

2019 NRPA PARK
AND RECREATION
**SALARY
SURVEY**



NRPA National Recreation
and Park Association

Because everyone deserves a great park

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2019 PARK AND RECREATION SALARY SURVEY KEY FINDINGS

MEDIAN 2018 TO 2019 SALARY INCREASES

Park and Recreation Agency Director **+3.0%**

Planning Director **+2.5%**

Director of Finance **+3.4%**

Recreation Director **+3.2%**

Park Operations Director **+3.1%**

Park Operations **+3.1%**

Facilities Manager **+3.0%**

Athletics Supervisor **+3.0%**

Aquatics Supervisor **+3.0%**

Recreation Program Coordinator **+3.0%**

SALARIES TYPICALLY ARE HIGHER FOR THOSE WITH:



Greater professional experience



Greater education attainment



A professional certification

MEDIAN ANNUAL VACATION DAYS:

10 days upon hire
20 days after 10 years of employment

PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES TYPICALLY COVER **80%** OF THEIR FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES' HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS.



80% of park and recreation agencies offer their full-time employees a **defined benefit** retirement plan;

65% of agencies offer their full-time employees a **defined contribution** retirement plan.

INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation transforms our cities, towns and counties into vibrant, healthy communities. From neighborhood and regional parks and sprawling trail networks to pools and recreation centers, local park and recreation agencies provide places and programs that offer much-needed respites from our increasingly complicated lives. By offering opportunities to be physically active, reconnect with nature, learn a new skill or care for our youngest or oldest residents, parks and recreation touches the lives of millions of Americans every day.

A cadre of hard-working and dedicated professionals makes all of this happen. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that there were more than 157,000 full-time employees of local park and recreation agencies throughout the United States in 2017, with several hundred thousand more part-time and seasonal workers. It is these skilled teams that program events, maintain facilities and otherwise ensure that all Americans can access and enjoy all that their local park and recreation agencies have to offer.

In much of the United States, however, tight labor markets have made it difficult to recruit and retain quality workers. Consequently, park and recreation agencies must offer competitive compensation packages for their staff, including robust benefits that go beyond salary, in order to bring the best and brightest to their teams.

Comprehensive compensation data inform park and recreation agency leaders on how to attract the best staff. Such data can also provide park and recreation professionals with insights on salary and benefits being offered by potential employers. To amass that data, NRPA's research team sent a 35-question survey in April 2019 to elicit not only the salary data of 10 positions at park and recreation agencies, but also general information about benefits and salary policies. Leaders from 470 park and recreation agencies across the United States responded to the survey, the results of which are the basis of this report.

The *2019 NRPA Park and Recreation Salary Survey* report features detailed base salary and bonus data for 10 typical park and recreation agency positions:

- Park and Recreation Agency Director (or Executive Director or Superintendent)
- Planning Director (or Superintendent)
- Director of Finance (or Administrative Director or Business Manager)
- Recreation Director (or Recreation Superintendent or Assistant Director - Recreation)
- Park Operations Director (or Maintenance Director or Maintenance Superintendent)
- Park Operations (or Maintenance Foreman)
- Facilities Manager
- Athletics Supervisor (or Athletics Manager)
- Aquatics Supervisor (or Aquatics Manager)
- Recreation Program Coordinator (or Recreation Programs Manager)

Of course, no two park and recreation agencies are exactly alike and so neither are the compensation packages they offer their teams. The *2019 NRPA Park and Recreation Salary Survey* report presents compensation data by agency size, type and certain demographic characteristics of incumbents in the positions (e.g., education, certifications and years in the profession). The analysis also examines factors that determine pay raises and bonuses (if offered) and highlights other benefits that comprise the full compensation package for park and recreation professionals.

KEY FINDINGS

When we think of employee compensation, base salaries are usually top of mind. However, compensation is not just salary: it includes a variety of benefits that can greatly increase the financial value of a paycheck. Valuable employee benefits—including generous vacation and sick-leave policies, health and dental insurance and retirement plans—put additional dollars in workers’ pockets and improve their standard of living.

VACATION AND SICK LEAVE

After salary, one of the most highly valuable components of employee compensation is the amount of vacation and sick leave provided to workers. This is certainly true for parks and recreation—a field that celebrates the importance of leisure as a part of a healthy lifestyle. Further, increasing vacation benefits over time are an important tool in retaining quality staff.

Most park and recreation agencies divide paid time off into separate vacation and sick leave accounts. Only one in six agencies provides paid time off (PTO), which is a combination of vacation and sick leave in a single account.

Park and recreation agencies typically provide 10 days of annual vacation for their newly hired full-time employees (after any preliminary probation period). After five years of employment, the median number of vacation days increases to 15 days per year, and then increasing again to 20 days after 10 years of service. With few exceptions, the typical number of vacation days does not differ significantly by agency size or type.

A closer look at the amount of annual vacation time for those with more than 10 years of service reveals that 51 percent of park and recreation agencies offer their employees more than 20 days of vacation (including six percent that provide at least five weeks of annual vacation to their longest-tenured employees). Forty percent of park and recreation agencies provide employees with at least 10 years of service between 15 and 19 days of vacation time each year.

MEDIAN NUMBER OF VACATION DAYS OFFERED TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

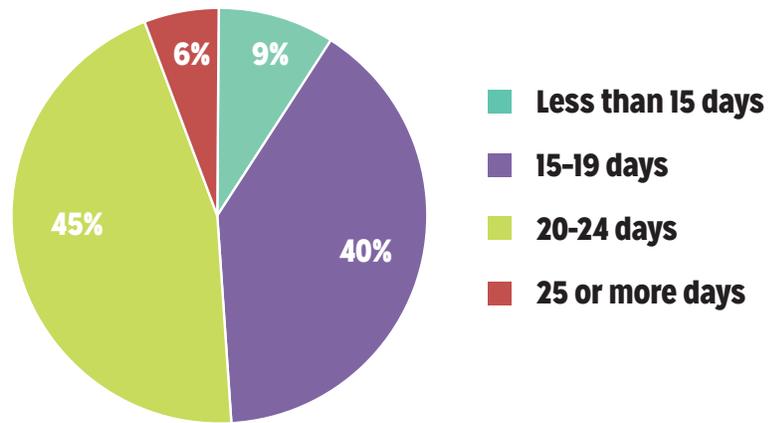
	All	1-10 FT Employees	11-20 FT Employees	21-50 FT Employees	51-100 FT Employees	More than 100 FT Employees	City/Town/Borough	County	Special Park District/Regional Authority	Urban
Annual days of vacation upon hire	10	10	10	10	11	10	10	10	10	10
Annual days of vacation after 5 years of employment	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Annual days of vacation after 10 years of employment	20	19	18	20	20	19	20	18	20	20



*Time off is **vital** for a motivated and healthy staff*



NUMBER OF ANNUAL VACATION DAYS OFFERED TO FULL-TIME
EMPLOYEES AFTER 10 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AGENCY
(Percentage Distribution)



Most park and recreation agencies also provide paid time off that employees can use when they or close family members are ill. The typical park and recreation professional receives 12 days of annual sick leave; this number does not vary significantly by agency size or type. Unlike vacation time, the amount of annual sick leave offered to park and recreation professionals typically does not tend to increase with employee tenure.

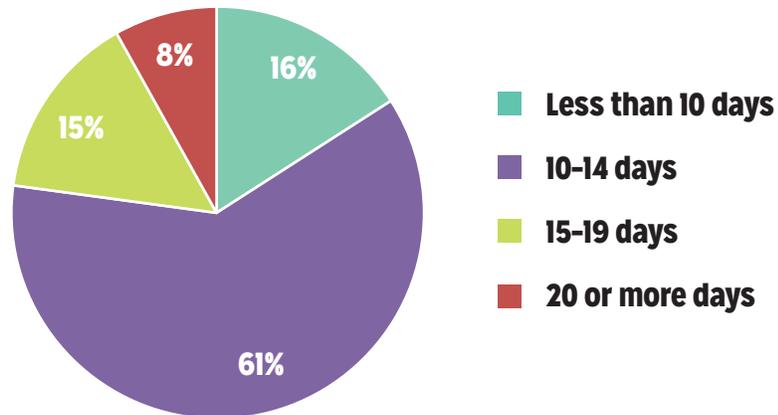
More than three in five park and recreation agencies offer their employees between 10 and 14 days of sick leave each year. Sixteen percent of agencies offer fewer than 10 days of sick leave per year; at the other end of the spectrum, 23 percent of agencies offer 15 or more days of annual sick leave to their employees.

MEDIAN NUMBER OF SICK DAYS OFFERED TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

	All	1-10 FT Employees	11-20 FT Employees	21-50 FT Employees	51-100 FT Employees	More than 100 FT Employees	City/Town/Borough	County	Special Park District/Regional Authority	Urban
Annual days of sick leave upon hire	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Annual days of sick leave after 5 years of employment	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
Annual days of sick leave after 10 years of employment	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

NUMBER OF ANNUAL SICK DAYS OFFERED TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES AFTER 10 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AGENCY

(Percentage Distribution)



Most park and recreation agencies offer their employees between 10 and 14 days of sick leave each year



THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 1993

Under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), qualified employees are guaranteed up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave each year with no threat of job loss. The FMLA also requires employers covered by the law to maintain the same health benefits for eligible workers during this time off as those employees had while working. All public agencies, including state, federal and local employers, must follow FMLA rules. Employees are eligible for such benefits under the FMLA if they meet any of the following situations:

- The employee cannot work due to a serious medical condition
- The employee must care for an immediate family member with a serious medical condition
- The birth, placement and/or subsequent care of the employee's child (including adoption or foster care)
- A "qualifying exigency" due to an employee's spouse, child or parent being on active duty or having been called to active duty for the National Guard or Reserve in support of a contingency operation

MATERNITY/PATERNITY LEAVE

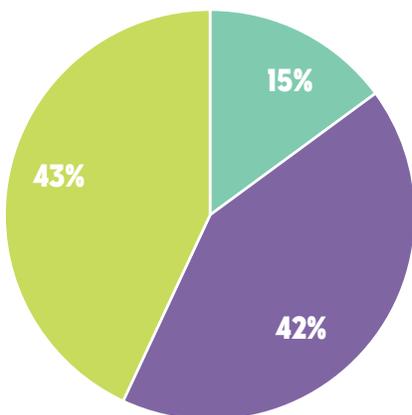
Whereas the Family and Medical Leave Act guarantees up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, workers can continue to receive paychecks by drawing from their vacation, sick leave and/or paid time off allotments. In addition, some employers choose to pay employees for a portion or all of the time employees are on leave, one example being maternity and paternity leave benefits.

Seventy-three percent of park and recreation agencies do not offer specific paid leave benefits associated with the birth or adoption of a child. Twelve percent of park and recreation agencies *do* provide specific paid maternity benefits and 14 percent of park and recreation agencies provide specific paid maternity *and* paternity benefits.

PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES' PROVISION OF MATERNITY AND PATERNITY LEAVE
(Percentage Distribution)

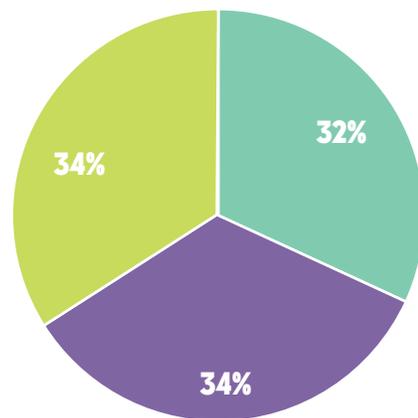
	All	1-10 FT Employees	11-20 FT Employees	21-50 FT Employees	51-100 FT Employees	More than 100 FT Employees	City/Town/Borough	County	Special Park District/Regional Authority	Urban
Offers paid maternity leave	12%	16%	13%	11%	9%	9%	14%	8%	7%	9%
Offers both paid maternity and paternity leave	14	12	6	19	16	23	14	20	12	22
Does not offer specific paid leave benefits associated with the birth or adoption of a child	73	72	80	70	76	68	72	73	81	69

NUMBER OF WEEKS OF PAID MATERNITY LEAVE
(Percentage Distribution of Agencies Providing Paid Maternity Leave)



■ 1-5 weeks ■ 6-8 weeks ■ 9-12 weeks

NUMBER OF WEEKS OF PAID PATERNITY LEAVE
(Percentage Distribution of Agencies Providing Paid Paternity Leave)



■ 1-5 weeks ■ 6-8 weeks ■ 9-12 weeks

HEALTH INSURANCE

Providing access to quality healthcare is another valuable component of employee compensation. Virtually all park and recreation agencies offer health insurance coverage to staff and their families. Most agencies require employees to share in health insurance costs, including having their staff contribute to insurance premiums. The percentage of the premiums that an agency pays and the percentage that an employee must cover may vary greatly across agencies.

Typically, park and recreation agencies cover 80 percent of their employees' health insurance premiums. Some agencies pick up an even greater part of the tab: 35 percent pay for at least 90 percent of their employees' health insurance premiums, including 19 percent of agencies that cover the entire amount. On the flip side, a third of agencies cover 70 percent or less of their employees' health insurance premiums. Special park districts tend to pay a higher percentage of their employees' health insurance premiums (median: 90 percent).

PERCENTAGE OF HEALTH INSURANCE PREMIUMS PAID BY PARK AND RECREATION AGENCY
(Percentage Distribution)

Percentage of Health Insurance Premiums Paid by Agency	All	1-10 FT Employees	11-20 FT Employees	21-50 FT Employees	51-100 FT Employees	More than 100 FT Employees	City/Town/Borough	County	Special Park District/Regional Authority	Urban
100%	19%	27%	23%	11%	13%	15%	17%	16%	27%	10%
90-99%	16	13	27	16	14	8	14	14	23	15
80-89%	32	30	26	40	36	28	33	29	26	27
70-79%	16	16	16	13	18	26	17	14	18	20
50-69%	10	8	6	10	9	15	11	16	*	15
Less than 50%	7	6	3	10	11	8	8	11	*	12
Median agency contribution	80%	80%	88%	88%	80%	80%	80%	80%	90%	80%

* = Insufficient Data

In addition to health insurance and vacation, an overwhelming majority of agencies offers other valuable benefits as a part of their compensation packages for full-time employees including:

- Dental (97 percent)
- Continuing education (97 percent)
- Life insurance (93 percent)
- Vision (90 percent)
- Employee assistance/counseling (89 percent)

In some cases, the agency pays the full cost of the benefit. In other cases, the agency and employee share the costs. Park and recreation agencies are more likely to bear the full cost for continuing education, life insurance and employee assistance.

PERCENTAGE OF STANDARD BENEFITS PROVIDED AND FUNDED
BY PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES

(Percentage Distribution)

	Benefit provided, funded fully by agency	Benefit provided, funded (at least) in part by employee	Benefit not currently offered
Continuing training (courses, conferences, certificates)	75%	22%	3%
Dental	33	64	3
Life Insurance	61	32	7
Vision	29	63	10
Employee assistance/Counseling (EAP)	76	13	11
Long-term disability insurance	34	44	22
Short-term disability insurance	34	41	25
Tuition reimbursement (college, trade school)	24	45	31

RETIREMENT PLANS

Employee compensation not only includes wages and benefits that workers currently receive but also can provide a foundation for financial security when employees retire. Virtually all park and recreation agencies' compensation packages include quality retirement benefits as a tool to attract and retain high-performing employees.

Historically, government employees—including park and recreation professionals—were offered defined benefit (DB) plans. Under these plans, frequently referred to as pension plans, the employer promises the employee specific retirement benefits (either a weekly/biweekly/monthly payment or a lump-sum upon retirement) based on the employee's length of service and salary level. Typically, the employer contributes most, if not all, of the funds for these retirement benefits and guarantees the payments when the employee retires and begins to draw on those benefits.

DB plans are a valuable tool to recruit and retain high-quality employees, but the financial obligations associated with such plans have made them untenable for many of the local government employers that continue to offer them. In recent decades, private-sector employers have moved away from offering DB plans to new employees. While the shift away from pension plans has been less prevalent in the public sector, park and recreation agencies have been moving toward (or at least supplementing their DB plans with) another increasingly common retirement savings tool: defined contribution (DC) plans.

With DC plans, the employee and frequently the employer both make regular contributions to an employee-owned retirement account. Funds held in DC plans (e.g., 401(k), 457(b) or 403(b)) may be withdrawn without penalty by the worker until a certain age, typically 59.5 years old. Taxes on both the contributions made to these plans and the income earned over the years are deferred until the worker withdraws funds from the plan during retirement.

Unlike DB plans, DC plans do not guarantee a specific payment amount at retirement, but they usually do give employees a choice in how to invest their retirement savings based on their appetite for risk. These plans also can be attractive to employees because they are portable: when employees change jobs, they may roll over the funds to their new employer's plan or a bank's or investment company's investment product of their choice. In comparison, DB plans have vesting schedules that require the employee to remain with the employer for a certain number of years before "earning" any retirement benefits.

Forty-five percent of park and recreation agencies offer both DB and DC plans to their employees, providing a greater diversity of retirement options for their staff. Nearly four in five agencies have a defined benefit program as part of the compensation packages they offer to their newly hired, full-time employees, while 65 percent offer a DC plan either in conjunction with a DB plan or as the sole retirement benefit offering.

In those park and recreation agencies that offer defined benefit retirement programs, 84 percent of employees make contributions to those retirement accounts. The typical DB employee contribution is six percent.

Sixty-two percent of agencies that offer a defined contribution plan provide a percentage match to participants' contributions. The median employer match is six percent.

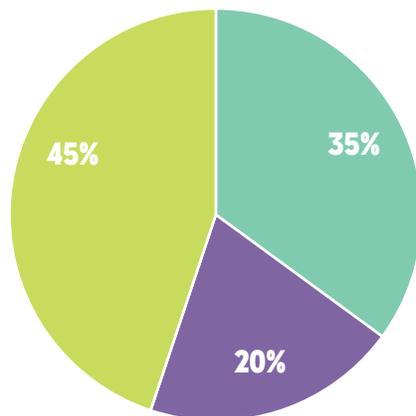
RETIREMENT PLANS OFFERED TO NEWLY HIRED, FULL-TIME PARK AND RECREATION AGENCY EMPLOYEES

(Percentage Distribution)

	All	1-10 FT Employees	11-20 FT Employees	21-50 FT Employees	51-100 FT Employees	More than 100 FT Employees	City/Town/Borough	County	Special Park District/Regional Authority	Urban
Defined benefit program (e.g., pension plan)	35%	46%	38%	35%	19%	19%	37%	30%	28%	18%
Defined contribution plan (e.g., 401(k), 457(b), 403(b))	20	23	24	19	17	14	22	17	19	14
Defined benefit and defined contribution plans	45	31	37	46	64	67	41	52	53	68

RETIREMENT PLAN(S) OFFERED TO NEWLY HIRED, FULL-TIME PARK AND RECREATION AGENCY EMPLOYEES

(Percentage Distribution)



- **Defined benefit program** (e.g., pension plan)
- **Defined contribution plan** (e.g., 401(k))
- **Both defined benefit and defined contribution plans**

PAY RAISES AND BONUSES

Regular salary adjustments are an important part of compensation plans so that employers can keep their staff engaged and motivated. The methods that park and recreation agencies use to set pay raises vary significantly by agency. Between 2018 and 2019, base salaries for the 10 park and recreation professional job titles increased between 2.5 percent and 3.4 percent.

The two most common salary adjustments are for individual performance and cost-of-living (COLA). Sixty-one percent of agencies award merit-based pay raises; high-performing employees receive larger pay adjustments than do other workers. In the case of COLAs, the salaries of every member of the park and recreation agency staff increase at a similar rate that matches the rate of inflation in the local area. Fifty-seven percent of park and recreation agencies offer COLAs to their employees.

Park and recreation agencies may also increase employees' salaries because of:

- Increased employee responsibilities and duties (44 percent)
- Predetermined step raises (38 percent)
- Jurisdiction-wide raises as granted by the mayor, county executive, council, etc. (24 percent)
- Union contract requirements (26 percent)

KEY DETERMINANTS OF PAY RAISES FOR PARK AND RECREATION PROFESSIONALS

(Percent of Agencies)

	All	1-10 FT Employees	11-20 FT Employees	21-50 FT Employees	51-100 FT Employees	More than 100 FT Employees	City/Town/Borough	County	Special Park District/Regional Authority	Urban
Individual performance	61%	58%	53%	63%	59%	46%	53%	41%	84%	43%
Cost-of-living increase	57	60	67	56	59	46	60	66	50	54
Increased employee responsibilities/duties	44	42	44	41	49	40	41	30	64	34
Step raises	38	32	39	37	31	54	42	32	20	48
Union/Contract requirement	26	18	18	29	31	38	29	16	18	35
Jurisdiction-wide raises as granted by the mayor, county executive, council, etc.	24	21	25	21	25	29	25	34	8	29
Other	4	1	4	5	5	12	3	5	7	5



From 2018-2019, the 10 park and recreation professional job titles saw their base salary increase between 2.5% and 3.4%



Beyond base salaries, many park and recreation agencies include a bonus plan as part of their compensation packages for employees. Thirty-five percent of park and recreation agencies offer bonuses to at least some of their employees. Bonuses are more likely to be offered by larger park and recreation agencies (42 percent at agencies with more than 100 full-time equivalents on staff) and by special park districts (43 percent) than by smaller or county park and recreation agencies.

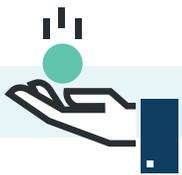
The most common bonus plans—offered by 18 percent of agencies—are tenure-based; that is, employees receive a fixed payment based on the anniversary of their employment. Employees at 15 percent of park and recreation agencies are eligible for merit-based bonuses based on their performance. One percent of agencies have plans in which employees throughout the department earn a bonus based on the success of their department meeting stated goals.

PREVALENCE OF BONUSES FOR PARK AND RECREATION PROFESSIONALS BY AGENCY TYPE

(Percent of Agencies)

	All	1-10 FT Employees	11-20 FT Employees	21-50 FT Employees	51-100 FT Employees	More than 100 FT Employees	City/Town/Borough	County	Special Park District/Regional Authority	Urban
Tenure based (e.g., length of service)	18%	18%	20%	11%	18%	13%	20%	18%	7%	16%
Individual-based performance bonus	15	10	13	20	16	15	11	13	27	18
Department-based performance bonus	1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	8	6	7	7	7	12	7	*	11	6
Agency does not offer bonuses to its staff	65	60	63	60	66	58	61	66	57	56

* = Insufficient Data



Larger park and recreation agencies and special park districts are more likely to offer bonuses to their full-time employees



MINIMUM WAGE POLICY AND SEASONAL EMPLOYEES

Part-time and seasonal workers are essential contributors to park and recreation agencies' ability to deliver services and amenities to their communities. In many cases, part-time and seasonal workers are in front-line customer-service positions, such as lifeguards at a pool, aides or instructors at a summer camp or staffing the customer help desk at a recreation center. In many cases, these positions are the first jobs for young adults entering the workforce.

Part-time and seasonal employees typically receive compensation at or just above the minimum wage. The lowest hourly wage paid by seven in ten park and recreation agencies is the statutory minimum wage to which they are subject. At 24 percent of agencies, the minimum wage paid matches the current federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour; another 47 percent of agencies pay a locality/state minimum wage that is higher than the federal minimum wage. Twenty-nine percent of park and recreation agencies set their lowest hourly wage above the minimum wage rate to which they are subject.

PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES' MINIMUM WAGE POLICY
(Percentage Distribution)

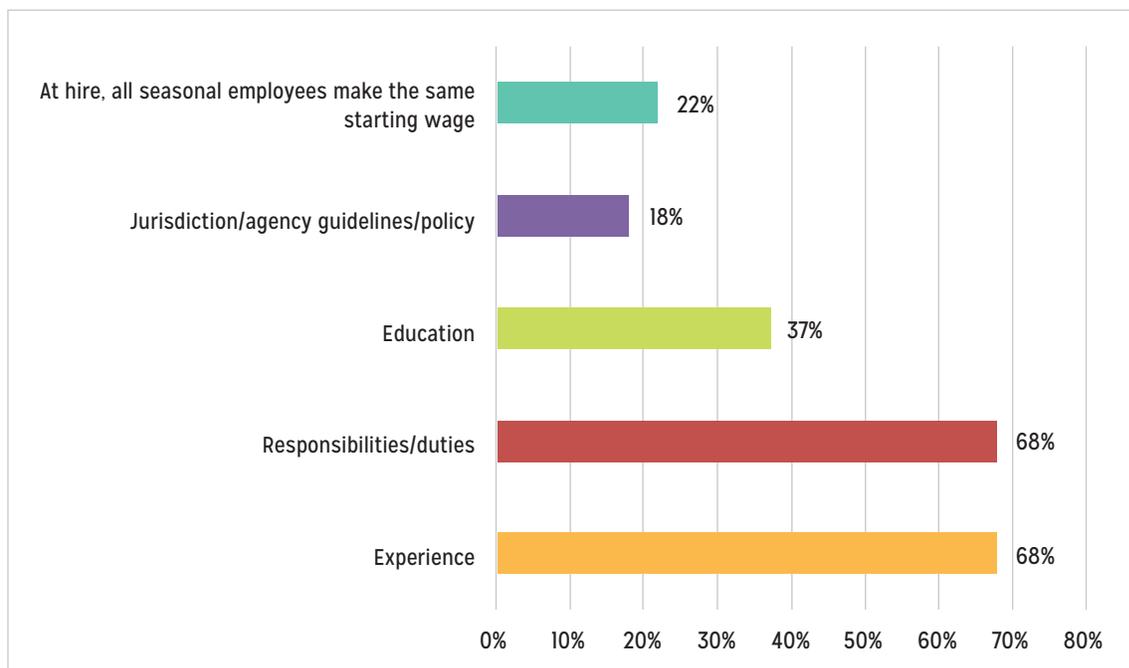
	All	1-10 FT Employees	11-20 FT Employees	21-50 FT Employees	51-100 FT Employees	More than 100 FT Employees	City/Town/Borough	County	Special Park District/Regional Authority	Urban
Agency's minimum wage matches federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour	24%	31%	19%	20%	25%	20%	25%	29%	18%	25%
Agency's minimum wage matches locality's and/or state's minimum wage, which is higher than the federal minimum wage	47	40	43	54	52	50	44	36	67	49
Agency's minimum wage is higher than the locality and state minimum wage	29	29	38	26	23	30	32	36	15	26

Seasonal staff are among the park and recreation workers most likely to earn the agency's minimum wage rate. In fact, approximately half of seasonal employees at the typical park and recreation agency earn the agency's minimum wage rate when hired.

Nearly four in five park and recreation agencies consider several factors when determining what to pay a new seasonal employee. Two-thirds of agencies will hire a seasonal worker at a wage rate above that paid to other seasonal workers based on the worker's experience, with a similar share of agencies doing the same based on the specific responsibilities and duties of the position. New seasonal employees who meet particular education or certification criteria may qualify for a higher starting wage. On the other hand, 22 percent of park and recreation agencies pay the same starting wage for all of its seasonal workers, regardless of experience, responsibilities or educational background.

FACTORS CONSIDERED WHEN PAYING NEW SEASONAL WORKERS A WAGE HIGHER THAN THE MINIMUM STARTING WAGE

(Percent of Agencies)



Experience and specific job responsibilities and duties lead to higher wages for seasonal workers



SALARY INFORMATION

This section of the report presents detailed salary, bonus and demographic data for the 10 park and recreation professions covered in the survey:

- Park and Recreation Agency Director (or Executive Director or Superintendent)
- Planning Director (or Superintendent)
- Director of Finance (or Administrative Director or Business Manager)
- Recreation Director (or Recreation Superintendent or Assistant Director - Recreation)
- Park Operations Director (or Maintenance Director or Maintenance Superintendent)
- Park Operations (or Maintenance Foreman)
- Facilities Manager
- Athletics Supervisor (or Athletics Manager)
- Aquatics Supervisor (or Aquatics Manager)
- Recreation Program Coordinator (or Recreation Program Manager)

MEDIAN BASE SALARIES AND TYPICAL ANNUAL SALARY INCREASES

	Base Salary on January 1, 2019	Base Salary on January 1, 2018	Median Year-to-Year Percentage Increase
Park and Recreation Agency Director	\$100,250	\$95,000	+3.0%
Planning Director	78,052	77,000	+2.5
Director of Finance	85,000	80,388	+3.4
Recreation Director	78,250	76,000	+3.2
Park Operations Director	72,500	68,000	+3.1
Park Operations	55,000	53,625	+3.1
Facility Manager	57,434	54,433	+3.0
Athletics Supervisor	54,152	52,000	+3.0
Aquatics Supervisor	51,500	47,600	+3.0
Recreation Program Coordinator	48,141	46,194	+3.0

In the same way that park and recreation agencies differ significantly in size, programming and facility offerings, and the scope of their mission and funding, they also differ in the responsibilities and (ultimately) the compensation of their professional teams. Taking into account those differences, this report provides a broader snapshot of compensation data, including a presentation of not only the median and average salaries for each of the 10 positions covered in the survey, but also salaries and bonuses at the 10th, 25th, 75th and 90th percentiles. Agencies with broader missions and offerings and those with greater funding resources may be more apt to pay their employees at the 75th or even 90th percentiles in order to recruit and retain professionals best suited for their agencies. Conversely, agencies with more modest offerings or funding resources may choose to offer compensation levels below the median.

Other factors can have an impact on a park and recreation professional's compensation such as agency size, type, its location and employee demographics (education, certification, etc.). This report also looks at the relationship between the characteristics of agencies and employees and their salaries.

- **Agency size, as measured by the number of full-time staff employed:** In general, base salaries and bonuses tend to be larger at agencies with larger full-time staffs.
- **Agency type:** Cities/towns, counties, special park districts/regional authorities and agencies located in urban locales. While base salaries and bonuses can vary significantly, both tend to be higher at special park districts and at agencies located in urban locales.
- **Region:** The four census regions of Northeast, South, Midwest and West, with significant differences by region. Agencies located in the West tend to offer higher base salaries.
- **The highest level of education attained:** In general, park and recreation professionals with a bachelor's degree tend to have larger base salaries than do their peers without a four-year college degree. Furthermore, professionals who have earned a graduate degree (e.g., Master's, MBA, JD, Ph.D.) have base salaries greater than those with a four-year college degree.
- **Certification:** In lieu of or in addition to a degree, many park and recreation professionals have professional certifications. Employees holding a professional certification have greater success in upward career mobility, finding jobs or receiving promotions based on the job requirements of the employer. Also, for certain job titles, park and recreation professionals who have earned one or more professional certifications, including, but not limited to, the Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CRPP) and Certified Park and Recreation Executive (CPRE), tend to earn more than their peers who do not hold these certifications.
- **Years of professional experience:** Experienced park and recreation professionals earn more than their peers who are relatively new to the field.

Following the salary data for each of the 10 jobs is a sample job description outlining the key responsibilities and typical job experience of incumbents in those positions. Park and recreation agencies can use these sample job descriptions as guides when creating or updating the list of key responsibilities at their organizations. Please note that incumbents who have greater responsibilities than those listed in the sample job descriptions tend to earn more than those whose job responsibilities match those listed in the samples.

CONCLUSION

The success of park and recreation agencies would not be possible without the dedication of the more than 150,000 full-time professionals who serve these agencies. The ability to make a real difference in the lives of members in their communities is what draws many park and recreation professionals to this work. At the same time, competitive compensation packages—including base salaries and benefits—are critical to attracting and retaining the best employees. Armed with information such as the compensation data and sample job descriptions presented in this *2019 NRPA Park and Recreation Salary Survey* report, park and recreation agencies can recruit and retain highly qualified professionals to ensure those agencies best serve their communities.

ABOUT NRPA

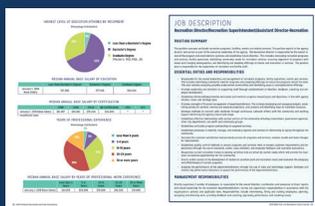
The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing parks, recreation and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of 60,000 recreation and park professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space.

NRPA brings strength to our message by partnering with like-minded organizations including those in the federal government, nonprofits and commercial enterprises. Funded through dues, grants, registrations and charitable contributions, NRPA produces research, education and policy initiatives for our members that ultimately enrich the communities they serve.

NRPA places immense importance on research and data to raise the status of parks and recreation and conducts research with two goals. First, NRPA creates data to help park and recreation agencies make optimal decisions on operations, programming and spending. Second, NRPA generates data and insights that support park and recreation professionals making the case for greater and more stable funding to policymakers, key stakeholders, the media and the general public. The NRPA research team works closely with internal subject matter experts, respected industry consultants and the academic community to develop its reports and data resources. Learn more at www.nrpa.org/Research

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This version is only a summary of the findings from NRPA's Salary Survey. To access the full version of the report, the following additional resources and an online discussion group, visit www.nrpa.org/Salary-Survey



Salary Data and Sample Job Descriptions

The full version of this report includes detailed salary data for each of the five jobs mentioned above, as well as sample job descriptions which presents the key responsibilities and typical job experience of incumbents in said positions. Park and recreation agencies can use these sample job descriptions as a guide when creating or updating the list of key responsibilities at their organizations. Furthermore, incumbents who have responsibilities greater than those listed in the sample job description tend to earn more than people whose job responsibilities match those listed in the sample.



Sample Organization Charts

The full version of this report includes organization charts from 20 park and recreation agencies. No two park and recreation agencies are the same – they have different facilities and offerings, different levels of funding and serve different populations. For that reason, there is no one “correct” organization structure. Rather, park and recreation agencies can review these sample job descriptions as they consider what would be the optimal staffing structure.

To access these resources and the full version of this report, visit www.nrpa.org/Salary-Survey



NRPA National Recreation
and Park Association

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22377 Belmont Ridge Road,
Ashburn, VA 20148
800.626.NRPA (6772) | nrpa.org