

THE 2021
**YOUTH PASTOR
COMPENSATION
REPORT**



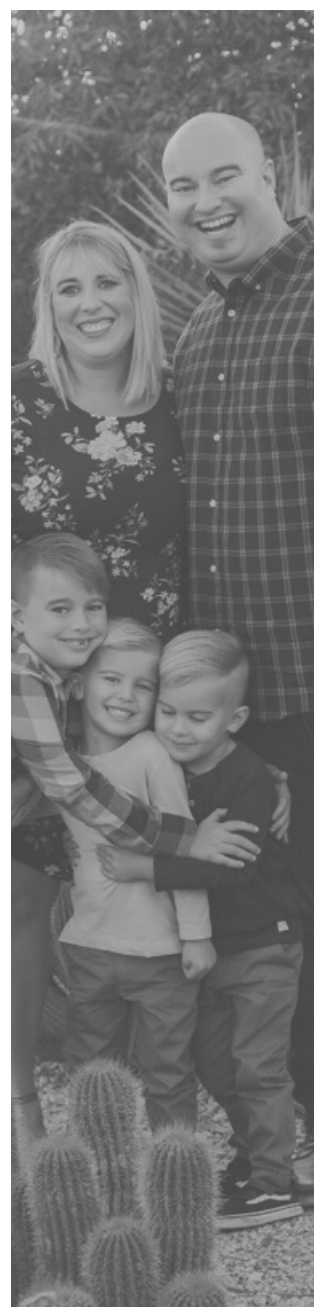
THE 2021 YOUTH PASTOR COMPENSATION REPORT



Meet Me & The Survey

Welcome to the fourth annual installment of the Youth Pastor Compensation Survey, hosted by Dan Navarra of [Chemistry Staffing](#) in association with [The Youth Cartel](#). Every year we set out to provide helpful tools and information for Youth Pastors that can practically help turn their calling into a more sustainable career. We also want to thank Mark Oestreicher of The Youth Cartel for being our General Editor again this year. Our survey results were captured via a Google Form with over 50 specific fields responders were required to fill in. The largest reporting states were Texas, California, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Ohio; and we saw at least ten full-time responses from twenty-nine different states. In all, we had 991 Youth Pastors participate in this year's survey, with 839 being full-time (regularly scheduled to work 30 hours or more). This report will mostly deal with full-time Youth Pastors since there is so much variation among the part-time heroes of the industry, and that data is nearly impossible to synthesize into trends and findings.

If you're new to the survey, my name is Dan Navarra, and I'm a Pastor who genuinely cares about other Youth Pastors. I'm a 15+ year youth ministry veteran, a Fuller Seminary MDiv graduate, and a Church Coach with Chemistry Staffing. Plain and simple, my desire is for this information to help you turn your calling into a sustainable career by best understanding the landscape of pastoral compensation among Youth Pastors. I love my role with Chemistry Staffing because our company cares deeply for the Church and wants to see healthy long-term fits in every position at every church. If you're not aware of who we are at Chemistry Staffing, I highly recommend you either [add yourself to our candidate pool](#) or if your church is thinking about hiring in 2021, [please set up a time to talk with me](#) about how Chemistry Staffing might be able to serve you and your church in your next search. But enough about me. On to the report!

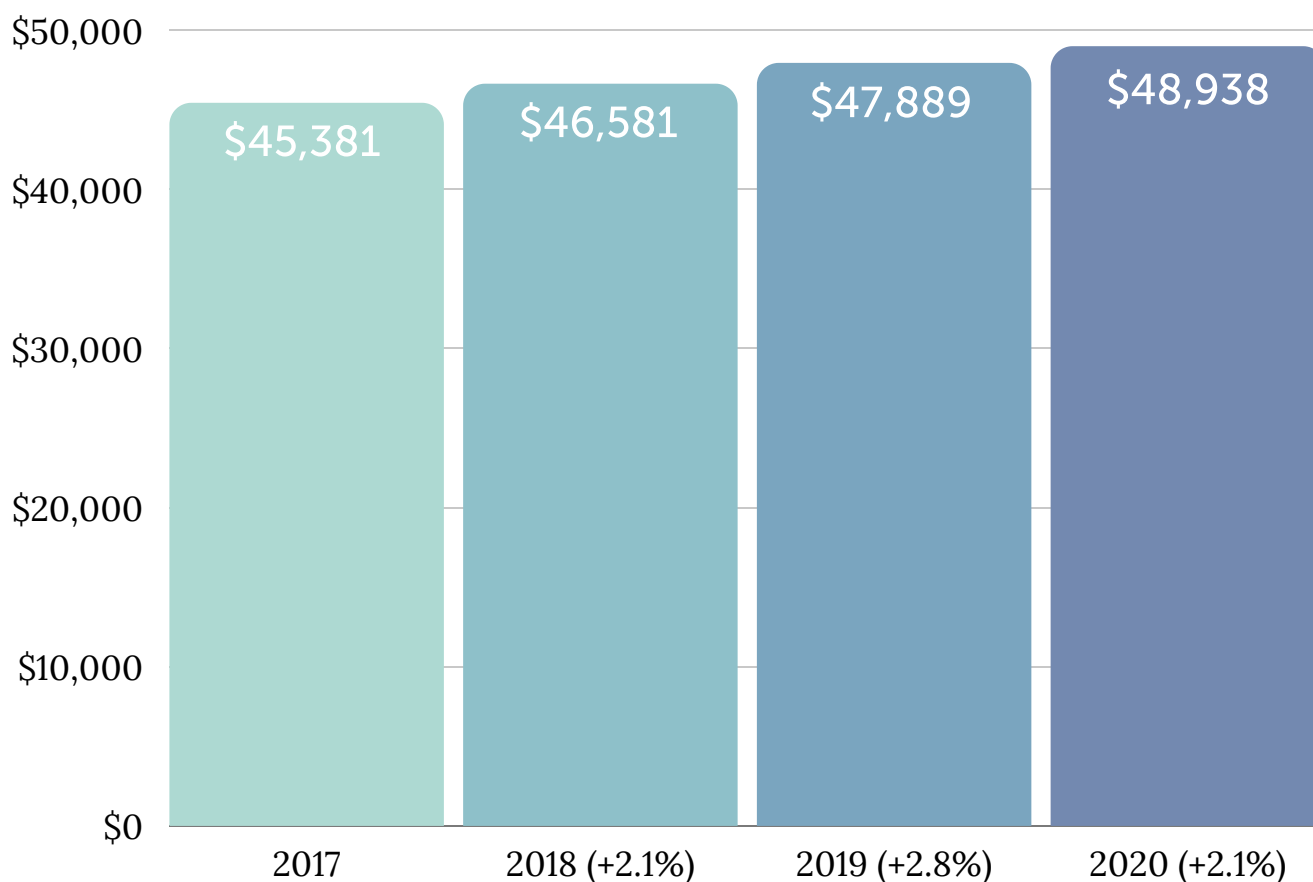




The Big Number for 2020

The Big Number for 2020: Drum roll, please! The national average salary for a full-time Youth Pastor in 2020 is \$48,938. This represents a 2.1% increase from last year's number! 2021's cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is +1.3% federally, so the Youth Pastor industry has continued its trend of growth and improvement this year in how compensation is doled out.

Check out how the average has gone up year-over-year:

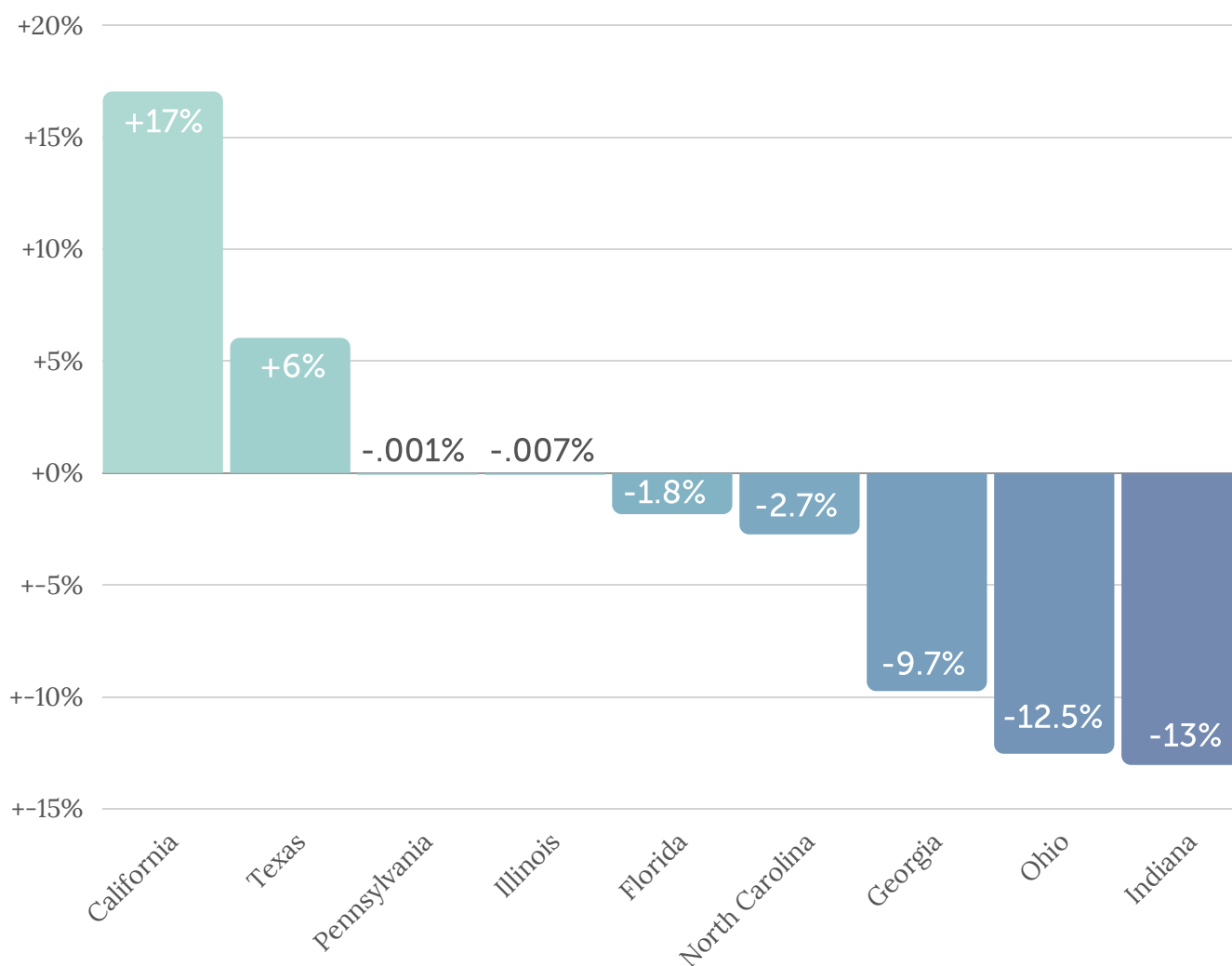


There were two new sections of data for this year's compensation survey that we will highlight in this report: the Enneagram was one, and online streaming of services was the second. We will look at both of these and how they relate to Youth Pastor compensation. If you're looking for information on how compensation is affected by education, tenure, and church or ministry budget, [I'd recommend checking out last year's free report](#) that has in-depth studies and tables on how these factors affect compensation. The data has proven correct year over year, and this year is no exception.



The Big Number for 2020 Continued ...

Every year we get lots of questions about the state-by-state cost of living adjustments. If you're looking for the state-by-state COLA adjustments and how they affect the average Youth Pastor salary in your state, you can [click here](#) to read a 2019 blog post that provides many state-by-state percentage adjustments you can apply to the average salary for 2020 in order to calculate your state's average compensation. For the states with the most respondents (at least 30 from this year's survey), the COLA adjustment is as follows:



If you live in one of those states, take the national average (\$48,938) and multiply it by your percentage change with a properly placed decimal point (California: $\$48,938 \times .17 = \$8,319$) and add that to the national average to get your state's national average. For Indiana, $(\$48,938 \times -.13) + \$48,938 = \$42,576$ is the state average annual salary.



The Enneagram & Youth Pastor Compensation

Below you'll find a table illustrating the average compensation of a Youth Pastor by Enneagram type, along with the number of respondents for each personality type. We had 255 full-time pastors share that they did not know their number.

<i>Enneagram</i>	Avg. Compensation	# of Responses
1	\$49,698	40
2	\$48,396	82
3	\$51,346	100
4	\$46,151	19
5	\$48,090	30
6	\$46,298	27
7	\$51,199	85
8	\$53,254	86
9	\$48,623	86

The Unsure: The 255 people who self-reported being unsure of their Enneagram number reported an annual salary average of \$48,105, which is the third-lowest number in the data set. I believe this points to the conclusion that knowing one's self should be a strategy we all use to best position ourselves to understand the barriers we may have towards higher compensation and career advancement. The only numbers reporting lower average salaries than those who did not know their number are Types 4 and 5.

In reference to barriers, consider the Type 3, Type 7, and Type 8. 3s are consistently high achievers who get lots done with adequate competency in many areas. Their resumes are typically full of accomplishments, and they aren't afraid of talking about their own strengths (even to the point of being characterized as arrogant at times). 8s are considered excellent managers with a high motivator of justice and a leaning into challenges, even if it means butting heads with their peers at times. 7s are great creative idea generators with big dreams and goals that lend themselves towards impressive accomplishment if they can somehow manage to follow through on their own ideas. Each of these three numbers represents the highest compensated types among youth pastors, and that is likely not a coincidence, but instead a reflection of their ministries emulating their personality types to one extent or another. Type 3, 7, or 8 will typically excel in many ministry settings naturally, thus often leading to higher compensation due to past achievement and leadership success. Their barriers to success and long term stability in a role may oftentimes be character and pride (the 3), follow-through (the 7), or harsh characteristics like anger and control (the 8) that negatively affects their supervisor's assessment of their work.



The Enneagram & Youth Pastor Compensation Continued...

On the other hand, 6s are the lowest paid Enneagram Type. Characterized as loyalists, the 6 will likely stay put longer in a job where they are less satisfied or under-compensated than any other number. Part of this most assuredly is attributed to their great innate loyalism, but part of it may also be attributed to their phobic shadow side that can at times paralyze them from moving forward in an endeavor like career advancement. I found this hard to believe, but there was not one Enneagram 6 full-time youth pastor who indicated that they lead a group of 80 or more students weekly, out of 27 Type 6s represented. Every other number had at least three respondents with a group north of 80 in weekly attendance.

Why does this matter? It's only when we begin to fully know our true selves that we can fully know God and what he says about who we are. If we go on without tending to our blind spots in our natural makeup, we risk encountering God with a naive or unknown version of ourselves, and God meets whatever facade we wear rather than our true selves.

If you want to learn more about why personality theory paired with spiritual formation is a formula for a healthier you, I recommend picking up [Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Pete Scazzero](#). Also, The Youth Cartel offers excellent Enneagram coaching with a certified Enneagram coach (and it includes a highly accurate test), which can help you grow in understanding and self-awareness, as well as the successes and pain-points of your role. [Check out Enneagram help from The Youth Cartel here!](#)

Live Streaming & The New Normal

The second piece of the survey that was new in 2020 was the section on live-streaming. 54% of churches began live-streaming their worship services in 2020 #thankscovid. The average salary of a Youth Pastor at a church that began live streaming in 2020 is \$48,266, or slightly below the national average. Churches that were streaming in 2019 or earlier reported a large increase over that number to an average salary of \$50,136, or almost 4% more. Interestingly, the 15 churches with a full-time Youth Pastor who reported not currently or ever streaming their services online at all reported a salary of just under \$42,000. If you're interviewing at a church, a wise question to ask may be when they started streaming their services, because it may be an indication of how aggressive they are in pursuing their mission and correspondingly retaining their staff through higher compensation long term.



Live Streaming & The New Normal Continued ...

Youth ministry live streaming also lends itself to imply different churches are investing in youth pastors that are reaching more students as the future of ministry changes. Youth Pastors with more than 80 students weekly on their youth group live stream are earning an average of \$58,189, while those with less than 80 are earning \$47,999 (a 17.5% gap).

Churches with in-person groups of less than 80 are paying their youth pastor \$46,437, while churches with larger than 80 in-person are paying \$56,996 (18.5% gap). The size of the ministry in 2021 is a big indicator of what compensation looks like. If you're running a larger group, you've got a strong case to be a higher earner, relative to other Youth Pastors.

I CAN'T GET NO SATISFACTION

We included a question asking you to rate your overall satisfaction with your current church's role on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best rating.

Interestingly ...

- *Those of you who rated your satisfaction at a 5 are being paid \$1,000 more than those who rated yourself at a 4.*
- *Level 4's were paid \$2,500 more than level 3s.*
- *Level 3s were paid \$2,500 more than level 2 rated Youth Pastors.*

So, while they say money can't buy happiness, it seems like a roughly 10% swing in pay from 2s to 5s points to the fact that part of the reason people are unsatisfied in their current role is attributed to their compensation being significantly lower than those who are satisfied in their current role.



Where Do We Go From Here?

The gender wage gap was 13% this year, up from 11.2% last year. The women who reported saw virtually no increase in compensation (2019: \$43,475; 2020: \$43,488), while men saw their average compensation rise from \$48,913 in 2019 to \$50,043 in 2020. There is still work to be done on making sure women are being paid equally to men.

California is also in danger of seeing a massive exodus of the salaried Youth Pastor as mandated wage increases will give rise to a \$62,400 minimum salaried exempt wage as early as 2022 for churches with more than 25 employees. Youth Pastors need to be vigilant and proactive to make sure their churches are not taking advantage of them (some do this unknowingly). I like to remind Youth Pastors that your Senior Pastor likely didn't go to school to manage a business, and Sunday is always coming. This is a perfect recipe for many churches to not know that they may be in danger of violating labor laws. Tread softly and humbly, but also know your facts.

Many churches added work to their youth pastor's plate in 2020 due to COVID and pivoting ministry models, but many churches did not change their compensation for their youth pastor to reflect these changes in responsibility. Look, it's a global pandemic, so I get that not every church can make an adjustment and all that...but for far too long, the church has been known to take advantage of its employees by overworking and under compensating, and I truly believe it is time for the church to instead be known for how it cares for its leaders and provides for them and their families. This includes protecting sabbath, fair compensation, putting boundaries on nights out for ministry or meetings, and undoing gender bias in career advancement. Only then will we see better longevity and less burn out among the Youth Pastor community.

May you be encouraged to hold fast and know you are valued and loved. May you know yourself so you can more fully know how deeply God loves you the way he made you. And above all, may eternity be different for many because of you loving students one step closer to Jesus.

Amen.

Do you need some help processing this information? [Set up a time to talk.](#) I'd love to be a resource to you and your team.

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