

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 17, 2021
Virtual Meeting**

**Archival Compensation Task Force:
Salary Transparency Advocacy
(Prepared by Council Member Melissa G. Gonzales)**

BACKGROUND

This Action Item is being submitted for a second time by the Archival Compensation Task Force (ACTF) so Council can vote on promoting archival salary advocacy by seeking transparency in job postings to the SAA Job Board, Career Center, blogs, and social media.

The archival profession continues to be plagued by inadequate compensation for individuals, which has negatively affected retention and diversification efforts. Many formal and informal surveys executed by archivists and archival organizations over the past decade have shown that the issue is growing worse as reflected through job postings that request vast amounts of education and skills for compensation that is not commensurate or justifiable in comparison. One serious issue to keep in mind is the number of SAA members who have opted to leave the profession for more financially stable careers, thereby affecting SAA's sustainability. It is time that we actively address this issue before it alters the future of the profession by demeaning degrees and skillsets, which in turn will adversely affect collections through inadequate care and accessibility.

DISCUSSION

Many regional organizations have already advocated on behalf of archivists and the profession by promoting salary transparency through job postings on their sites.¹ If institutions decline to provide the salary range in job postings, these organizations will not promote them on their websites or social media. For example, the Board of the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York announced in December 2019 they would support member requests to advocate for increased diversity and equity. Their Board voted to discontinue accepting job position posts that

¹ **Organizations requiring salary information in job postings**

Archivists Roundtable of Metropolitan New York, Association of Moving Image Archivists, Association of College and Research Libraries/Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS), CLIR+DLF Job Board, Maine Archives and Museums, National Association of Government Archives & Records Administrators (NAGARA), National Council on Public History, New England Archivists, Northwest Archivists, Society of Florida Archivists, Society of Georgia Archivists, Society of Southwest Archivists, USAjobs, and We Here.

do not include a salary or salary range. The announcement came after months of consternation about salaries and pay inequities raised at the SAA 2019 Annual Meeting.

The formation of the informal Ad-hoc Working Group on Archivist Salary Transparency resulted in a thorough report that contained data in support of a decision to require salary transparency in the hopes that SAA Council would vote in favor of doing the same.² In response, the Business Archives Section also conducted a survey of their membership, and although the results supported the creation of a compensation task force, 77% of BAS members did NOT support a resolution across all of SAA, including the SAA Job Board and social media accounts for all sections, that would ban the posting of jobs without salary information.³ The majority of their members believed the requirement would create one result: far fewer business archives job or internship postings via SAA. The BAS did not provide data to support this concern, and the ACTF has not found any supporting data, either.

Despite clear support from a significant portion of SAA membership, the majority of Council members chose not to approve a salary transparency requirement when presented at the December 2019 meeting for a vote. Rather, they approved providing an incentive to those who did provide salary/compensation information in their postings. However, Council did approve the creation of the ACTF, which has been working this past year to gather, disseminate, and develop solutions to improve compensation for the profession that is on par with our professional peers. One of these solutions has been promoting salary transparency.

In March 2021, another motion to approve salary transparency was made, and the initial motion was recanted and amended to remove the requirement that archival salary also be included in those job postings sent via the SAA Discussion Lists. The second motion was struck down altogether since a few members required further information prior to voting. Questions for the ACTF seeking further clarity about salary transparency were submitted by Council via the Discussion List and sent to the group via their Council liaison. Here are the questions and subsequent answers:

- Many have articulated the benefits that would come along with salary transparency initiatives, including requiring posting salary info to the job board. What is the benefit-*to the profession-of not* doing this?
 - The benefit of NOT doing this is that we preserve the status quo. The current system uses information asymmetry (where only the employer knows how much they are willing to pay) at the expense of setting a fair value for archival professionals. Data shows that NOT listing salaries disproportionately targets women and people of color who are historically underpaid for their work. The Job Board's lack of salary transparency results in a haphazard system where under-

² [October 2019 Council Agenda Item: IV.A.1. Archival Salary Advocacy Group](#); According to their survey report, they received 1311 individual survey responses, with 1012 respondents identifying themselves as SAA members. The vast majority of respondents supported the requirement of some form of salary information in job postings on the SAA Job Board, and a smaller majority supported a requirement for postings on SAA listservs or blogs and social media when notices come from SAA leaders and/or administrators acting in an official capacity.

³ [October 2019 Council Agenda Item: IV.A.2. BAS Survey on Salary Requirements for SAA Job Postings](#)

and over-qualified SAA members compete for a small number of vague position descriptions.

- A survey of nearly 1,200 SAA job postings from 12/2016-2/2020, illustrates potential and promise for the Job Board.
 - 42% (499) of job postings received 1-3 candidates.
 - 32% of job postings (375) received 4-9 candidates.
 - But, 15% of job postings (176) delivered 0 candidates.
 - Unfortunately, only about 20% (238) of the postings contain trackable data related to Salary Range, those that listed salary range from \$30,000 - 192,000. This is both far above and below the median archivist salary! But only 29 (16%) of the group that delivered 0 candidates listed salary or salary range.
 - To complicate issues related to the many variables in salary compensation, the most effective listings (e.g. those that delivered the most candidates) are for positions with salaries ranging from \$35,360 - 67,101 for Entry Level and from \$40,000 - 64,600 for Experienced archivists.
 - The status quo can be improved. SAA can support its membership with this change. This would benefit SAA members and employers (by showing them how their salary requirements are unreasonable) and would help us better understand our members' values and interests. By requiring salary transparency in its Job Postings, SAA can begin to establish a fair market value for its members and for archival professionalism based on our training, commitment, experience, and expertise.
- What recommendations do you have for those that simply cannot post jobs with salary information due to stringent institutional practices? What approaches/strategies do you suggest members have to speak with their institutions even if they know change may not happen?
 - The ACTF will look to archivists like Meg Tuomala, who has successfully argued for salary transparency within their institution, to gain information to develop an advocacy toolkit so our members can approach HR, upper management, and/or administrative officers.
 - Once the toolkit is complete, ACTF can host a forum with archivists and directors who have successfully advocated for salary transparency change at their institutions.
 - What other considerations have you thought of for those that cannot abide salary transparency? Is it just tough luck? What other archives-centric job posting sites would you back and recommend?
 - If SAA recommends going to other job boards that don't support salary transparency, then that negates supporting salary transparency.
 - The ACTF will recommend the creation of an advocacy toolkit for archivists who are seeking to change their institution's policy on salary transparency.
 - Would you be ok with the revised motion of allowing sections to post jobs on their social media platforms that are specific to their needs and give them the autonomy as they see fit even if they don't have salary information? Provided that we urge and challenge sections to seek and highlight the jobs that do share.

- If current policy permits section leaders to post jobs that are not on the SAA Job Board, then there should not be a problem with having them post jobs without salaries to their listservs.
 - The ACTF agrees it should be left up to each section to decide since it may be harder to enforce a salary transparency policy for section discussion lists, and there is no existing posting policy or review process for posts before they go to the larger lists.
 - That said, a wider SAA stance may influence what sections will/will not allow.
- Since many regional organizations have adopted salary transparency for their job boards, how many job postings from non-traditional institutions showing salary have they run across in their research? This one is more out of curiosity and totally understand if they don't have in their research. (Eric Chin)
 - One example is the State of Colorado's Equal Pay for Equal Work Act (EPEWA), enacted in January 2021. It requires salary posting transparency to close the pay gap.
 - This may be a difficult year to assess the effects of new salary transparency policies on regional job boards. Many of the policies were enacted just before or during the pandemic, a time when job postings fell dramatically across the archival profession.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

THAT the SAA Council support and pursue the following actions:

- 1. Require compensation (salaries, salary ranges, hourly wages, or stipends) information for all job postings on the SAA Job Board, SAA Career Center, blogs, and social media.**
- 2. Require all institutions paying to post jobs on the SAA Job Board include complete, accurate, and standardized data related to qualifications, job type, and salary or salary range.**
- 3. Update guidelines and add required fields and data structures to Job Board posting template.**

Support Statement: Requiring compensation information in SAA's job postings supports our members by establishing accountability for institutions to pay professional-level salaries for archives and archives-adjacent positions, allowing institutions to evaluate the salaries they pay against those of comparable institutions, and providing job seekers an important data point in applying for positions and negotiating salary as part of a job offer.

Impact on Strategic Priorities: Approval of the proposed revisions will have direct impact on all four Strategic Priorities, as follows:

- Goal 1 (Advocating for Archives and Archivists), particularly 1.1, 1.2, and 1.4, as they will assist, educate, and influence leadership and decision makers in promoting the value

of archives and archivists to institutions, communities, and society by actively advocating for professional-level salaries, which ultimately has an impact on the value of archives.

- Goal 2 (Enhancing Professional Growth) is also supported, since salary accountability and transparency will support the career development of archivists (2.1).
- Goal 3 (Advancing the Field) because it will assist the Archival Compensation Task Force in establishing guidelines, best practices, and/or standards in their final report/recommendations (3.1).
- Goal 4 (Meeting Members' Needs), particularly 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4, because these updates are in direct response to requests from members and have been supported by several high-profile regional organizations and archives-adjacent institutions. If approved, this revision will encourage institutions to be transparent and reevaluate their compensation levels. Higher pay and compensation will foster a more inclusive association and profession by providing the funds that are necessary at this time to contribute and participate in SAA and other leadership opportunities, including promotions.

Fiscal Impact: A report generated by SAA's Director of Finance and Administration is attached that outlines the SAA Job Board revenue over the past ten years. It indicates that even a complete discontinuation of the SAA Job Board would still have left the organization with a financial net gain in 9 of the past ten years.

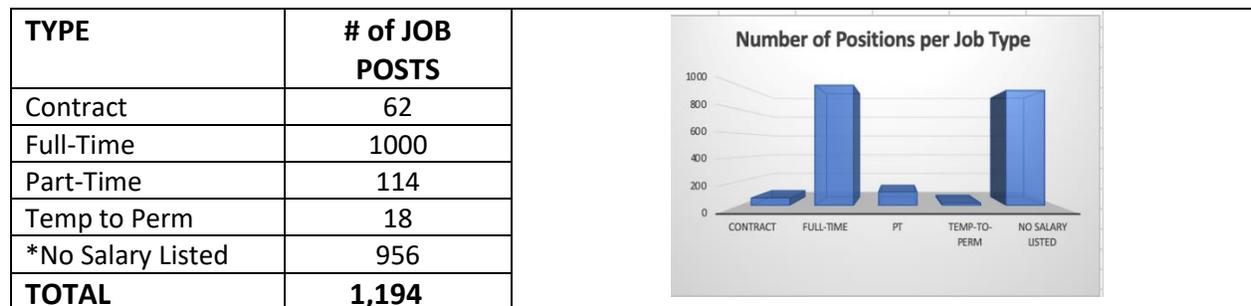
Requiring salaries may reduce the number of postings, especially initially as organizations adapt to the change. There are ways this impact can be offset, such as reexamining the pricing structure of the Job Board (which the Director of Finance and Administration notes has not changed in more than ten years). The proposed action item will require limited SAA staff time to make the adjustments to the website and Job Board template, and to confirm compensation data is present for submitted posts.

In the long term, greater salary transparency could have a positive fiscal impact on SAA. If organizations gain a greater understanding of fair compensation for archival labor and begin to compensate their employees accordingly, salaries could rise and reliance on contract labor could diminish. These positive effects on the finances of archivists would result in more archivists paying higher membership dues in our tiered dues structure, and in more archivists who are able to join and maintain membership in SAA.

Appendix A

Data analyzed from SAA Job Board postings from Jan 2017 – Feb 2020

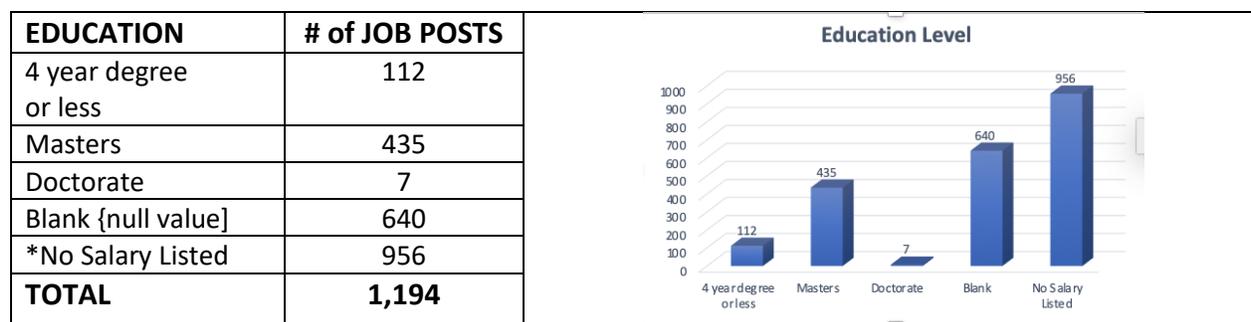
The vast majority (84%) of job postings are full-time positions, but 956 don't list salary or range.



Most postings (69%) require Experienced professionals. See detailed breakdown in chart below.



Most postings (53%) left Education blank. 36% prefer Masters. See table below on right.



Excel pivot tables showing disparities between desired Job Level and null values in Education

JobLevel	Count of JobType	Count of JobLevel	Count of EducationLevel	Count of Salary
Entry Level	181	181	96	181
Experienced	827	827	413	827
Internship	167	167	39	167
Paid Internship	19	19	6	19
Grand Total	1194	1194	554	1194

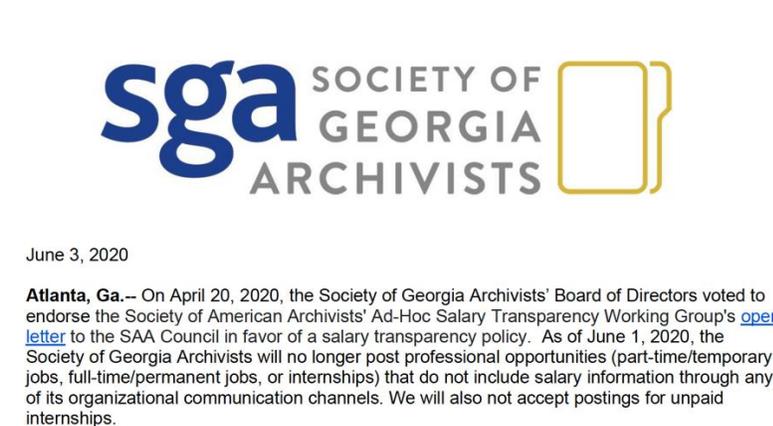
EducationLevel	Count of EducationLevel	Count of Salary	Count of JobLevel
2 Year Degree	3	3	3
4 Year Degree	101	101	101
Doctorate	7	7	7
High School	3	3	3
Masters	435	435	435
Some College	5	5	5
(blank)		640	640
Grand Total	554	1194	1194

Examples of professional associations requiring salary or salary range in jobs:

1. FLORIDA: Society of Florida Archivists voted unanimously On July 2, 2020.



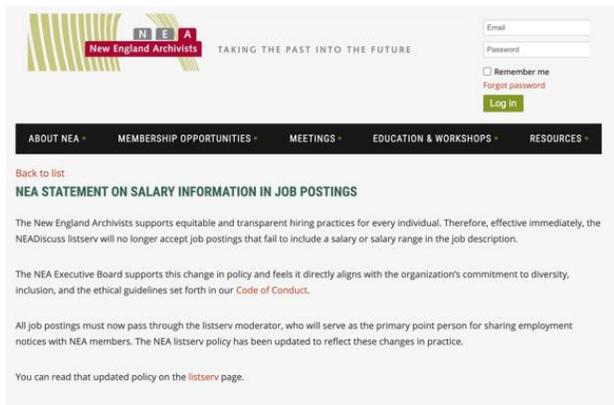
2. GEORGIA: Society of Georgia Archivists changed policy on April 20, 2020.



3. MARYLAND: AMIA (Association of Moving Image Archivists) changed policy in January 2020.



4. NEW ENGLAND: New England Archivists serves archivists in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.



5. PACIFIC NORTHWEST: Northwest Archivists serves archivists in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. They changed their job postings policy in 2019.

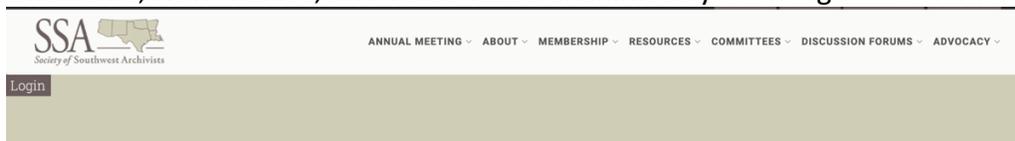
Northwest Archivists (NWA): Policy for Acceptable Job Postings

The following three rules must be adhered to for job postings to be shared on the NWA website and through NWA social media channels:

1. NWA will only post jobs, internships, and volunteer positions in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington.
2. Positions must have a salary or salary range listed.
3. Unpaid positions are discouraged. If an internship is unpaid then it must adhere to the United States Department of Labor's [Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act](#) and follow the Society of American Archivists' [Best Practices for Internships](#) as a Component of Graduate Archival Education. Volunteer positions must follow the Society of American Archivists' [Best Practices for Volunteers in Archives](#).

If the job post is found to be in violation of the US Labor laws, or is otherwise in violation of professional best practices, the organization will be notified and the job post will be rejected.

6. SOUTHWEST: Society of Southwest Archivists serving Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas voted unanimously to change rules in March 2019.



Salary Information Now Required in Job Postings

POSTED BY SSA WEBMASTER POSTED ON MARCH 11, 2019

At its 8 March 2019 meeting, the SSA Board voted unanimously to immediately stop accepting job advertisements that do not list a salary or salary range. This applies to all SSA media including the website forums, Facebook, and Twitter.

Any request to post a job announcement that does not include salary information will be held while the requestor is contacted and asked to provide this information. Once salary information has been added to the announcement, the job advertisement will be posted.



7. NYC: Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York changed its policy in 2019.

8. VIRGINIA: CLIR (Council for Library and Information Resources) changed its policy.



New ART policy

To: ART Membership
 From: The Board of the Archivist Round Table of Metropolitan New York, Inc.
 Date: December 8, 2019
 Subject: New Job Submission Policy

Dear ART Members:

The Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York Inc. supports your requests to advocate for increased diversity and equity for our professional community of archivists, librarians and record managers. We support and promote **salary transparency** for our membership of qualified emerging and established professionals, and aim to ensure that our job board offers positions that balance compensation with job responsibilities, desired education, and experience while providing the New York Metropolitan area with top candidates from our membership base for all levels of employment.

The ART Board voted to discontinue accepting job position submissions to our job board that do not include a **salary** or **salary** range, are in violation of US Labor laws; fall below a living wage according to the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#); or otherwise do not meet current professional best practices.

Effective 6 December 2019, all jobs submitted via the ART Job Board will be reviewed for compensation **transparency**; parity between job requirements and compensation; and parity between job description and job title.

- All paid Full time/Part time listings must include **salary** information
- All Paid/Unpaid student, intern, and volunteer listings must adhere to the following:
 - US Department of Labor's Internship Programs Under the Fair Labor Standards Act: <https://www.dcl.gov/whd/reqs/compliance/whd671.htm>
 - Society of American Archivists' Best Practices for Internships: <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/BestPract-Internships.pdf>
 - Society of American Archivists' Best Practices for Volunteers in Archives: <https://www2.archivists.org/standards/best-practices-for-volunteers-in-archives>

ART has created new job submission forms to help guide those submitting jobs online, and will return for adjustments postings that do not meet our current standards for paid employment and our current standards for student positions, internships, and volunteer opportunities as stated above. Posts that discriminate based on race, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation, and aim to widen the wage gap between men and women in our profession will also be returned.

The Art Board of Directors invites questions and comments on this newly adopted policy at board@nycarchivists.org.

Sincerely,
 Deidre Dinnigan
 President

About the CLIR and DLF Job Board

Let CLIR and DLF help you attract great candidates in the fields of libraries, archives, cultural institutions, and communities of higher learning.

Job postings are free for **CLIR sponsor and DLF member institutions**, and \$200 for non-members. **Start posting for free...join CLIR and DLF today!**

Postings are active for 60 days and include customized promotion on **CLIR** and **DLF** Twitter accounts.

We do not post or publicize unpaid positions or internships. We also require employers to include a minimum salary amount and support **fair employment practices**.

