



Corporate Progress

What Are Green Jobs Paying?

UC San Diego Extension and *Sustainability: The Journal of Record* Conduct Sustainability Salary Survey

By Henry DeVries and Lori Tripoli

Forty-three percent of sustainability professionals make \$75,000 or more per year, according to a survey conducted by UC San Diego Extension in collaboration with *Sustainability: The Journal of Record*. In all, 366 U.S.-based sustainability professionals in workplaces that include corporations, nonprofits, and government agencies responded to the survey, which was conducted in the fall of 2009 and winter of 2010. Twenty percent of respondents earn salaries between \$100,000 and \$149,999.

High-end salaries aren't just limited to those working in large cities (with populations of one million or more), where the cost of living is likely to be higher than that in more remote areas. Interestingly, almost as many of those at the upper end of the salary echelon work in suburbs. Not surprisingly, more professionals in the top income tiers (\$75,000-plus per year) have advanced degrees.

Results indicate that men outearn women in the sustainability field, with 65 percent of males making \$75,000 or more per year, compared to 33 percent of the females. Although some perceive sustainability as a "youthful" profession, given its relatively recent emergence as a career track and its emphasis on improving the planet for future generations, respondents were in all age ranges, with significantly more being in the 35-plus crowd than in the 34-and-under age range. That said, the majority of respondents (62 percent) have less than three years of sustainability experience.

Pervasiveness in the Workplace

Twenty-one percent of respondents reported that sustainability issues are the primary focus of their jobs, and 28 percent indicated that their sustainability work is an important, though not central, part of their jobs. Respondents report working on a variety of issues within the sustainability field, with environmental issues, corporate social responsibility, and energy savings leading as areas of primary responsibility. A majority (54 percent) of respondents supervise or manage at least one worker, and,

for those with direct reports, most oversee a mix of professionals and support staff.

Green principles are increasingly being incorporated into design and decision making, respondents said, with 86 percent reporting that this is happening more often than in the past. Most believe that their employers are committed to sustainability and think that sustainability is not merely a passing fad.

Continuing Education

To keep up with developments in the field, respondents network, obtain training, and rely on media sources (trade publications, general interest publications, and the Internet). Chances for promotion, according to 54 percent of respondents, are enhanced by their experience and knowledge of sustainability issues. Sixty-four percent reported that their employers reimburse them for taking continuing education courses.

Green Job Surge?

Perhaps reflective of the poorly performing economy, 66 percent of respondents reported they did not plan to hire any new professional staff in the coming year—but 34 percent do, although most of these new hires (39 percent) will be making less than \$75,000 per year. Even as sustainability staff itself might not be bolstered, 35 percent reported that it's likely their employer will hire, within the next 12 months, someone dedicated to alternative technologies.

The majority of respondents (62 percent) said that their job does have promotion potential, and most would recommend sustainability as a career to their children.

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UCSD/Sustainability: The Journal of Record SALARY SURVEY

Employers

Which of the following best describes your job?

Senior Management (Partner, Owner, President, CEO)	36	10%
Architect	7	2%
Vice President	10	3%
Lawyer	9	2%
Director	21	6%
Consultant	32	9%
Manager	68	19%
Teacher/Trainer	21	6%
Engineer	38	10%
Health Professional	12	3%
Other, please specify	112	31%
Total	366	100%

Which of the following best describes your principal area of responsibility/area of expertise?

Corporate Management/Administration	38	10%
Coordination of Company-wide Strategy	12	3%
Design and Engineering	33	9%
Purchasing	2	1%
Research and Development/Research	48	13%
Marketing	17	5%
Production/Quality Control	11	3%
Public Relations/Community Relations	9	2%
Nonprofit/Foundation	19	5%
Sales	6	2%
Law Firm	9	2%
Financial Advice	2	1%
Architectural Advice/Plans/Designs	6	2%
Public Health	1	0%
Teaching/Training	27	7%
Public Policy	11	3%
Environmental Science/Compliance	20	5%
Energy/Sustainability Programs	19	5%
Corporate Communications	1	0%
Other, please specify	75	20%
Total	366	100%

How many workers does your company/organization employ?

Fewer than 50	118	32%
50 to 99	17	5%
100 to 499	66	18%
500 to 999	31	8%
1,000 to 4,999	57	16%
5,000 or more	77	21%
Total	366	100%

How many workers do you supervise/manage?

None	167	46%
Fewer than 5	106	29%
5 to 9	47	13%
10 to 49	39	11%
50 to 99	3	1%
100 to 499	4	1%
500 or more	0	0%
Total	366	100%

Employers-continued

Which of the following best describes your place of employment?

Large City/Metro Area (1 million or more)	233	64%
Suburban Area	50	14%
Small City (less than 1 million)	50	14%
Rural Area	33	9%
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Total	366	100%

Which of the following best describes the end product or service of your company?

Nonprofit/Foundation	37	10%
Financial Firm	7	2%
Industrial Firm/Products	45	12%
Education (Training Company/College/University)	50	14%
Government	58	16%
Design/Engineering Firm	22	6%
Architectural Firm	3	1%
Consulting Firm	29	8%
Law Firm	8	2%
Other, please specify	107	29%
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Total	366	100%

What is the annual sales volume (total revenue) of your company/organization?

Less than \$500,000	105	29%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	13	4%
\$1 million to \$4.9 million	54	15%
\$5 million to \$9.9 million	23	6%
\$10 million to \$99.9 million	68	19%
\$100 million or more	103	28%
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Total	366	100%

How likely is it that your firm will hire someone entirely dedicated to alternative (green) technologies in the next 12 months?

Very Likely	77	21%
Somewhat Likely	50	14%
Neutral	57	16%
Somewhat Unlikely	52	14%
Very Unlikely	130	36%
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Total	366	100%

Jobs & Careers

What percentage of your workday do you spend on sustainability issues?

Less than 15%	222	61%
25%	50	14%
50%	27	7%
75%	25	7%
100%	42	11%
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Total	366	100%

Jobs & Careers-continued

Strictly with respect to sustainability, which of the following best describes your primary responsibility? (Select ONE answer.)

Corporate Social Responsibility	37	10%
Construction	8	2%
Environmental Issues	58	16%
Energy Savings	35	10%
Health & Safety	22	6%
Marketing	11	3%
New Product Development	32	9%
Recycling/Waste Management	20	5%
Regulatory Compliance	22	6%
Teaching	25	7%
Workforce Recruitment & Retention	12	3%
Other, please specify	84	23%
Total	366	100%

How long have you worked for your present employer?

Less than 2 years	75	20%
2 to 5 years	109	30%
6 to 10 years	84	23%
11 to 20 years	60	16%
More than 20 years	38	10%
Total	366	100%

For each statement in the following list, please think about your current employer and your own beliefs about sustainability as a career. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
My company is committed to sustainability.	155 / 42%	140 / 38%	53 / 14%	18 / 5%
My company gives "lip service" only to sustainability professionals.	20 / 5%	61 / 17%	118 / 32%	167 / 46%
I believe that sustainability is a passing fad.	19 / 5%	34 / 9%	75 / 20%	238 / 65%
I would recommend sustainability as a career to my kids.	148 / 40%	136 / 37%	54 / 15%	28 / 8%

Is the need to incorporate green principles into designs and decisions happening more often, just as often, or less often than in the past? (Please select ONE answer.)

More often	316	86%
Just as often	40	11%
Less often	10	3%
Total	366	100%

Which of the following do you do to stay up-to-date professionally? (Select ALL that apply.)

Visit websites	330	90%
University courses	174	48%
Read trade publications	212	58%
Network with peers	255	70%
Read general publications	231	63%
Attend trade shows	106	29%
Company training programs	129	35%
External training seminars	155	42%
Other, please specify	30	8%

Does your company reimburse you for continuing education courses?

Yes	233	64%
No	133	36%
Total	366	100%

Jobs & Careers-continued

Does your job have potential for promotion?

Yes	228	62%
No	138	38%
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Total	366	100%

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that each statement applies to a career in sustainability.

	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly
Green science or environmental sustainability science presents promising opportunities for professional development.	192 / 52%	143 / 39%	24 / 7%	7 / 2%
My chances for promotion in this company are enhanced by my experience and understanding of sustainability issues.	77 / 21%	125 / 34%	83 / 23%	81 / 22%

Supervisory Responsibilities

What type of employees report to you?

Support Staff	60	16%
Both Support Staff and Professionals	77	21%
Professionals	57	16%
No one reports to me	172	47%
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Total	366	100%

How many new professional staff will you hire in the next year?

None	240	66%
1 to 5	103	28%
6 to 10	13	4%
11 to 24	5	1%
25 or more	5	1%
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Total	366	100%

What will the salary range be for those new professionals?

under \$50,000	79	22%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	62	17%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	29	8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	9	2%
\$150,000 or more	1	0%
We/I will not be hiring	186	51%
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Total	366	100%

Education, Experience, Age & Salary

Please indicate the highest level of education you have achieved/earned.

No College	5	1%
Associates	7	2%
College (no degree)	23	6%
B.S./B.A.	142	39%
M.A./M.S.	79	22%
M.B.A.	29	8%
J.D.	15	4%
Ph.D.	43	12%
Post-graduate work (no advanced degree)	23	6%
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Total	366	100%

Education, Experience, Age & Salary-continued

How many years of sustainability experience do you have?

Less than 1 year	154	42%
1 to less than 3 years	72	20%
3 to less than 5 years	45	12%
6 to less than 10 years	34	9%
10 to less than 20 years	34	9%
20 years or more	27	7%
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Total	366	100%

What is your gender?

Male	181	49%
Female	185	51%
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Total	366	100%

What is your age?

24 or under	14	4%
25 to 34	68	19%
35 to 44	92	25%
45 to 54	98	27%
55 to 64	77	21%
65 or older	10	3%
Decline to answer	7	2%
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Total	366	100%

What is your base salary this year?

under \$50,000	89	24%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	72	20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	71	19%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	73	20%
\$150,000 or more	14	4%
Decline to answer	47	13%
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Total	366	100%