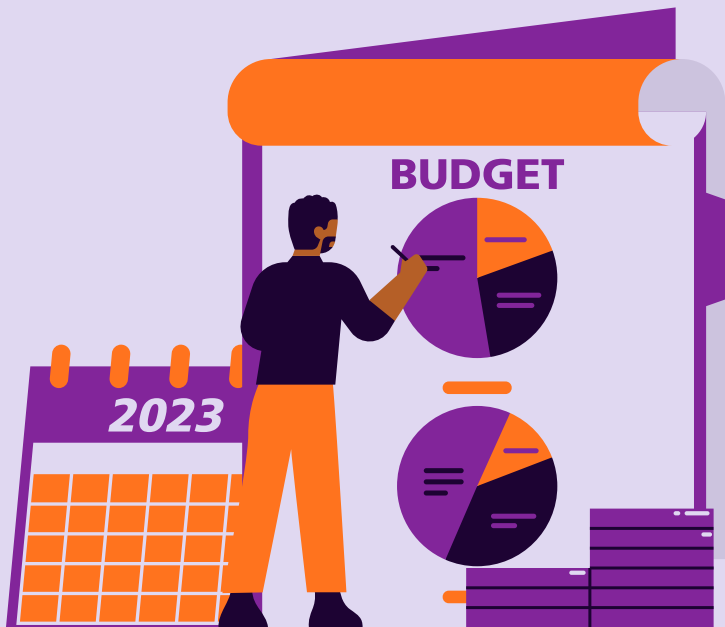


# WE NEED BREAD AND ROSES, TOO



## NEW WORKING MAJORITY

Kati Sipp  
Alina Sipp-Alpers  
Dani Paez



**NEW  
WORKING  
MAJORITY**

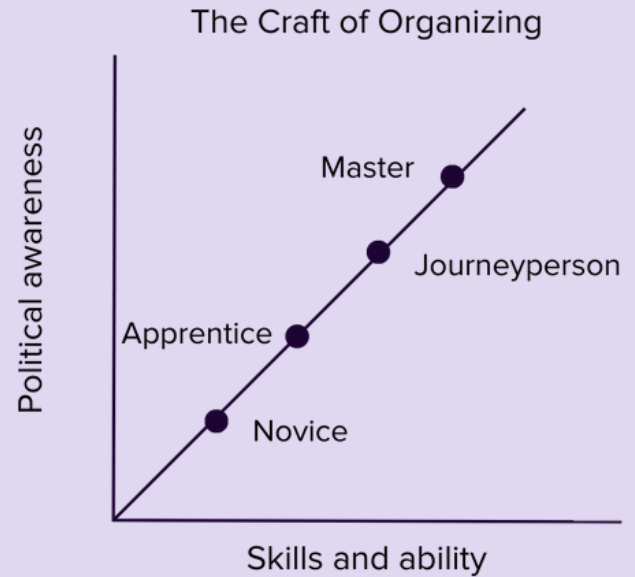
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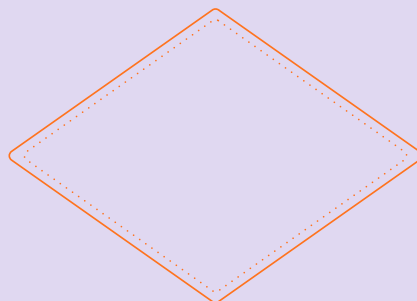
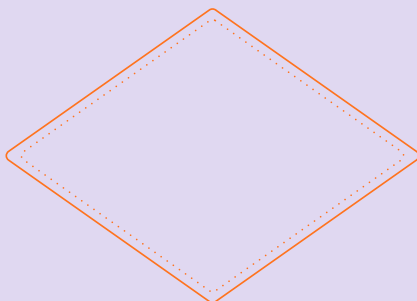
# 1 INTRODUCTION

New Working Majority (NWM) considers organizing to be a craft. We believe that the most powerful organizers thrive in environments that are centered around a conviction that everyone can learn this craft, and that we have a responsibility as organizers to always be training the next generation. In order for entry-level organizers (Novices and Apprentices) to grow into strategic campaigners, they need to develop in two areas — learning the skills of organizing (represented to the right as Skills and ability) and developing a deeper understanding (represented to the right as Political awareness) of the political conditions in which they work, how to make sense of their opponents, and the history of organizing in their movement. The craft needs experienced people (Journeypeople and Masters) to impart both the technical skill of organizing, as well as the more theoretical and historical elements of the work.



Providing a mentoring and teaching environment requires senior staff to have the mental capacity and time to support their coworkers and supervisees consistently. It takes 10-15 years to grow an organizer into an experienced campaigner, to really instill the level of Awareness that a Master level organizer needs. It is not a one- or two-year development cycle. Unfortunately, financial conditions in our field and political crises in our country have caused burnout that keeps many senior leaders working directly in programmatic activity instead of being able to step back and develop younger or more junior staff. Organizing groups need to commit to building an internal environment that supports training and mentoring, and funders need to better understand the important role that Journeypeople and Masters play in developing more junior staff.

Earlier this year, NWM launched a bilingual (English & Spanish) survey to help us understand salary trends in progressive movement organizations. Our desire to conduct this survey was motivated by our interest in giving our recruitment clients information about current salaries, but also (and more importantly) to raise awareness among funders and interested stakeholders about the ways that our movements are treating their staff. The survey was posted online and distributed via email and multiple other forms of digital outreach.



Kati Sipp, our firm's founder, has been an organizer for over thirty years. Last year, when we were having our first internal discussions about this survey (and the larger conversation about pay equity from the bottom up), she told this story:

Like many field folks, I started my life in the movement as a canvasser. In the early 90s, the minimum wage was \$3.80/hour, and canvassers didn't even get that—we had to organize in our canvasses to get paid minimum wage. I spent most of my 20s living on \$16,000/year (or less), working in canvasses and electoral field operations, including as a canvass director and field manager for campaigns with dozens of staff under my supervision. I wasn't a person who grew up with money, and I didn't have a safety net—that \$16,000 poverty wage was what I had to live on. I didn't have health care until I was 26, when my partner's parents offered to pay for it, because they were worried about me.

When I was 28, I got hired by the union (SEIU Local 715 in San Jose) as an entry level internal organizer; I was paid \$40,000/year, and for the first time, I didn't have to worry about how I was going to pay rent or buy groceries. I wasn't rich, but I was financially stable for the first time. I want to make sure that our movement is giving every new organizer that sense of stability.

[That \\$40,000 Kati was paid 26 years ago in 1997 as an entry level union organizer now has the purchasing power of \\$76,855.<sup>1</sup>](#) Why are we still offering people starting out in the movement salaries of \$40,000 or \$50,000 instead of \$60,000 or \$70,000? Where has that \$35,000 in buying power gone over the years? We believe that it is time to start asking questions about the entirety of the pay scale in order to create movement jobs where every person is paid the wage they need to thrive.

We offer this report to share our findings and to add insight to the conversation that many others have started in projects like [All Due Respect](#), [Vega Mala Consulting](#) and in the unionization efforts that many progressive organizers and campaign staff have engaged in over the past five years. We believe that our movement is stronger when we offer financial stability to everyone who works in our organizations. We intend to continue this survey on an annual basis to see whether pay in our industry begins to shift more towards a culture of care and sustainability for all, not just for some.



# WHAT WE FOUND--SURVEY DATA

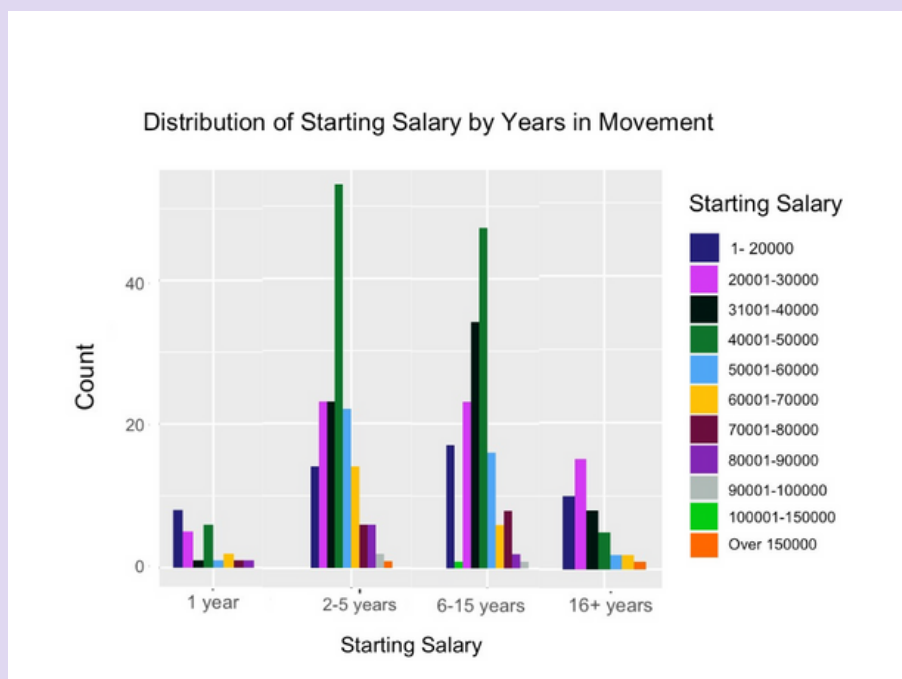
In order to craft a survey that could show us starting salaries over time, we asked people to tell us how long they have done paid movement work. At New Working Majority, we use the following definitions to track job levels, and for the purposes of the survey, we used the same definitions:

NOVICE (1st year of paid movement work)  
 APPRENTICE (2-5 years of paid movement work)  
 JOURNEYPERSON (6-15 years of paid movement work)  
 MASTER (16+ years of paid movement work)

The two middle classifications represented the biggest group of survey takers (167 & 156, respectively) with smaller groups of the newest and most experienced folks (25 & 43 of those).

For most of the latter half of the 20th century and early parts of the 21st, the two most common entry points into movement jobs were through canvassing work or community organizing. Many people who currently work in communications, data, digital organizing, development, or operations started their careers as canvassers or organizers and then made a lateral move into a different job type because those offer both more money and (sometimes) more traditional work schedules. This phenomenon makes salary tracking within specific movement careers challenging, so we have opted to ask people about their starting salary in movement jobs whether or not they still work in the same job category they are working in now. (NOTE: we did not ask people what type of work they did when they started out, which we will likely do in future surveys.)

The most striking finding from our salary survey is that, according to the data provided by our respondents, starting salaries in the movement began stagnating across all job types about 15 years ago. As you can see in the chart below, those categorized as Masters (16+ years in paid positions) most often started in the salary band from \$20-30,000. As is to be expected, the next cohort, Journeypeople (6-16 years in paid positions), made some progress—and they reported that starting salaries in those years most often fell in the \$40-50,000 and then \$30-40,000 ranges. However, Apprentices (2-5 years in paid positions) were also most likely to report starting salaries of \$40-50,000, and were next most likely to report salaries of either \$20-30,000 or \$30-40,000.



# HOW DID WE GET HERE?



**I used to work at McDonald's making minimum wage. You know what that means when someone pays you minimum wage? You know what your boss was trying to say? 'Hey if I could pay you less, I would, but it's against the law.'**



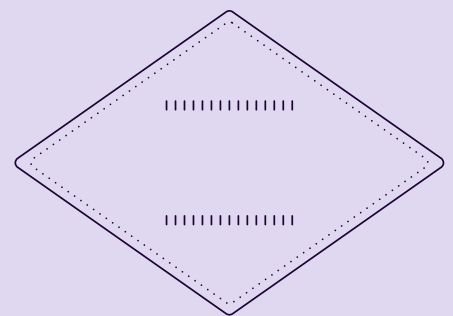
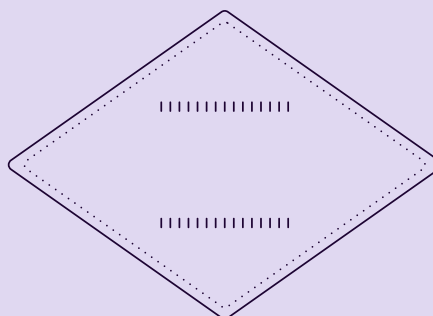
-Chris Rock

Efforts to raise the minimum wage in the US have also been, perhaps not coincidentally, stagnant for roughly that same period of time. The minimum wage in the United States was last raised on July 24, 2009, more than 14 years ago. It still stands at \$7.25/hour, except in those cities and states where organizers fighting for \$15 (and more) have been able to overcome the lobbying of capitalized interests to raise wages locally. [Last year, the Economic Policy Institute found that the minimum wage had fallen to its lowest real value since 1956.](#)<sup>2</sup>



You may wonder—how is the US minimum wage tied to organizer pay? Aren't all these organizations committed to paying people more than that? And to be clear—there were no responses to the survey indicating that anyone makes \$7.25/hour. However, it is extremely common for base-building and canvassing organizations to hire people who are in their base—and thanks to the US system of racialized capitalism, many members of base-building organizations have previously worked in low-wage employment. If a grassroots organization is offering \$15/hour for canvassing, and Target is offering that same group of folks \$16/hour to stock shelves, then Target is our competitor for talent—and our competition has a vested interest (shareholder profits) in keeping wages low.

The overall economic system of the US, which sees Black and Brown workers as disposable and not worth investing in, is part of what leads to low wages in the non-profit organizing sector. Retail and service sector companies keeping wages low is one part of that missing \$35,000 in buying power. Organizers who have grown up in generational poverty, where the impact of the minimum wage is keenly felt, sometimes have trouble believing that anyone would pay them even \$40,000 to organize, as it is a higher salary than many other family members have ever earned in their lives.



Historically, canvassers have been paid at or near the minimum wage, as Kati's experience shows. In the mid-2010s, after several years of organizing by the Fight for \$15! movement, canvassers on Democratic campaigns and in progressive canvassing groups began to demand a wage of \$15, and were eventually successful in raising canvasser pay to that level, where it held roughly through the 2018 midterm elections.

Anecdotally, we know that canvass and field starting salaries were given a bump in 2020—in every battleground state, organizations raised pay to attract canvassers who could phone bank or text, with some rates for experienced leads topping out at \$25/hour. [Two years ago, Dean Baker from the Center for Economic Policy Research published a paper showing that, if the minimum wage had kept up with inflation, it would have been \\$23/hour in August 2021,](#) so canvassers are not being paid outrageous amounts—they are being paid approximately what the minimum wage should be currently set at, had capitalist interventions not prevented it from being raised appropriately.

However, starting salaries across all job categories did not see an immediate jump. This has led, in some organizations, to canvass pay becoming comparable to organizer pay for the first time in many years, though longer term organizing often requires more skill, political awareness, and experience than an entry level canvasser generally has.

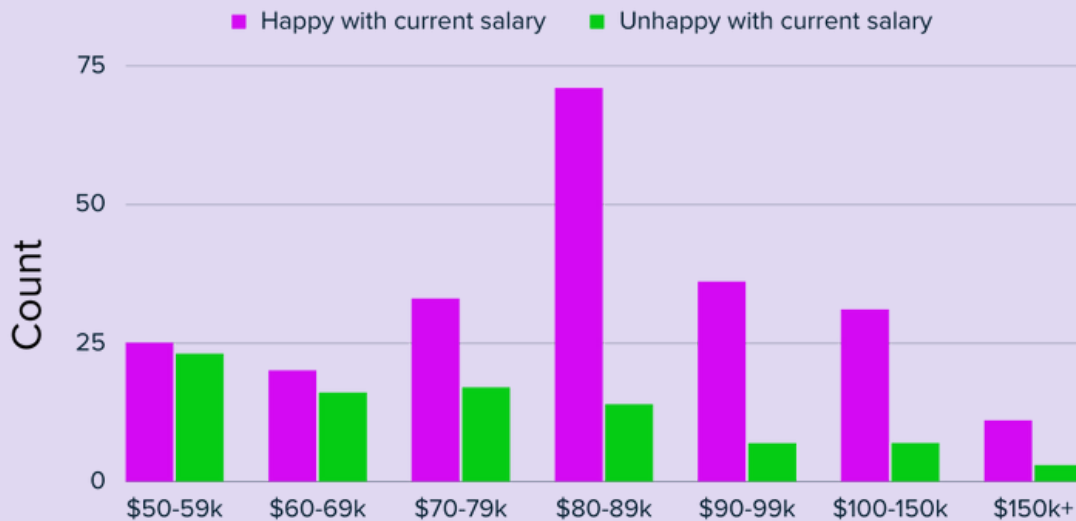
Organizers and canvassers who started their careers during this period of extensive wage stagnation are now struggling with the fact that salaries in their mid-management and director-level roles did not experience wage pressure from the bottom of the payscale, and therefore were not pushed up from below. In addition, the 2008 financial crisis (and its resulting destruction of many foundation endowments) meant that the early 2010s were extremely difficult fundraising years, and many organizations slowed their staff and salary growth accordingly.

“**Being an executive director means taking on many key leadership roles like fundraising, communications, strategy, administration, etc. Without the resources to develop my staff and move them into director roles in these categories led me to one of the reasons I was feeling burnout.**”

# WE'RE ALL STRUGGLING

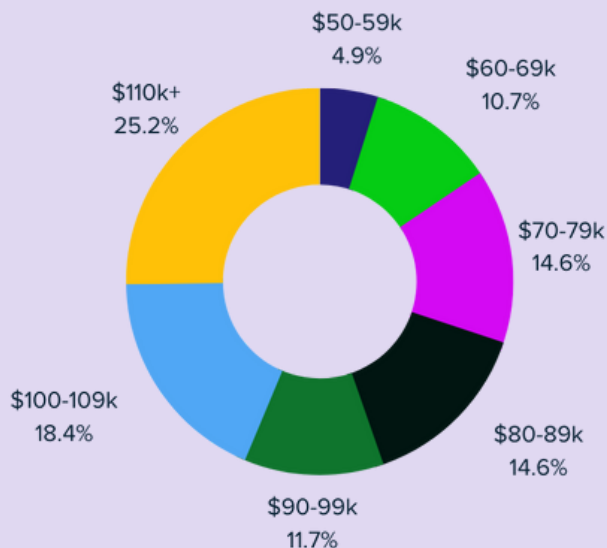
In terms of salary satisfaction, the group with the most dissatisfaction with their salaries were the Master cohort, of whom 38% were dissatisfied with their salaries. They were followed closely behind by Journey People, of whom 32% were dissatisfied with salaries. The Apprentice (15%) and Novice (19%) cohorts also exhibited significant levels of dissatisfaction with their pay. The tipping point for salary satisfaction seemed to be in the people who reported salaries in the \$60,000 - \$70,000 band, as dissatisfaction rates dropped sharply for experienced staff above \$70,000 per year.<sup>3</sup>

## Happiness with current salary



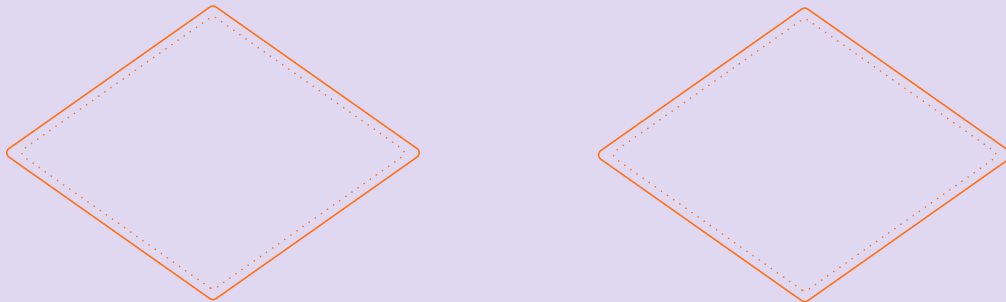
We asked those that felt dissatisfied with their salary to tell us how much they would need to earn, in order to feel comfortable. Obviously, salary rates can differ enormously from one state to another, and we were less concerned with determining a national standard for specific kinds of jobs, and more concerned with what people felt would be a living wage, regardless of where they lived.

## Salary needed for financial stability by percent

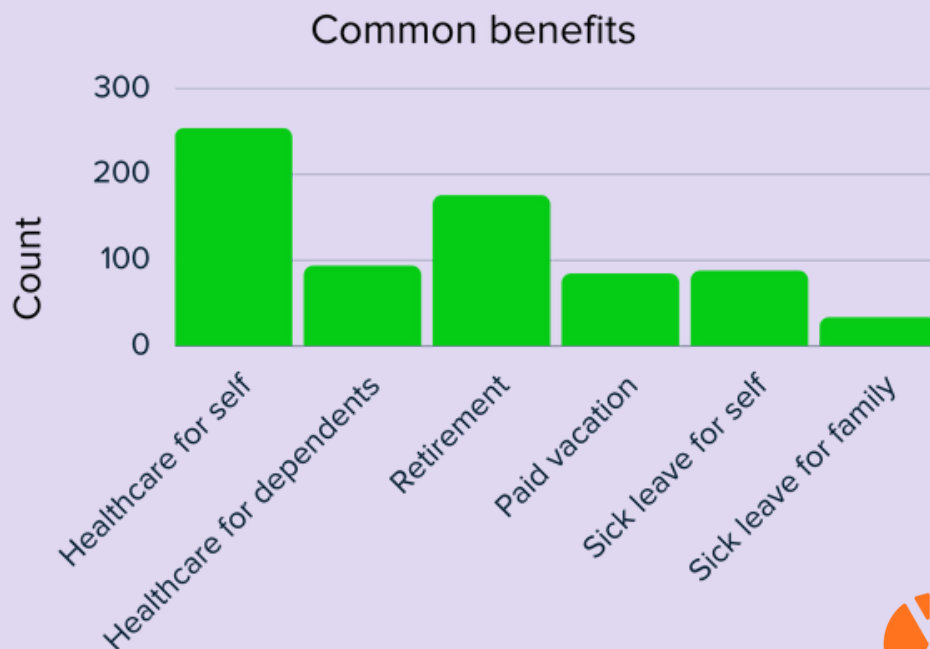




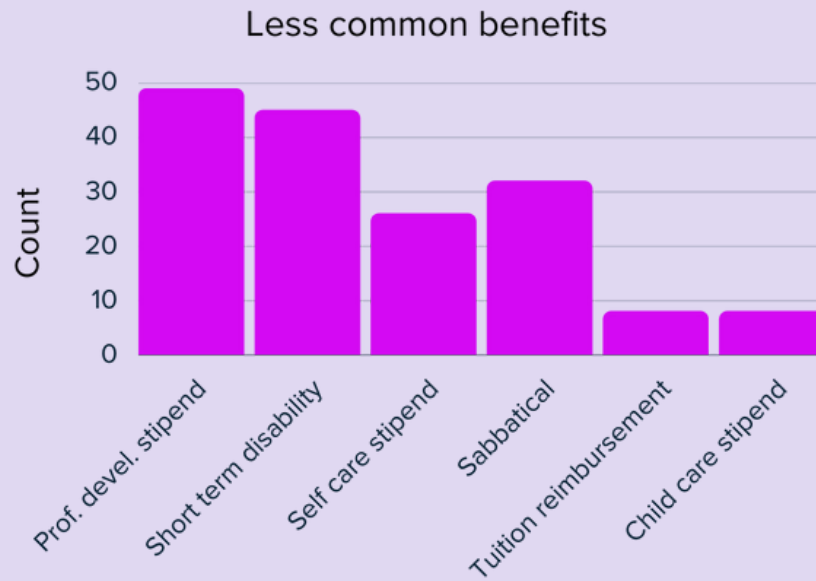
As the data shows, most people who are currently working for pay in movement jobs would like to make more money—and for the most part, their salary expectations are not unrealistic. Generally, people seek to move up one or two salary bands, not six or seven. This is good news for funders and others who want to help fix the problem of salary dissatisfaction, as the price tag for any one mid-sized movement organization to bring compensation up in order to retain staff will likely be calculated in the hundreds of thousands, rather than millions of dollars. Of course, this requires a multi-year commitment to those hundreds of thousands—in the words of one organizer, “There is no cheap way to pay people more.”. The need to increase pay for more senior staff is an urgent one, and we make some recommendations for funders and staff managers in the conclusion of this report.



Most (253) respondents reported that their employer provided health insurance to them, with the vast majority (140) of those reporting that their employer paid 75-100% of coverage. Far fewer (93) reported that their employers provided dependent coverage. (175) reported having some kind of retirement plan of some kind. One piece of good news that we want to bring forward is that movement organizations are exercising creativity in extending new types of benefits to their staff people. 84 respondents replied that they received some type of paid vacation, 87 reported having sick leave for themselves, and 33 reported having sick leave to care for family members.



We asked in the survey about some less traditional benefits, and we were pleasantly surprised to learn about the following items:



In addition, we asked people to brag about unusual benefits that they received, and we got a wealth of feedback to that question, including:

More time off, in many different ways:

- The entire office closes for some part of the summer and/or at the end of the year
- A shorter workweek in the summer, half days on Fridays, one Friday/month off, and 32 hour workweek
- Day off on your birthday
- Unlimited PTO
- A full week off after every election
- Floating religious holidays

More leave like:

- 10 days for bereavement
- PTO to be used for government business, like getting a driver's license, going to court, etc.
- 40 weeks paid parental leave
- Paid caregiver leave for others besides family members

Stipends for various things:

- Car and insurance reimbursement
- Stipend for extra health costs during the pandemic
- Reimbursement for pet sitting costs while traveling for work
- 50% coverage of out of network mental healthcare



# WHAT WE FOUND—INTERVIEWS

There were several categories that we were interested in digging into more as the surveys rolled in. Our follow-up interviews were organized around three sets of questions within those categories—general questions about people’s experiences with pay and salary transparency in the movement, specific questions about job searches for a white paper we will release later this year, and a specific set of questions for Apprentices and Journey People about their career trajectory and how they have navigated it so far.

As described above, one of our interests in launching the survey was to discover not just how much people are paid, but how people are feeling, financially. We asked the question “Are you content with your current salary?” to which a significant minority (103 total responses, over 25% of survey takers) answered “No.” In our follow-ups, we asked interviewees to describe some of the financial choices they had to make as a result of their inadequate salaries.



One interviewee described that her low salary had resulted in her not being able to secure child care for the summer, which meant that she had to juggle remote work with keeping her child entertained, fed, and active. She also mentioned that she had recently had to look for a new place to live, and discovered that she had to look for an independent landlord, because most property managers and corporate landlords wanted her to have 3.5 times the rent in monthly income, which she did not. She also mentioned that she had avoided some work travel, because she has to pay for child care while she is away, and that is not covered by her employer.



Other interviewees talked about not being able to pay down debt (student and otherwise) due to low salaries, or needing to cover their own expenses for relocating to a new state to work on a campaign, and needing to keep a close eye on their food budget during the month. One (more senior) interviewee mentioned that while her salary was adequate for her needs, she knew that there were more junior people in her own department as well as her larger organization who were paid significantly less than her, and were struggling financially.

“ We only see salary numbers when jobs are posted for hiring. ”

Most interviewees reported that salaries in their organization were not transparent. “We only see salary numbers when jobs are posted for hiring,” said one. In addition, interviewees report mixed success in asking their supervisors for raises. One interviewee reported that, while they had talked to other people in their organization about the inadequate pay, no one wanted to raise it with the Executive Director, because the whole staff knew that the director was also underpaid, and was not able to pay the staff more than they themselves were making.<sup>4</sup> Boards are often loath to pay staff more than the ED, and if the ED is only making \$70,000/year, everyone in the organization is underpaid.

For Apprentices and Journey People, we asked several questions about their career path, and whether they felt that they had a mentor or supervisor who is guiding them in thinking about their career. Only one of the interviewees reported having a mentor, and she said, “Largely, it was other women who coached and mentored me for free, because my organization didn’t have the money to hire a coach.” One interviewee said, “I think the hope is that our supervisors are helping with that, but it doesn’t really happen. They ask about our personal development goals in our annual review, but there is no plan of action for making them happen.” The problem of a lack of mentorship likely has several causes, but it cannot possibly help that so many senior movement staff are feeling underpaid, overstretched, and burnt out.

“ I think the hope is that our supervisors are helping with that, but it doesn’t really happen. They ask about our personal development goals in our annual review, but there is no plan of action for making them happen. ”

The problem of lack of funding for adequate salaries runs all the way up the ladder, from entry level organizers to Executive Directors, but the effects can look different for more senior staff. One interviewee, who acted as an Executive Director for 6 years, told us that the lack of funding at her organization led to her burnout. She told us, “Being an executive director means taking on many key leadership roles like fundraising, communications, strategy, administration, etc. Without the resources to develop my staff and move them into director roles in these categories led me to one of the reasons I was feeling burnout.” When Executive Directors aren’t able to hire other director level staff to support them, they end up doing the work of multiple people, and that leads to their burnout too.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Because we believe that it is necessary for young organizers and other movement staff to be mentored by those who have gone before, it is extremely distressing to learn that the most experienced staff of organizations are the ones most dissatisfied with their pay. How can we expect to have a nurturing environment to grow new staff, if the people who are supposed to create that environment are constantly worrying about their own personal finances? Why are there so few people lasting in this work for multiple decades?

We offer these suggestions to organizations who are interested in doing something different. We understand that fighting capitalist-created structures of pay is not easy, and it is hard to imagine something different. But as organizers, it is our main job and responsibility to imagine a world different from the one we have, and slowly work towards that world. One of the ways that capitalism influences how we pay folks is by encouraging a culture of silence about money—in ways that make higher-paid folks feel defensive of whether they ‘deserve’ what they earn, and lower-paid folks feel like they are being exploited. If you are coming from an organization that lacks salary transparency, it is going to feel very weird at first to talk about it publicly. Pushing through uncomfortable conversations is what we do as organizers. And no person is ‘worth’ what they earn, whether they have unearned billions or hard-won pennies.

To be clear—we know that no one funder, and no one organization, can fix the problem of wage stagnation. We also know that the solution to this problem is not to pretend it doesn’t exist. We all must do what we can, knowing what we now know, to help build the world where all of us are fairly paid.

## FOR ORGANIZATIONS

When people on your staff tell you they don’t make enough money, believe them.

It might be that the only thing you can do about it right now is affirm them in their feelings about it. You might also need the kind of gut-check Kati gave herself, by investigating the real impact of inflation on your own starting salary. Be proactive about this as your staff, especially the least experienced, may feel uncomfortable admitting they need a higher salary to be financially stable even if you ask them directly. If you made less as a young organizer, remind yourself that the cost of everything has gone up since then—and you yourself have probably been impacted by wage stagnation as well. Have an annual “what do you need” conversation with your staff, and do it at a time of the year that makes sense for your budget process.

Institute an annual raise.

If you aren’t giving people an annual COLA (cost of living adjustment), the message that you are sending is that the only way to earn more is to move out of their current job.

### While you're figuring out how to give people more money, can you give them more rest?

There is a great list of alternative benefits that people have started to provide, earlier in this report. Is it time to realize, finally, that the week between December 25-31 is not a week where any work gets done, so it makes sense to shut down (rather than making people burn a week of vacation days being off)? Do you want to embrace Summer Mondays or Fridays, or just give everyone off the week of July 4th? The beauty of giving everyone the same days or week off is that no one has to play catch-up internally, when they come back, and hopefully the whole staff will return feeling refreshed.

### Ask your staff what they need and don't judge them when they tell you.

If you want to understand where people are coming from, ask them. Convene a conversation with staff about what financial stability looks like in your area. Ask people in 1:1s if they are earning enough to survive. Just talking about it and bringing people's struggles into the open will help. It will also give you a real number to shoot for, as well as the amorphously scary "just more, more, more" thoughts that might live in your head now.

### Re-evaluate the "special skills" that you pay a premium for.

In union contracts, jobs that require special skill often receive differential pay. This means that, for example, if a hospital needs to hire a bilingual nurse and two monolingual nurses, they might pay the bilingual nurse a higher hourly rate. If you are running an organization that has some staff positions that require language fluency in a language other than English, are you paying them for that skill? If you are requiring that everyone in your organizing team adopt a new CRM, are you paying someone to administer and train people in the use of that CRM (and giving them ample time to learn it) or just expecting everyone to learn on the job?

### Talk to your funders about what your staff needs.

Use the information that you gather from your staff meetings and 1:1 conversations to talk to your funders about what your staff needs. If funders need additional convincing, show them this report, and other research on what is causing organizer burnout. For a non-profit with ten staff, the price for giving everyone a \$10,000 raise is an extra \$100,000 per year. Asking four funders for an extra \$25,000 each to support staff raises feels more doable than finding \$100,000 of unrestricted general operating funds, and funders need to better understand the wage pressures that organizations are under.

### Try something radically different.

Create cultures of care, where every person is valued. Set an organizational pay floor that represents what you and your staff think is necessary for survival, and don't hire anyone for less than that. Give folks who are already above that pay floor commensurate raises—but do that in a group discussion about the overall move to adopting a pay floor, so that people above understand that the point isn't that some staff with high technical skills are well-paid while everyone else just scrapes by. Engage more staff in budgeting and fundraising, so that the technical skill of finance and development is spread out through the organization.

A note on geography:

We know that organizations that employ staff in multiple locations have struggled with issues around equity for staff who have varied costs of living, based on where they live. We believe that everyone in the movement deserves a living wage, and that living wage starts at around \$65,000 for anywhere in the United States right now. But we are curious about what solutions organizations have come up with to deal with geographic variations in the cost of living, when they employ staff in multiple locations. If you'd like to share your solution with us, please [tell us](#) about it.

## FOR FUNDERS

Move toward general operating funding.

We won't go into a long discussion about this, as we know we're just adding to a chorus of many others—but general operating funding allows organizations the flexibility to pay people what they need. If grantees are constantly experiencing staff turnover due to low salaries and the necessity of having more experienced staff doing program work instead of training and mentoring younger organizers, they will not be able to achieve grant deliverables. Funders who are interested in achieving program goals should understand that experienced organizing staff are to be trained gradually, not burned through. As recruiters, we know that any organization that wants to hire managerial level staff can post an ad and get dozens of applications from Novices and Apprentices that want to move up—but all those applicants don't make up for the loss of craft and skill that Journeypeople and Masters have acquired.

When non-profits come to you asking for money for staff salary increases, give it to them.

No one funder can overcome the effects of this wage stagnation, however no funder is off the hook for helping to fix it. If you are truly interested in helping organizations build infrastructure, recognize that having 40% of the most senior staff in the movement feel financially stressed is a big infrastructure problem—somewhat akin to a Grade F on a bridge. We need to fix the bridge, not just the highway that leads up to it.

Help grantees have peer conversations about salary and equity.

Movement leaders need time and space to grapple with these concepts together with others in a similar position. Consider convening a cohort of your grantees' Executive Directors to encourage them to talk to each other about how they are working to establish salary equity and take care of people within their organizations.

Fund sabbaticals and other periods of rest for movement leaders.

Organizing is a job that requires substantial teaching, both of staff and of organizational members. Teaching requires emotional labor on top of the actual skills being taught, and Journeypeople and Master organizers need rest, in addition to more money. Funding a sabbatical for an ED doesn't just require covering that person's salary for three months—it's also helping fund the director's replacement to make sure that the organization continues to move forward in their absence. Can't fund a full sabbatical? What about covering the cost of a year-end or summer week off for a whole staff team? Or a paid month off for an Organizing or Field Director who has just led a major campaign?

## Encourage your grantees to adopt salary transparency and to disclose salary levels for all staff as part of their application or plans.

Foundations have a role to play in creating a culture of care, too—including making sure that they are not funding jobs that are unsustainable. If you routinely see that movement leaders are paying entry-level salaries in the \$40,000-\$50,000 band, ask them about it. Examine your own pay practices as well. Are you okay with a culture of silence around grantee pay or underpaying entry-level folks because that's what you've become accustomed to in philanthropy?

### Ask yourself—do I really need these metrics this way?

The Obama campaign in 2008 changed the game for relational organizing as it relates to campaigns, and their focus on the use of data to track progress sparked a revolution in political technology, some of which has seeped into community and union organizing. Over the intervening 15 years, we've seen an explosion of technology in organizing spaces, and some of that tech is not serving organizers well.

We're not anti-technology in organizing,<sup>5</sup> but we also know that people used paper and pen for years. What the movement needs most is organizing experts, not technology experts. Pushing people to adapt technology to produce meaningful metrics is pushing people towards tech expertise, rather than base building expertise. When funder metrics require an organization to begin using complicated technology to produce data, it means that everyone on the team must be digitally literate and able to use that database. That can mean that a Lead Organizer will have to spend dozens of hours working with their organizing team to make sure that the data is entered correctly, instead of spending those hours training them to do better outreach.

If the tool is standing in the way of organizing work, let it go.

### A word on Field/Canvass pay:

Most of our recommendations in this report focus on the pay for permanent staff, and obviously, most canvassers are employed on a temporary basis. We do not have a method to reach the thousands of people who have been employed as temporary canvassers in even the past two years, so we have not included data-driven recommendations about canvass pay. However, it is our firm belief that canvasser pay does need to be raised, in no small part because the job of canvassing is a dangerous one. Everyone who has canvassed for any amount of time can tell you stories about having guns pulled on them, being harassed by cops, and chased by dogs—not to mention the fact that it's an inherently outdoor, in-person job that requires being out in all kinds of weather, and being exposed to risk, from COVID & other infectious diseases.

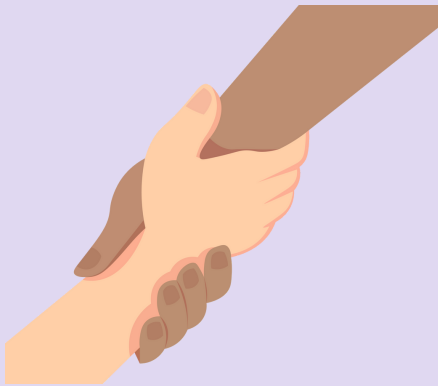
Pay canvassers more, too.



We will never beat back the forces attempting to further erode and destroy democratic structures and replace them with authoritarianism if we don't first take care of our own people. With a commitment to transparency and increasing dialogue between funders and movement leaders about what is really necessary to win, we can become stronger.



Extremism, anti-democratic, racist, and white supremacist ideologies are on the rise. If we lack the people power, we will lose--even if a majority of the country is on our side. It starts by looking in the mirror and practicing what we preach. Only then can we more fully dismantle the forces of oppression.



That starts with ensuring folks are paid a respectable wage for the incredibly difficult work within the movement. If we burn folks out with low pay, few resources, and the lack of dignity we so often (and justifiably) accuse the systems of capital of perpetuating, we'll never beat back those forces.

As organizers, we are accustomed to asking people to imagine the world we are trying to create, to dream, to win. We must begin to practice building that world by centering movement organizations around the needs of our people in caring ways.



# METHODOLOGY

This report is based on a survey of 391 people who took it online between June 1 and June 30, 2023. In addition, we conducted nine follow-up interviews with survey-takers who had consented to be contacted for additional conversation. Interviewees were granted anonymity in order to be able to speak freely about their experiences. Staff of New Working Majority and contractors who worked on this project did not participate in the survey themselves.

## THANK YOU

We'd like to take a moment to say thank you to the folks around the country who took this survey, and to those who agreed to have follow-up conversations with us about their experiences with salaries and job searches. In addition, we'd like to thank those who have mentored us over the years, too—we didn't get where we are without the mentorship and love of other organizers! We also owe special thanks to Kevin Ledezma & MK Mueller, who helped us with the technical aspects of survey design and analysis that our team lacks. Finally, we want to thank our group of pre-readers—Nick Alpers, Hunter Baker, Amy Fetherolf, Joel Mendelsohn, and Kevin Simowitz—who gave feedback on this report when it was in draft form.

## PLEASE SHARE

Of course, we'd love to have you share this report with as many people as possible. We've made a toolkit, if you'd like to post about it, which you can access [here](#). In addition, later this year we'll be putting out a white paper about our conversations with folks about their job searches, and some best practice recommendations for folks who are hiring. You can sign up for New Working Majority's email list [here](#), if you'd like to get access to that report when it comes out.

We've done our best to make this as accessible for everyone as possible, including adding alt text for images, offering a large print option (which you can download on our website), and using colors in our graphs and charts which are distinguishable for folks with colorblindness. If you have any suggestions for increased accessibility, please fill out this [form](#) and we'll edit the report to include your suggestion, as long as it is feasible for us.

New Working Majority is made up of Kati Sipp, Alina Sipp-Alpers,  
and Dani Paez.



# ENDNOTES

1. <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl?cost1=40000&year1=199701&year2=202307>
2. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/07/15/inflation-leads-federal-minimum-wage-to-reach-lowest-value-since-1956.html>
3. Given that earlier this year, [Inc magazine](#) determined that the average salary (across the 25 costliest cities) required for a comfortable life in the US this year is \$68,499, it is clear that movement organizers are not so much motivated by greed as they are by rising rents and housing costs.
4. We believe that the problem of Executive Directors in particular underpaying themselves is endemic, however, we need to do more research to understand the depth of this problem.
5. In fact, for many years Kati wrote a blog about tech and organizing, called Hack the Union.