

\$600K Question: Why are Women Earning \$20K Less per Year

<http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/600k-question-why-are-women-earning-20k-less-per-year/?pfsstyle=wp>

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by Karen Klieger Sponder

Is the Jewish community really saying that \$20,000 a year is the “cost” of being a woman working for a Jewish organization? Over a thirty year career that is \$600,000!

“Holding constant age, years in the field, level of responsibility, hours worked, and degrees earned, women’s salaries still trail men’s by about \$20,000- equivalent to what may be called ‘the net cost of being a woman in Jewish communal life’” reads page 18 of Profiling the Professionals: Who’s Serving Our Communities?, the [study released this week](#) by the Jewish Communal Service Association and the Berman Jewish Policy Archive @ NYU Wagner.

It is clear that the Jewish community must work to understand this statistic; I see at least three possible interpretations. First, it could mean that the factor driving the difference is that the analysis also needs to hold constant organizational size and budget, or put another way, that women are paid less because they are leading and working for smaller organizations with smaller budgets. Second, it could mean that women within organizations do not effectively negotiate their starting salaries and/or advocate for raises. Third, it could mean that there is gender discrimination in compensation in Jewish nonprofits.

Let me be clear, I am not suggesting one of these particular possibilities is the cause. And I acknowledge that there must be other possible readings that would explain these statistics.

I am asking the Jewish community to exert effort to find the answer and discuss its ramifications. This statistic has implications that vary depending on the explanation, from helping women break the glass ceiling to gain access to the leadership roles at the largest organizations, to helping women improve their negotiating skills, to assessing organizational compensation practices.

While the report describes women as comprising two-thirds of the Jewish communal workforce, this statistic is relevant beyond the women working in this field. It could adversely effect recruitment for the field. The consequences are broader and should be of concern to the entire Jewish community.

Our Jewish organizations are an important way in which our community transmits Jewish values. As our Jewish organizations strive towards a just Jewish world, let us strive to ensure our employees are treated justly.

Let us build upon the study and further understand why women are earning 20,000 less than their male counterparts. Let us get to the bottom of this \$600,000 question.

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