LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT SALARY
transparency in design

2024 Landscape Architecture Salary Report

December 2024

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Welcome

Welcome to the first-ever *Landscape Architecture Salary Report*. This report is designed to increase transparency within our industry, providing valuable insights to help professionals make informed decisions and foster fair practices. Our goal is to empower individuals and firms alike, contributing to a stronger, more equitable landscape architecture community. Your support makes this effort possible and fuels our mission to create a resource that benefits us all. Thank you for being part of this journey toward a more transparent and connected profession.

Introduction

Introduction to the Landscape Architecture Salary Report
This report provides an in-depth analysis of salary expectations for professionals in the field of landscape architecture across various career stages. By examining key factors such as geographic location, education level, licensure status, and years of experience, this comprehensive study aims to offer valuable insights into the dynamics of compensation within the profession. The data spans a wide range of career stages, from entry-level professionals with less than a year of experience to seasoned experts in the field.

Purpose of the Report
The primary objective of this report is to inform landscape architecture professionals, employers, and industry stakeholders about the trends and factors influencing salaries in the field. By highlighting variations across geographic regions, education levels, and professional milestones, this study seeks to provide actionable insights for career planning, hiring strategies, and compensation benchmarking.

Methodology and Scope
The analysis is based on data collected through *Design Salary Hub*, a platform designed to add transparency to salaries within the profession. All data is inputted anonymously by participants, with the intent of fostering openness and aiding informed decision-making. Due to the nature of self-reported data, all information presented in this report is subject to potential inaccuracies and cannot be factually verified. The use of this information is at the reader's discretion, and neither the authors of this report nor Design Salary Hub can be held liable for decisions made based on this data.

The report is organized into distinct sections for each experience category (0-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-10, and 11+ years). Each section includes a detailed examination of salary trends based on three primary factors:

- Geographic Location: Understanding regional disparities in compensation.
- Education Level: Analyzing the impact of academic qualifications on salary.
- Licensure Status: Assessing how licensure influences earning potential over time.

Additionally, the report provides an overarching analysis of trends across all experience levels, offering a holistic view of salary dynamics in the profession.

Potential Data Flaws
While this report strives to present accurate and meaningful insights, it is important to acknowledge potential data flaws that may influence the findings:
- Participation Bias: Individuals who are particularly satisfied or dissatisfied with their salaries may be more inclined to participate, potentially skewing the data.
- Underrepresentation of Partner-Level Employees: Senior-level professionals, such as partners or principals, may be less likely to participate, resulting in limited data representation for this group.
- Self-Reported Nature: All data is self-reported, which introduces the potential for inaccuracies or exaggerations. Participants' understanding of "expected salary" may vary, adding a layer of subjectivity to the data.

These potential flaws highlight the need for cautious interpretation of the findings. The insights provided should be considered directional rather than definitive.

Key Insights

Some of the most notable trends identified in the report include:

- The significant influence of geographic location on salaries, with high-demand regions consistently reporting higher compensation.
- The early-career advantage of advanced degrees, such as an MLA, in achieving higher salaries.
- The increasing importance of licensure in mid-career stages, with diminishing differences in senior levels.

Audience and Application

This report is intended for:

- Professionals: To help landscape architects understand how their qualifications, experience, and location impact their earning potential.
- Employers: To assist firms in aligning their compensation structures with industry benchmarks.
- Stakeholders: To provide insights for academic institutions, licensing bodies, and policy makers to better support the profession's growth.

Summary of Full Dataset

Analysis of the Full Dataset: Landscape Architecture Salaries
This section provides a comprehensive analysis of the entire dataset, spanning all experience levels (0-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-10, and 11+ years). The following insights are based on aggregated data for average salaries by state and licensure status.

Average Salaries by State
The data reveals substantial geographic variation in salary expectations. Below are the average salaries by state, organized alphabetically.

- Alabama: Average Salary = $63,500.00 (N=2)
- Arizona: Average Salary = $76,333.33 (N=3)
- Arkansas: Average Salary = $63,162.50 (N=2)
- California: Average Salary = $106,917.81 (N=64)
- Colorado: Average Salary = $80,380.65 (N=31)
- Connecticut: Average Salary = $108,909.09 (N=11)
- Delaware: Average Salary = $108,000.00 (N=1)
- Florida: Average Salary = $79,956.52 (N=23)
- Georgia: Average Salary = $73,235.82 (N=17)
- Idaho: Average Salary = $110,000.00 (N=2)
- Illinois: Average Salary = $75,318.75 (N=16)
- Indiana: Average Salary = $76,900.00 (N=5)
- Iowa: Average Salary = $96,500.00 (N=2)
- Kansas: Average Salary = $63,000.00 (N=2)
- Kentucky: Average Salary = $72,250.00 (N=2)
- Louisiana: Average Salary = $68,106.67 (N=3)
- Maine: Average Salary = $71,750.00 (N=2)
- Maryland: Average Salary = $77,233.33 (N=12)
- Massachusetts: Average Salary = $88,722.17 (N=23)
- Michigan: Average Salary = $64,423.08 (N=13)
- Minnesota: Average Salary = $66,714.29 (N=7)
- Missouri: Average Salary = $69,600.00 (N=5)
- Montana: Average Salary = $72,750.00 (N=4)
- Nebraska: Average Salary = $80,000.00 (N=1)
- Nevada: Average Salary = $71,375.00 (N=4)
- New Jersey: Average Salary = $78,000.00 (N=8)
- New Mexico: Average Salary = $52,500.00 (N=2)
- New York: Average Salary = $85,038.46 (N=26)
- North Carolina: Average Salary = $82,313.59 (N=22)
- Ohio: Average Salary = $74,500.00 (N=10)
- Oklahoma: Average Salary = $67,000.00 (N=3)
- Oregon: Average Salary = $75,406.25 (N=16)
- Pennsylvania: Average Salary = $81,269.96 (N=25)
- Rhode Island: Average Salary = $78,500.00 (N=2)
- South Carolina: Average Salary = $98,283.33 (N=6)
- Tennessee: Average Salary = $78,000.00 (N=4)
- Texas: Average Salary = $78,677.24 (N=29)
- Utah: Average Salary = $73,166.67 (N=6)

- Vermont: Average Salary = $120,000.00 (N=1)
- Virginia: Average Salary = $82,293.33 (N=12) Includes Alexandria
- Washington: Average Salary = $81,263.16 (N=19)
- Washington, D.C.: Average Salary = $84,000.00 (N=4)
- Wisconsin: Average Salary = $79,249.71 (N=7)
- Wyoming: Average Salary = $70,000.00 (N=1)

This geographic disparity underscores the importance of regional demand, cost of living, and market dynamics in determining salary levels. High-demand states like California and Connecticut lead in compensation, while regions with fewer economic hubs, such as New Mexico and Michigan, report lower averages.

Average Salaries by Licensure Status
Licensure status also plays a significant role in salary expectations:
- Licensed (Yes): Average Salary = $96,290.04 (N=169)
- Not Licensed (No): Average Salary = $76,066.69 (N=298)

The $20,223.35 gap between licensed and non-licensed professionals highlights the critical value of licensure as a marker of expertise, professional credibility, and access to higher-paying roles. This trend is consistent across all career stages, though the gap narrows slightly for senior professionals (11+ years).

Observations and Conclusions
1. Geographic Influence: States with strong economies and urban centers offer higher salaries, particularly for mid to senior-level professionals. Geographic mobility can be a strategic advantage for career growth.
2. Licensure as a Differentiator: Licensure significantly boosts earning potential, making it a key milestone for professionals aiming to maximize their salaries.
3. Variability Across the Dataset: While the overall trends are clear, individual states and regions show significant variability, reflecting localized demand and industry conditions.

These findings provide valuable benchmarks for professionals, employers, and stakeholders in landscape architecture, offering a clearer understanding of the factors influencing compensation across the profession.

0-1 Years of Experience

Analysis of Expected Annual Salary Data for Landscape Architecture Professionals (0-1 Years of Experience)

The analysis of salary expectations for landscape architecture professionals with 0-1 years of experience provides key insights into trends based on geography, education level, and licensing status. Below is a summary of findings derived from the data and visualized through three targeted graphs.

1. Salary by State
The data reveals substantial variation in expected salaries across different states and provinces. The highest average salaries are observed in states such as California, Massachusetts, and New York, with averages exceeding $70,000 annually. In contrast, states such as Kentucky and Montana show lower average salaries, typically in the range of $50,000-$55,000. The distribution indicates that geography plays a significant role in shaping salary expectations, likely influenced by regional cost of living and demand for landscape architecture services. Data was collected from over 20 locations, with some states showing higher representation (e.g., California and Colorado).

Average Expected Annual Salary by State/Province
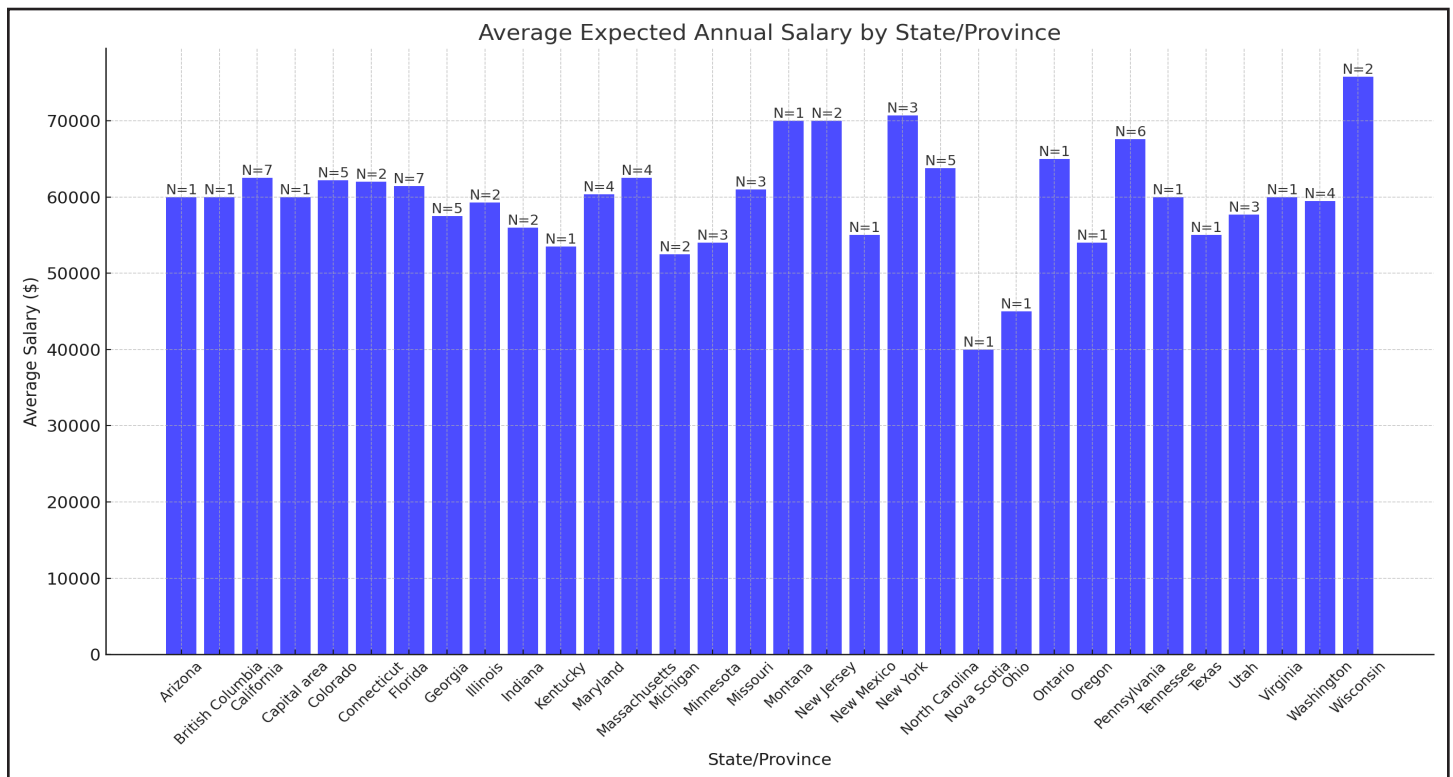
2. Salary by Education Level

When categorizing data by education level, significant trends emerge. Professionals with a Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) degree report the highest average salaries, around $65,000 annually, with a significant sample size (N=33). Bachelor's-level degrees, including BLA (grouped to consolidate BLA, BSLA, and Bsla), show an average expected salary of $60,000, based on 47 responses. Individuals with specialized or additional degrees, such as a Master's in ecological design, exhibit smaller sample sizes but generally competitive salary expectations. This pattern highlights the value of advanced education in the field, as salaries appear to increase with higher levels of academic qualification.
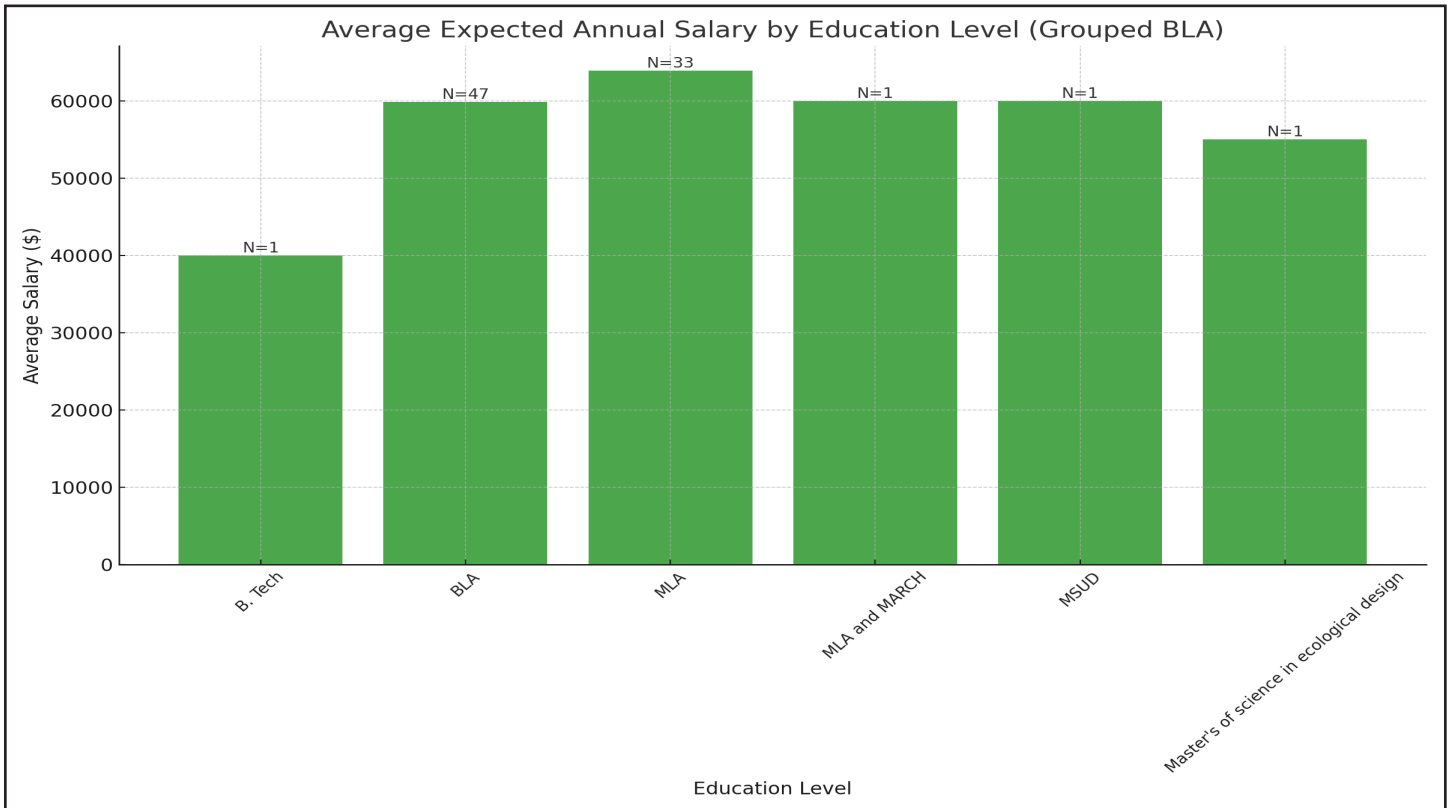
3. Salary by Licensing Status

Licensing status reveals a critical dimension of professional expectations. Individuals who are already licensed landscape architects report slightly higher average salaries of approximately $62,000 annually, compared to those who are not licensed, whose expectations average around $60,000. However, the majority of respondents (N=81) are not licensed, reflecting the early career stage of this group. The data suggests that while licensing is a positive factor for salary enhancement, its impact is relatively modest at the entry-level stage.

Average Expected Annual Salary by Licensing Status
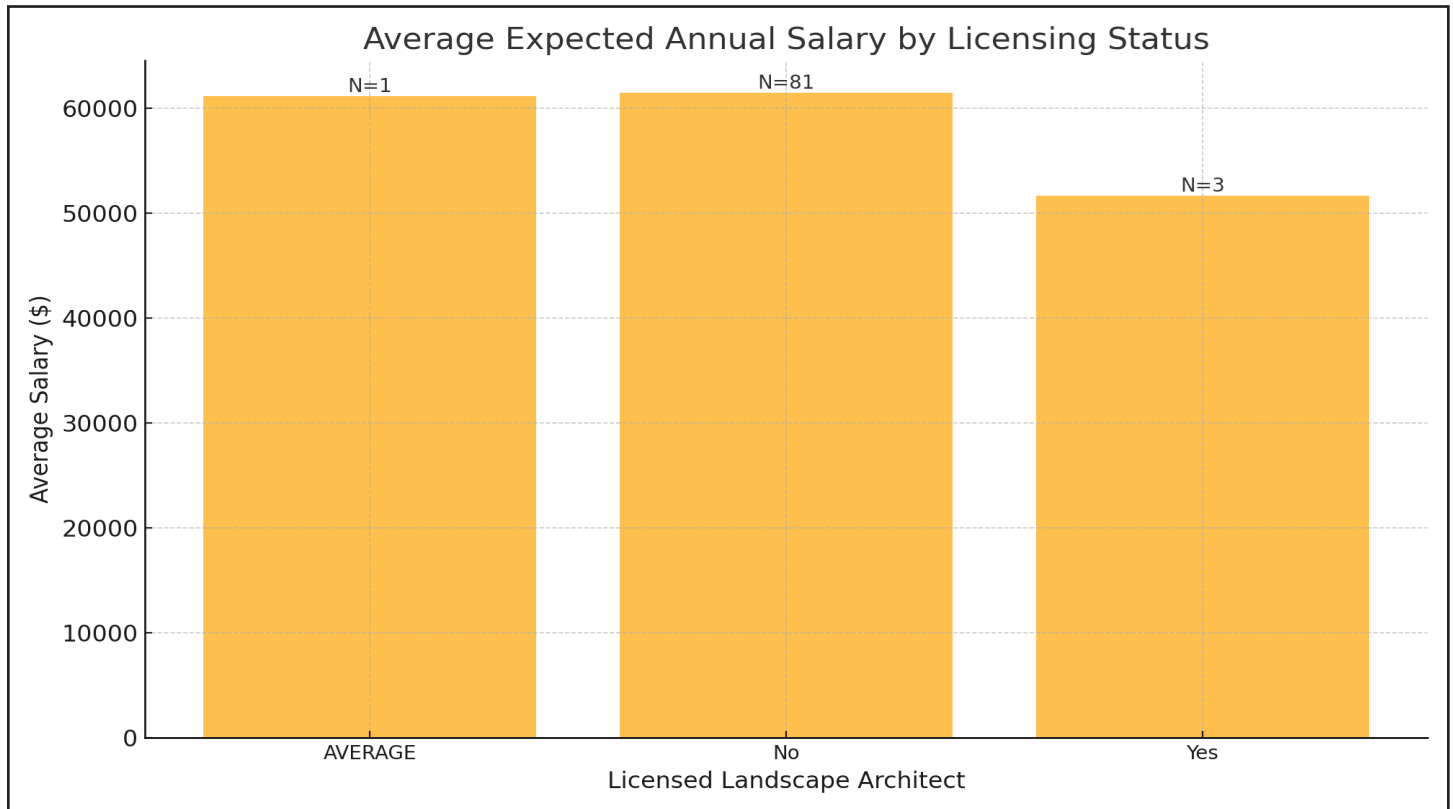
Overall Observations

The data suggests that geography, education level, and licensing status are pivotal factors in shaping salary expectations for early-career landscape architects. Professionals in high-demand regions with advanced degrees and licensure are likely to secure higher salaries. However, variations across categories emphasize the importance of other contextual factors, such as employer type and regional economic conditions, which may also influence these trends.

This analysis provides a baseline understanding of salary expectations for the 0-1 years' experience group and sets the stage for comparative studies across other experience levels. The insights can serve as a valuable benchmark for professionals entering the field, employers, and industry stakeholders aiming to align compensation structures with market dynamics.

Identifying Trends

Analysis of Salary Trends Across Career Stages in Landscape Architecture
By examining the salary data across all experience categories (0-1, 2-3, 4-6, 7-10, and 11+ years), clear trends and insights emerge regarding the factors influencing compensation in landscape architecture. Below is a synthesis of the observed patterns:

1. Salary Growth with Experience

Across all sheets, salary expectations show a consistent increase with years of experience. Entry-level professionals (0-1 years) report average salaries around $60,000, while mid-career professionals (7-10 years) report averages nearing $95,000. For seasoned professionals (11+ years), average salaries exceed $110,000. This trend reflects the value of accumulated expertise, leadership capabilities, and expanded responsibilities that come with time in the field.

2. Geographic Influence on Salaries

Geographic location remains a critical determinant of salary across all experience levels. High-demand regions like California, New York, and Massachusetts consistently report higher salaries compared to states like Kentucky, Wisconsin, and Michigan. This pattern highlights the importance of regional cost of living, urbanization, and market demand. The salary gap between high-paying and low-paying regions becomes more pronounced at advanced career stages, suggesting that seasoned professionals may increasingly leverage geographic mobility to maximize earnings.

3. Impact of Education Level

Education level significantly affects salaries, particularly in the early stages of a career. Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA) holders consistently earn more than their Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA) counterparts, with the gap narrowing as professionals gain more experience. At the 11+ year stage, the influence of education diminishes, with practical expertise, leadership, and specialization playing a larger role in compensation.

4. Role of Licensure

Licensure becomes increasingly important as professionals progress in their careers. At the 0-1 year stage, licensing status has a negligible impact on salary expectations, reflecting the early stage of career development. By the 4-6 year stage, licensed professionals begin to report higher salaries, and by the 7-10 year stage, the gap becomes more pronounced. However, at the 11+ year stage, the difference between licensed and non-licensed salaries is minimal, suggesting that other factors, such as seniority and project leadership, outweigh licensure as primary determinants of compensation.

5. Narrowing Influence of Education and Licensure Over Time

While education and licensure significantly affect salaries in the early and mid-career stages, their influence diminishes as professionals gain experience. By the 11+ year stage, salary outcomes are more closely tied to organizational roles, leadership responsibilities, and specialized expertise than to academic qualifications or licensure status.

6. Broader Observations
- Salary Plateauing at Senior Levels: Salaries plateau at the 11+ year stage, with average increases between the 7-10 and 11+ year categories being modest. This suggests that career advancements at this stage may be driven by roles (e.g., principal or partner) rather than linear salary increments.
- Regional Opportunities: High-paying states consistently offer greater opportunities across all experience levels, emphasizing the strategic value of geographic mobility for career growth.
- Education as a Catalyst: Advanced degrees serve as a strong early-career advantage, reinforcing the importance of education for new professionals entering the field.

Conclusion

The trends observed across all experience levels provide a comprehensive understanding of the landscape architecture profession's compensation dynamics. Salary growth is robust during the early and mid-career stages but tapers off as professionals reach seniority. Geographic location, education, and licensure remain key factors, though their relative importance evolves over time. These insights are valuable for professionals planning their career trajectories, as well as for employers aiming to create competitive and equitable compensation structures.

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