

2025-2026 Salary Survey Report Summary



January 2026

Survey conducted and reported by:



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Dear ARJE members,

We are pleased to share with you the report of our **2025 ARJE Salary Survey**. We are grateful to our partners at **KEES** for engaging in a collaborative process and providing vital insights into both data collection and data interpretation. We are also deeply thankful to the **ARJE members** who took the time to submit their information. We could not provide this data to our members and partners without your commitment to this project—thank you.

You will find, in both the Executive Summary and the full report, a great deal of information to digest. The narrative that accompanies the data provides important context and interpretation, and we encourage you to take the time to read the report in its entirety. ARJE's CEO and lay leaders are available to discuss these findings, and ARJE holds and archives annual webinars on negotiations and salary surveys.

One of the most common reasons members turn to this survey is to find an “apples-to-apples” comparison. While this report is designed to provide our members and their employers with salary and benefits information, it is important to acknowledge the wide variation across Jewish educator roles – no two Jewish education jobs are identical, **and no compensation reflects that**. Differences in job responsibilities, training and credentials, institutional settings, geographic location, and benefits structures all shape compensation. For this reason, we encourage both educators and employers to view this survey as **one important set of data points** to be used alongside professional judgment, local context, and North American Trends. Especially with regard to benefits, there continues to be confusion and misinformation about what is and is not offered to employees, and employees generally construct their negotiations based on the benefits they individually seek at that moment in their career.

How can you use the data we are sharing?

If you are a **Jewish educator**, this report allows you to:

- see how your salary and benefits compare to those of colleagues across our organization
- identify the variables most relevant to your role.

The data can be a helpful tool as you prepare for contract negotiations or compensation conversations. ARJE, in particular, Rabbi Stacy Rigler, is committed to supporting you in this process, and we encourage you to reach out directly for **negotiation and salary support** to help interpret what this data means for your individual situation.

If you **represent a congregation, school, camp, or organization**, this survey provides:

- comparative data from institutions similar to yours
- can inform hiring, retention, and compensation decisions in order to attract and retain top talent.

We encourage employers to use this report thoughtfully and in conjunction with broader communal resources, including the **Reform Pay Equity Initiative**, support from the **URJ** and **NATA**, and the work of the **Safety Respect and Equity Network**, as part of an ongoing commitment to equitable and transparent employment practices.

We offer this report as a tool for learning, reflection, and action, in service of strengthening our educators, our institutions, and the Reform Movement.

With gratitude,

Rabbi Arianna Gordan, RJE

Chair, ARJE Job Services Committee

Introduction

KEES is honored to present the 2025 Salary Survey Final Report for the Association of Reform Jewish Educators (ARJE). This project was a true collaboration with leaders committed to advancing and elevating the work of ARJE members. We are grateful to the ARJE survey team for their partnership, clarity of purpose, and dedication to data-informed excellence in Jewish education.

Compensation is more than a financial figure, it reflects how we value sacred work, prioritize community needs, and support those who guide learning, nurture souls, and shape Jewish identity. Salary and benefits influence educators' decisions around career growth, longevity, and sustainability in the field, while also impacting recruitment, retention, and institutional capacity to support those called to this work.

As the landscape of Jewish education evolves, with shifting expectations, diverse workforce needs, and continued competition for talent, current benchmarks are vital. They promote transparency, kavod (honor/respect), and equity, helping employers and educators make informed, shared decisions that strengthen relationships and sustain the profession. This report offers value on multiple levels:

For employers and Boards: Salary and benefits data provide a concrete foundation for fair, competitive, and mission-aligned compensation structures. Benchmarks help organizations strengthen recruitment and retention, even in settings with limited resources or evolving staffing models.

For educators/ARJE members: Insights illuminate how the field currently values experience, professional excellence, advanced training, and long-term leadership. This clarity supports informed negotiation, career planning, and thoughtful conversations about growth and advancement.

Across the field of Jewish education, several factors consistently shape compensation:

- Organizational size, budget, and structure
- Geography and local cost-of-living realities
- Role scope, responsibility, and leadership expectations
- Market demand and availability of qualified educators
- Training, credentialing, and demonstrated experience

This survey strengthens the voice of ARJE members and supports a profession rooted in sacred purpose, excellence, and the flourishing of Jewish learning. KEES is grateful for ARJE's leadership, for member participation, and for the shared commitment to ensuring that those who nurture minds and souls are supported in ways that honor the significance of their work. Thank you for the opportunity to partner on this important initiative.

With appreciation,

Heather Eddy, President & CEO

Haley Becerril, Project Manager

Methodology

KEES conducted the 2025 ARJE Salary Survey to provide current, decision-ready benchmarks for Jewish educators while maintaining alignment with prior survey structures to support year-over-year comparison.

ARJE leadership supplied the finalized question set. KEES programmed the instrument into our survey platform and made only minimal wording/formatting edits for skip-logic compatibility and clarity. KEES completed internal quality assurance/testing, ARJE conducted user testing, and the final instrument was approved without substantive content changes.

The ARJE instrument captures:

- Employment status: Full-time (40+ hours/week) and Part-time (<40 hours/week)
- Professional titles: Earned RJE, Ordained Rabbi, Ordained Cantor, N/A, and Other (with write-in option)
- Compensation & benefits: Salary, base pay, and available benefits packages including healthcare, retirement contributions, professional development, leave policies, and other employer-supported offerings

These data points were collected alongside additional demographic information and detail about respondents' specific roles, supporting deeper, more nuanced analysis across the field.

All responses are confidential; no identifying personal or salary data are reported. "Prefer not to disclose" was available for sensitive items to ensure respondent comfort and data integrity.

The online questionnaire was distributed to ARJE members working in the field and generated a high participation rate (~ 65%). Respondents were instructed to report compensation as of July 1, 2025, ensuring accuracy and comparability across results.

Subgroup analyses throughout this report include—but are not limited to—employment status, professional title, and benefit access, providing a layered view of compensation within settings where ARJE members work.

Terms, Definitions, and Use of Prior Year Data

For the purposes of the 2025 ARJE Salary Survey, **base salary** refers to the stated annual salary paid to a Jewish educator, including parsonage, and excluding additional forms of compensation. Base salary does not include bonuses, insurance benefits, retirement contributions, professional development funds, or any supplemental allowances (such as technology stipends, transportation allowances, or similar supports).

Total compensation, when referenced, reflects the sum of base salary plus the monetary value of employer-sponsored benefits, bonuses, and incentives, providing a more complete picture of financial support beyond base pay alone.

Throughout this report, we use the term educational setting as a standardized reference for the environment in which an educator works, such as schools, congregations, early childhood programs, camps, or other Jewish institutions. Consistent terminology ensures comparability, especially where previous studies may have used multiple naming conventions.

Understanding Salary Measures

Graphs and tables in this report include both median and mean (average) salary values:

The **median** represents the middle value of all reported salaries - half of educators earn below this number and half earn above it.

The **mean** is calculated by adding all salaries together and dividing by the total number of respondents. Because unusually high or low salaries can shift the mean upward or downward, the median often reflects a “typical” salary more accurately.

Where appropriate, we also include quartile values to illustrate the spread of salaries within the profession:

- **Q1 (first quartile):** 25% of educators earn below this point
- **Q3 (third quartile):** 25% of educators earn above this point
- **The interquartile range (IQR)** - the distance between Q1 and Q3 - represents the middle 50% of salaries and indicates variation within the field.

Reporting Context

This is the first year KEEs has fielded and analyzed salary data for ARJE. Historical comparisons referenced in this report reflect figures provided to us by ARJE and are included when useful for context. Future survey cycles will allow for deeper longitudinal insights and a clearer picture of compensation trends over time within settings where ARJE members work.

Understanding Compensation Benchmarks

Compensation within settings where ARJE members work is shaped by many intersecting elements. While factors such as years of experience, professional role, educational background, and work setting tend to have the most direct impact, every characteristic plays a part. Salary benchmarks are therefore most meaningful when interpreted within context - not as single-point comparisons, but as part of a broader picture that reflects scope of responsibility, institutional structure, and the realities of the community served.

To support clear interpretation, this report analyzes compensation across the following dimensions:

Individual Characteristics

- Gender identity
- Highest level of education completed
- Years of professional experience
- Professional title
- Role description and leadership scope
- Full-time vs. part-time employment status
 - Part-time is defined as working fewer than 40 hours per week. While actual hours may vary widely among part-time respondents, all were categorized as part-time for the purposes of this survey; this should be considered when interpreting part-time compensation analyses.
- Contract type/status

Workplace & Institutional Characteristics

- Primary work setting (National or Local Agency, Camp, Afterschool program, or JCC, Congregation or Community part-time School, Day School, Institute of Higher Education or Hillel, Self-employed, Consultant, Coach.)
- Benefit access and benefit type

Geography can significantly influence compensation; however, it is not included as a primary analytic dimension in this report. Zip code data was collected, and respondents were heavily concentrated on the East Coast. The overall sample size was too limited to support reliable city- or state-level analysis. State-only comparisons can also mask meaningful cost-of-living differences within states - for example, compensation norms in New York City differ substantially from those in upstate New York. For these reasons, geographic analysis was intentionally excluded. Future surveys may consider including broader location-type categories (urban, suburban, rural) to allow for more meaningful geographic insights.

Where sample size allows, salary outcomes are presented using median values and quartile distributions, offering an apples-to-apples view across educators working in different environments. Quartiles help reflect the middle 50% of compensation values, decreasing the influence of unusually high or low outliers and offering a more realistic picture of typical earnings. Readers may notice that counts vary slightly across tables; this is intentional. As part of the analysis process, each subgroup is reviewed individually for statistical outliers, and any identified outlier salary values are removed from the calculations for that specific category only. This ensures that all reported figures are accurate, balanced, and reflective of true compensation patterns rather than skewed by extreme values.

General Observations

The 2025 ARJE Salary Survey highlights several key trends and insights that reflect both the strengths and challenges facing ARJE members today:

- **Overall Compensation (All Respondents – Full- and Part-Time):** Base salary levels vary widely across the field, reflecting differences in role scope, employment status, education, and institutional context. Median and quartile-based benchmarks provide the most reliable reference points for comparison.
- **Full-Time vs. Part-Time Employment:** Full-time educators earn substantially more than part-time educators across all benchmarks. Because part-time roles are structured very differently and individuals in these roles often prioritize flexibility over compensation growth, the report presents full-time and part-time data separately throughout.
- **Gender Representation & Pay Differences:** Women comprise the overwhelming majority of respondents in both full-time and part-time roles. Despite this, male respondents in full-time positions report somewhat higher compensation on average.
- **Education & Credentials:** The field is highly credentialled. Compensation increases consistently with higher levels of education, with master's degrees, ordination, and advanced academic credentials associated with notably higher salaries. This underscores the market value placed on advanced training and leadership preparation.
- **Experience in the Field:** Compensation rises steadily with years of professional experience, particularly for full-time educators. The strongest earnings are observed among mid-career and later-career professionals, reflecting growth in responsibility, expertise, and leadership scope.
- **Role Description & Leadership Scope:** Role type is one of the strongest predictors of compensation. Senior-level educators and clergy educators earn the highest salaries, followed by mid-level administrative roles, with program-focused and youth-facing roles earning less on average. These patterns hold for both full-time and part-time roles.

- **Employment Contracts:** A majority of respondents report having a written employment contract. Educators with contracts consistently earn more than those without, across both full-time and part-time positions, reinforcing the value of formalized agreements in clarifying expectations and compensation.
- **Benefits & Total Compensation:** Benefits play a significant role in overall compensation. Retirement plan access and employer contributions are common and meaningful, while health insurance coverage is most consistently provided for the employee and less so for spouses, partners, and dependents. Benefits that primarily support children and families (such as dependent health coverage, tuition assistance, early childhood programs, and camp-related benefits) may be underreported or less well understood, as employees without spouses, children, or dependents may be less aware of offerings that do not pertain to their personal circumstances.
- **Time Off Practices:** Time-off structures vary widely across employers. While many respondents report defined PTO or vacation allotments, others describe flexible, discretionary, or “unlimited” arrangements. In practice, time off is often shaped by trust, workload expectations, and institutional culture rather than strict tracking.
- **Family Leave Policies:** Many employers report having a written family leave policy, though the level of pay and clarity varies. A notable portion of respondents are unsure whether a policy exists or report no formal policy, highlighting inconsistency in both availability and communication. This uncertainty may also reflect limited awareness among employees who are single, do not have children, or do not have dependents, as these individuals may be less likely to seek out or consider family leave information unless it is directly relevant to their circumstances.

These findings reflect a committed, experienced, and highly skilled workforce operating within a wide range of employment models. Compensation outcomes are strongly influenced by role scope, employment status, credentials, and institutional structure, while benefits and policy clarity continue to shape how total compensation is experienced across the field.

Compensation Variables

Base Salary by Gender

Full Time:

Gender	Count	1st Quartile	Median	Mean (average)	3rd Quartile
Female	216	\$77,220	\$100,000	\$107,371	\$127,290
Male	38	\$92,000	\$107,750	\$110,083	\$123,000

Gender compensation analysis indicates that women comprise the majority of both full- and part-time employees. Among full-time employees, men reported higher compensation across most benchmarks, suggesting a persistent gender pay gap, despite a smaller male sample. Part-time compensation analysis was limited to female respondents, who reported an average salary of \$49,698.

Base Salary by Highest Education

Full Time:

Highest level of Education	Count	1st Quartile	Median	Mean (average)	3rd Quartile
Associate's degree or less	4	\$53,500	\$64,152	\$71,576	\$89,652
Bachelor's Degree	32	\$64,448	\$73,775	\$76,252	\$86,250
Master's Degree	163	\$77,400	\$100,000	\$107,932	\$125,000
PhD, EdD, and Other Advanced Degrees	23	\$103,000	\$135,000	\$135,469	\$159,677

Compensation increases consistently with higher educational attainment. Among full-time employees, salaries rise from associate-level credentials through bachelor's and master's degrees, with advanced degrees associated with the highest earnings. This pattern holds for part-time employees, where those with master's degrees earn more on average than those with bachelor's degrees.

Base Salary by Professional Title

Full Time:

Earned the RJE Title?	Count	1st Quartile	Median	Mean (average)	3rd Quartile
Yes	103	\$92,000	\$107,000	\$114,271	\$132,500
No	157	\$73,000	\$93,000	\$102,690	\$123,000

Ordained Clergy	Count	1st Quartile	Median	Mean (average)	3rd Quartile
Yes	69	\$103,810	\$124,500	\$132,326	\$155,952
No	192	\$74,228	\$92,503	\$98,255	\$118,000

Professional credentials are associated with higher compensation among full-time employees. Individuals holding the RJE designation and those who are ordained consistently report higher earnings than their non-credentialed peers across the salary range, indicating that formal credentials and ordination play a meaningful role in compensation differentiation and earning potential.

Base Salary by Primary Work Setting

Full-Time:

Primary Work Setting	Count	1st Quartile	Median	Mean (average)	3rd Quartile
National or Local Agency	17	\$77,250	\$117,420	\$119,482	\$155,902
Camp, Afterschool Program, or JCC	18	\$68,000	\$110,850	\$105,227	\$127,308
Congregation or Community part-time School	206	\$77,250	\$100,000	\$106,653	\$124,000
Institute of Higher Education of Hillel	8	\$65,500	\$75,000	\$107,455	\$85,000
Other	7	\$77,400	\$105,000	\$106,486	\$135,000

Compensation varies by work setting, reflecting differences in organizational structure and scope of responsibility. Congregation or Community Part-Time Schools represent the largest share of full-time roles, with additional meaningful representation in national or local agencies, camps/JCCs, and higher education or Hillel settings.

Base Salary by Years of Experience

Full-Time:

Years of Experience	Count	1st Quartile	Median	Mean (average)	3rd Quartile
0-2	26	\$58,500	\$72,775	\$77,054	\$90,000
3-7	64	\$70,750	\$90,000	\$94,094	\$115,989
8-15	73	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$107,457	\$123,500
16+	97	\$94,541	\$116,000	\$123,941	\$154,500

Compensation rises steadily with years of experience, particularly among full-time educators, where longer tenure is associated with higher responsibility and earnings. Part-time compensation follows a similar upward pattern, with some variation likely reflecting role structure and late-career shifts into flexible or reduced-hour positions.

Base Salary by Role Description

Full-Time:

Role Description	Count	1st Quartile	Median	Mean (average)	3rd Quartile
Educator of Lifelong Learning or Senior Level Professional	146	\$90,000	\$106,000	\$115,761	\$135,000
Assistant Director or Manager/Department Director	60	\$69,000	\$80,000	\$86,361	\$100,430
Administrator or Principal not at a senior level	7	\$54,000	\$74,000	\$75,464	\$92,000
Youth/Teen/Experimental Educator	15	\$55,000	\$68,000	\$67,654	\$73,000
Clergy Educator	32	\$115,000	\$135,000	\$133,324	\$160,000

Compensation is strongly linked to role, reflecting differences in responsibility, leadership, and expertise. Among full-time educators, senior-level professionals and clergy educators earn the highest salaries, while mid-level and more specialized roles fall into lower tiers. Part-time compensation follows a similar hierarchy, with earnings generally aligned with leadership and program scope.

Base Salary by Years at Current Employer

Full-Time:

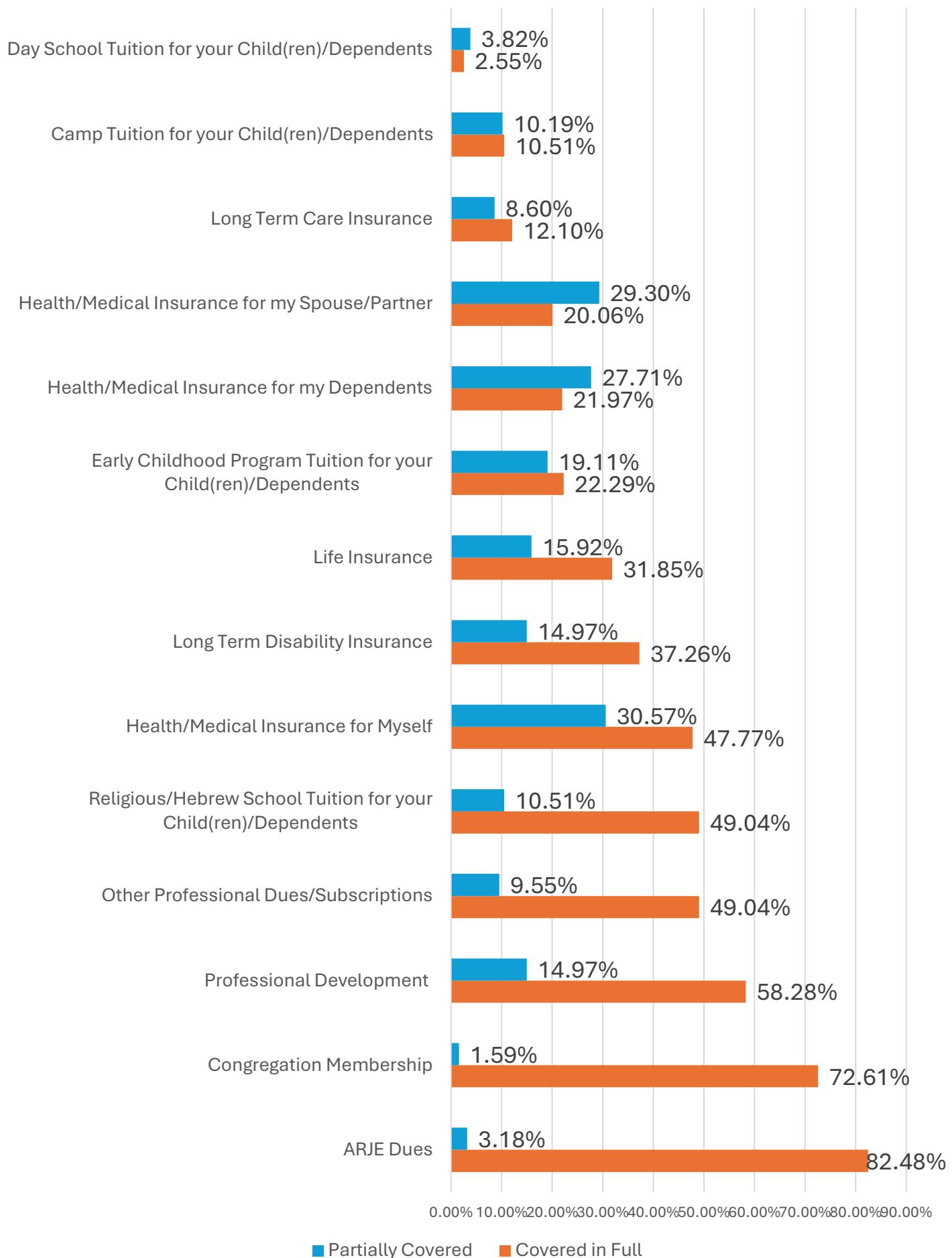
Years at Current Employer	Count	1st Quartile	Median	Mean (average)	3rd Quartile
0-2	70	\$70,000	\$86,725	\$91,531	\$114,438
3-5	86	\$75,305	\$96,408	\$103,523	\$127,452
6-10	45	\$91,875	\$113,210	\$115,978	\$140,000
11-20	44	\$93,375	\$111,650	\$129,436	\$164,132
21+	15	\$91,865	\$95,000	\$111,185	\$128,215

Compensation rises with tenure, particularly for full-time educators, with the highest earnings among those with 6–20 years at their institution. Late-career educators (21+ years) remain well compensated, though variation reflects shifts toward flexibility or reduced responsibilities.

Benefits

The chart below summarizes whether benefits are fully or partially covered amongst respondents. Additional details on benefit offerings and time-off policies are included in the full report. It is important to note that benefits supporting children and families may be underreported, as this chart is representative of ARJE members in all phases of life. Overall, these findings provide context for understanding total compensation beyond base salary.

Benefit Coverage (Full vs Partial)



Closing Comments

Open-ended responses reinforce a central theme of this year's findings: **ARJE compensation and benefits packages are highly variable and often shaped as much by employment structure, contract practices, and evolving responsibilities as by base salary alone.** Many respondents described roles that extend beyond a single job title (e.g., religious school leadership combined with early childhood oversight, youth engagement, b'nai mitzvah tutoring, programming, or other portfolios). Several noted that workload expectations can outpace contracted hours, particularly for part-time roles, or that responsibilities expanded without a commensurate pay adjustment, underscoring the importance of clarifying scope, FTE equivalency, and role boundaries when benchmarking compensation.

A second theme is the uneven formalization of employment terms. Respondents referenced a wide range of arrangements, including multi-year contracts, annual letters of agreement, at-will employment, hourly conversions, and independent contractor (1099) structures. Multiple comments indicated that benefits and leave are sometimes governed by handbooks, informal practice, or managerial discretion rather than explicitly stated in a contract, which can create uncertainty about what is available, what is guaranteed, and how consistently policies are applied.

Comments also highlighted how cost sharing and benefit shifts can materially affect perceived compensation. Some respondents described situations where retirement contributions decreased and base pay was adjusted to offset the change, while others noted that health insurance plan changes and premium increases effectively outpaced cost-of-living adjustments. Several respondents raised the topic of regular raises (COLA versus merit-based adjustments) and whether increases are predictable or discretionary, suggesting that "total compensation stability" is a meaningful concern alongside the benefit levels themselves.

In the area of time off, respondents described wide variation in PTO structures, ranging from defined vacation and sick allotments to accrued-hour systems, flexible policies, and "unlimited" PTO frameworks that still depend on operational realities (e.g., limited coverage during school sessions). Several comments also emphasized parental/family leave as a critical benefit, sometimes negotiated individually and sometimes tied to state programs rather than employer-funded leave, reinforcing that "paid leave" can reflect different funding mechanisms across employers and geographies.

Finally, the closing comments surfaced survey-design feedback and emerging benefit categories. Respondents noted that some items would benefit from a "not applicable" option (e.g., spouse/partner or dependent coverage for those without eligible dependents), and others suggested expanding future surveys to capture education/degree support, tuition reimbursement, childcare support,

discretionary/professional development funds that are not tied to ARJE-specific events, and unique institutional settings (including Canadian benefit norms and non-congregational employers). Several respondents explicitly mentioned using the survey as a tool for contract negotiations, underscoring the value of clear benchmarking by geography and institution size, and the importance of distinguishing between what is offered, what is covered, and what is contractually guaranteed.

Thank You ARJE!



We are grateful for your contributions to Jewish education and the vital role you play in shaping learning, engagement, and community life within your institutions.

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