

Salary Study: Massachusetts Teachers Association

January 24, 2024

ASA Research conducted salary analyses of Massachusetts’ higher education staff and salary on behalf of the Massachusetts Teachers Association. This document provides highlights of the findings.

Massachusetts Faculty Salaries: Public 4-Year Institutions Compared with Private

U.S. Department of Education data was used to assess faculty salaries in 2021-22, and the change in salaries between 2016-17 and 2021-22. Salaries and changes in salaries for the state universities and UMass institutions

were compared to colleagues in Massachusetts private institutions; there are not enough private 2-year institutions in Massachusetts to support similar analysis.

Figure 1. The **Difference** between Salaries for Faculty teaching in **Public Institutions** and **Private Institutions** is over \$31,000 at Universities, and nearly \$13,000 at Comprehensive Institutions
2021-22 Faculty Salaries, MA Public and Private 4-year Institutions

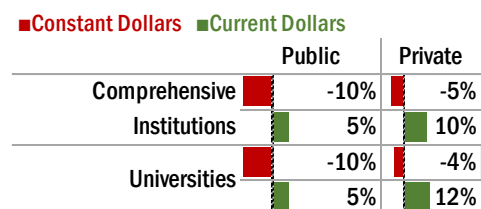


On average, faculty teaching at UMass earned about \$31,000 less than faculty teaching at private, independent research universities (Figure 1). The difference is about \$13,000 for faculty teaching at public state comprehensive universities compared with those teaching at private institutions. By faculty rank, with only one exception, the result is the same and faculty teaching in public 4-year institutions earned less than those in the private sector. The difference is most striking for full professors at UMass who earned nearly \$34,000 less than those in private research universities.

Not only do faculty in Massachusetts public 4-year institutions earn less than those teaching in private institutions, they also did not fare as well with salary increases. Faculty in public 4-year institutions saw a greater decline in inflation-adjusted salaries as current-dollar salaries increased at a slower rate than salaries at private institutions. Inflation-adjusted faculty salaries at public 4-year institutions declined by 10 percent between 2016-17 and 2021-22, while they declined 4 to 5 percent for private institution faculty (Figure 2). In current dollars, this was a 5 percent increase for public

Figure 2. Faculty in Public Institutions Saw Greater Purchasing Power Loss as Salaries Increased at a Slower Rate than Private Institution Faculty

Percent Change in Faculty Salaries in Constant and Current Dollars, MA Public and Private 4-year Institutions, 2016-17 to 2021-22



institution faculty, but 10 to 12 percent for faculty teaching in private institutions. Inflation was 16 percent during this time.

Massachusetts Faculty Salaries Compared with Other States

U.S. Department of Education data were used to compare salaries paid to faculty teaching in Massachusetts and a selected set of comparison states for the 2021-22 academic year.

For this analysis, salaries paid to Massachusetts public institution faculty were compared to that of faculty teaching in the following comparison states, by level of institution, and for faculty on 9/10-month contracts:¹

- Nearby states: CT, NH, NY, RI, VT
- Peer states: CA, IL, MD, MI, MN, OH, OR, PA, WA. The peer states were selected because they have similar educational systems and structures, and political and funding similarities.

Averages were weighted by number of faculty at each institution within sector and state and corrected for cost of living, based on the state’s cost of living index from the World Population Review.²

Notably, Massachusetts’ cost of living is high – quite a bit higher than the surrounding states and, for the most part, higher than the peer states. Thus, when correcting salaries for cost of living, the differences between Massachusetts faculty salaries and those of other states are quite large. For example MA’s cost-of-living-adjusted average salary for community college professors is about \$40,000 less than professors in peer states’ community colleges (Figure 3. Shaded green for differences that are above \$0, or where public institution salaries were higher than private; intensity of yellow-to-red for the magnitude of the public-to-private salary discrepancy). At comprehensive institutions, the cost-of-living-adjusted salary difference is \$25,000, and nearly \$31,000 lower for research universities, or UMass in Massachusetts.

Figure 3. Cost-of-Living-Adjusted Faculty Salaries in Nearby and Peer States are \$25,000 to \$40,000 Higher than MA Faculty Salaries
Cost-of-living-adjusted Faculty Salaries, Public Institutions, MA and Nearby and Peer States, 2021-22

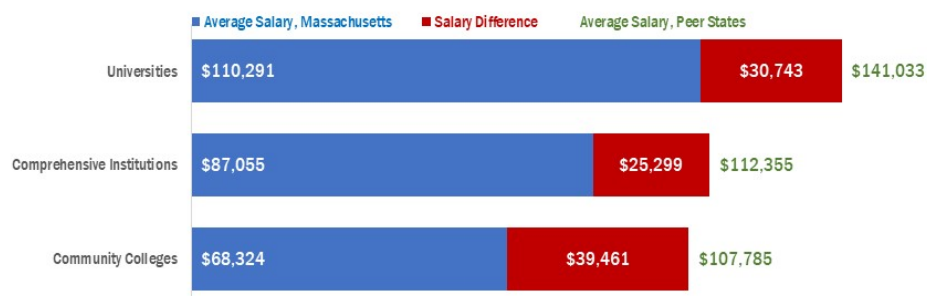


Figure 4. With One Exception, MA Faculty Earn Less than Faculty in Nearby and Peer States

Difference in Cost-of-Living-Adjusted Faculty Salaries, MA Compared with Nearby and Peer States, 2021-22

		Community Colleges	Comprehensive Institutions	Universities
Nearby States	CT	-\$43,995	-\$47,683	-\$34,329
	NH	-\$23,319	-\$24,086	-\$14,935
	NY	-\$34,406	-\$17,627	-\$21,300
	RI	-\$22,551		-\$22,661
	VT	-\$15,288	\$3,860	-\$11,357
Peer States	CA	-\$48,365	-\$13,737	-\$27,531
	IL	-\$67,375	-\$39,970	-\$51,686
	MD	-\$29,794	-\$54,527	-\$11,759
	MI	-\$68,987	-\$12,318	-\$57,928
	MN	-\$48,353	-\$34,258	-\$45,917
	OH	-\$42,991	-\$21,874	-\$44,078
	OR	-\$36,662	-\$5,232	-\$16,708
	PA	-\$41,171	-\$35,775	-\$43,724
	WA	-\$29,194	-\$25,667	-\$26,483

¹ 9/10-Month contract faculty comprise about 85% of faculty, nationally.

² See <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/cost-of-living-index-by-state>.

By state and sector, nearly across the board (Vermont comprehensive institution salaries are the only exception), Massachusetts’ faculty salaries were lower than the cost-of-living-adjusted salaries in both the nearby and peer states (Figure 4). And, many of the differences are quite significant: Connecticut comprehensive institution cost-of-living adjusted salaries were about \$48,000 higher than faculty in Massachusetts, and Illinois’ and Michigan’s community college cost-of-living adjusted salaries were \$67,000-\$69,000 higher than Massachusetts’ faculty.

Change in Salaries: Massachusetts Compared with Peer States

Not only are cost-of-living adjusted salaries for Massachusetts faculty lower than those teaching in the nearby and peer states, but their salaries also did not increase at the same rates between 2016-17 and 2021-22. In fact, during a period of 16 percent inflation, Massachusetts faculty in community colleges experienced only a 3 percent increase in current dollar salaries, which is about one-fifth of the increase faculty in nearby states and peer states experienced (Figure 5). Faculty in Massachusetts comprehensive institutions saw a 4 percent increase in current dollar salaries, while those at UMass had a 5 percent increase. These rates are about one-third to one-half of the rates seen in the nearby and peer states.³

Notably, the difference in the magnitude of the decline in inflation-adjusted salaries between Massachusetts faculty and nearby and peer states is significant. Change in inflation-adjusted salaries in nearby and peer community colleges was slight, declining 1 to 2 percent, while Massachusetts community college’s inflation-adjusted average salary declined 12 percent (Figure 6). In 4-year institutions, the difference is smaller, but Massachusetts faculty fell behind comparison states with a 10 percent decline in inflation-adjusted salaries between 2016-17 and 2021-22, while the decline was 3 to 5 percent for faculty in comparison states.

Salaries Compared to the Living Wage

Salaries of faculty and staff employed in Massachusetts’ public higher institutions were compared to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) living wage estimates. MIT developed these estimates for counties and states based on “the local wage rate that a full-time worker

Figure 5. MA Faculty Salaries Increased at One-fifth to One-half the Rate of Nearby and Peer States
Change in Faculty Salaries in Current Dollars, 2016-17 to 2021-22

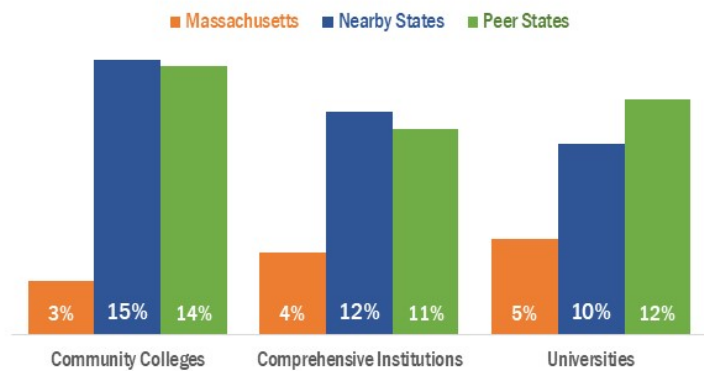
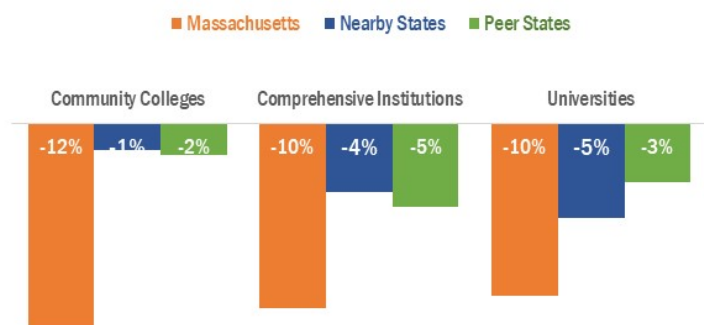


Figure 6. MA Faculty Inflation-Adjusted Salaries Declined Sharply Compared to Nearby and Peer States
Change in Faculty Salaries in Constant Dollars, 2016-17 to 2021-22



³ Salaries are averaged over all ranks. The mix of faculty by rank may vary from year to year, affecting the reported change in salaries.

requires to cover the costs of their family’s basic needs where they live”.⁴ The methodology includes geographically specific costs of food, housing, childcare, transportation, clothing, personal care, taxes, etc.⁵ A variety of data sources are used to compute the composite living wage estimate; all data are corrected for inflation to 2022 dollars.

Through this analysis, the MIT living wage for one adult plus one child was compared to the 2021-22 average salaries paid to (1) faculty teaching at each of the Massachusetts higher education institutions, by rank, and (2) staff by job category at each institution. The living wage for the county the institution operates in was used for the comparison. A summary of highlights of findings follows; see the Appendix for detailed data.

Faculty. The vast majority of Massachusetts faculty salaries were lower than the living wage in the county for one adult plus one child. In fact, in community colleges, salaries were below the living wage threshold for their county, for all faculty ranks at all colleges. At community colleges, the smallest difference was at Springfield Technical Community College where faculty earn about \$8,000 less than the county’s living wage. But Bunker Hill Community College faculty earned, on average, nearly \$39,000 less than the county’s living wage. Note, this is the average salary—Bunker Hill’s lowest-paid faculty ranks of associate and assistant professor earned about \$45,000 less the living wage estimate for the county.

The state universities fared slightly better. On average, the salaries at seven of the nine state universities were below the living wage for one adult plus one child in the county – the difference ranges from \$2,500 to about \$21,000 less than the living wage. Fitchburg State and Westfield State are the two exceptions. However, at seven of the nine state universities, full professors earned more than the living wage threshold; Framingham State University and Massachusetts College of Art and Design are the exceptions and full professors’ earnings did not meet the living wage threshold. With Westfield State’s associate professors being the only exception, the Massachusetts state universities’ associate and assistant professors and instructors earned less than the living wage threshold.

Non-Instructional Staff. With the exception of staff working in management occupations, the vast majority of non-instructional staff working in Massachusetts higher education earned less than the living wage for one adult plus one child. Staff working in service occupations earned the least, on average about \$43,000 less than the living wage threshold. Staff working in production, transportation, materials moving occupations and those in office and administration support earned over \$30,000 less than the living wage, while staff in healthcare, legal and community service, and business and financial occupations earned about \$20,000 to \$24,000 less than the living wage estimate. Those in computer and engineering earned about \$18,000 less than the living wage.

In Sum

Comparing Massachusetts public 4-year faculty salaries to those of faculty teaching in private institutions reveals that faculty in private institutions earned nearly 30 percent more in 2021-22 than those in public institutions, for faculty in both the UMass and state systems.

When examining cost-of-living adjusted salaries for nearby and peer states, the story is the same nearly across the board: cost-of-living adjusted salaries for Massachusetts faculty are less than their peers, and due to the high cost of living in Massachusetts, the difference can be quite significant. Further,

⁴ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/>. For a full methodology, see <https://livingwage.mit.edu/pages/methodology>.

⁵ The MIT living wage estimate assumes no external financial support such as child support.

Massachusetts faculty have not seen the increases in salaries at the same rates as the nearby and peer states. And salary increases in Massachusetts have not kept up with inflation, thus eroding inflation-adjusted salaries.

When comparing Massachusetts' higher education faculty and non-instructional staff salaries to the living wage estimate for one adult plus one child, generally, only the highest-paid employees earned more than the living wage threshold. Those above the living wage threshold include staff holding managerial and executive roles, full-professors at 4-year institutions, and some associate and assistant professors at the UMass institutions. Regardless of rank, faculty teaching at community colleges earned less than the living wage estimate.

Appendix

Data cells are pink if the salary is below the living wage threshold, green if the average salary is above the living wage threshold. Massachusetts Bay Community College and Massasoit Community College operate in two counties and are listed in the table twice.

Table 1. Faculty and Staff Salaries Compared with Living Wage, Massachusetts Public Institutions, 2021-22

Institution	County	Living Wage, 1 Adult + 1 Child	Faculty Salary							Staff Salary									
			Professor	Associate	Assistant	Instructor	Lecturer	No Rank	Average	Business and financial operations occupations	Computer, engineering, and science occupations	Education, legal, service, arts, and media occupations	Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	Management occupations	Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	Office and administrative support occupations	Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	Sales and related occupations	Service occupations
Community Colleges																			
Berkshire Community College	Berkshire	\$81,952	\$72,003	\$58,301	\$55,848				\$64,690	\$70,639	\$65,664	\$66,727		\$96,393	\$56,968	\$56,054			\$43,257
Bristol Community College	Bristol	\$83,574	\$73,433	\$63,164	\$58,704	\$61,306			\$66,663	\$73,778	\$73,307	\$66,638		\$100,856	\$59,145	\$56,312			\$49,161
Bunker Hill Community College	Suffolk	\$107,848	\$72,330	\$62,458	\$61,979				\$69,200		\$86,261	\$64,887		\$108,239	\$55,367	\$62,052		\$79,560	\$58,059
Cape Cod Community College	Barnstable	\$94,453	\$75,868	\$63,960	\$65,846	\$65,931			\$69,467		\$68,236	\$62,850		\$105,600	\$56,954	\$61,694			\$47,537
Greenfield Community College	Franklin	\$79,706	\$72,540	\$61,966	\$58,477	\$58,889			\$68,149	\$61,997	\$75,423	\$49,778		\$103,250	\$54,200	\$58,712			\$46,679
Holyoke Community College	Hampden	\$78,686	\$72,760	\$60,917	\$58,584	\$55,793			\$67,848	\$88,903	\$63,368	\$66,136	\$52,754	\$98,624	\$59,668	\$58,421	\$69,006		\$49,222
Massachusetts Bay Community College	Norfolk County	\$107,432	\$76,365	\$65,077	\$65,097				\$69,828	\$71,006	\$78,860			\$104,954	\$56,910	\$63,367			\$55,070
Massachusetts Bay Community College	Middlesex County	\$99,570	\$76,365	\$65,077	\$65,097				\$69,828	\$71,006	\$78,860			\$104,954	\$56,910	\$63,367			\$55,070
Massasoit Community College	Norfolk County	\$107,432	\$80,005	\$64,163	\$64,959	\$59,077			\$70,581	\$62,230	\$73,133	\$62,282		\$102,179	\$69,326	\$63,942			\$54,680
Massasoit Community College	Plymouth County	\$95,160	\$80,005	\$64,163	\$64,959	\$59,077			\$70,581	\$62,230	\$73,133	\$62,282		\$102,179	\$69,326	\$63,942			\$54,680
Middlesex Community College	Middlesex	\$99,570	\$72,971	\$57,407	\$56,147				\$67,911	\$74,864	\$82,308	\$60,500		\$109,408		\$59,511			\$56,789
Mount Wachusett Community College	Worcester	\$84,386	\$81,314	\$67,686	\$55,839	\$64,164			\$71,433	\$68,386	\$73,110	\$58,250	\$52,094	\$98,388	\$67,656	\$57,051			\$50,580
North Shore Community College	Essex	\$97,427	\$72,993	\$62,880	\$58,468	\$52,520			\$66,412	\$58,173	\$74,712	\$56,915	\$91,494	\$109,094	\$59,896	\$63,756	\$54,854		\$48,767
Northern Essex Community College	Essex	\$97,427	\$71,735	\$60,697	\$55,189	\$53,009			\$65,921	\$74,638	\$79,027	\$53,404		\$100,641	\$65,340	\$60,640			\$44,572
Quincy College	Norfolk	\$107,432	\$74,815	\$71,318	\$66,623	\$57,469			\$71,422	\$61,998	\$54,412	\$90,675		\$133,259		\$48,995			\$47,148
Quinsigamond Community College	Worcester	\$84,386	\$68,812	\$64,730	\$57,142	\$53,535			\$66,188	\$65,642	\$70,488	\$63,224	\$64,895	\$96,127	\$56,374	\$50,242	\$59,314		\$47,585
Roxbury Community College	Suffolk	\$107,848								\$83,364	\$81,117	\$74,000	\$51,095	\$81,317	\$63,522	\$55,818	\$65,929		\$44,222
Springfield Technical Community College	Hampden	\$78,686	\$78,183	\$65,491	\$60,781	\$53,510			\$70,618	\$76,806	\$86,999	\$70,352	\$53,295	\$105,534	\$64,441	\$58,075			\$49,187
Comprehensive Institutions																			
Bridgewater State University	Plymouth	\$95,160	\$103,168	\$83,836	\$70,855	\$48,650			\$87,755	\$73,521	\$75,739	\$62,761	\$75,505	\$152,506	\$60,594	\$58,038	\$50,630		\$46,191
Fitchburg State University	Worcester	\$84,386	\$103,634	\$79,901	\$68,846	\$65,396			\$84,396	\$75,092	\$70,281	\$57,147	\$73,174	\$116,931	\$57,982	\$60,283	\$56,148		\$49,776
Framingham State University	Middlesex	\$99,570	\$98,163	\$83,018	\$72,480				\$85,750	\$76,633	\$79,210	\$65,923	\$72,430	\$97,869	\$51,862	\$55,305	\$53,256		\$46,327
Massachusetts College of Art and Design	Suffolk	\$107,848	\$104,574	\$79,269	\$67,268				\$86,930	\$69,699	\$83,423	\$175,000		\$101,291		\$60,626	\$64,222		\$44,386
Massachusetts Maritime Academy	Barnstable	\$94,453	\$107,251	\$81,259	\$71,844	\$65,269			\$88,664	\$83,334	\$85,898	\$53,204	\$71,724	\$103,977	\$67,181	\$63,879	\$80,060		\$54,688
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	Berkshire	\$81,952	\$98,360	\$73,259	\$63,232				\$79,523	\$60,655	\$72,550	\$51,655	\$69,427	\$106,955	\$65,137	\$55,064			\$43,031
Salem State University	Essex	\$97,427	\$104,769	\$90,103	\$80,533	\$75,224			\$94,409	\$83,008	\$87,981	\$70,465	\$78,616	\$153,006	\$64,593	\$57,723	\$61,584		\$52,357
Westfield State University	Hampden	\$78,686	\$99,596	\$84,439	\$72,176	\$60,333			\$88,676	\$68,973	\$64,393	\$59,966	\$77,000	\$97,312	\$32,057	\$57,691			\$44,240
Worcester State University	Worcester	\$84,386	\$101,518	\$76,287	\$63,547	\$61,597			\$79,832	\$64,625	\$63,053	\$57,257	\$40,000	\$99,264	\$62,243	\$52,822	\$48,745		\$50,547
Universities																			
University of Massachusetts-Lowell	Middlesex	\$99,570	\$151,395	\$116,365	\$96,445	\$70,846	\$85,725	\$68,129	\$110,789	\$85,137	\$83,590	\$73,217	\$60,402	\$105,784	\$67,344	\$65,662	\$76,996		\$52,144
University of Massachusetts-Amherst	Hampshire	\$78,686	\$157,144	\$110,435	\$97,648	\$62,500	\$79,016		\$116,543	\$68,946	\$71,893	\$74,226	\$91,933	\$146,665	\$60,048	\$52,597	\$64,727	\$68,233	\$42,929
University of Massachusetts-Boston	Suffolk	\$107,848	\$144,608	\$112,199	\$89,772		\$71,075	\$81,808	\$100,663	\$77,427	\$77,254	\$79,021	\$70,646	\$164,729	\$77,866	\$66,716	\$57,104		\$67,602
University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth	Bristol	\$83,574	\$136,279	\$101,831	\$89,735		\$70,965		\$103,139	\$78,824	\$75,148	\$60,789	\$59,357	\$118,148	\$58,207	\$56,489	\$67,527		\$50,868