

Salaries in Psychology

Findings from the National Science Foundation's
2015 National Survey of College Graduates

American Psychological Association
Center for Workforce Studies

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Executive Summary

This report uses data from the National Science Foundation's 2015 National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) to analyze salaries for psychologists in the United States. The data are from a nationally representative sample of full-time psychologists – those who had doctorates or professional degrees in psychology as their highest degrees, and worked at least 35 hours per week. It describes psychologists' annual salaries by geographic region, degree field, type of position, sector, as well as demographic characteristics. Major findings include:

In 2015, the median annual salary for psychologists was \$85,000. More than half (57 percent) of psychologists had salaries within the range of \$60,000 to \$120,000. Geographically, median salaries were highest in the Middle Atlantic Division (\$108,000) and lowest in the East South Central Division (\$59,000). By degree field, psychologists who were trained in industrial/organizational psychology (\$125,000) had the highest median salaries, whereas those who were trained in educational psychology had the lowest (\$75,000).

Psychologists in **professional service positions** had a median salary of \$85,000. Among those providing professional services, self-employed psychologists in non-incorporated businesses had the highest median salary at \$120,000, followed by those working in the federal government at \$86,000.

Psychologists in **teaching positions** had a median salary of \$62,000. Post-secondary teachers earned a median salary of \$63,000. Salary levels were higher in private educational institutions (\$70,000) than public educational institutions (\$60,000).

The median salary for psychologists in **research positions** was \$95,000. Among research positions in educational institutions, those in university-affiliated research institutes had the highest median salary at \$98,500. Across sectors, salaries for research positions were highest in the private sector (\$130,000).

The median salary for psychologists in **management positions** was \$110,000. Higher salaries were found for positions directly supervising 5-20 people (\$110,000), or indirectly supervising (through subordinate supervisors) more than 20 people (\$141,000).

As for salary differences by demographic characteristics, salaries were generally higher for male (\$91,000) than female psychologists (\$80,000), and for White (\$88,000) than racial/ethnic minority psychologists (\$71,000). In terms of age, median salaries were highest for psychologists ages 60-64 years. Salaries were also higher for psychologists with disabilities (\$98,500) than those without disabilities (\$84,000).

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide salary information for the United States psychology workforce. This report describes the median salaries for full-time psychologists by geographic region, degree field, type of position, sector, and demographic characteristics. The data analyzed in this report are from the 2015 National Survey of College Graduates conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of the National Science Foundation’s National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES).

The National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) is a longitudinal biennial survey of the nation’s college graduates, particularly the science and engineering workforce. It uses a selected sample from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, and includes U.S. residents under the age of 76 with at least a bachelor’s degree. The 2015 NSCG has a sample size of 135,000 individuals.

The report focuses on salaries for full-time psychologists, who were operationally defined as individuals who (1) had a doctoral or professional degree in psychology as their highest degrees,¹ and (2) worked at least 35 hours per week in their principal jobs (the jobs in which they worked the most hours) during the survey reference period (the week of February 1, 2015). Salaries were based on basic annual salaries² of psychologists’ principal jobs, presented in nominal dollar figures as they were reported during the survey reference period.

[Section 1](#) of this report provides an overview of salaries for full-time psychologists and examines the distribution of salaries and salaries by geographic divisions and degree types. As psychologists work in a variety of occupations, the subsequent sections investigate salaries by different types of positions: professional service positions ([Section 2](#)), teaching positions ([Section 3](#)), research positions ([Section 4](#)), and management positions ([Section 5](#)).³ Lastly, [Section 6](#) examines salary levels by various demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and disability status of psychologists.

Limitations and strengths of the data presented in this report are discussed in the [Conclusion](#). [Appendix A](#) contains technical documentation of methodology used in this report. Data supporting the figures in the report are provided in [Appendix B](#).

¹ NSCG categorizes degree type into four categories: bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate, and professional degrees. Although PhDs and PsyDs are both doctoral-level degrees, the NCSES codes psychology PhDs as “doctorates” and PsyDs as “professional degrees.” (NCSES, personal communications, May 12, 2016). In this report, psychologists were defined on the basis of degree attainment, not on reported occupation. For detailed documentation on how full-time psychologists were defined, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

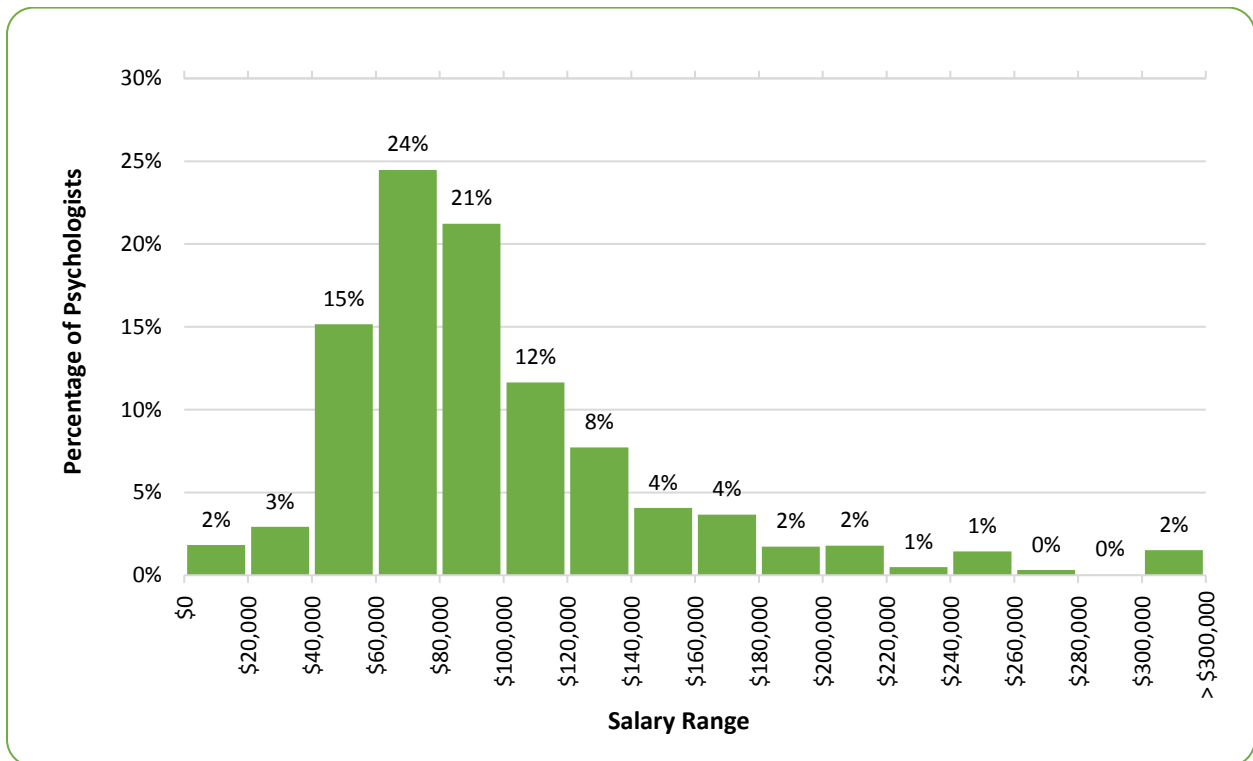
² Basic annual salaries do not include bonuses, overtime, or additional compensation for summertime teaching or research. Different variables were used in the analysis of salaries per availability of NSCG reported variables, and as sample size allowed. Throughout the report, cells with sample sizes of less than four were suppressed.

³ Position types were determined by survey respondents’ reported work activities. See detailed documentation on position types in Table 2.

Section 1. Overview

According to the results based on a weighted sample of 135,000 full-time psychologists from the 2015 NSCG,⁴ psychologists had a median annual salary of \$85,000. Figure 1 displays the distribution of salaries for psychologists in 2015. Although there was a wide range of salary levels, most psychologists (57.4 percent) had salaries within the range of \$60,000 to \$120,000. Approximately 20 percent of psychologists were paid less than \$60,000, and 22.7 percent were paid more than \$120,000.

Figure 1. Salary Distribution, 2015



Notes: For data underlying this figure, please refer to Table 15 in [Appendix B](#).

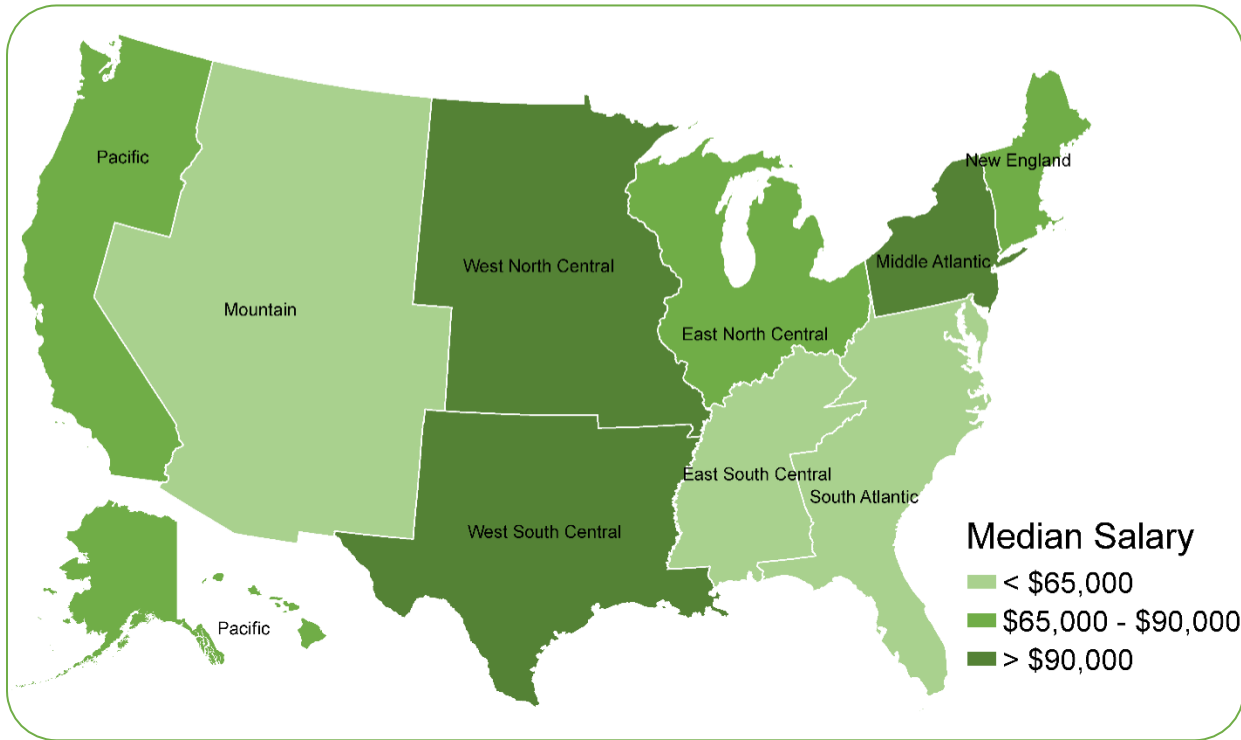
Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Figure 2 presents the geographic variation⁵ of psychologists' salaries. Salary levels were highest in the Middle Atlantic Division (\$108,000), followed by the West North Central Division (\$92,000) and the West South Central Division (\$91,000). Salary levels were lowest in the East South Central Division (\$59,000) and the Mountain Division (\$60,000).

⁴ According to the 2015 NSCG, there were approximately 207,000 individuals who had doctorates or professional degrees in psychology as their highest degrees. Approximately 34,000 were not working during the survey reference period: 3,000 were unemployed and 31,000 were not in labor force, e.g., retired, student, or did not want to work. Approximately 38,000 were working part-time (less than 35 hours per week) in their principal jobs.

⁵ Geographic Divisions were those used by the U.S. Census Bureau. See [Appendix A](#) for detailed documentation.

Figure 2. Median Salary by Geographic Division, 2015



Notes: For data underlying this figure, please refer to Table 16 in [Appendix B](#).
 Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Salaries by Degree

Psychologists with doctoral degrees, such as a PhD, had higher median salaries at \$85,000 compared to those with professional degrees, such as a PsyD (\$75,000). Table 1 presents summary statistics for psychologists by degree type.

Table 1. Salaries by Degree Type, 2015

Degree Type	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Doctoral Degree	\$85,000	\$102,898	72,472	110,518
Professional Degree	\$75,000	\$88,738	64,585	24,114
All	\$85,000	\$100,362	71,331	134,632

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Figure 3 displays salaries by field of highest degree in psychology. The highest median salaries were found for industrial/ organizational psychology (\$125,000) and experimental psychology (\$92,000). Educational psychology and other psychology fields had lower median salaries.

Figure 3. Median Salaries by Field of Highest Degree, 2015



Notes: For data underlying this figure, please refer to Table 17 in [Appendix B](#).

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

As psychologists work in a variety of positions, the following sections present salaries into four mutually exclusive types of positions (i.e., professional service, teaching, research, and management positions). Types of positions were determined based on the primary work activity (the activity in which the individual worked the most hours) at the principal job. Table 2 provides a complete list of position types and their corresponding work activities.

Table 2. Definition of Position Types

Position Type	Primary Work Activity at Principal Job (Complete List)	N	%
Professional Service Positions ^a	Professional Services (e.g. health care, counseling, financial services, legal services)	59,579	44.2% ^b
Teaching Positions	Teaching	19,904	14.8%
Research Positions	1) Basic Research 2) Applied Research 3) Development 4) Design	26,202	19.4%
Management Positions	1) Managing or Supervising People or Projects 2) Human Resources - including Recruiting, Personnel Development, Training 3) Administration - Accounting, Finance, Contracts 4) Quality or Productivity Management	22,464	16.7%
Other Positions	All other work activities, including: 1) Computer Programming, Systems or Applications Development 2) Production, Operations, Maintenance 3) Sales, Purchasing, Marketing, Customer Service, Public Relations 4) Other	6,684	5.0%
Full-time Psychologists in all Position Types	All Work Activities	134,632	100%

Note: Total may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

^a Professional service positions roughly represent psychologists providing health services, but may include positions that provide other services such as financial and legal services.

^b According to the state licensing board lists, there were approximately 106,000 licensed psychologists (compiled and estimated by the American Psychological Association, 2016). The estimated number of psychologists in professional service positions (as well as in other types of positions) was lower because the estimation in this report was based on psychologists' *primary* work activity in their *full-time principal* jobs. Psychologists often work in multiple positions and may choose to work part-time in their principal jobs. One position may also involve multiple work activities.

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Table 3 and Figure 4 presents salary levels by position type. In 2015, highest salaries were found for management positions (\$110,000), followed by research positions (\$95,000). Teaching positions had the lowest salary level (\$62,000). Compared to median salaries in 2013,⁶

⁶ Salaries for 2013 were adjusted for inflation using the BLS inflation calculator (http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm). For more information on 2013 salaries, please refer to the report [Salaries in Psychology: Findings from the National Science Foundation's 2013 National Survey of College Graduates](#) (American Psychological Association, 2017). Due to large standard deviation in salary, use caution when interpreting across-year comparisons between 2013 and 2015 salaries in specific settings (such as sectors, types of educational institutions).

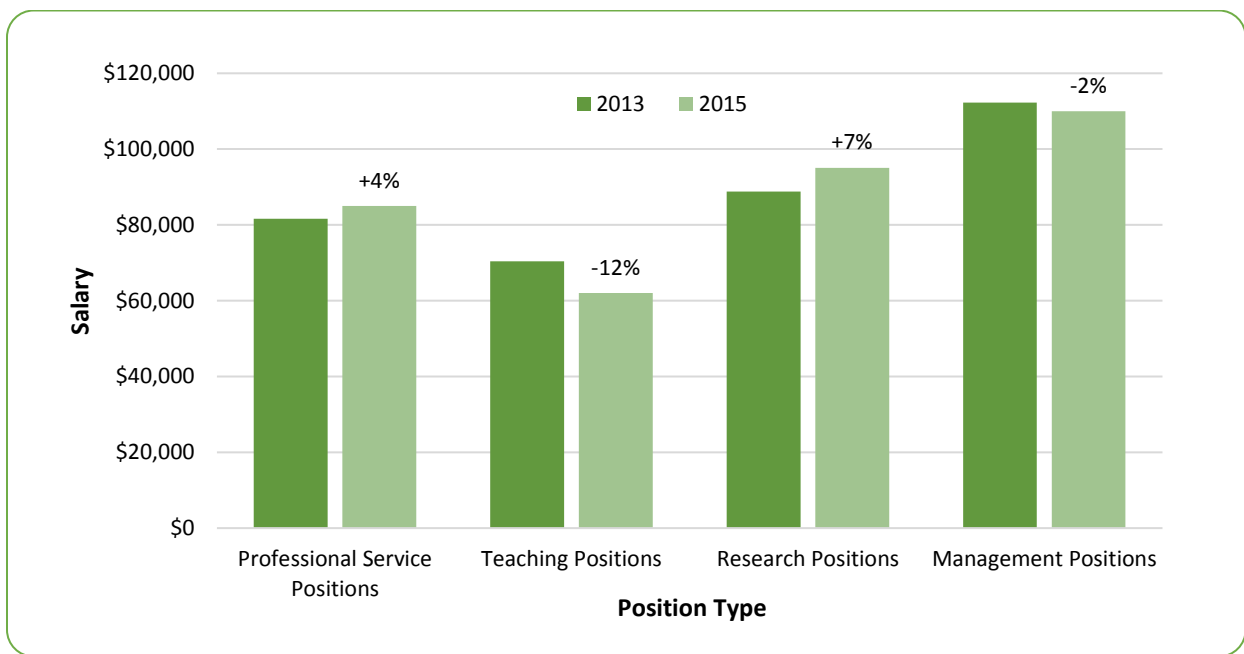
professional service positions and research positions had a salary increase of 4.1 and 7.1 percent respectively. Salary decreased for teaching positions by 11.9 percent.⁷ For management positions, median salary decreased for 2.0 percent.

Table 3. Salaries by Position Type, 2015

Position Type	Median	Mean	SD	N
Professional Service Positions	\$85,000	\$100,074	70,306	59,579
Teaching Positions	\$62,000	\$70,743	24,860	19,904
Research Positions	\$95,000	\$98,519	54,473	26,202
Management Positions	\$110,000	\$136,260	103,656	22,262
All	\$85,000	\$100,362	71,331	134,632

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Figure 4. Salaries by Position Type, 2013-15



Source: 2013-15 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

The following four sections analyze salary levels within the four position types respectively.

⁷ The salary decrease in teaching positions is partly due to the younger sample: the median age for psychologists in teaching positions was 50 in 2013 and 48 in 2015. For more information on psychology faculty salaries, please refer to the report: [2015-16: Psychology Faculty Salaries](#) (American Psychological Association, 2017).

Section 2. Professional Service Positions

Table 4 summarizes salaries for professional service positions by sector.⁸ Across all sectors, salary levels were highest for self-employed psychologists (non-incorporated), followed by those working in the federal government. In educational institutions, salary levels were higher in public institutions than in private institutions. In the private sector, those providing services in for-profit organizations had higher salary levels than those employed in non-profit organizations.

In terms of salary variation, Table 4 indicates that professional service positions in the government had a narrower range of salary levels (with the lowest standard deviations) compared to those in other sectors. Salaries for self-employed psychologists had the highest standard deviation, indicating high salary variations, especially for those working in incorporated businesses.

Table 4. Salaries for Professional Service Positions, by Sector, 2015

Sector	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Educational Institution	\$82,000	\$92,748	44,651	7,883
Public Institution	\$82,000	\$85,302	28,003	6,069
Private Institution	\$81,000	\$117,663	72,353	1,814
Government	\$85,000	\$80,008	24,656	12,669
Local Government	\$85,000	\$80,444	13,049	4,414
State Government	\$84,000	\$88,359	30,563	2,312
Federal Government	\$86,000	\$76,435	27,676	5,943
Private Sector (self-employment excluded)	\$70,000	\$74,430	37,476	15,482
Employed, For-Profit	\$75,000	\$78,420	40,676	8,091
Employed, Non-Profit	\$60,000	\$70,062	33,080	7,392
Self-Employed	\$100,000	\$130,187	94,952	23,545
Non-incorporated	\$120,000	\$139,591	89,545	15,663
Incorporated	\$65,000	\$111,500	102,339	7,882
All Sectors	\$85,000	\$100,074	70,306	59,579

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

⁸ Sector categories are mutually exclusive. Self-employment included those self-employed and business owners in incorporated or non-incorporated businesses, professional practices, or farms. For detailed documentation on sector, please refer to [Appendix A](#).

Per availability of NSCG reported variables, the following sections examine salaries for professional service positions in the private sector (self-employment excluded) and in educational institutions.

1) Professional Service Positions in the Private Sector

Table 5 presents salaries by employer size in the private sector (self-employment excluded). For the for-profit sector, the highest median salary (\$105,000) was found in companies or organizations with 100-999 employees. For the non-profit sector, salaries were highest in organizations with 1000 or more employees (\$76,000).

Table 5. Salaries for Professional Service Positions in the Private Sector, by Employer Size, 2015

Sector and Employer Size	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Private Sector, For-Profit and Non-Profit				
10 or Fewer Employees	\$40,000	\$53,168	43,312	1,698
11 - 99 Employees	\$75,000	\$81,619	44,152	3,755
100-999 Employees	\$65,000	\$71,649	26,339	7,471
1000 or More Employees	\$76,000	\$86,102	42,807	2,560
All	\$70,000	\$74,430	37,476	15,482
Private Sector, For-Profit				
10 or Fewer Employees	\$12,000	\$35,966	33,206	1,288
11 - 99 Employees	\$75,000	\$93,774	47,944	2,610
100-999 Employees	\$105,000	\$83,906	25,464	3,842
1000 or More Employees	s	s	s	s
All	\$75,000	\$78,420	40,676	8,091
Private Sector, Non-Profit				
10 or Fewer Employees	s	s	s	s
11 - 99 Employees	\$50,000	\$53,901	6,927	1,145
100-999 Employees	\$45,000	\$58,670	20,351	3,628
1000 or More Employees	\$76,000	\$90,243	43,131	2,209
All	\$60,000	\$70,062	33,080	7,392

s = suppressed due to small cell size.

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

2) Professional Service Positions in Educational Institutions

For psychologists providing services in educational institutions⁹ (Table 6), the median salary was highest in pre-school/elementary/secondary schools (\$91,000), followed by 4-year colleges (\$70,200).

Table 6. Salaries for Professional Service Positions in Educational Institutions, by Type of Educational Institution, 2015

Type of Educational Institution	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Pre-school/ Elementary/Secondary	\$91,000	\$93,753	25,665	4,389
2-year College	s	s	s	s
4-year College	\$70,200	\$102,549	67,405	2,190
Medical School	s	s	s	s
University-Affiliated Research Institute	s	s	s	s
All	\$82,000	\$92,748	44,651	7,883

s = suppressed due to small cell size.

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

⁹ Educational institutions were coded into five categories as follows: Pre-school/Elementary/Secondary, 2-year College, 4-year College, Medical School, and University-Affiliated Research Institution. See detailed documentation in [Appendix A](#).

Section 3. Teaching Positions

Compared to professional service positions, psychologists in teaching positions had a lower median salary at \$62,000.¹⁰ Table 7 displays salary levels for psychologists in teaching positions. Of all teaching positions, salaries were lowest for precollege teachers, with a median salary of \$55,500. Median salary for post-secondary teachers in the psychology discipline was \$62,000.

Table 7. Salaries for Teaching Positions, by Occupation, 2015

Occupation	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Precollege Teachers	\$55,500	\$53,394	9,191	1,294
Post-secondary Teachers	\$63,000	\$70,581	24,269	15,976
In Psychology	\$62,000	\$67,508	23,274	12,580
In Education	\$72,000	\$74,775	16,401	1,896
In Other Disciplines	\$85,000	\$91,056	29,488	1,500
Other Teachers and Instructors	\$100,000	\$80,255	28,597	2,634
All	\$62,000	\$70,743	24,860	19,904

s = suppressed due to small cell size.

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Most teaching positions (94.5 percent) were within educational institutions. Table 8 presents salaries in teaching positions by sector and type of educational institution. Psychologists employed in teaching positions at private educational institutions (\$70,000) were paid more than those in public educational institutions (\$60,000). Median salary was also higher for teachers in 4-year colleges (\$63,000) than in pre-school/elementary/secondary schools (\$55,500).

¹⁰ For more information on psychology faculty salaries, please refer to the report: [2015-16: Psychology Faculty Salaries](#) (American Psychological Association, 2017).

Table 8. Salaries for Teaching Positions, by Sector and Type of Educational Institution, 2015

Sector and Type of Educational Institution	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
By Sector of Educational Institution				
Public Educational Institution	\$60,000	\$71,020	23,537	8,176
Private Educational Institution	\$70,000	\$71,818	25,556	10,644
By Type of Educational Institution				
Pre-school/Elementary/Secondary	\$55,500	\$75,877	26,567	2,299
2-year College	s	s	s	s
4-year College	\$63,000	\$70,325	21,281	13,914
Medical School	s	s	s	s
University-Affiliated Research Institute	s	s	s	s
All	\$63,000	\$71,471	24,703	18,820

s = suppressed due to small cell size.

Note: Teaching positions in non-educational institutions were not included in this table.

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Section 4. Research Positions

Median salaries for psychologists in research positions were generally higher (\$95,000) compared to professional service and teaching positions. Table 9 displays salary levels for research positions broken down by type of research activity. Psychologists who conducted applied research activity had the highest median salary at \$100,000.

Table 9. Salaries for Research Positions, by Type of Research Activity, 2015

Type of Research Activity	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Basic Research – Study directed toward gaining scientific knowledge primarily for its own sake	\$50,000	\$73,038	47,746	6,949
Applied Research – Study directed toward gaining scientific knowledge to meet a recognized need	\$100,000	\$116,622	57,568	13,129
Development – Using knowledge gained from research for the production of materials, devices	\$96,000	\$81,955	40,816	4,463
Design – Design of equipment, processes, structures, models	\$90,000	\$106,533	22,167	1,660
All	\$95,000	\$98,519	54,473	26,201

s = suppressed due to small cell size.

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

About half (47.7 percent) of research positions were within educational institutions, with salary levels presented in Table 10. The highest median salaries were found for university-affiliated research institutions (\$98,500), followed by pre-school/elementary/secondary schools (\$96,000).

Table 10. Salaries for Research Positions, by Type of Educational Institution, 2015

Educational Institution	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Pre-school/ Elementary /Secondary	\$96,000	\$86,428	14,767	1,345
2-year College	s	s	s	s
4-year College	\$59,100	\$68,811	38,508	4,898
Medical School	\$50,000	\$69,717	50,432	3,312
University-affiliated Research Institute	\$98,500	\$87,863	26,491	2,885
All	\$68,000	\$75,297	38,930	12,504

s = suppressed due to small cell size.

Note: Salaries for research positions in 2-year colleges were not included in this table as no observations were found for this category in the survey sample.

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Table 11 presents salaries for research positions by sector. The highest-paid research positions were in the private sector, especially in the for-profit sector at \$132,000. For psychologists with research positions in educational institutions, those in public institutions had higher salary levels than those in private institutions.

Table 11. Salaries for Research Positions, by Sector, 2015

Sector	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Educational Institution	\$68,000	\$75,297	38,930	12,504
Public Institution	\$80,000	\$84,234	44,997	7,328
Private Institution	\$50,000	\$62,643	22,832	5,175
Government	\$90,000	\$106,350	50,762	2,896
Federal Government	\$90,000	\$109,206	52,349	2,623
State Government	s	s	s	s
Private Sector (Self-employment excluded)	\$130,000	\$132,573	59,173	8,675
For-Profit	\$132,000	\$144,800	53,864	5,277
Non-Profit	\$125,000	\$113,588	61,972	3,398
Self-Employed	\$100,000	\$85,483	41,260	2,127
All	\$95,048	\$98,519	54,473	26,202

s = suppressed due to small cell size.

Note: Salaries for research positions in local government were not included in the table as no observation was found for this category in the survey sample.

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Section 5. Management Positions

Among all position types, management positions had the highest median salary at \$110,000. Table 12 presents salary levels for management positions by sector. The highest salary levels were found in the private sector, especially within the private for-profit sector (\$150,000). However, the large standard deviation (SD=140,914) suggests high salary variations within this sector.

Table 12. Salaries for Management Positions, by Sector, 2015

Sector	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Educational Institutions	\$84,000	\$90,297	29,018	6,887
Public Institutions	\$64,000	\$75,279	24,598	2,353
Private Institutions	\$106,000	\$98,090	28,059	4,534
Government	\$111,300	\$116,103	35,744	1,669
Local Government	s	s	s	s
State Government	\$111,300	\$97,261	32,182	625
Federal Government	\$106,000	\$129,413	31,847	1,005
Private Sector (Self-employment excluded)	\$141,000	\$190,663	124,111	9,691
For-Profit	\$150,000	\$232,250	140,914	5,998
Non-Profit	\$141,000	\$123,120	28,277	3,693
Self-Employed	\$35,000	\$92,177	86,849	4,015
All Sectors	\$110,000	\$136,260	103,656	22,262

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Salary levels in management positions differed by the number of people under supervision (Table 13). Higher salary levels were found for positions where respondents were responsible for directly supervising 5-20 people (\$110,000), or indirectly supervising (through subordinate supervisors) more than 20 people (\$141,000).

Table 13. Salaries for Management Positions, by Number of People under Supervision, 2015

Number of People under Supervision	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
Number of People under <i>Direct</i> Supervision				
<5	\$94,989	\$104,702.00	59,341	12,085
5-20	\$110,000	\$182,287	138,090	7,125
>20	\$78,000	\$164,526	135,246	775
Number of People under <i>Indirect</i> Supervision (through subordinate supervisors)				
<5	\$84,000	\$95,415	59,390	10,288
5-20	\$120,000	\$99,862	34,670	3,347
>20	\$141,000	\$216,663	135,968	6,349

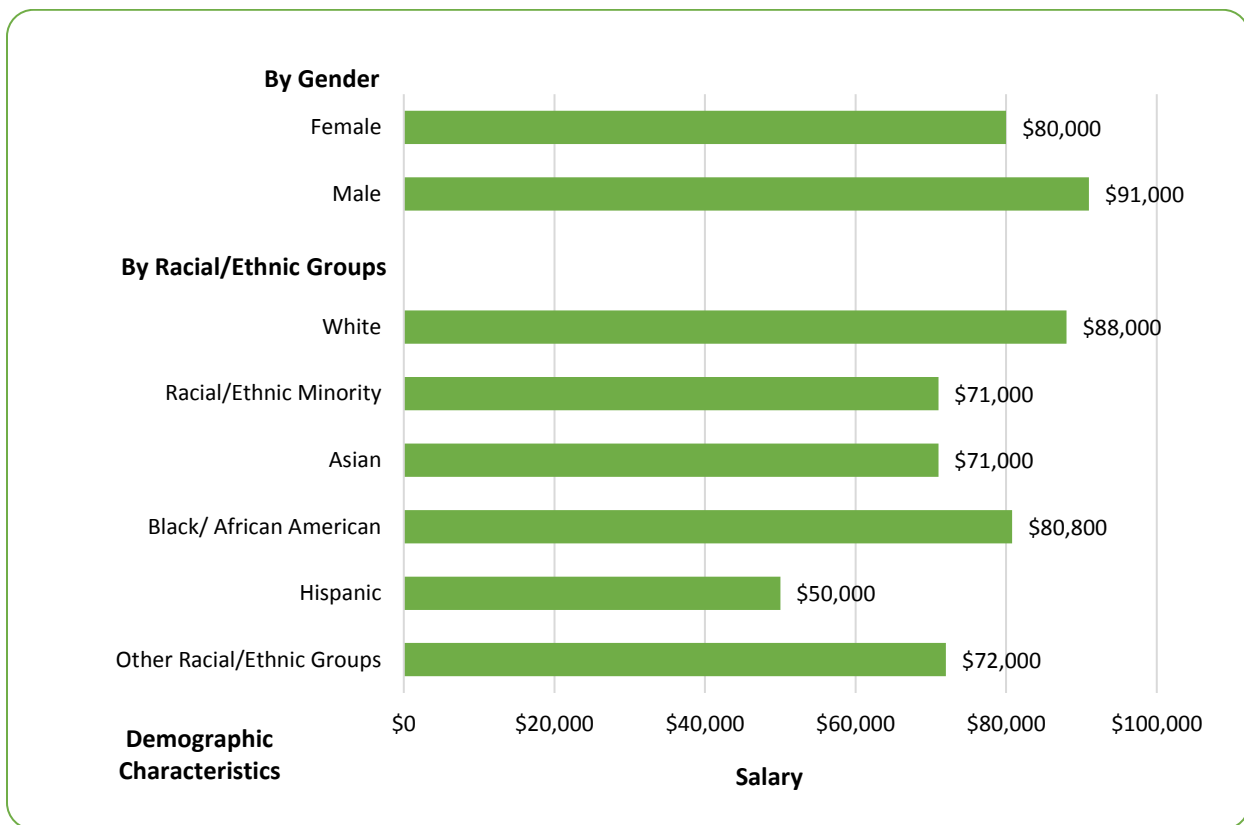
Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Section 6. Salaries by Demographic Characteristics

This section examines full-time psychologists' salaries by gender, race/ethnicity, age, and disability status.¹¹

Figure 5 displays psychologists' salaries by gender and racial/ethnic groups. Median salaries were higher for male psychologists (\$91,000) compared to female psychologists (\$80,000), and for White psychologists (\$88,000) compared to racial/ethnic minority psychologists (\$71,000).

Figure 5. Median Salary by Gender and Racial/Ethnic Groups, 2015



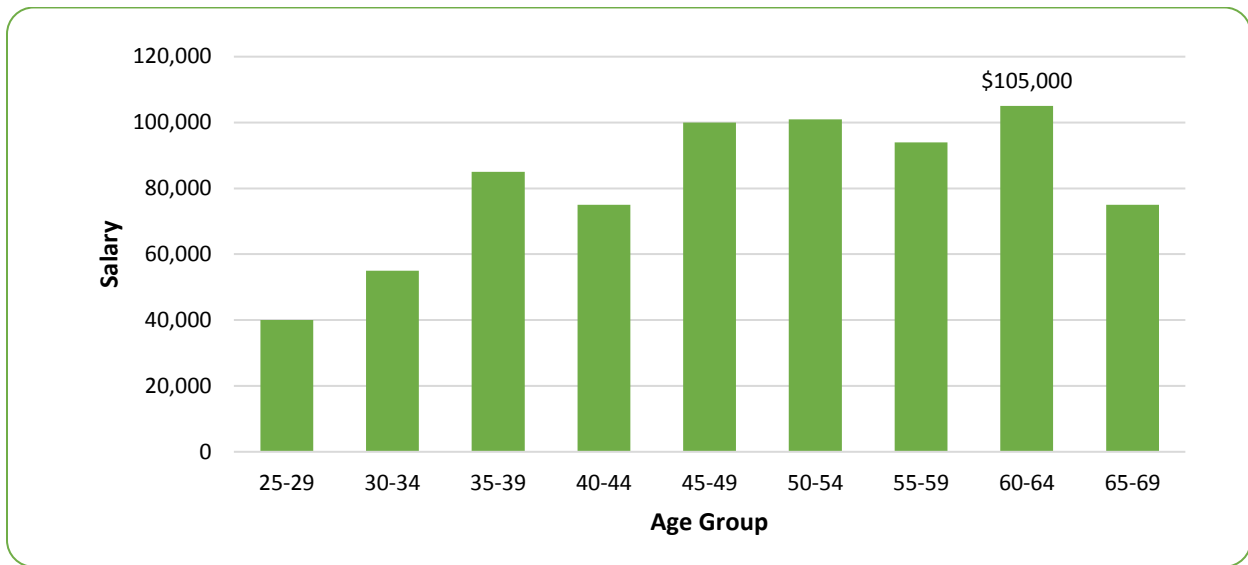
Note: "Racial/ethnic minority" includes Asian, Black/African Americans, Hispanics, and other racial/ethnic groups. For data underlying this figure, please refer to Table 18 in [Appendix B](#).

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Salaries were generally higher for older psychologists. Figure 6 displays psychologists' salaries by age group. Median salaries were highest for psychologists ages 60-64 (\$105,000).

¹¹ For detailed documentation on these demographic variables please refer to [Appendix A](#).

Figure 6. Median Salary by Age Group, 2015



Note: For data underlying this figure, please refer to Table 18 in [Appendix B](#).

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

As for salaries by disability status, psychologists with disabilities had a median salary of \$98,500, compared to psychologists with no disabilities¹² at \$84,000. Among psychologists with disabilities (Table 14), those with difficulty hearing had the highest median salary level at \$102,000, followed by those with difficulty seeing at \$98,500.

Table 14. Salaries by Type of Disability, 2015

Type of Disability	Median	Mean	SD	N
No Disability	\$84,000	\$100,336	72,075	127,767
With Disability	\$98,500	\$100,840	55,683	6,865
Cognition	\$50,000	\$53,206	18,739	998
Hearing	\$102,000	\$125,189	64,672	3,276
Seeing	\$98,500	\$115,918	61,749	2,476
Lifting	\$50,000	\$56,740	25,738	1,138
Walking	s	s	s	s

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

¹² NSCG categorized disability into five types: seeing, hearing, walking, lifting, and cognitive disabilities. Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for detailed documentation on the disability variable.

Conclusion

The report uses data from the National Science Foundation's 2015 National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) to analyze salaries for psychologists. Psychologists' salary levels were highest in the Middle Atlantic Division and lowest in the East South Central Division.

Psychologists in management positions had the highest median salary, followed by those in research, professional service, and teaching positions. Salary levels were generally higher for male than for female psychologists, for White than for racial/ethnic minority psychologists, and for older than for younger psychologists.

One limitation of the report is that, although the NSCG collects specific industry information about respondents' employers, that information is not included in the data files made available to the public. Having more detailed industry information about employers – within the domains of healthcare, social assistance, public administration, education, etc. – would enrich our understanding of the work settings of psychologists and the salaries associated with those settings.

In contrast, the strength of using NSCG data comes from its large and nationally representative sample drawn from the American Community Survey and its detailed breakdown of degree type and major field. These features make it possible to capture patterns in salaries for all individuals with doctoral-level degrees in psychology, including PsyD degrees. The NSCG is one of the most useful data sources for understanding the nation's psychology workforce.

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Appendix A. Technical Documentation

The data analyzed in this report came from the 2015 National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) by the National Science Foundation's (NSF) National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics.

The NSCG is a longitudinal biennial survey used to study the occupations and career paths of U.S. residents with bachelor's or higher- degrees, particularly in science and engineering fields.

NSCG has been conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of NSF since 1993. The 2015 NSCG had a sample size of approximately 135,000 individuals which were draw from:

- 1) The returning sample from the 2010 NSCG, originally selected from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2009 American Community Survey (ACS);
- 2) The returning sample from the 2013 NSCG, originally selected from the 2011 ACS and 2010 National Survey of Recent College Graduates (NSRCG); and
- 3) New sample selected from the 2013 ACS.

The reference time for the 2015 NSCG was the week of February 1, 2015. The weighted response rate was 70 percent. Sample weights were developed by NCSES and adjusted for differences in selection probabilities, nonresponse, and undercoverage, so that inferences could be made to the entire U.S. population.

Definitions of terms and the variable taxonomy used in this report are as follows:

Principal job was defined as the job the respondent worked the most hours during the survey reference week (i.e., the week of February 1, 2015).

Full-time psychologists were operationally defined as individuals who:

- (1) had a doctoral or professional degree in psychology,
 - a. Highest degree type was either a "professional degree" or a "doctoral degree" [variable DGRDG = 3 or DGRDG = 4], and
 - b. Field study of highest degree was "psychology" [variable NDGMEMG = 43], and
- (2) worked at least 35 hours per week in their principal jobs during the week of February 1, 2015.
 - a. Hours per week typically worked was equal to or greater than 35 [variable HRSWK \geq 35]

The NSCG categorizes *degree type* into four categories: bachelor's, master's, doctorate, and professional degrees. According to NCSES, a Ph.D. degree in psychology is categorized as a doctoral degree, and a Psy.D. degree is categorized as a professional degree (NCSES, personal communication, May 12, 2016).

This report only included full-time psychologists. Due to large variations in salaries and work hours for psychologists who worked part-time in their principal jobs, part-time salaries were not included.

Psychologists who worked part-time in both their principal and secondary jobs, even if those totaled 35 work hours or more per week, were excluded from this report. Secondary job characteristics, including salaries, were not reported in the NSCG.

Salaries were based on basic annual salaries of psychologists' principal jobs, presented in nominal dollar figures as they were reported in 2015. Basic annual salaries do not include bonuses, overtime, or additional compensation for summertime teaching or research. Different variables were used in the analysis of salaries per availability of NSCG reported variables, and as sample size allowed. Throughout the report, cells with sample sizes of less than four were suppressed.

Geographic Divisions were based on U.S. Census Bureau's Geographic Divisions:

- East North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin;
- East South Central: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee;
- Middle Atlantic: New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania;
- Mountain: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming;
- New England: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont;
- Pacific: Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington;
- South Atlantic: Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia;
- West North Central: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota;
- West South Central: Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.

Field of degree was based on variable NDGRMED (code for field of highest degree) and included the following psychology fields:

- General psychology
- Clinical psychology
- Counseling psychology
- Educational psychology
- Experimental psychology
- Industrial/Organizational psychology
- Social psychology
- Other psychology fields

Primary Work Activity was the activity in which an individual worked the most hours and was based on NSCG-categorized work activities as follows:

- Accounting, finance, contracts

- Basic research – study directed toward gaining scientific knowledge primarily for its own sake
- Applied research – study directed toward gaining scientific knowledge to meet a recognized need
- Development – using knowledge gained from research for the production of materials, devices
- Design of equipment, processes, structures, models
- Computer programming, systems or applications development
- Human resources – including recruiting, personnel development, training
- Managing or supervising people or projects
- Production, operations, maintenance (e.g., chip production, operating lab equipment)
- Professional services (e.g., health care, counseling, financial services, legal services)
- Sales, purchasing, marketing, customer service, public relations
- Quality or productivity management
- Teaching

Occupation was based on the NSCG occupation variable N2OCLST. Occupations included in this report are:

- Psychologists
- Medical and health services managers
- Counselors
- Diagnosing/treating practitioners
- Other health occupations, such as registered nurses, dieticians, therapists, physician, health technologists and technicians, etc.
- Pre-college teachers, such as pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, elementary, secondary, and special education
- Psychology post-secondary teachers
- Education post-secondary teachers
- Post-secondary teachers in other disciplines, such as business, health and related sciences, and other social sciences
- Education administrators
- Top-level managers, executives, administrators
- Other mid-level managers
- Other management positions, such as natural sciences managers, engineering managers, etc.

Sectors were based on respondents' reported principal employer information (variable NEDTP) as follows:

- Self-Employed (or a business owner)

- In a non-incorporated business, professional practice, or farm
- In an incorporated business, professional practice, or farm
- Private Sector employee
 - In a for-profit company or organization
 - In a non-profit organization (including tax-exempt and charitable organizations)
- Government employee
 - In a local government (e.g., city, county, school district)
 - In a state government
 - In the U.S. military service, active duty or Commissioned Corps (e.g., USPHS, NOAA)
 - In the U.S. government (e.g., civilian employee)
- Other type of employee

Note: the above four sectors exclude educational institutions. Respondents were coded in the educational institutions based on variable EMED (educational institution indicator):

- Educational Institution
 - In a public institution (when respondent was coded in an educational institution as a government employee)
 - In a private institution (when respondent was coded in an educational institution and in the private sector)

Types of Educational Institutions were based on variable EDTP (educational institution type) and coded as follows:

- Preschool, elementary, middle, or secondary school or system
- Two-year college, community college, or technical institute
- Four-year college or university, other than a medical school
- Medical school (including university-affiliated hospital or medical center)
- University-affiliated research institute
- Other

Employer Size was based on variable EMSIZE, the number of people working for the respondent's principal employer.

Number of People Supervised was based on variable SUPDIR (Number of people under direct supervision) and SUPIND (Number of people under indirect supervision through subordinate supervisors).

Gender was defined based on NSCG variable GENDER (Female/Male).

Race/Ethnicity was based on NSCG race/ethnicity variable RACETHM and was coded as follows:

- Minority
 - Asian
 - Asian, non-Hispanic ONLY
 - Black
 - Black, non-Hispanic ONLY
 - Hispanic
 - Hispanic, any race
 - Other Racial/ethnic Groups
 - American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic ONLY
 - Non-Hispanic Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander ONLY
 - Multiple race
- White
 - White, non-Hispanic ONLY

Age Group was based on variable AGEGR, with respondents' reported age coded in 5-year intervals.

Disability Status was based on variable HCAPIN (physical disabilities indicator). The variable was derived from responses to the degree of difficulty questions—none, slight, moderate, severe, unable to do—an individual has in seeing (with glasses or contact lenses); hearing (with a hearing aid); walking without assistance; lifting 10 pounds; or concentrating, remembering, or making decisions. Respondents who answered "moderate," "severe," or "unable to do" for any activity were classified as having a disability in the corresponding disability categories - seeing, hearing, walking, lifting, and cognitive disabilities.

Appendix B. Data underlying Figures

Table 15. Distribution of Salaries, 2015

Salary Range	N	%
\$0 - 20,000	2,541	1.8
\$20,000 - 40,000	7,245	2.9
\$40,000 - 60,000	27,994	15.2
\$60,000 - 80,000	24,127	24.5
\$80,000 - 100,000	23,240	21.2
\$100,000 - 120,000	16,257	11.7
\$120,000 - 160,000	9,450	7.7
\$140,000 - 160,000	6,466	4.1
\$160,000 - 180,000	4,092	3.7
\$180,000 - 200,000	1,186	1.7
\$200,000 - 220,000	4,487	1.8
\$220,000 - 240,000	665	0.5
\$240,000 - 260,000	989	1.4
\$260,000 - 280,000	682	0.3
\$280,000 - 300,000	970	0.0
> \$300,000	4,241	1.5
Total	134,632	100

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Table 16. Salaries by Geographic Divisions, 2015

Division	Median	Mean	SD	N
New England	\$90,000	\$98,011	38,526	11,845
Middle Atlantic	\$108,000	\$144,970	100,420	29,396
East North Central	\$72,000	\$77,288	44,750	14,938
West North Central	\$92,000	\$103,652	47,866	6,434
South Atlantic	\$65,000	\$82,631	49,914	24,704
East South Central	\$59,000	\$69,782	46,107	3,335
West South Central	\$91,000	\$97,195	57,885	8,188
Mountain	\$60,000	\$73,645	39,796	7,277
Pacific	\$84,000	\$93,322	68,882	28,368
Total	\$85,000	\$100,362	71,331	134,632

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Table 17. Salaries by Field of Degree, 2015

Field of Psychology Degree	Median	Mean	S.D.	N
General Psychology	\$80,000	\$73,606	20,054	1,262
Clinical Psychology	\$80,000	\$107,183	89,706	58,204
Counseling Psychology	\$85,000	\$89,108	41,168	13,229
Educational Psychology	\$75,000	\$87,257	40,913	11,874
Experimental Psychology	\$92,000	\$113,747	60,899	11,487
Industrial/Organizational Psychology	\$125,000	\$149,912	78,921	5,297
Social Psychology	\$85,000	\$85,860	49,827	9,149
Other Psychology Fields	\$78,000	\$84,055	45,133	22,158
Total	\$85,000	\$100,362	71,331	134,632

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.

Table 18. Salaries by Demographic Characteristics, 2015

Salary by Demographic Characteristics	Median	Mean	SD	N
By Gender				
Female	\$80,000	\$83,843	40,679	72,897
Male	\$91,000	\$119,867	91,866	61,735
By Race/Ethnicity				
White	\$88,000	\$107,615	77,622	102,598
Minority	\$71,000	\$77,132	37,129	32,034
Asian	\$71,000	\$87,591	41,548	7,490
Black	\$80,800	\$84,862	29,241	10,751
Hispanic	\$50,000	\$63,223	36,133	12,291
Other Racial/Ethnic Groups	\$72,000	\$83,474	37,311	1,502
By Age Group				
25-29	\$40,000	\$45,597	17,373	3,567
30-34	\$55,000	\$63,093	29,701	15,816
35-39	\$85,000	\$83,610	25,321	14,030
40-44	\$75,000	\$95,625	63,211	18,953
45-49	\$100,000	\$111,182	49,581	15,282
50-54	\$101,000	\$112,128	58,214	11,552
55-59	\$94,000	\$96,044	52,371	15,996
60-64	\$105,000	\$133,049	114,686	21,608
65-69	\$75,000	\$96,208	56,792	10,523
70-75	\$100,000	\$129,755	102,146	7,306
Total	\$85,000	\$100,362	71,331	134,632

Source: 2015 National Survey of College Graduates, National Science Foundation.