Data	40
General results	41
Comparing compensation to cost of living	41
Gaps and next steps	44
APPENDIX II	45
All Due Respect Job Definitions	45

I. Introduction

A. Who is this for?

B. How to use this tool



A. WHO IS THIS FOR?

This resource is for community organizers in New York City to better understand the compensation, benefits, and workplace policies that form the foundation of their jobs. It is also for the organizing managers and executive directors who hold the decision-making power for the policies that impact community organizing roles. And for the donors who fund community organizing efforts, we hope this resource will provide both data and advice for how to best support your grantee partners.

As the frontline staff of power building groups, organizers build relationships with members, plan events, provide care to traumatized communities, manage logistics, gather and enter data, and make fast-paced campaign decisions, all while holding the reality that making progressive change is an uphill, long-term commitment. They work day in and day out to build power and win big fights and should work in a culture that supports their livelihoods. Organizers deserve good benefits and to be paid a living wage, at a minimum. Ideally, they would receive a thriving wage that enables them to stay at the organizations they invest themselves in.

Since 2020, All Due Respect has been researching and testing how to materially improve the working conditions of local and state-based community

organizers. For more information about the work we're doing in other parts of the U.S. and different types of experiments we're leading, please check out our website: www.allduerespectproject.org.

This resource outlines what we know about the current state of wages and benefits for NYC-based community organizers, while providing some context and advice from our years of working with organizers, directors, and funders from around the country to update the labor standards that dictate these crucial yet under-resourced jobs.

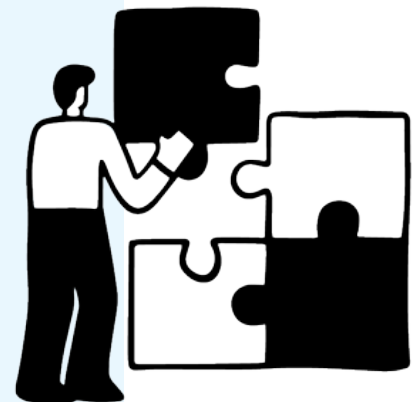
Our goal in creating this resource is to reduce high rates of staff burnout and turnover. Encouraging skilled organizers to continue their meaningful work in the sector will ensure our organizations and movements have the best players on the field, especially by investing in and prioritizing organizers of color, women, LGBTQ+ organizers, those with disabilities, rural organizers, and/or undocumented organizers as the core of our movement. We see this document as an ongoing, evolving resource that can be expanded as new data becomes available and as dynamics in NYC organizing culture continue to shift.

This resource was developed with the generous support of the New York Foundation, NYC Capacity Building Collaborative, and the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation.

B. HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The first part of this resource details the research we conducted to better understand the current state of compensation for organizers in NYC. The full compensation study with detailed data sets can be found at the end of this resource in Appendix I.

The second part of this resource provides guidance and tools to help organizers, directors, and other stakeholders implement the takeaways from our research. This resource serves as a starting point for your own curiosity and should be adapted and interpreted to address your organization's needs.



II. Context

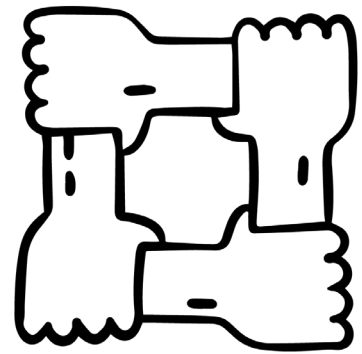
- A. Trends across the field
- B. Zoom in: Organizing in the City
- C. Data and methodology



A. TRENDS ACROSS THE FIELD

In 2022, our [national research study](#) found:

- 9 out of 10 organizers have experienced burnout;
- Organizers believe working conditions need to be improved
- Organizers believe their working conditions have a direct impact on campaign success as well as on the effectiveness of the broader movement ecosystem;
- Directors don't have the resources they need to pay more competitive salaries and build staff capacity;
- It is difficult to find, hire, and retain trained organizers, especially organizers who come from or represent the communities they are working with;
- Directors don't have access to centralized information about wages, benefits, and best management practices to create and maintain sustainable jobs; and,
- There is a set of funders who understand the need to shift how they fund and support organizing, and who understand there is a disconnect between how we value organizing and how we actually treat organizers.



These trends not only impact the livelihood of organizers and their families, but also impact organizations' efforts to build skilled teams with the ability to take up and win important campaigns.

B. ZOOM IN: ORGANIZING IN THE CITY

This resource provides an overview of what it means to organize in New York City—a unique ecosystem that requires particular skills, knowledge, and physical demands from its organizers. Compared to the majority of other organizing ecosystems across the U.S., organizers in NYC commute more by public transportation, sometimes very long distances, to be able to organize across boroughs and communities. And, because NYC is made up of many diverse immigrant and ethnic communities, organizers working within certain neighborhoods are often required to speak languages other than English and have the necessary

cultural insight to do their jobs effectively. These challenges are compounded by the inflated cost of housing, creating living conditions for organizers that are similar to those of the community members they're organizing with. As one organizer stated, "we are organizing to fight the same conditions that impact ourselves, as well as our membership." Lived experience and connection to community can be a powerful asset for organizers; however, dealing with the same conditions they're organizing against on a personal level can add additional strain to an already taxing job.

The following dynamics in particular shape the current landscape and organizing conditions in New York City:

1. Housing crisis:

The [housing affordability crisis](#) in New York City impacts local organizing in myriad ways. About 1/3 of organizer jobs posted between January–April 2024 were for tenant organizing positions. At the same time, many organizers who work in certain neighborhoods have been priced out themselves, therefore displaced from the communities



in which they organize. Additionally, due to the high volume of renters in the city and the frequency with which their members are moving, organizers continue to lose progress on campaigns or face the difficulty of frequently having to build new relationships from scratch.

2. Childcare:

Childcare in NYC costs up to 17% more than the national average. We spoke to organizers with caretaking and parental responsibilities who described the difficulties they face with inconsistent work hours and required evening and weekend events that leave little to no ability to juggle both work and home obligations consistently. These organizers expressed frustration over the lack of affordable childcare options, which compounds the stress of balancing their

professional responsibilities with their roles as parents. This challenge not only affects their ability to attend or travel for key organizing events but also strains their personal lives, making it difficult to sustain their commitment to the work over the long term. These organizers mentioned that childcare opportunities that are integrated into the budget for events can play an important role, but not enough to make them feel like they could do this work long term.



“My kids often complain that I don’t get home at a decent time or I’m working too much when I am home, so I work extra hard making sure I get to spend time with them. That leaves zero time for my personal self. I feel lucky that I get to use the childcare we provide for our members at events but it’s not enough, it’s never enough.”

—Parent/Organizer

3. Government funding:

Many organizations feel stuck within the confinements of their New York City-specific funding contracts (for example, Housing and Urban Development grants) that sometimes do not allow them to integrate benefits like Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) or raises into their budgets. These city grants often require recipients to use a reimbursement model, in which organizations front the money before receiving funds that can sometimes take years to

process. Given the funding landscape of NYC, we know many smaller organizations rely on these types of grants to fund their organizing work, which can put them in a cycle limiting their growth. Directors mentioned that funding uncertainty can impede their ability to grow their teams, and that organizer retention can be a struggle in general, with the constraints of government grants as one contributing factor.



4. Organizing experience and upward mobility:

Many organizing directors interviewed in this study reported difficulties with one-size-fits-all roles and compensation structures that fail to account for varying types and levels of experience. In community organizing teams, upward mobility is often limited due to the narrow range of available job roles. Typically, these organizing teams have a relatively flat structure, with most positions focused on outreach, advocacy, and mobilization efforts. Consequently, there are fewer specialized roles—such as data analysis or digital organizing—or higher-level positions to advance into, making career progression challenging for those seeking growth. This lack of pipeline creates

a bottleneck where talented organizers remain in similar roles for extended periods, with few opportunities to expand their skills or assume leadership positions. Additionally, organizers expressed reluctance to move into management roles, as they do not perceive the increase in pay to be commensurate with the added responsibilities. Even for those who wish to advance while retaining their organizing skills, the limited number of managerial or director roles make this pathway rare. As a result, while the work is often fulfilling, the lack of clear career pathways can hinder long-term professional development.



“Organizing is for young people. It doesn’t feel like you can retire in this work because there is nowhere for us to go or move up. Our directors are already pretty young and there won’t be much opportunity for those of us who want their roles anyway.”

— Organizer

We found that entry-level community organizer jobs in New York City require an average of **2 years of experience** and **18% of NYC organizing jobs require multiple languages**. Organizers we spoke to were motivated by a strong sense of duty to their communities but felt that compensation is often inadequate given the skills required and the high demands of the roles. Additionally, numerous directors reported a declining interest in pursuing organizing work in general. We found that after two years on the job, many organizers realized they could earn similar salaries in jobs outside of nonprofit work or in nonprofits without organizing programs with significantly less demanding responsibilities.

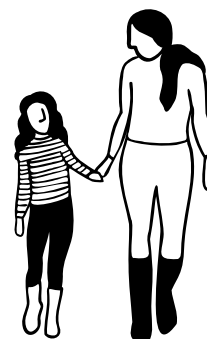


“If you are moving into a seasoned organizer role, you’re most likely supervising. I look at my supervisor and, like, it looks like hell. You need to devote hours to supervising on top of your organizing work. It doesn’t feel worth it.”

— Organizer

“We expect organizers to start from the very bottom, no matter where they are in life, no matter where they’re coming from or whether or not they have families to support or what have you. And that doesn’t feel fair, given the extremely taxing and emotionally draining labor that is organizing.”

— Organizing Director



Set against these challenges, we’ve taken a closer look at the current state of compensation for community organizing jobs in NYC through both qualitative and quantitative research. We focused on how compensation culture influences the retention of organizers in NYC, as well as how this culture impacts directors and the labor standards of the ecosystem as a whole. We took many factors into account, including geographic locations within the city, race, gender, class dynamics, and organizational issue areas. We believe this information is crucial to understanding how all players in the NYC organizing ecosystem can work collectively to improve working conditions, retain organizers, and make

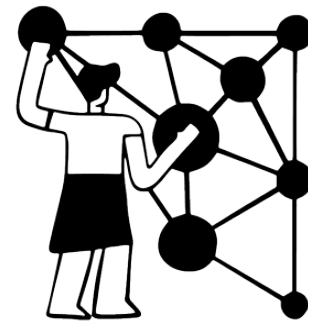
tangible changes towards higher sectoral standards for compensation and benefits.

Organizations come to this work from different circumstances and with different considerations: they have varying budget sizes and staff capacities, focus on different issues, and may or may not also engage in direct service work. Especially in NYC, power building organizations may work in all five boroughs across the city or focus on one specific neighborhood. As such, this resource is meant to provide a baseline level of utility to all types of organizers, but we encourage readers to adapt this information to their own circumstances.

A note on organizers:

For purposes of this resource, we define an organizer as someone who recruits potential members through canvassing, 1:1s, trainings, events, and/or meetings to build and grow a base rooted in a site, region, issue, or identity. An organizer supports the leadership development of members, facilitates the process of members building relationships, identifies

and analyzes the issues that impact them, and takes action together with members. Additionally, paid fellows and paid interns should be included when considering this information. There are many different subcategories and variations of organizers, which may be helpful to distinguish in your own work. Please see additional definitions at the end of this document in Appendix II.



C. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data in this report was pulled from two sources: (1) individual job announcements posted between January–April 2024 and (2) the compensation study conducted by Nonprofit NY in May 2024. With survey data from 381 organizations, the Nonprofit NY study provides a breakdown of subsectors within the nonprofit universe (as defined by the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities used by the IRS), organizations' budget size, employee demographics, and compensation and benefits. Numbers used for this study were taken as an average from both of these data sets.

In order to ensure that our research reflected a comprehensive understanding of the impact that compensation has on the organizing landscape overall, we also prioritized multiple perspectives from within the NYC power building sector through nine one-to-one interviews with executive and mid-level directors, five interviews with funding partners, and three virtual focus groups with organizers.

Topics covered in these interviews included:

- Ideal wages and benefits for organizers
- Challenges preventing organizations from offering higher salaries
- Processes for wage-setting
- Organizational culture as it relates to compensation
- The impact of organizer compensation on the sector overall

This resource includes key themes, findings, and observations from both our qualitative and quantitative research, and is intended to provide insights that follow the lead of community members and partners organizing in New York City.

III. State of Play: Compensation and Benefits

- A. Compensation
- B. Benefits
- C. What comes next



A. COMPENSATION

Key findings on salaries and wages

Based on our research, we found that the average salary for a non-managerial organizer in NYC is **\$56,933**. For organizers with management responsibilities, the average salary is **\$87,652**.

According to the Nonprofit NY 2024 report, the average salary for a non-managerial organizer has actually **decreased by \$526** since 2022, whereas the average salary for organizing managers has **increased by \$18,728**.



Cost of Living

We compared these average salaries against the current cost of living estimate for each of the five boroughs, as determined by the Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) [Family Budget Calculator](#), which aggregates information from federal agencies on housing, food, childcare, transportation, healthcare, and taxes. It is of note that these calculations for cost of living account for what we would consider the minimum, and do not include costs for the things that ensure long-term stability and wellbeing, such as putting money aside for savings, travel costs, education, and more. For example, the EPI calculates these cost of living amounts based on the national low cost food plan with the assumption that all meals are cooked at home and all food is purchased at grocery stores. Given the time-consuming demands of organizing work, these numbers do not take into account the likelihood of organizers purchasing prepared food. While limited, this type of cost of living calculator is, at this time, the most comprehensive, aggregated set of data we have to be able to understand the needs of living in New York City.

The tables below illustrate the significant gaps between the cost of living and the average salary for non-managerial (**\$56,933**) and managerial (**\$87,652**) organizing positions in NYC.



TABLE 1

(ONE ADULT, NO CHILDREN, STUDIO APARTMENT)

	Kings (Brooklyn)	New York	Queens	Richmond (Staten Island)	Bronx	Overall Average
Cost of Living	\$67,557	\$78,454	\$72,879	\$70,260	\$57,843	\$69,398
Non-Managerial Organizers	-\$10,624	-\$21,521	-\$15,946	-\$13,327	-\$910	-\$12,465
Managerial Organizers	+\$19,472	+\$8,575	+\$14,150	+\$16,769	+\$29,186	+\$17,630

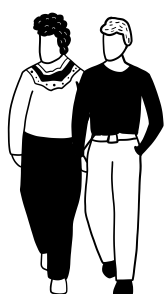


TABLE 2

(TWO ADULTS, NO CHILDREN, 1 BEDROOM)

	Kings (Brooklyn)	New York	Queens	Richmond (Staten Island)	Bronx	Overall Average
Cost of Living	\$82,281	\$93,860	\$86,948	\$85,271	\$72,388	\$84,149
Non-Managerial Organizers	-\$25,348	-\$36,927	-\$30,015	-\$28,338	-\$15,455	-\$27,216
Managerial Organizers	+\$4,748	-\$6,831	+\$81	+\$1,758	+\$14,641	+\$5,611

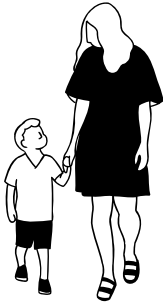


TABLE 3
(ONE ADULT, ONE CHILD, TWO BEDROOM)

	Kings (Brooklyn)	New York	Queens	Richmond (Staten Island)	Bronx	Overall Average
Cost of Living	\$105,326	\$118,684	\$111,372	\$109,407	\$93,902	\$107,738
Non-Managerial Organizers	-\$48,393	-\$61,751	-\$54,439	-\$52,474	-\$36,969	-\$50,805
Managerial Organizers	-\$18,297	-\$31,655	-\$24,343	-\$22,378	-\$6,873	-\$20,709

This data demonstrates that the current average salary is not enough to afford basic cost of living in New York City for any non-managerial organizers. Additionally, becoming a parent or taking on other caregiving responsibilities is only possible for managerial organizers living in a dual income household or outside of the city itself.

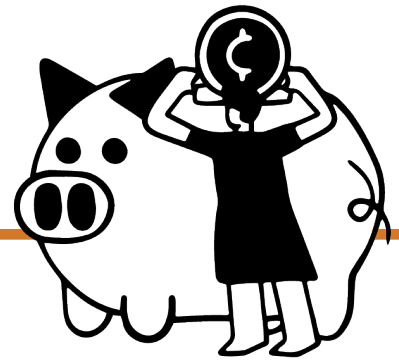
The increase in costs across counties and as family size increases comes, in large part, from housing. Given the [housing affordability crisis](#) in New York City and across the country, it follows that 1/3 of organizing jobs posted since the start of 2024 are for tenant organizers. The same affordability issues that impact many of the communities that organizers serve, which are leading long-time residents to leave the five boroughs of the city, impact organizers themselves as well.

**For a thorough landscape analysis of the current state of compensation for organizers in New York City and a more in-depth look at how cost of living impacts managerial roles, please see the compensation report at the end of this document.*

“The fact that I’m in tenant organizing, I know the realities of how rent will go up every year. Our directors should know that too, and they should be accounting for that when they think about whether or not we can afford to stay in these jobs.”

—Organizer

Compensation culture



When asked about the ideal starting salary for an organizer, every organizer and director we interviewed suggested an amount exceeding \$50,000, with \$67,000 being the average minimum for an entry-level position. As illustrated above, the salary for many organizing jobs falls far short of that average.

Directors and funders have observed that, due to their inability to offer competitive salaries or larger grants, respectively, organizers often leave grantee organizations within 2–3 years of service. This turnover occurs before an organizer can fully integrate campaign or community knowledge into a sustainable system, which not only hampers the continuity of ongoing campaigns but also diminishes the long-term impact these organizations aim to achieve. The frequent departure of organizers leads to inexperienced teams, creating a cycle of disruption that undermines the stability and growth of campaigns. Additionally, the uneven distribution of workloads burdens more experienced organizers or managers, who are constantly required to onboard and train new staff, detracting from their ability to focus on strategic objectives.

Furthermore, we learned that many organizations fail to involve key staff members who serve on hiring teams, such as organizing directors or HR directors, in broader budgetary discussions. This exclusion creates a significant disconnect and a lack of transparency in determining salaries for new organizing hires. As a result, those directly responsible for recruitment and staffing are often left without a clear understanding of the financial framework within which they are expected to operate. This disconnect can lead to misaligned expectations, where hiring teams may advocate for competitive salaries to attract top talent, only to find that budgetary constraints have already been set without their input. This lack of involvement not only hinders hiring teams to make informed decisions but also contributes to broader issues of staff dissatisfaction, turnover, and the inability to offer compensation packages that reflect the true value and needs of the roles being filled.

“Salaries are not as competitive as they can be and everyone agrees that we need more money. Turnover due to staff seeking better compensation always delays the work/campaigns.”

—Executive Director

B. Benefits

In addition to a living wage, core benefits such as employer-paid health insurance and access to retirement fund plans (401k, 403b) can be crucial to job sustainability.

According to the Nonprofit NY study, 85.6% of nonprofits provide health insurance coverage for employees and 78.7% provide retirement savings plans. Yet what those health and retirement plans cover can vary widely. At the time of this report, there is no publicly available information on the number of organizers who have access to:

- 100% employer-paid health insurance
- 50-99% employer-paid health insurance
- Employer-paid health insurance that includes spousal, domestic partner, and/or dependent coverage (or at what percentage they are covered)
- Retirement plans that include employer contributions or matches
- Retirement plans that include vesting periods (the amount of time an employee must work for the organization before they can fully own those benefits)

A lack of standardization across nonprofits and social justice organizations persists as to what a baseline or entry-level benefits package would include, even for core benefits such as health insurance and retirement funds.

In addition to salary and core benefits, many additional supports help make staffers feel like they are being invested in. For example, organizers cited professional development, flexible scheduling and compensatory (comp) time off, and wellness support as core to feeling “seen” for the hard work they put in and the unique challenges of organizing they navigate.

Professional development and education

Organizers said one of the top considerations for feeling valued by organizational leadership is professional development, such as attending conferences, trainings, and other skills-building and networking opportunities. For example, NYC-based organizers who focus on tenant organizing must understand a significant amount of technical and policy-based knowledge in order to do their jobs effectively. Organizations that invest deeply in the type of legal education or language skills needed to do this type of organizing see lower turnover rates on their teams when coupled with providing a living wage.



Additional examples of professional development for organizers include:

- Sending organizers to conferences and trainings abroad to understand the global context in which they're doing their work (organizations we spoke to had these opportunities sponsored by funding partners)
- Support for continuing education opportunities, including one-off workshops as well as longer-term programs
- Tuition reimbursement programs
- Career coaching
- Communications and facilitation training for organizers to engage in public speaking and when representing the organization

Workplace resources

Several factors can make an organizing job quite taxing, such as frequent local and statewide travel; odd hours, including evenings and weekends; and being in constant communication, especially during busy campaign peaks. While some aspects are unavoidable parts of the job, organizations can offer staff support to help them manage these realities. We found that most organizations in NYC do not include transportation (public transit or cabs) or communication (cell phone or internet) stipends or reimbursements, despite these being required for an organizer's job. In addition to contributing to financial hardship, many organizers see this oversight as a fundamental lack of understanding or respect for what organizing truly entails.

Even when benefits are provided, organizers and directors mentioned a lack of education on how to even access them. Aside from initial onboarding basics, many organizations aren't providing information on how to navigate these benefits or their portals. As a result, some organizations have discontinued or deprioritized retirement or comprehensive healthcare benefits due to lack of use. This can be especially challenging for those staffers who do not have the type of class privilege that might aid in financial comfort and literacy.



“It’s so hard to organize in New York because everything in New York is hard. It already takes so much of my personal time to commute to meetings and on top of that, I’m having to pay for where I’m required to be too. Imagine having to pay your own money to go to a zoom meeting.”

—Organizer

Flexibility



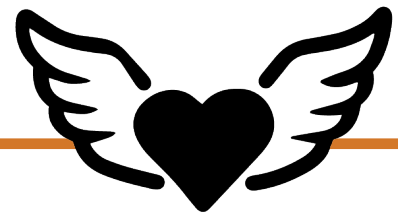
Given the often unpredictable nature of organizing work, many organizers state that having flexible time off, being able to work from home on days they're not in the field, and receiving comp time after busy campaign pushes can all make huge differences in their ability to stay in their organizing roles. Interviewees voiced the need to create boundaries for themselves with the support of their managers.

When asked about elements of workplace culture that contribute to job satisfaction, organizers said that a sense of understanding and trust from their supervisors plays a significant role. While managers might not always have the ability to provide monetary incentives, trusting direct reports to manage their own work hours or allowing for extra time off positively increased organizers' rapport with leadership. Similarly, organizing managers agreed that, given the demands of organizing work, especially on evenings and weekends, providing organizers with flexible schedules was something they said has a high impact on their managerial relationships as well as the overall capacity of their teams.

"I see my manager doing his best and the fact that he sees the same in me makes all the difference. He knows how hard I'm working; if he didn't trust me to do my job and give me flex time to create boundaries for myself, I would have burnt out and quit a long time ago."

—Organizer

Wellness



Unlike other regions of the country where a culture around wellness may be more broadly embraced, we found that organizations in New York City do not typically include wellness benefits in their employment packages. These benefits might include support for staffers' mental and emotional health, community building, physical fitness, or healing justice practices. While these types of benefits would be encouraged for all staffers, frontline organizers consistently reference wellness support as something that would help to prevent or alleviate burnout.

For example, one organizer shared that their entire organizational staff are queer people, and mostly women. They shared that having a flexible benefits package inclusive of queer parenting needs and non-traditional lifestyle structures is highly valued and helps make up for lower salaries.

Wellness benefits also help organizers deal with the intensity and secondary trauma of the work. Neighborhood accountability and deeply personal organizing efforts are distinctive aspects of organizing work in this city, and organizers often say they have to navigate the impact on their health alone. Assisting members with trauma resulting from state-sanctioned and institutional violence is frequently a central part of organizing work. This responsibility, typically undertaken by organizers who lack formal mental health training, is an ongoing consideration for organizing directors in the management of their teams.

In some cases, wellness benefits help organizers deal with their own trauma caused by similar situations experienced by the people they're building relationships with. Particularly when it comes to tenant advocacy, organizers and directors alike have cited the highly emotional nature of working in New York City. Organizers in NYC are deeply embedded in the communities they serve, frequently forming professional relationships with their own neighbors, who sometimes serve as the core constituents of their campaigns.

While the emotionally demanding nature of organizing work may be inevitable, providing certain mental wellness benefits to organizers can assist them in coping with the trauma that often accompanies their efforts.

Other examples of wellness benefits can be found on **"Providing more resources"** on page 32.



"My job requires so much of me. I feel like I'm holding the trauma of our members every day and when it's time for me to disconnect, I just can't."

—Organizer

C. What comes next

None of the conditions that impact organizer retention and well-being are easy to shift overnight. Moreover, the changes that organizations must make to support and retain organizers go hand in hand with systemic solutions to the housing, childcare, and cost of living crises that communities face. At the same time, the organizers fighting for these solutions need and deserve working conditions and wages that sustain them.

In the following section, you will find a guide to address these dynamics from whatever role you currently occupy, from a new organizer weighing job opportunities to a director making decisions about hiring and pay. We intend this guide to serve as a resource for leaders in a variety of positions to begin tackling these challenges together.

IV. What to consider as a...

Director who wants to develop or change compensation policies

Director who is trying to raise funding for personnel needs

Organizing manager who wants to better support their direct reports

Organizer who is considering a new job

Funder who wants to support their grantees





What to consider as a...

DIRECTOR WHO WANTS TO DEVELOP OR CHANGE COMPENSATION POLICIES

Low compensation and wages are, with little exception, the number one issue that organizers cite as contributing to low morale and burnout. However, within that context, we have found a broader picture to all the components of compensation aside from the specific numbers on a paycheck.

We think of this bigger picture as a “compensation philosophy.” For example, an organization that has transparent pay bands should also ensure that employees are clear on what metrics would determine being on the lower end or higher end of a particular pay band. Performance, seniority, years of experience, or specific skills might all be determining factors that need to be communicated to the team. A compensation philosophy might also include policies for raises and salary adjustments, cost of living adjustments (COLAs), bonuses, or additional stipends.

In a city as increasingly expensive as New York, it can be challenging to develop compensation standards that meet the needs of staff and also reflect organizational values. Having baseline compensation standards alongside a plan for what to aspire to can help organizations develop realistic fundraising goals, predict reasonable levels of growth, and encourage transparency with staff regarding pay. Based on our research and conversations with organizers and directors, this section includes recommendations and ideas for directors to consider as they build necessary compensation practices to invest in organizers and create more sustainable organizing jobs.

Questions to ask when building your compensation standards:

- How will you ensure your compensation guidelines are understood by all members of staff, including new organizers or employees?
- What is the scale or ratio between highest and lowest salaries and positions?
- Are these compensation policies indirectly discriminating against anyone with special circumstances (i.e. caretaking or parenting, medical needs, or differently abled individuals)?
- How does your compensation plan support any anticipated growth for your staff size or organization in general?
- How would you describe the role that fairness and equity play in guiding the development and implementation of your organization’s compensation strategy, including salary structures, raises, and benefits?
- Is there a difference in compensation for roles in certain departments within the organization (i.e. organizing vs. finance)? If so, why?

Salaries

Sustaining Practices

All organizers are paid at or above the cost of living specific to the county they are organizing in.

Organizers who take on additional responsibilities when their colleagues are on leave or when the organization is short-staffed are compensated for the extra work.

Established salary ranges with a comprehensive breakdown of benefits are included in every job listing and revisited at least once a year.

Compensation policies and standards are clear and made available to everyone on staff.

Cost of living increases are provided to organizers at least once a year.

Opportunities for salary negotiations are made available to organizers at least once a year.

Aspirational Practices

Bonuses and monetary incentives are given periodically to reward organizing benchmarks, either as positive reinforcement and/or acknowledgement of labor.

Compensation for new hires is reviewed and approved before any new staff are hired.

Organizing teams have access to participatory budgeting opportunities and are able to participate in conversations with organizational leadership related to salary considerations and amounts.

Benefits

Sustaining Practices

All organizers have 100% paid medical, vision and dental benefits provided by the organization.

All organizers are provided with a retirement plan with no or minimal (90 days or less) introductory/waiting period.

All organizers have access to adequate paid time off including sick days, bereavement, vacation, flex days, and partially or fully paid family and medical leave.

Aspirational Practices

At least 50% of health insurance coverage is offered to spouses, domestic partners, and dependents.

Organizations match a certain amount of an organizer's contribution to a retirement fund.

Organizers have access to paid sabbatical time after a certain number of years on staff.

Benefits are offered to part-time or temporary paid staff members.

Other types of paid leave are built into organizational policy (child or elder care, menstrual leave, activism or voting time off, self-care days, etc.)

Wellness resources vs. wages/benefits

While not typically included in traditional benefits packages, our research has found wellness benefits significantly impact the job satisfaction and retention of organizers. Some examples of wellness benefits include:



- **Restoration time**
 - Days or weeks off included in organizational calendars for the entire team
 - PTO and/or comp time after campaigns or other periods of high-volume work
 - Ability to work from home when not required to be physically in office
- **Financial wellness**
 - Support with student loans
 - Retirement
 - Tuition reimbursement
 - Financial literacy coaching
- **Access to mental and emotional health resources**
 - Stipends or group rates for online therapy, such as Talkspace
 - Group counseling
 - Membership to mindfulness apps such as Calm or Headspace
 - Recommendations and reimbursement for therapists
- **Physical fitness and nutrition**
 - Gym memberships
 - Access to apps such as ClassPass
 - Virtual gym memberships (such as Peloton or the YMCA)
 - Bike to work incentives
 - Meals provided at required events
 - Food delivery gift cards to use when working during evening meal times
- **Home office materials**
 - Cell phone and internet reimbursement
 - Stipends for equipment and home office supplies
 - Contributions to co-working spaces (if a physical office is not available)
- **Wellness stipends for employees to use at their discretion**
 - In tandem with campaigns or given as bonuses
 - Many of these offerings will come at additional cost to your organization, and therefore it is important to consider these benefits in tandem with base pay rate or as funding becomes available.

Factors to consider when determining organizer salary ranges:

- Organizing credentials and familiarity with membership base
- Years of experience and/or number of campaigns organized
- Formal experience (jobs held) vs. informal experience (volunteer, membership, or community involvement)
- Education related to organizing and advocacy, such as data bootcamps, degrees, or certificates in nonprofit management, policy, etc.
- Special skills (additional languages spoken, data analysis, budget management, etc.)
- Management experience and management requirements of the position



Resources to check out

- [Salary Policy Discussion Guide](#)
(RoadMap Consulting)
- [Making Compensation More Equitable](#)
(The Management Center)
- [Brave Questions: Recalculating Pay Equity](#)
Mala Nagarajan and Richael Faithful
(Network Weaver)
- [Compensation Equity](#)
(Vega Mala Consulting)



What to consider as a...

DIRECTOR WHO IS TRYING TO RAISE FUNDING FOR PERSONNEL NEEDS

We believe funders play a key role in improving working conditions for community organizers. As the main keepers of the resources that support organizing work, funders need to be more aware of the real costs of the work and the tough choices that directors are forced to make when allocating resources.

How to talk to program officers about the cost of doing the work

The trend toward trust-based philanthropy is encouraging, pushing more funders to consider general operating support grants without strict constraints on project-specific support. But, we have found in our donor organizing work that many program officers are not sure how to engage in conversations about staff wages, HR policies, and other internal organizational dynamics without worrying that they're intruding on a director's autonomous decision-making.

And yet, the directors we've spoken with say they're unsure if their funders support directing resources toward personnel needs. Some directors even worry their funders still follow a former philanthropic norm that stipulates no more than 30% of resources should be allocated to overhead. These dynamics would be alleviated with more transparent conversation about staffing needs and, ideally, reassurance from funders that resources can—and should—go towards investing in organizing teams.

“One of the hardest parts of this job is prioritizing programming, which makes our org what it is, and staffing, which makes our programming happen. It’s a constant see-saw to keep our doors open and I wish there was a way I didn’t have to constantly make that choice.”

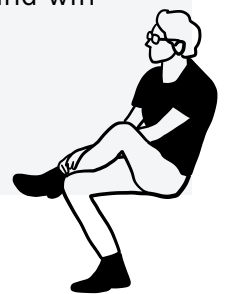
— Executive Director

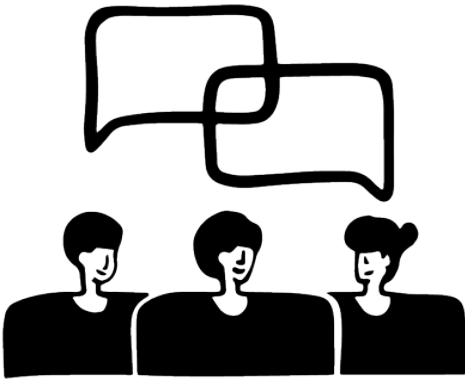
Some effective tactics we have seen:

- Communicate the full costs of doing the work. While the cost of living, health insurance rates, and general inflation have all increased, grant amounts have mostly stayed the same. We strongly encourage directors to be as clear as possible about what their organizations need to to both support their teams and further programmatic impact. Resource to check out: [Nonprofit Finance Fund's Full Cost Project](#)
- Share more with funders about the current state of staff turnover and morale, as well as your goals about how you would like to support your team. Many funders won't know to ask about these needs, but through our interviews and conversations, we have found many funders would like to be helpful to directors looking to address these concerns. Even when funders may not be able to increase their grant size, they might be able to help organize funder colleagues. Additional tools for funders can be found in All Due Respect's "[Sustainable Jobs for Organizers](#)" toolkit.
- Many directors and organizations feel confined by the metrics to demonstrate as much programmatic impact as possible to ensure continued funding support—a very real pressure and challenging dynamic in our movement. And yet, it's the team members and organizers who make that programmatic work possible. Communicating with funders about the need to support staff in order to continue programmatic impact might help to make the case that funds for overhead and personnel are not distinct from (and are in fact the driver of) the ability to demonstrate impact and win campaigns.

Unrestricted funding for overhead expenses is one way funding partners can support the capacity needed to help an organization grow alongside their organizing teams. Having dedicated staff to create and maintain practices around cost of living increases, onboarding, hiring, payroll, and proactive work concerning salaries and benefits can ease the stress on the other staff members who often take on this work outside of their job descriptions.

So much of what makes an organizing program successful is the ability to build on campaigns and work that continues over multiple cycles. Relationships with community members are built over time and aren't something that can be manufactured easily. The importance of retaining organizers who are experts in their organizing work and in their communities is something directors should emphasize to funders as an investment that requires proper staff and maintained systems.





What to consider as a...

ORGANIZING MANAGER WHO WANTS TO BETTER SUPPORT THEIR DIRECT REPORTS

One of the most challenging aspects of working as an organizing manager is balancing the realities of an organization with the individual needs of an organizer or organizing team. In this study, we spoke to organizers who cited support from their supervisor as one of the biggest factors contributing to job satisfaction. In order to develop a culture of mutual accountability, it is important for an organizing manager to think about the immediate needs of their organizers and how meeting those needs can positively impact their team and the organization as a whole.

Some questions to consider:

1. **Does this organizer have all the resources they need to do their job effectively?**
 - a. Are they paying for transportation to required meetings out of pocket?
 - b. Are they using their personal cell phone to communicate with their members? If so, can your organization offer reimbursement?
 - c. Do they have a computer provided by the organization?
 - d. Is there a language gap between the organization's base and organizers on staff?
 - e. Is there a system in place to take over someone's workload when required?
 - f. Are organizers able to use their PTO without having workloads pile up or campaigns suffer?
 - g. Are organizers who take on more work when others are out compensated accordingly or provided with comp time?
 - h. Are there systems to check in with organizers on how they are managing their capacity and workloads?

2. Do organizers have access to professional development and learning opportunities?

- a. Have your organizers shown an interest in or need for building new skills or developing their craft?
- b. Is there money in the departmental or organizational budget for organizers to use for professional development as a team and/or individually?
- c. Are there gaps in knowledge on your organizing team that can be filled with training or political education?

3. Are organizers valued as whole people?

- a. Do they have any special skills or qualifications they bring to the team?
- b. Do they have any special circumstances to consider (such as caretaking, parenting, or other needs)?
- c. Are there any opportunities or funds available for mental and emotional wellness?

A helpful framework to prepare yourself for a conversation with organizational leadership:

- What elements of the work can be improved or increased with additional resources or capacity?
- How do the resources allocated to the organizing department compare with other departments on staff?
- What does the volume of work look like for the organizing team? Will there be periods of increased workloads or new campaigns in the near future?
- How have organizers found success in other elements of their work outside of campaign wins (i.e. increased membership base, number of trainings provided, etc.)?
- Consider timing: Is the organization performing well financially? Has the organizer recently achieved significant success?

Advocating for organizers

Advocating for organizers is an important responsibility for managers to prioritize when building and sustaining their teams. While many supervisory approaches measure a staff member's productivity relative to their quantitative "successes," in a distinct job like organizing, success isn't always so straightforward. For example, even if a campaign is ultimately unsuccessful, metrics could include the number and depth of relationships built with partners and members, the organizer's ability to change course

or make quick decisions during the campaign, and whether or not the organizer can draw insightful conclusions about the strategy for next time.

Organizing managers interviewed in this study spoke to the difficulties they face advocating for their organizers when working with organizational leadership to make merit-based pay or title increases. Metrics-driven performance evaluations often result in strained communication between managers and the organizers they work

with, who might not have a full understanding of how leadership interprets their organizing efforts or how their performance impacts potential wage increases or other changes in their position.

Merit-based raises can be tricky, especially given the nuanced nature of organizing work. Proposing a raise or upward mobility for organizers isn't always straightforward to organizational decision-makers who might not be entirely plugged in to what's happening in the day-to-day work of organizing teams. There are steps you can take to think through what uniquely qualifies an organizer's salary and title increases, while still considering the capacity of the organization as a whole:



Tips for making the case

1. Gather evidence of positive performance:

Compile data and examples that demonstrate the organizer's achievements, contributions, and overall performance. Highlight specific projects, improvements, or campaigns that showcase their value to the team and the organization.

2. Take an organizational standpoint:

Frame the raise as an investment, rather than just a cost. Show how investing in an organizer will help sustain the organizing team, increase retention, and contribute to strategic goals.

3. Highlight unique contributions:

Point out any specific skills, responsibilities, or talents that the organizer has offered, making sure to note when this has gone beyond their baseline job description.

4. Discuss professional growth:

Show how the organizer has grown in their role with examples of how they have led initiatives, acquired new skills, assisted with management, or taken on additional responsibilities. This will demonstrate their value and commitment to their organizing role.

5. Understand market rates:

Come ready with data on industry standards, salary benchmarks, and tangible examples from similarly-sized organizations to make your case.

By thinking through logistics and providing relevant data, you can build compelling justification that not only advocates for your organizer, but also recognizes the perspective of organizational leadership and aligns with the broader goals of the organization.



What to consider as a...

ORGANIZER WHO IS CONSIDERING A NEW JOB

What to look for in a job description

Not all organizing jobs are created equal. The size, budget, location, and issue-focus of an organization impact the job responsibilities, structure, and compensation made available. In New York City, many organizing roles require travel, extended hours, coalition work, and engaging with different types of communities. While it is impossible to know exactly what a job will feel like until you're doing it, look out for the following to make sure an organizing role is a good fit for you and will meet your expectations:

Transparency

- Salary range with criteria for where someone will fall in the range
- Concise breakdown of benefits (including healthcare breakdown, retirement, PTO, and fringe benefits)
- Hours expected to work and whether or not travel is required
- Expectation of tenure (how long an organizer is desired to stay in the role or organization)

Responsibilities and qualifications

- Job description should have a detailed overview of responsibilities, ideally broken down into percentages
- Examples of tasks specific to responsibilities: what will an ideal day or week look like?
- Experience level and skills needed to succeed in the role, with added values or nice-to-haves included
- Goals for this position as they relate to the overall mission of the organization and/or specific campaigns.

Organizational culture

- How is this job description written? Does it include any elements of the organization's personality or priorities?
- Does this job posting mention any kind of information on or connection to the community where this organization is located or the community it serves?
- Does the job description mention the structure of the team and who the position will report to?



What to ask hiring managers

When looking for an organizing job, remember you are interviewing them just as much as they are interviewing you. In order to get a proper assessment of what working at an organization will look like, you can ask questions at every stage of the interview process in order to determine if this is the right place for you to work.

Expectations and reciprocity

- What does accountability look like, and what type of management style does your potential supervisor adhere to?
- What are the time commitments expected of this role? Are there evening or weekend hours and if so, how often? When are campaign seasons the heaviest, and are there any opportunities for comp time during heavy work seasons?

Opportunities for growth or advancement within the organization

- How many people on staff have held multiple positions or received promotions?
- What does this role look like after two years of work?
- Are there any gaps on the team that can eventually be filled with experience and leadership?
- What is the process for pay and performance reviews?

Vision of success

- What does a successful year look like for someone holding this role?
- What does success look like outside of campaign wins?
- How is success acknowledged and celebrated at this organization?

Team and managerial culture

- How is work divided on this team?
- What does decision-making look like at a departmental and organizational level?
- Have there been any recent turnover or any major organizational changes?
- Are there any systems in place to mitigate burnout or encourage wellness of organizers?

Hiring Process: Things to watch out for

- Unclear expectations
- High staff turnover and organizational transitions
- Minimal communication or lack of clarity in interview process
- Rushed and/or extensive interview processes
- No mention of benefits or paid time off
- Vague description of role and responsibilities, and an inability to elaborate when asked
- No introduction to members of team or direct supervisor after being hired
- Short tenure of organizers that may reflect a lack of stability and growth pipeline
- Discouraging the sharing of wage information
- Lack of diversity among identities within organizational leadership
- Grant-funded or temporary positions that are listed without a timeline for re-evaluation



What to consider as a...

FUNDER WHO WANTS TO SUPPORT THEIR GRANTEES

Understanding the challenges

The majority of program officers, program directors, and individual donors we have spoken with want organizers to have the resources, training, and support they need to do their jobs well. And, most funders who currently provide grants for base building and organizing efforts know organizing is challenging work subject to the ups and downs of campaigns, election cycles, and political upheaval. But, many nuances of organizing work can be lost if funders have not held an organizing role themselves (or have not organized for a long time), or if funders are not connecting directly with organizing staff.

To best understand what your grantees are experiencing, we have outlined some questions to help start the conversation with a grantee (typically an executive director):

1. In order to support you more fully, I would like to better understand how your organizing efforts are connected to the rest of the organization's work. Could you please tell me more about the role organizing plays in your theory of change?
2. Given the importance of organizing as one of your core strategies, how would you like to see that part of the work grow over the next 2–3 years? 5–10 years?
3. I would like to know more about your organizing team and how they experience the hard work of organizing. Could you please tell me more about your organizing staff (how long they've been on the team, where you see their strengths and growth areas, their own professional development goals)? Would you be comfortable bringing 1–2 of your organizing team members into the next conversation we have?

Providing more resources

The largest obstacle to a directors' ability to provide higher wages and stronger benefits to their teams is, without question, a lack of funding. If you're a funder who can move more money or restructure grants to provide multi-year general operating support, doing so is the most helpful path. Additionally, organizing funder colleagues to collectively support an organization more fully can go a long way toward an organization's sustainability.

But most funders face a limit on the amount of money they're able to direct and move. And regardless of their advocacy, there may not be a pathway toward increasing that amount. Within those constraints, we have some suggestions from our conversations with both directors and organizers about how to support teams without overstepping or becoming too prescriptive.

1. Ensure submitted budgets represent the full costs of doing the work. For the most part, the cost of running an organization has increased significantly in the past few years, from inflation to escalating needs in the face of greater injustices. If personnel expenses are staying the same from one year to the next, this is something to ask about. Are directors planning raises for their teams? What are the types of benefits that staff receive? Budgets should be treated as a starting point for a conversation, not taken as a final draft of what an organization is asking for. Resource to check out: [Nonprofit Finance Fund's Full Cost Project](#)

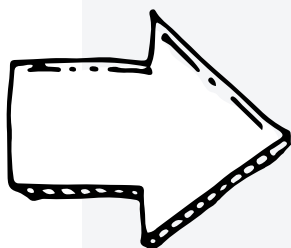
Example: I would like to be able to understand and support your team's needs to the best of my ability. Could you please tell me more about how you structure compensation, benefits, and other support resources for your organizers? Have you been experiencing high rates of turnover? How could we work together to ensure you're able to build and sustain the team you need?

2. Counteract previous philanthropic norms by making it clear you see personnel expenses and "overhead" as fundamental to the organization's impact—that the old assumption that "no more than 30% of a budget should be going to overhead" is not part of how you do your grantmaking, and that you see compensation and consideration for the needs of staff teams as the only way the work will be done. Many directors still believe funders want them to allocate resources to programs to ensure a better return on investment.

Example: I know you may have had previous conversations with donors who expressed a lack of interest in funding personnel costs or other overhead expenses. I do not see a distinction between funding programs or funding people. Could you please tell me more about how you're allocating resources and where we might be able to rightsize the budget, if needed?

3. In the same vein, many organizations commit themselves to ambitious goals in order to demonstrate relevance and impact in a competitive funding landscape. While organizations should be encouraged to set big visions and test new ideas, often those goals are set with funders in mind, with an aim to secure or maintain funding, rather than set in proportion to what their teams are capable of over time. When a funder is unable to provide additional funding, we encourage program officers and donors to suggest scaling back programming with no shift in funding amount. This allows directors to recalibrate the workloads of their teams without fear of being seen as failing in some way.

Example: I have always been impressed with your vision for the work, and I'm excited about the goals you're committing to this year. I'm also hearing that you're feeling pressure to ensure your team reaches these ambitious goals despite the fact that your team feels overworked. What would it look like for your organization to commit to 20% or 30% less work for the year and reallocate some of those resources towards supporting the sustainability of your team? I want you to know that if you scale back your proposed outcomes, it will not impact the size of your current or future grants.



Aside from increasing funds and organizing other donors, the strongest tools a funder has is their ability to open up transparent conversations and be explicitly clear about their support for compensation, benefits, and staff needs as a fundamental part of demonstrating impact. Additional tools for funders can be found in All Due Respect's "[Sustainable Jobs for Organizers](#)" toolkit.

Conclusion

Organizing is the backbone and the foundation of how we move toward a more just world. The people who serve on the frontlines of that work deserve to be invested in and supported. And, the directors and leaders who manage complex teams and juggle tough organizational decisions deserve enough resources to be able to take care of their teams.

We hope this resource serves as a starting point for further conversation, ideation, and innovation to ensure our movements value and inspire the current and next generation of organizers.

For questions or feedback, please contact the All Due Respect team at info@allduerespectproject.org. We would love to connect.



APPENDIX I

New York City Community Organizer Compensation Report

A Project by All Due Respect
September 2024

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The following report comprises existing, available data about compensation for community organizers in New York City. There are two data sources: a [compensation study](#) conducted by Nonprofit NY in 2024 and individual job announcements posted since the start of 2024 (“new jobs data”). With survey data from 381 different organizations, the Nonprofit NY study provides a bird’s eye view of who works at nonprofits in New York City. It speaks to the breakdown of subsectors within the nonprofit universe (as defined by the [National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities](#) used by the IRS), organizations’ budget size, employee demographics, and compensation and benefits.

The vast majority of positions considered as organizers are listed in “Human Services” and at organizations with a budget between \$1,000,000 and \$4,999,999. In general, the number of respondents in other subsectors who employ organizers is too small to glean comparative data across different types of employers.

New jobs data was pulled through postings on Google, idealist.org, and LinkedIn. The data includes 33 open positions, with nearly all containing the word “organizer” in the title or mirroring the jobs included in the Nonprofit NY data. The data excludes positions that were part-time or did not require one to live in the New York metro area, as well as electoral campaign or union organizer jobs. There was a wide range

of employers, including housing organizations, local government, and base-building groups working at both the citywide and neighborhood levels.

In the data available across both sources, the most meaningful comparative relationships fall between two categories: a lower tier of community, senior, or digital organizers, and an upper tier consisting of managers and directors. Thus, this report uses a two-tiered system for job level, the lower being non-managerial and upper being managerial. The lower tier jobs are presumed to be classified as non-exempt and eligible for collective bargaining.

Overall, the two data sources yield very similar estimates for average compensation. In section IV, final estimates (established in section III) are then set against the cost of living calculations by [Economic Policy Institute](#) for three different family structures (one adult with no children, two adults with no children, and one adult with one child) living in eight counties in the New York metropolitan area: the five boroughs of New York City, Westchester County, Nassau County, and Hudson County, NJ.

While the cost of living in New York City is notoriously expensive, this data shows how difficult it can be for residents to make ends meet even without any dependents, and how truly impossible it is for those who have them.



This report includes broad data and also focuses on positions with descriptions that align with All Due Respect’s definition of community organizers:

“Recruits potential members through canvassing, 1-1s, trainings, events, and/or meetings to build and grow a base rooted in a site, region, issue, or identity. Supports the leadership development of members and facilitates the process of members building relationships, identifying and analyzing issues that impact them, and taking action together.”

KEY NUMBERS AND TAKEAWAYS

A. Nonprofit NY 2024 Compensation Study

Overview

- **41%** of respondents (146/381) have a budget between \$1,000,000–\$4,999,999.
- **39.4%** of respondents (150/381) have roles categorized as “Human Services.” (Organizational categories determined by IRS [NTEE codes, definitions of Human Services orgs found here under “P.”](#))
- Respondents on average employ 67 full-time employees and 28 part-time employees.
- Respondents on average employ 51 employees who are people of color, an average of 54% of an organization’s paid staff (FTE and PTE).
- Respondents on average employ 6 LGBTQ+ employees and 2.5 employees who are transgender, genderqueer, questioning, self-identified, or gender nonconforming.
- Respondents on average employ 27 people who identify as women.

In community organizer positions specifically, defined by the compensation study as “responsible for grassroots outreach efforts, advocacy campaigns, and recruiting and training volunteers to support the outreach efforts of the organization”:

- **18.11%** (69/318) of organizations identify as having community organizers on staff.
- **57.9%** (40/69) of the organizations identify as in the field of Human Services.
- **42%** (29/69) of the organizations have a budget between \$1,000,000–\$4,999,999.

Compensation

Job Title	N	Average
Community Health Worker (1)	15	\$47,209
Membership Director (2)	16	\$112,524
Membership Associate (1)	15	\$53,161
Membership Manager (2)	21	\$72,287
Volunteer Manager (2)	31	\$70,320
Volunteer Coordinator (1)	30	\$55,888
Community Organizer (1)	69	\$63,315
Organizing Director (2)	30	\$90,496
Total, All Jobs	227	\$70,650
Lower tier (1)	129	\$54,893
Upper tier (2)	98	\$86,406

Benefits

Organizations with the highest proportion of community organizers also tend to have health insurance coverage and retirement plans, relative to total respondents.

Does the organization provide health insurance coverage for employees?	Yes	Yes (%)	No	No (%)
All Respondents	326	85.6%	55	14.4%
Subsector				
Arts, Culture & Humanities	47	12.3%	17	4.5%
Education	37	9.7%	7	1.8%
Environment & Animals	21	5.5%	5	1.3%
International/Foreign Affairs	8	2.1%	1	0.3%
Health	18	4.7%	2	0.5%
Human Services	141	37%	9	2.4%
Mutual/Membership Benefit	2	0.5%	0	0.0%
Public/Social Benefit	33	8.7%	8	2.1%
Religion	1	0.3%	0	0%
Other	18	4.7%	46	1.6%
Budget Size				
Under \$125,000	3	0.8%	5	1.3%
\$125,000-\$249,999	3	0.8%	15	3.9%
\$250,000-\$499,999	11	2.9%	17	4.5%
\$500,000-\$749,999	13	3.4%	9	2.4%
\$750,000-\$999,999	17	4.5%	4	1.0%
\$1,000,000-\$4,999,999	152	39.9%	5	1.3%
\$5,000,000-\$9,999,999	54	14.2%	0	0%
Over \$10 million	73	19.2%	0	0%

Does the organization have a retirement savings plan?	Yes	Yes (%)	No	No (%)
All Respondents	300	78.7%	81	21.3%
Subsector				
Arts, Culture & Humanities	40	10.5%	24	6.3%
Education	32	8.4%	12	3.1%
Environment & Animals	20	5.2%	5	1.6%
International/Foreign Affairs	9	2.4%	0	0%
Health	18	4.7%	2	0.5%
Human Services	130	34.1%	20	5.2%
Mutual/Membership Benefit	2	0.5%	0	0%
Public/Social Benefit	30	7.9%	11	2.9%
Religion	1	0.3%	0	0%
Other	18	4.7%	6	1.6%
Budget Size				
Under \$125,000	2	0.5%	6	1.6%
\$125,000-\$249,999	3	0.8%	15	3.9%
\$250,000-\$499,999	9	2.4%	19	5.0%
\$500,000-\$749,999	12	3.1%	10	2.6%
\$750,000-\$999,999	15	3.9%	6	1.6%
\$1,000,000-\$4,999,999	134	35.2%	23	6.0%
\$5,000,000-\$9,999,999	53	13.9%	1	0.3%
Over \$10 million	72	18.9%	1	0.3%

B. New Jobs Data

In November 2022, New York City instituted a law requiring pay transparency on all job postings. [Research indicates](#) that while transparency helps, it can still mask inequalities, especially regarding race and gender. The law in NYC has not been in effect long enough for its impact to be known. However, it created the opportunity to compile a small set of new jobs data from postings alone.

With more information available in job postings, more detailed—though not necessarily more meaningful—data can be pulled from this smaller data set. This includes three key sets of information: starting salary bands as opposed to the actual pay reported in the NPNY survey data (band size ranges from \$2,000–\$25,000, and 8 positions indicate no range).

If qualifications include a range of years of experience, the data includes the bottom end of that range. If a job description includes experience in its qualifications without providing a number of years, it was defined as 1 year. This data does not distinguish between preferred and required qualifications regarding experience or degree. Bilingual qualifications are only included if they are required.

Averages	
Overall minimum	\$60,296
Overall cap	\$67,363
Overall average	\$63,829
Non-managerial minimum	\$55,943
Non-managerial cap	\$62,000
Non-managerial average	\$58,972
Managerial minimum	\$83,802
Managerial cap	\$91,502
Managerial average	\$87,652

Eligible Positions (presumed)	Average Minimum	Average Maximum
Unionized (13)	\$57,786	\$62,593.86
Non-unionized (14)	\$54,232	\$60,696

Thoughts and takeaways:

- 33% (11/33) of jobs posted are for tenant organizers.
- The only jobs that do not mention benefits are temporary contracts.
- 76% (25/33) of postings include a salary band, with the rest including a single amount.
- Jobs with union representation have slightly higher salaries.

Notes on qualifications:

- 18% (6/33) of postings mention an advanced degree, even as a preferred qualification.
- 18% (6/33) of jobs require multiple languages (excludes jobs where bilingual candidates are preferred).
- Entry level community organizer jobs still require an average of 2 years of experience. (If a posting indicates a range of years of experience, the data reflects the lower end. If a posting indicates experience desired without specifying number of years, the data indicates 1 year of experience required.)

GENERAL RESULTS

	Nonprofit NY	New jobs data	Average
Non-managerial	\$54,893	\$58,972	\$56,933
Managerial	\$86,406	\$87,652	\$87,029

The difference between the Nonprofit NY study and new jobs data for lower tier salaries varies slightly (<\$10,000), accounting for inflation ([3.4% in 2023](#)) with a slight increase to reflect overall [wage growth](#). Given this consistency across data sets, it is reasonable to use the inflation-adjusted average salary from both data sets to arrive at the most accurate estimates.

COMPARING COMPENSATION TO COST OF LIVING

This section uses calculations by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) for cost of living by county in the United States. The EPI Family Budget combines data from relevant federal government agencies, supplemented as necessary, on costs of housing, food, childcare, transportation, healthcare, and taxes. A detailed outline of the methodology for the calculator can be on the [EPI website](#).

Table 1 shows [cost of living estimates](#) for three different household structures. A key distinction between these three categories is that a single adult is priced for a studio apartment, two adults for a one-bedroom, and one adult and one child for a two-bedroom.

Tables 2–4 show the differences between the salary averages presented above and these costs. The lower tier average salary (first row of numbers) is **\$56,933** and the upper tier (second row) is **\$87,029**. In other words, the difference is how much more employers need to pay in order for organizers to afford the cost of living.

TABLE 1: COST OF LIVING

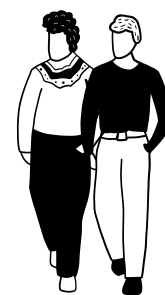
	1 adult, 1 child (two bedroom)	2 adults, no child (1 bedroom)	1 adult, no child (studio)
Kings	\$105,326	\$82,281	\$67,557
New York	\$118,684	\$93,860	\$78,454
Queens	\$111,372	86,948	\$72,879
Richmond	\$109,407	\$85,271	\$70,260
Bronx	\$93,902	\$72,388	\$57,843
Nassau	\$116,986	\$87,679	\$63,854
Westchester	\$108,363	\$81,476	\$60,693
Hudson	\$81,494	\$71,659	\$60,219
Overall Average	\$105,692	\$82,695	\$66,470

TABLE 2 : ONE ADULT, NO CHILDREN

	Upper tier (\$87,029)	Lower tier (\$56,933)
Kings	+\$19,472	-\$10,624
New York	+\$8,575	-\$21,521
Queens	+\$14,150	-\$15,946
Richmond	+\$16,769	-\$13,327
Bronx	+\$29,186	-\$910
Nassau	+\$23,175	-\$6,921
Westchester	+\$29,336	-\$3,760
Hudson	+\$26,810	-\$3,286
Overall Average	+\$20,934	-\$9,537

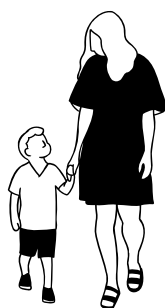


Table 2 presents data for the large numbers of young people in community organizing work, who are often single adults without dependents. Assuming these workers also hold lower-tier positions, the Bronx, Nassau, Westchester, and Hudson fall within an affordable range. Inner-ring suburbs may become affordable with salary increases, and only by reaching upper tier positions do other boroughs (Brooklyn and Staten Island) become affordable.

TABLE 3: TWO ADULTS, NO CHILDREN)

	Upper tier (\$87,029)	Lower tier (\$56,933)
Kings	+\$4,748	-\$25,348
New York	-\$6,831	-\$36,927
Queens	+\$81	-\$30,015
Richmond	-\$1,758	-\$28,338
Bronx	+\$14,641	-\$15,455
Nassau	-\$650	-\$30,746
Westchester	+\$5,553	-\$24,543
Hudson	+\$15,370	-\$14,726
Overall Average	+\$4,334	-\$25,762

Costs for a two-adult household are estimated using the cost of a one-bedroom apartment, indicating partners as opposed to roommates. There are clear advantages to a two-salary household. However, if one adult were to lose their job or was unable to work for any reason, **table 3** shows the impossibility of a functioning one-income household even without children.

TABLE 4 : ONE ADULT, ONE CHILD

	Upper tier (\$87,029)	Lower tier (\$56,933)
Kings	-\$18,297	-\$48,393
New York	-\$31,655	-\$61,751
Queens	-\$24,343	-\$54,439
Richmond	-\$22,378	-\$52,474
Bronx	-\$6,873	-\$36,969
Nassau	-\$29,957	-\$60,053
Westchester	-\$21,334	-\$51,430
Hudson	+\$5,535	-\$24,561
Overall Average	-\$18,663	-\$48,759

Finally, **table 4** displays the massive increase in costs of having one child, making salaries woefully inadequate at all levels. Even for jobs in the upper tier, salaries fall short of the cost of living by an average of **\$18,663**.

CONCLUSION

Currently, employers count on community organizers to live in the Bronx or outside the five boroughs without any dependents. The gap between average organizer salaries and cost of living is untenable when considering the cost of living in Manhattan. The jumps in costs across counties and as family size increases come, in large part, from housing. Given the [housing affordability crisis](#) in New York City

and across the country, it follows that 1/3 of organizing jobs posted since the start of 2024 are for tenant organizers. The same affordability issues that impact many of the communities that organizers serve, which are leading long-time residents to leave the core of the city, impact organizers as well, especially when they start families.



GAPS AND NEXT STEPS

The available data provides a fairly comprehensive idea of where the labor market is in terms of compensation. What's missing is more qualitative (and potentially quantitative) data on the experience of working as an organizer in New York City. Specific issues that could be covered in additional research:

- At what level/job titles are people of color working? Where do they fall overall on a pay scale compared to their white colleagues?
- What is the quality of benefits provided at these organizations? What are the cost sharing norms?
- What is the rate of turnover in these positions? Why do people leave, and where do they go?
- What is the culture of work at these organizations, and what are the impacts?
- How are leaders making decisions about compensation and benefits? Do they consider the cost of living? Has the pay transparency law impacted this process?
- How does union representation impact any/all of the above?

These questions can be answered through conversation. To get a more detailed, qualitative picture of what it means to be an organizer in New York City, ADR will conduct both 1:1 interviews and focus groups, which represent the opportunity for top-down and bottom-up information gathering, respectively. In order to understand decision-making about compensation and benefits across the sector, 1:1 interviews will be most useful with leaders, in organizations, and possibly unions. Focus groups offer the opportunity to elucidate and elaborate on the initial findings from this report, especially by talking to people with children and other target groups. Both methods should also shed light on the racial dynamics inside nonprofits.

APPENDIX II

ALL DUE RESPECT JOB DEFINITIONS

Community Organizer

(similar titles: Field Organizer, Organizer)

Recruits potential members through canvassing, 1-1s, trainings, events, and/or meetings to build and grow a base rooted in a site, region, issue or identity. Supports the leadership development of members and facilitates the process of members building relationships, identifying and analyzing issues that impact them, and taking action together.

Senior Organizer

(similar titles: Lead Organizer)

Leads efforts to build and deepen the actions of a base of members, including ongoing recruitment of potential members through canvassing, 1-1s, trainings, events, and/or meetings. Cultivates and coaches the development of members into leaders and works with members to identify, run, and lead campaigns. Has developed some organizing experience and knowledge through practice and training and may also act to mentor or guide less experienced organizing staff or volunteers.

Organizing Manager

(similar titles: Community Organizing Manager, Senior Organizing Manager)

Manages an organizing program, including supporting organizing staff in their work with members. Leads organizers in strategizing around member engagement, campaign planning, and strategic communications. Cultivates relationships with other organizations, coalitions, and community leaders. May be responsible for project budgets and supervision of other community organizing staff, volunteers, and/or intern positions.

Organizing Director

(sometimes called a Program Director)

Leads all aspects of an organizing team, including training and coaching organizing staff and developing and evaluating organizing campaigns in alignment with organization's mission and theory of change. Strategically develops relationships with other organizations, coalitions, and community leaders and may serve as a spokesperson and media contact. Manages organizing program budget, work plan, and staff.

Digital Organizer

(similar title: Digital Strategist)

Utilizes digital tools and platforms—including social media; volunteer communications platforms; digital organizing tools for dialing, texting, and relational organizing; email and donor CRMs; website; and others—to identify and recruit new members, deepen existing member engagement (including moving them from online to offline engagement), and mobilizing existing and new supporters to take action. May also include some aspects of database management and data analysis, graphic design and communications, and/or digital fundraising. (Note: other roles such as Communications Associate or Social Media Coordinator should not be put in this category unless they are primarily focused on member engagement.)

Paid Canvasser

(similar titles: Phone Canvasser, Seasonal Canvasser, Temporary/Short-Term Organizer)

Completes door-to-door or phone canvass shifts to directly engage with community members and meet regular goals for contact, persuasion, commitment, and/or turnout, often in service of a specific campaign or election. Collects and records data from conversations and shares insights with broader canvass and organizing team.

