

Images: courtesy of IIDA

IIDA 2019 Interior Design Compensation Report

by Mallory Jindra

Design firms are becoming savvier in marketing and educating their clients on the ROI of interior design services. As we begin to help clients pay closer attention to the benefits of investing in interior spaces, we must also look within.

One of the ways designers and design firms can bolster their effort is to educate themselves on the innerworkings of the profession of interior design.

A few weeks ago, the **International Interior Design Association (IIDA)** released its **2019 IIDA Interior Design Compensation Report**. The report compiles data gathered through a survey of IIDA members, covering correlations between compensation and education, industry tenure,

professional credentials, geography, job function, and supervisory responsibility, among other measures.

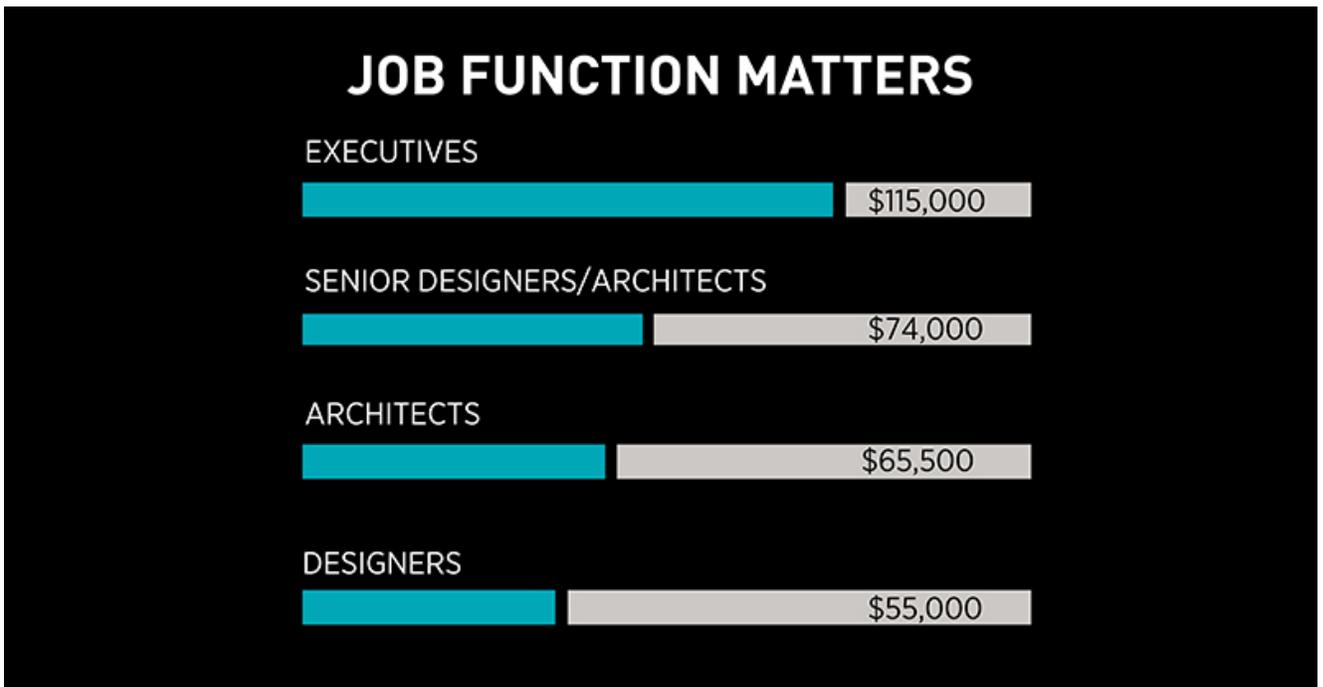
This is the second time IIDA has gathered and reported on compensation in the field of interior design; the first was in 2016, and since then, good things have happened.

“The numbers in the report reflect the positive growth we’re seeing both in the interior design industry, and in the greater U.S. economy,” said **John Czarnecki**, Hon. IIDA, Assoc. AIA., IIDA Deputy Director and Senior Vice President, in an officeinsight interview.

In its 40 pages, the IIDA report notes increases in base salaries and benefits, as well as high job satisfaction, and all of these measures affirm strong industry health.

“The Compensation Report underscores the strength and health of the interior design industry. The findings show that there was a 6.6% increase in average annual base salary in 2018 compared to 2016. The data also points to sustained industry growth, further substantiating forecasts from the 2018 IIDA Index Report, released last November. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics supports this notion as well, reporting that the profession will grow an additional four percent over the next 10 years – ultimately suggesting designers and design-related professionals will remain in high demand.”

Who participated? 2,208 IIDA members who are employed or self-employed full-time in the design industry took the survey, and those 2,208 members had the following makeup: 87% were female, 49% were NCIDQ certification holders, median age of 39, 15% from diverse backgrounds, and 61% had at least one design credential. The survey participants covers all levels of industry experience.



A few notable statistics gathered in the survey:

>The average design professional reported an annual base salary of \$78,100, an increase from \$73,300 reported in 2016.

>81% of designers reported receiving additional cash compensation beyond their base salaries.

>Those with an NCIDQ certification reported a median salary \$15,000 greater than those without.

“These numbers are all pointing to an increasing understanding and recognition of the interior design profession, which is really important,” said Mr. Czarnecki. “It’s a really good snapshot of the industry right now – a moment in time that we’re able to capture for the benefit and knowledge of our members and others in the industry.”

The report includes detailed data on compensation beyond base salary, such as benefits, incentives and perks that designers in different positions enjoy.

The IIDA survey also gathered participants’ personal reflections on their careers:

>78% of design professionals are satisfied with their careers.

>69% of design professionals are likely or very likely to recommend the profession to a high school or college student.

A survey of this kind is significant and helpful for many reasons. For designers and design firm leaders, this report can offer a broader view of the industry they participate in – capturing a perspective beyond what they do every day.

“The report highlights business and employment findings to help designers better value their skills and experience, negotiate salaries and raises, and make smart choices about their careers,” notes the press announcement. “The findings of the Compensation Report also assist leaders in hiring, recruiting talent, and making informed business decisions.”

Mr. Czarnecki also notes that IIDA will be able to use this data internally to identify points where it can better assist its members in their career pursuits.

“We’re proud to provide the industry with this comprehensive resource rich with tangible data and relevant information that will ultimately help firms and practitioners shape the future of design,” said **Cheryl Durst**, Hon. FIIDA, IIDA Executive Vice President and CEO, in the press announcement.

If you’re curious about learning more about this topic – and we all should be – head to www.iida.org to download the full digital report (\$75 IIDA Members, \$175 non-members), “Included with the Compensation Report is access to the interactive IIDA Compensation Calculator, which allows IIDA Members to evaluate their salary based on education, tenure, professional credentials, and job function, among others.” ■

Design professionals with at least one credential reported a median salary \$15,000 greater than those without (\$75,000 versus \$60,000).

