

Fact Sheet
2008-2009 Joint Survey of Rabbinic Compensation
A Partnership Project of the CCAR and URJ
Issued December, 2008

Some History

In 2000, a committee chaired by two congregational past presidents (and comprised of both Reform Movement lay leaders and professionals) created protocols for conducting a Movement-wide professional salary survey. This survey included rabbis, cantors, educators and executive directors. The survey results were released in January 2001. Subsequent to that survey, the non-rabbinic professional organizations have conducted their own salary surveys, while the Union and the CCAR conducted two additional joint surveys: the survey released in 2004-05, and the survey released last week. The survey design and protocols for the 2004-05 and 2008-09 surveys followed those established by the 2001 committee.

What methodology was used to conduct the 2008-09 rabbinic salary survey?

The survey was conducted by The Research Network using its online data collection software and hosting provided by Vovici EFM Continuum. The data is collected using their proprietary web scripting software. Vovici (<http://www.vovici.com/>) is a respected software provider, and has Fortune 500 clients from many different areas. The data were collected and all invitations were emailed using an online survey management program of The Research Network.

A total of 1,878 rabbis, which includes retired, part-time and non-congregational rabbis, received an email invitation to participate in the survey. Email lists were provided to the research firm by the CCAR, which also continued to gather and supply emails during the course of the project. The first invitation was sent in June 2008 via an email sent from Vovici's online survey management program, which ensures that respondents cannot respond to the survey more than once. The survey was preceded by informational announcements to CCAR members to prepare for the survey and subsequent reminders to complete the survey were sent by the CCAR directly to the rabbis.

A total of 625 individuals went to the survey site, including 260 full time solo or senior rabbis. However, only 175 of them completed the questionnaire in a manner that enabled the data to be included in the survey. We have been assured that these are sufficient responses to provide a meaningful survey comparison as reported.

As noted above, the survey design and protocols for the 2008-09 survey followed those established by the 2001 committee. The current survey instrument, based on previously used surveys, was reviewed by CCAR and URJ staff, and then provided to the research firm. Because not all the answers were mandatory, the individual sample sizes for each question vary.

Were congregations contacted directly for information and if not, why not?

The 2000 survey, which was a mailed survey, required a sign-off from the congregation as to the validity of the information. Because the 2004 -2005 and 2008-09 surveys were a web survey with unique sign-ins, this sign-off was not possible.

How were the results analyzed?

Results were generated using crosstabs. The mean, median and quartiles were calculated for each category of size of congregation. Since the questions in the survey were not mandatory, the number of respondents varies slightly depending on income subcategory.

Why are the category sizes different from the last survey completed in 2004-2005?

Attempts were made to gather information from more discrete categories and, unfortunately, they did not match the categories of the initial surveys. We apologize for the disparity but want to assure you that the small variance does not invalidate the survey results.

How many responses were received from full-time senior or solo rabbis in total and by category of size?

A total of 260 full-time senior or solo rabbis responded to at least some of the questions in the survey. This provides a 95% confidence interval of approximately $\pm 6\%$. However, since not all questions were mandatory, salary data are only available for the 175 rabbis mentioned above:

- 350 or fewer households: 76 full time senior or solo rabbis
- 351-650 households: 53 full time senior or solo rabbis
- 651-1000 households: 25 full time senior or solo rabbis
- More than 1000 households: 21 full time senior or solo rabbis

How many responses were received from associate/assistant rabbis?

20 full-time assistant rabbis and 43 full-time associate rabbis responded to the survey. Again, because not all questions were mandatory, salary data are only available for 15 full time assistant rabbis and 31 full time associate rabbis. The small sample size of associate and assistant rabbis precludes any analysis by size, however, because the number who completed the survey in each category is too small and there is wide diversity in their length of service and other factors.

How do you explain the average increases in compensation (both base and total) from the last survey to the current one?

The survey released in 2004-05 was actually sent out during 2003-04 and included compensation data from that year. We calculated the average annualized increases over a five year period (July 1, 2003 to July 1, 2008) and found the average increases are close to the annual rate of inflation and in line to anecdotal information we have received over the years.

Category A/350 or Less:	4.9%
Category B/351 – 650:	5.1%
Category C/651 – 1,000:	4.0%
Category D/more than 1,000:	5.9%

Note too: **total** compensation usually includes health benefits. As you are probably all aware, increases in health insurance have dramatically outpaced base inflation over the past few years and hence the average increases for total compensation may well be skewed because of those increases.

A final note

As always, surveys are meant to be a **guide**, not a dictate. And of course, negotiations between congregations and their rabbis will be affected by the reality of these challenging economic times.