Hot Topic: The 1993 MTAS Salary and Fringe Benefit Survey

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The 1993 MTAS Salary and Fringe Benefit Survey

by Rick Stokes
MTAS Municipal Personnel Consultant

The MTAS annual salary and fringe benefit survey for 1993 is complete and shows salary increases for city employees grew at a rate higher than 1992. Hot off the laser printer, here's a summary of the findings. Pages 5 and 6 are request forms you can send back to us for the specific salary and benefit information you need.

Salaries in 1993 for employees of Tennessee cities and towns grew at a rate just ahead of inflation. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers grew by 2.9 percent for cities in the South, while Tennessee city salaries grew by 3.5 percent. On the national level, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) shows the average rate of inflation was 2.5 percent.

Middle Tennessee outpaced East and West Tennessee. Middle Tennessee cities and towns reported salary increases at a rate of 4.05 percent, compared to 3.43 percent in East Tennessee and 3.40 percent in West Tennessee. These figures reflect an increase over 1992 data.

Several groups of positions reflected an average increase in salary percentages higher than the CPI. Clerical employees led the way with an average increase of 5.56 percent. Accounting clerks had the highest average increase over 1992 data, at 7.55 percent. The average salary increases of other groups were:

- labor employees, up by 4.28 percent;
- public safety employees, up by 3.68 percent;
- administrative employees, up by 3.31 percent; and
- professional employees, up by 3.87 percent.

Average salary changes in two categories were below the CPI — technical employees increased by 1.99 percent and elective positions decreased by .76 percent.

The largest increases were enjoyed by public information officers and city clerks. Public information officer salaries increased by about 11.02 percent (statewide average minimum salary changed from $23,798 to $26,187; statewide average maximum salary changed from $35,515 to
City clerk salaries increased by about 10.36 percent (statewide average minimum salary changed from $16,421 to $17,941; statewide maximum salary changed from $18,478 to $20,040).

Significant increases were also reported for mayors (9.03 percent), fire marshals (7.90 percent), street foremen (6.11 percent), building engineers (8.55 percent), finance directors (7.42 percent), accounting clerks (7.55 percent), administrative secretaries (7.07 percent), city engineers (6.84 percent), bookkeepers (6.16 percent), clerk-typists (6.27 percent), assistant police chiefs (6.45 percent), police captains (6.13 percent), police lieutenants (6.40 percent), and city managers (6.47 percent).

The largest salary decrease was for aldermen. Cities reported a decrease of about 7.79 percent (statewide average minimum salary changed from $1,614 to $1,500; statewide average maximum salary changed from $1,682 to $1,568). Decreases in statewide average salaries were also reported for administrative assistants (3.08 percent), head librarians (3.89 percent), water plant operators IV (.49 percent), refuse foremen (1.82 percent), wastewater plant operators IV (1.44 percent), fire drivers (1.18 percent), vice mayors (.09 percent), firefighters (.47 percent), utility managers (.16 percent), and city recorders (.02 percent).

The average number of city employees increased over 1992 by about 13 percent for full-time and part-time employees. This represents changes from an average of 121 full-time employees to 133. Almost all regions reported an increase in the number of full-time employees. The largest increase was seen in East Tennessee, where full-time and part-time averages jumped about 24 percent. Middle Tennessee reported an increase in the average number of employees of about 8 percent, while West Tennessee reported an increase of about 7 percent.

The Salary Information and How It Was Gathered

For regular users of our survey information, this document will look familiar. It's our attempt to get the most basic — and most used — information into the hands of Tennessee city officials in a faster and more economical manner. But if you need more detail, don't worry. MTAS gathered the same amount of information as in past years, and it's available quickly if you need it. In fact, data from the survey is entered into a database (RBASE for DOS) and reports can be generated in the format you're used to from previous years.

MTAS received responses this year from 235 of the 341 Tennessee cities. Salary information was gathered in five categories: (1) number of employees, (2) hours worked, (3) minimum salary, (4) maximum salary, and (5) FLSA status. In some instances, an employee may have held more than one position or a clerk-typist was also the secretary. For these cases, respondents were asked to report the salary for the position in which the employee spends more than 50 percent of his or her time.

Some positions didn't apply to all cities. If the job description didn't closely fit the job for the employee, the respondent was asked to leave the category blank. If you're not sure that the duties of a position listed match those of the job title in your city, ask for a copy of the job description.

Several liberties were taken when only one salary was listed. If the city listed one salary and only one employee, we assumed the salary represented the minimum and maximum salary. If
a city listed a minimum salary with more than one employee, no maximum salary was inferred. Blank spaces indicate that information was not provided.

We are capable of generating salary information based on populations. Population statistics used in the survey were obtained from the 1993 Directory of Tennessee Municipal Officials as certified by the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (July 1, 1990). The groupings are:

- Group 1 - populations over 100,000
- Group 2 - populations between 15,000 and 99,999
- Group 3 - populations between 8,000 and 14,999
- Group 4 - populations between 4,000 and 7,999
- Group 5 - populations between 2,000 and 3,999
- Group 6 - populations under 2,000

Salary data is also available by geographical and statewide averages, counties, or by selected cities.

**Benefit Information**

MTAS also gathered extensive data on benefits of Tennessee municipal workers. A check mark or a number was all that was required to complete most of the benefit questions; however, space was provided for additional comments. Benefit data can be generated by tallying responses by grand division and statewide. Information about numbers of employees has been averaged and can be presented in the same manner.

Available by request is information on: work week hours, breaks, probationary periods, hours required for full benefits, longevity pay, cost-of-living increases, uniforms, moonlighting policies, health and dental insurance and deductibles, disability, holidays, vacations, sick leave, personal time, retirement, tuition reimbursement, drug testing, workers' compensation, credit unions, child care assistance, deferred compensation, parking, and much, much more.

**How to Get More Information**

To understand the process of requesting additional salary or benefit information, you may need to understand a little about how the survey database is constructed. This will help you understand the constraints imposed on MTAS by the software used.

The database is divided into sections called tables. Each table is associated with a particular section (topic) of the questionnaire cities completed and returned. There is a general table that contains statistical information about every city in the state. Included in this table is information about population, grand division, county, the contact person and telephone number, and the MTAS municipal management consultant serving the city. We can certainly generate this report if you need it, but such information is available elsewhere in more usable formats. This table is what allows the computer to generate the rest of the reports.

Two tables are associated with the salary questionnaire. A title table contains a listing of the 65 benchmark positions (the listing appears on your request form). The salary table includes salary
information for all positions in each of the seven job categories: (1) elective, (2) administrative, (3) professional, (4) clerical, (5) technical, (6) public safety, and (7) labor and trade.

The remaining tables are associated with the benefits portion of the questionnaire. The tables are (1) staffing information, (2) hours, (3) salary payment policies, (4) employee insurance, (5) holidays, (6) leave, (7) other leave, (8) retirement benefits, and (9) other benefits. Some information on part-time employees is also available.

Individual reports may be tailored and generated exclusively for a requesting city. This gives you more control over what information you receive and how that information is presented to you. Examples of acceptable database requests are: (1) city manager salary data for cities with populations between 15,000 and 25,000 in West Tennessee, or (2) all clerical salaries in population group 4, or (3) police chief salaries for Maryville, Hendersonville, Jackson, and Clarksville, or (4) cities that pay less than 75 percent of their employees' insurance premium.

Use the forms provided on pages 5 and 6 to prepare your information request(s). Just pull off and mail. Feel free to duplicate the forms as often as necessary. Please note that there are limits on the kind of requests MTAS can handle. (A request for all salaries in all population groups will not be honored because of the amount of time necessary to run such a request.) However, you may request as many reports as you need. All requests will be processed as they are received.

For help formulating your request, for assistance in better understanding the search and printing limitations, for other questions regarding the survey, or to get additional information, contact Richard L. Stokes, MTAS Municipal Personnel Consultant, 226 Capitol Boulevard Building, Suite 402, Nashville, Tennessee, 37219, (615) 532-6827 or (615) 532-4956.
1993 SALARY SURVEY
DATA REQUEST FORM

The following form has been prepared to help you request information contained in the salary survey database. Should you have any questions about how to use the form feel free to contact Richard L. Stokes in Nashville at (615) 532-6827.

NAME: ____________________________________________

TITLE: ____________________________________________

MAILING ADDRESS: ____________________________________________

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<th>ADMINISTRATIVE</th>
<th>PROFESSIONAL</th>
<th>CLERICAL</th>
<th>TECHNICAL</th>
<th>PUBLIC SAFETY</th>
<th>LABOR</th>
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</thead>
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<td>POLICE CHIEF ASST CHIEF BLDG INSPECT POLICE CAPTAIN POLICE SGT</td>
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</table>

GENERATE A REPORT FROM _____________ (TABLE)

INCLUDE: _____________(POSITIONS) **NOTE** YOU MAY REQUEST ALL POSITIONS FROM A TABLE OR LIST THOSE YOU WANT.

SORTED BY:
1. POPULATION - BETWEEN ______ AND ______
2. POPULATION GROUP - _____________ (I - VI or all)
3. GRAND DIVISION - _____________ (E, M, W, or ALL)
**1993 BENEFIT SURVEY**
**DATA REQUEST FORM**

The following form has been prepared to help you request information contained in the salary survey database. Should you have any questions about how to use the form feel free to contact Richard L. Stokes in Nashville at (615) 532-6827.

NAME: ____________________________________________

TITLE: __________________________________________

MAILING ADDRESS: __________________________________________

__________________________________________

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<th>SALARY PAYMENT</th>
<th>INSURANCE</th>
<th>HOLIDAYS</th>
<th>LEAVE</th>
<th>OTHER LEAVE</th>
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<td>good friday</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

GENERATE A REPORT FROM ____________ (TABLE)

SORTED BY:

1. POPULATION - BETWEEN _______ AND _______

2. POPULATION GROUP - _________ (I - VI or all)

3. GRAND DIVISION - _______ (E, M, W, or ALL)
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