2016 Grassroots Salary Survey

Executive Summary
Introduction

The Grassroots Salary Survey is conducted annually by the Public Affairs Council in response to a demonstrated interest in compensation and job tasks for grassroots practitioners. The survey is designed to collect, analyze and provide valid, reliable data on the current compensation levels for grassroots positions.

The survey was completed only by individuals whose grassroots or advocacy-related responsibilities account for at least 50 percent of their job time. The survey asked respondents to provide base salary and percentage breakdown of job responsibilities, as well as bonus eligibility and bonus earned for fiscal year 2015. The survey also asked about supervisory roles, years of experience in the grassroots field and additional job responsibilities. All survey responses are anonymous. Eighty-four grassroots practitioners participated in this year’s survey (71% from associations and 29% from corporations).

This is an executive summary of the survey. The full 23-page survey analysis provides information in the following categories:

• Time spent on grassroots management*
• Percentage of time spent on grassroots activities
• Time spent on non-grassroots activities*
• Base salary for grassroots professionals*
• Base salary by job title*
• Base salary by organization size*
• Base salary for grassroots supervisors*
• Fiscal year 2015 bonus analysis*
• Base salary and bonus detail by years of experience

For access to the full report, please visit: pac.org/publications.

*Indicates analysis breaks down results by organization type (corporate and association)
Key Findings: Time Spent on Activities

• The median grassroots practitioner spends **53 percent** of his or time on grassroots activities, up from 50 percent in 2015. Association grassroots staff tend to spend more time on grassroots activities (median of 60%) over corporate grassroots staff (median of 50%).

• Within the median 53 percent of time spent on grassroots management and administration, grassroots professionals manage many activities, with the top three most popular grassroots activities being:
  – Crafting communications to grassroots contacts (90% of respondents)
  – Fly-in/lobby day planning and management (83% of respondents)
  – Grassroots ambassador program management (80% of respondents)

• Only **18 percent** of respondents spend three-quarters or more of their time on grassroots-related activities. The top three most common other activities and — the number of respondents who spend at least some of their time on these activities — are:
  – Communications (70% of respondents)
  – Federal lobbying and/or legislative tracking (45% of respondents)
  – Coalition/alliance management or industry relations (44% of respondents)

• Communications, PAC management and administration and federal lobbying/legislative tracking are the three activities that grassroots practitioners spend the **most time on** outside of grassroots.
Key Findings: Grassroots Salaries

• The median grassroots practitioner has a base salary of $73,500. In general, corporate grassroots staff make slightly more than association grassroots staff.

• Base salaries vary by title (analysis was done on three title groups: associate-level, manager-level and directors or above). Salary variation by title band is consistent across both corporate and grassroots practitioners.

• Organization size is not a consistent factor impacting grassroots professionals' salaries.

• Of total respondents, 27 percent supervise other employees. Supervisor salaries are consistently higher than for those without supervisory responsibilities. The median grassroots supervisor makes 14 percent more than those without supervisory responsibilities.

• Sixty-nine percent of respondents were bonus eligible in fiscal year 2015. Corporate grassroots practitioners were more likely than their association counterparts to be bonus-eligible. Mean bonus amounts also vary by organization, with corporate bonus amounts significantly higher than association bonus amounts.
For the full Grassroots Salary Survey, please visit pac.org/publications.

The Public Affairs Council thanks all of the grassroots practitioners who participated in this survey.

Questions?
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About the Public Affairs Council

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The Council’s staff professionals have direct experience in corporate and association public affairs management, lobbying, global public affairs, social media, corporate responsibility, campaign finance, grassroots advocacy, crisis communication and a host of related areas.

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