

# HIGHS AND LOWS

Respondents to this year's Salary Survey shared what they loved most about their jobs – recurring responses included no two days are ever the same, the work is challenging, the perks of travel, and the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues. What did they like least? The lack of consistency, constant issues to overcome, being on the road too much, and too many people, as one respondent said, “with their hands in the pot.”

You see where we're going with this: Event planning is a double-edged sword. What appeals to many is also what makes the work so stressful. And the good news – face-to-face meetings have come back in full force – is also the bad news, as planners are dealing with market uncertainties, rising costs, the expectation that hybrid experiences are part of their event design, a lingering pandemic-related lack of staffing and the related challenge of working with inexperienced staff among their suppliers as part of their new reality. We take stock of the ups and downs of the role, monetary and otherwise, in this year's Annual Salary Survey.

**Survey analysis by  
Magdalena Atanassova and Michelle Russell**

## CONVENE SALARY SURVEY 2023

“I think of myself as a domino artist,” wrote one Salary Survey respondent, in answer to the open-ended question of what they liked about being an event professional. “I spend years precisely placing thousands of individual dominoes in an incredibly intricate pattern for a single meeting. A few days before a live meeting begins, the dominoes start falling. Slowly at first and then rapidly — one after the other until the last speaker microphone turns off. Watching the dominoes fall and constantly checking the pattern for potential problems is exciting, but also incredibly stressful. However, when the last domino falls, the stress is immediately replaced with an overwhelming sense of relief and pride in the enormous, live work of art I’ve just produced. That sense of relief and pride is what keeps me going; it is the most exciting part of my job.”

If you’ve seen any hypnotic videos of dominoes that gently fall, one after the other, fanning out into surprising shapes and patterns, you can appreciate the metaphor. Or you may be more familiar with an expression about the rectangular tiles that isn’t so positive, as was the case for this event professional sharing what they like least about the job: “Last-minute requests and changes that have a domino effect, and the leadership and staff act as if we have a magic wand to fix everything.”

Looking at the long list of what planners disliked about their jobs, it’s clear that a lot does need fixing, especially what broke during the pandemic, like staffing levels and resources that were cut during that time period that haven’t bounced back to 2019 levels. Even the domino artist respondent complained about “juggling increased responsibilities due to staff reduction (and at the same salary!).”

But on the plus side, planners said they relish the creativity, ability to learn, and feeling like the events they plan benefit their audiences and contribute to the economies where they’re held.

Over the last 30 years, according to a McKinsey report, “people have identified meaningful work as the most important aspect of a job — ahead of income, job security, and the number of hours worked.” The pandemic only amplified that value system. So maybe a sense of purpose is the single-biggest thing offsetting the negatives and the high levels of stress that come with the event planning role — which, once again in 2023, made it on the list of CareerCast’s annual 10 Most Stressful Jobs. Said one respondent, in a sentiment echoed by a number of fellow survey-takers: “I feel like we make a difference in the world.”

Nearly 850 event professionals participated in this year’s Salary Survey, conducted in early fall. Here’s a snapshot of what they had to say.

⑤ **Where they’re from.** The vast majority of respondents were from North America (94 percent), with 4 percent from Europe.

⑤ **Who they are.** The average age for respondents is 45 years old with 15 years of experience. Nine out of 10 respondents are female; nearly four out of five said they are white; 7 percent are Black; 5 percent are Hispanic or Latina/Latino; and 4 percent are Asian or Pacific Islander.

⑤ **Six figures.** The highest percentage of respondents (28 percent) earn \$125,000 or more

annually and 19 percent earn between \$100,000 and \$124,999. The average salary for those who identified as event marketers is \$128,551; for those who are event planners for associations, corporations, government, or are independent, the average is \$85,213. By role, the average salary for those respondents who are at the executive or VP level is \$132,600; \$97,864 for directors; and \$76,994 for managers. Those who supervise a staff earn \$101,364, while those who do not have any direct reports earn \$74,978. The average annual salary for all respondents in North America is just shy of six figures: \$97,130. And a stubborn gender

# CONVENE SALARY SURVEY 2023

wage gap remains, despite the fact that the large majority of event professionals are women. Male respondents earn nearly 5 percent more than female respondents, making an average annual salary of \$98,537 vs. the \$94,104 women earn each year.

💰 **Credentials.** More than half of the respondents have earned the CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) designation and nearly one-quarter have the DES (Digital Event Strategist) designation. Thirteen percent have earned a project management certification and 5 percent are CAEs (Certified Association Executive). Another 5 percent have earned a CMM (Certification in Meeting Management). The average salary for those with a CMP is \$90,330; those without a CMP earn an average salary of \$72,429. Those who earned a DES have an average salary of \$97,186 compared to \$83,048 for those without that designation. And the average annual salary for those who have earned both a CMP and DES is even higher: \$103,170. Those who have neither of those designations earn on average \$85,115 annually.

💰 **Satisfied? More or less.** On a scale of one to 10 (with 10 being most satisfied), the average level of salary satisfaction level is seven. The average salary for those who are very satisfied with their job (rating 9 or 10 on the job satisfaction scale) is \$126,760. Correspondingly, on the low end (those who rated their level of satisfaction 1 or 2) earn on average \$74,978. The average salary for those who are very satisfied with the profession as a whole (giving it a 9 or 10 on the scale) earn on average \$101,542. The number of those who said they are very unhappy with the profession (1 or 2 rating) was quite small, with an average salary of \$95,833 per year.

💰 **Going up.** More than three-quarters of respondents have seen their salary increase in the past 12 months. One out of five respondents said their salary remained the same. For those who saw their salary go up, 63 percent said it was due to a regular salary increase; 19 percent received a promotion; and 9 percent changed employers. The average salary increase overall was 8 percent. The majority (59 percent) expect to get a raise in the next 12

months; more than one-quarter are unsure; and 14 percent said they don't expect an increase in pay next year.

💰 **More than eight-hour days.** Similar to last year's Salary Survey, half of respondents work 41-50 hours per week, and 16 percent work 51-60-hour workweeks. Six percent report working a grueling 61-70 hours a week. One-quarter put in 30-40 hours a week.

💰 **Time off.** Nearly three out of 10 respondents took 11-15 days off in 2022 and the same number reported taking 10 or fewer days off. Slightly under one-quarter took 16-20 days off and 18 percent took more than 20 days away from the job.

💰 **More to do.** Close to half (46 percent) said they have had additional duties added to their job description this year for reasons other than a loss of staffing, while three out of 10 said they are taking on more responsibilities because of insufficient staff. Nearly one-quarter said they have not assumed any additional work.

💰 **Workplace changes.** Nearly nine out of 10 respondents said their employers have a flexible work policy and two out of five said they get to decide when to work from home and when to be in the office. Thirty-five percent have a fixed schedule of two to three days in the office.

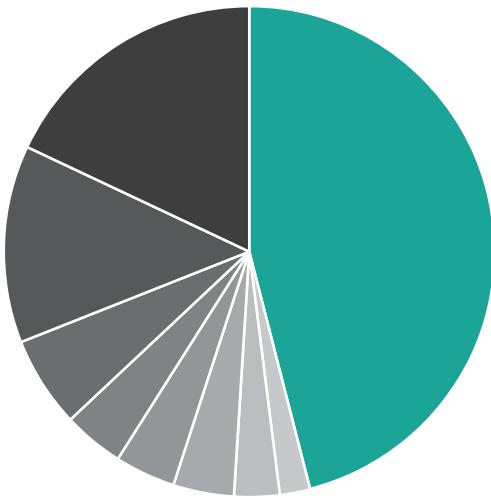
💰 **Continuing ed.** The overwhelming majority of respondents — 85 percent — said they pursue upskilling on their own. Meanwhile, slightly under three-quarters of respondents said their employer regularly pays for them to attend educational events, including conferences. It feels like that percentage should be higher, considering many of these organizations are in the business of creating revenue-generating learning opportunities for their audiences — so they know full well the value of continuing education. Seems to be yet another industry conundrum. 🍷

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Survey and analysis conducted by [Magdalena Atanassova](#), *Convene's* digital media editor. Overview by [Michelle Russell](#), *Convene's* editor in chief.

# CONVENE SALARY SURVEY 2023

## RESPONDENTS BY EMPLOYER



- 46%** Association meeting professional
- 19%** Corporate meeting professional
- 13%** Nonprofit meeting professional
- 6%** Professional conference organizer
- 4%** Association management company
- 4%** Independent meeting planner
- 4%** Other
- 3%** Educational
- 2%** Government

## RESPONDENTS BY AGE

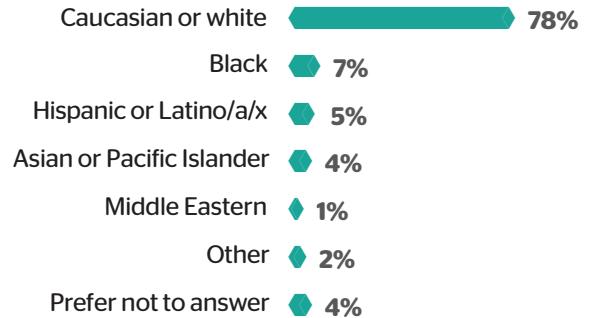


AVERAGE AGE

45

- 8% 20 to 29
- 26% 30 to 39
- 31% 40 to 49**
- 26% 50 to 59
- 9% 60 or older

## RACIAL OR ETHNIC IDENTITY



## 2023 SALARY AVERAGE BY JOB TITLE (US)

Coordinator/ Specialist	Executive Level/VP	Director
\$65,383	\$132,600	\$97,864
Meeting Designer	President/CEO	Manager
\$77,222	\$89,091	\$76,994
		Owner
		\$83,771

## 2023 SALARY AVERAGE BY ORGANIZATION TYPE

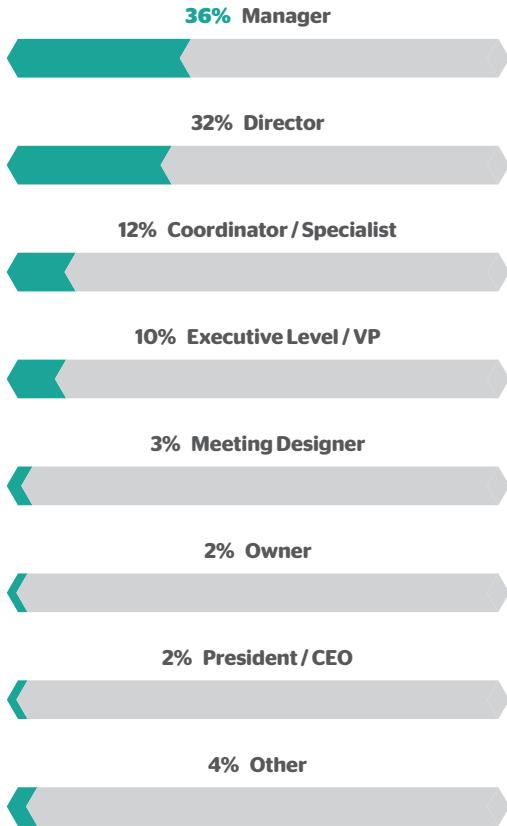
Association	Government
\$89,416	\$82,001
Association Management Company	Independent Meeting Planner
\$81,213	\$77,174
Corporation	Nonprofit
\$91,289	\$86,572
Educational	Professional Conference Organizer
\$75,125	\$86,936

## 2023 SALARY AVERAGE BY CURRENT ROLE

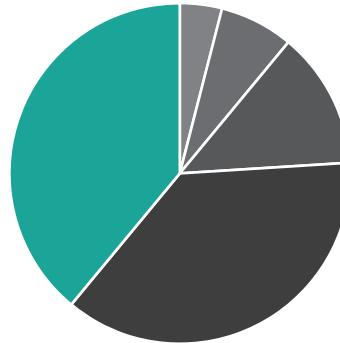
Event Marketer	Event Planner
\$128,551	\$85,213

# CONVENE SALARY SURVEY 2023

## RESPONDENTS BY JOB TITLE



## YEARS OF MEETING MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE



AVERAGE YEARS

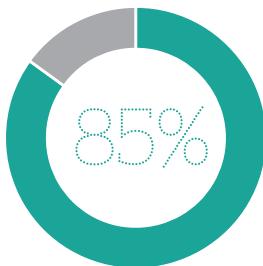
15

- 4% Less than 3 years
- 7% 3 to 5 years
- 13% 6 to 9 years
- 37% 10 to 20 years
- 39% More than 20 years

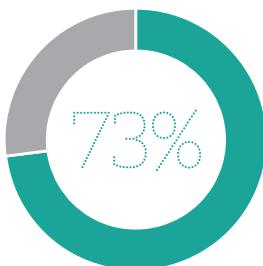
13%

of respondents cited project management certifications like PMP

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

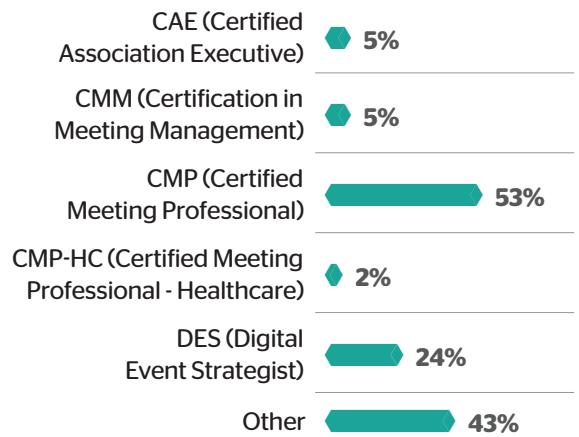


of respondents pursue upskilling on their own



work for organizations that regularly pay for them to attend educational events—three per year on average.

## PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS



# CONVENE SALARY SURVEY 2023



## AVERAGE SALARY

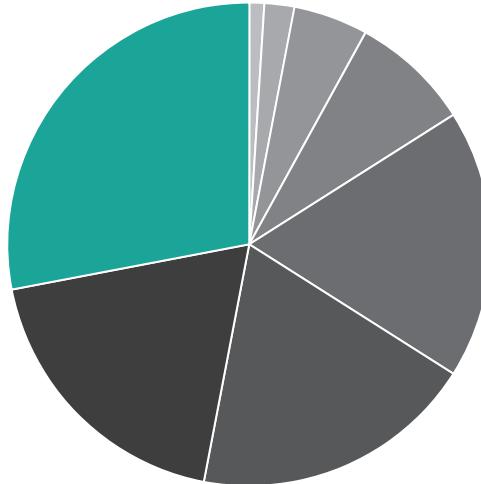
\$104,600

## MEDIAN SALARY

\$85,000-\$99,999

## SALARY RANGES

(total compensation including bonuses)



- 0% Less than \$30,000
- 1% \$30,000-\$39,999
- 2% \$40,000-\$49,999
- 5% \$50,000-\$59,999
- 9% \$60,000-\$69,999
- 19% \$70,000-\$84,999
- 18% \$85,000-\$99,999
- 19% \$100,000-\$124,999
- 28% \$125,000 or more

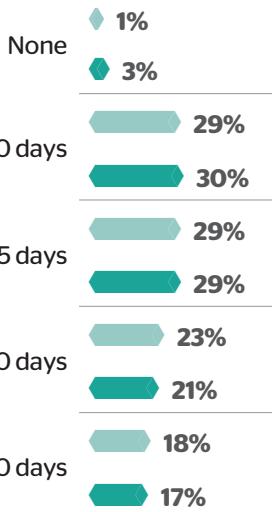
expect to get a raise in the next 12 months



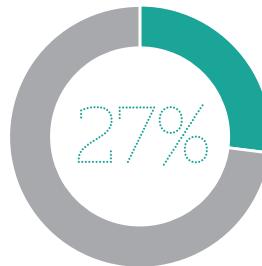
## TIME OFF

(taken in 2022)

- Total Days Off
- Paid Days Off



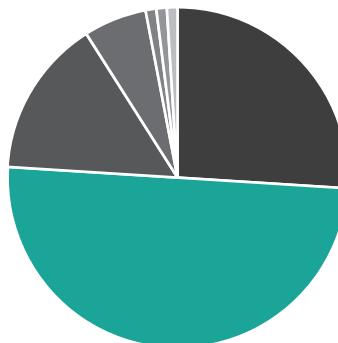
are unsure if they will get a raise in the next 12 months



## HOURS WORKED PER WEEK

AVERAGE HOURS

45



- 26% 30 to 40
- 50% 41 to 50
- 16% 51 to 60
- 6% 61 to 70
- 1% 71 to 80
- 1% 80 or more
- 1% Less than 30

# CONVENE SALARY SURVEY 2023



**FEMALE**  
**89%**

**MALE**  
**11%**

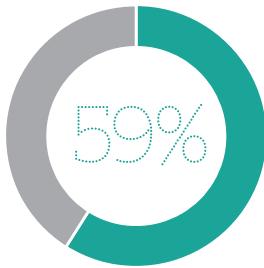


## ORGANIZATION LOCATIONS

**94%**  
North America

Europe  
4%

Asia Pacific  
1%



nearly three out of five respondents supervise a staff



average number of staff members who report directly to them

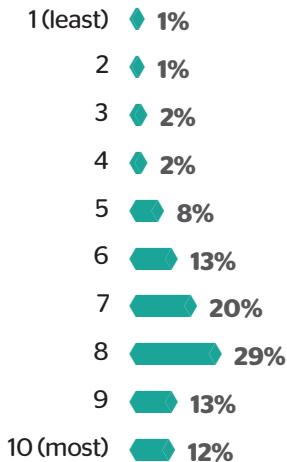


## OVERALL LEVELS OF SATISFACTION

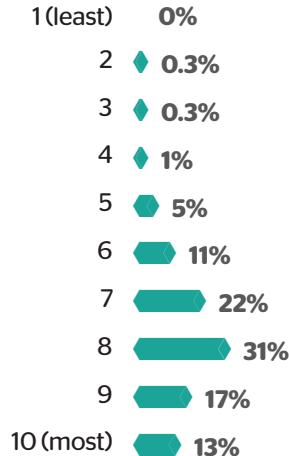
(from 1-10 with 1 being the least satisfied and 10 being the most satisfied)



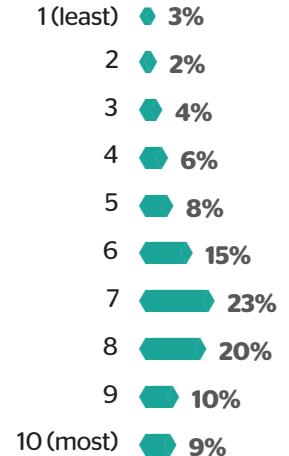
## JOB SATISFACTION



## PROFESSION SATISFACTION



## SALARY SATISFACTION



# CONVENE SALARY SURVEY 2023

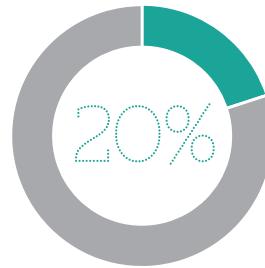
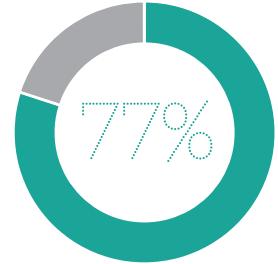
## ADDITIONAL DUTIES ADDED TO JOB DESCRIPTION IN 2023



**46% Yes, for other reasons**  
**31% Yes, assumed more responsibilities due to a loss of staffing**  
**23% No**

## SALARY CHANGE IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS

nearly eight out of 10 received a salary increase in the past year



one out of five said their pay stayed the same

63%

had a regular salary increase

Average salary increase

8%

Changed employer

9%

19%

received a promotion

## 2023 AVERAGE SALARY

Supervise a staff

**\$101,364**

Do not supervise a staff

**\$74,978**

Very satisfied with job

**\$126,760**

Very dissatisfied with job

**\$75,372**

Very satisfied with profession

**\$101,542**

Very dissatisfied with profession

**\$95,833**

Male

**\$98,537**

Female

**\$94,104**

With CMP

**\$90,330**

Without CMP

**\$72,429**

With DES

**\$97,186**

Without DES

**\$83,048**

With CMP + DES

**\$103,170**

Without CMP + DES

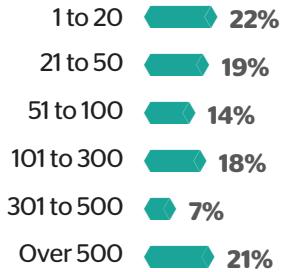
**\$85,115**

**AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY (US)**

**\$97,130**

# CONVENE SALARY SURVEY 2023

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY ORGANIZATION



84

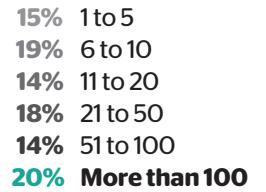
average size of staff

## NUMBER OF MEETINGS PLANNED BY ORGANIZATIONS ANNUALLY



15

median number of meetings planned a year



## ORGANIZATION SCOPE



Regional  
4%

Other  
1%

National  
43%

State  
5%

## FLEXIBLE WORK POLICIES

Flexible – I decide when to work from home and when to work from the office **40%**

Fixed two to three days in the office, the rest from home **34%**

Other **26%**

88%

of respondents work for an employer with a flexible work policy