

# Paying for Professionalism

a report on teaching artist compensation in New York City

Arts in Education  
**NYC** **ROUNDTABLE**

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## ABOUT THE NEW YORK CITY ARTS IN EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE

The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable (NYCAIER) is a service organization and a community of arts education practitioners sharing information, providing professional development, and communicating with the public to promote their work in schools and beyond (Mission, 2018). Members include individual arts educators as well as organizations ranging from large cultural and performing arts institutions to small community-based organizations (Members, 2018). The Teaching Artist Affairs (TAA) Committee supports the teaching artist profession from the perspectives of both teaching artists and the organizations that employ them (Roundtable Committees, 2018).

## PREFACE

New York City is home to many of the world's leading arts institutions and producing arts organizations. The NYC Department of Cultural Affairs lists 1,968 cultural organizations in its directory (DCLA Cultural Organizations, 2017). It is also home to a growing employment industry of the teaching artist. A teaching artist (TA) is "a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills and sensibilities of an educator, who engages people in learning experiences in, through, and about the arts" (Booth, 2017). These valuable artists and educators provide arts experiences for students and residents of New York City through in-school and after-school programs, in partnership with community centers, cultural institutions, and more.

The TAA Committee of the NYCAIER created an employment survey in the spring of 2016 to better understand the landscape of compensation for TAs in New York City. New York City is a national leader in arts, education, and arts education. The NYCAIER TAA Committee seeks to educate and dialogue about how New York City can become a leader in best TA employment practices as well.

## METHODOLOGY

The survey was designed by a team from the TAA Committee of professional TAs, arts administrators, and arts education consultants. It was distributed online through a Google survey using social media and email groups from NYCAIER member organizations. Responses were anonymous. Respondents had the opportunity to provide employment information for up to three organizations they work for. There were 157 TA respondents. Together they reported on over 278 individual TA gigs. A gig constituted a paying TA opportunity varying from one day to full year placements either through an organization or directly with a school as an independent contractor. We estimate this sample pool to be approximately 10% of the total TA pool in New York City (D. Davis, personal communication, March 27, 2017).

## WHO ARE NYC TAs?

The survey pool showed that TAs in New York City are majority white and female identified. 70% of TAs surveyed identified as female, 29% as male, and 65% identified as white. The age of TAs spanned from 21 to over 60 with 57% of TAs 40 and below and 43% 41 and over. The largest majority age group of TAs surveyed was 31-40 at 36%. TAs responded from a wide range of artistic disciplines including the Visual Arts, Digital Media Arts, Architecture, Dance, Music, Writing, and Theatre. 35% of TAs responded that they teach more than one artistic discipline or selected “interdisciplinary” as their art form. 47% of TAs surveyed reported they worked for 3 or more organizations, 14% reported they worked for 5 or more.

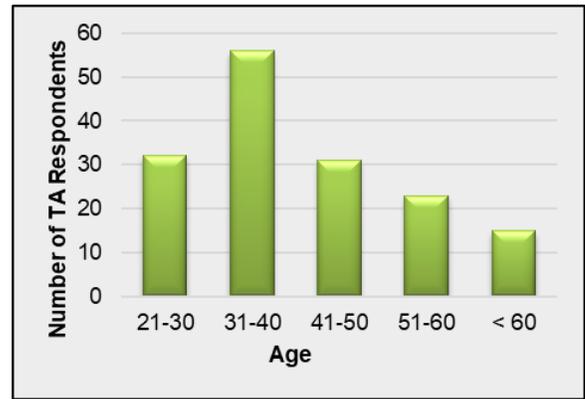


Figure 1: Age of TA Respondents

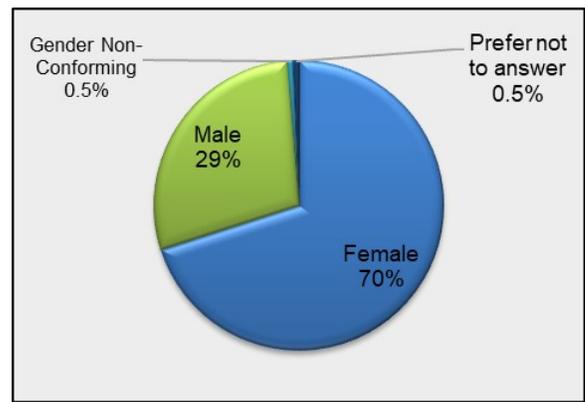


Figure 2: Gender ID of TA Respondents



**35% of TAs reported they teach more than one arts discipline.**

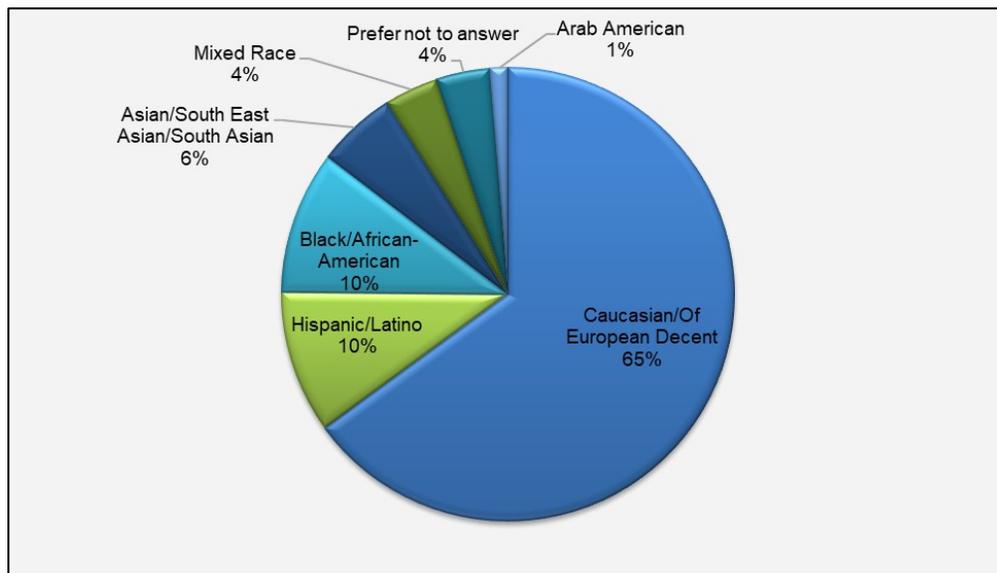
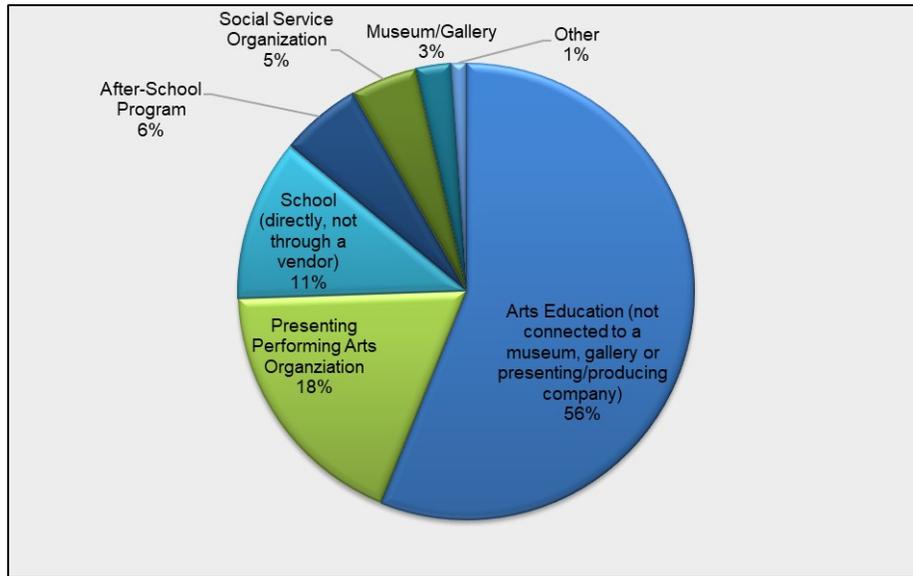


Figure 3: Ethnic ID of TA Respondents

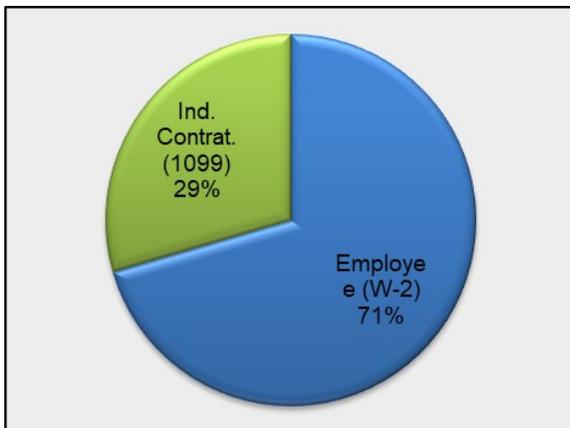
## WHO DO NYC TAs WORK FOR?



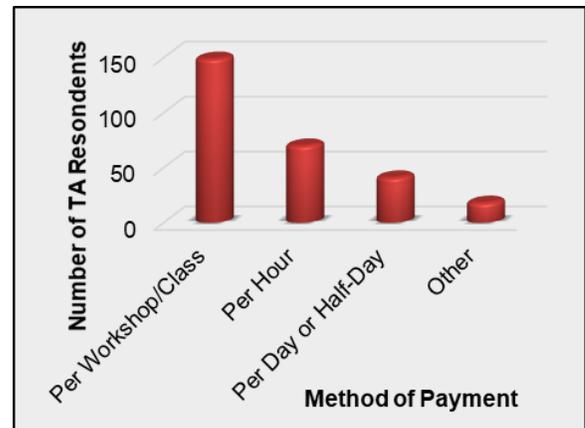
**Figure 4: Type of Organization**

## HOW ARE NYC TAs PAID?

The survey results show that the majority of organizations (71%) pay their TAs as employees, and 29% as independent contractors. Methods of invoicing and payment generally fell into three categories; 1) pay per workshop/class, 2) pay per hour, and 3) pay per day or half-day. Pay per workshop/class was the majority at 54%. Other methods of payment included weekly or yearly salaries or contract sums for a full residency.



**Figure 5: Type of Contract**



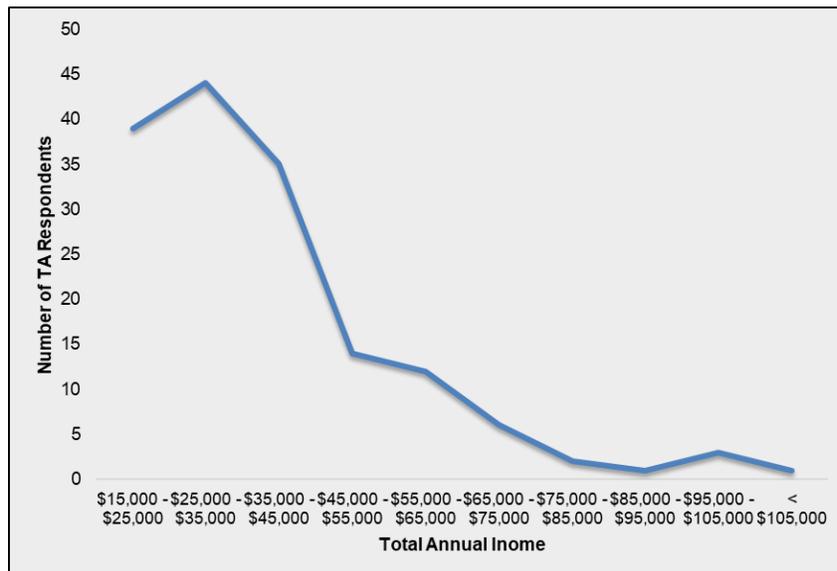
**Figure 6: Method of Payment**

**75% of TAs reported annual incomes of \$45,000 or less.**

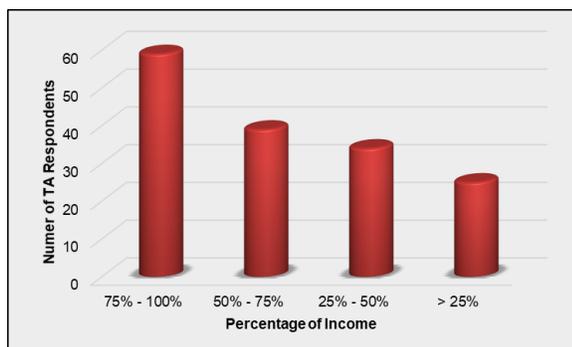


### WHAT ARE NYC TAs Paid?

75% of TAs surveyed reported their total annual income (inclusive of all sources of income) to be \$45,000 or less. The percentage of annual income from TA work varied with more than half of TAs reporting that 50%-100% of income came from TA gigs. The second most reported sources of income were from paid professional artistry. Other sources of income included administrative jobs, care-giving, private lessons or coaching, rental income from Airbnb or sub-letting, and teaching at the college level.

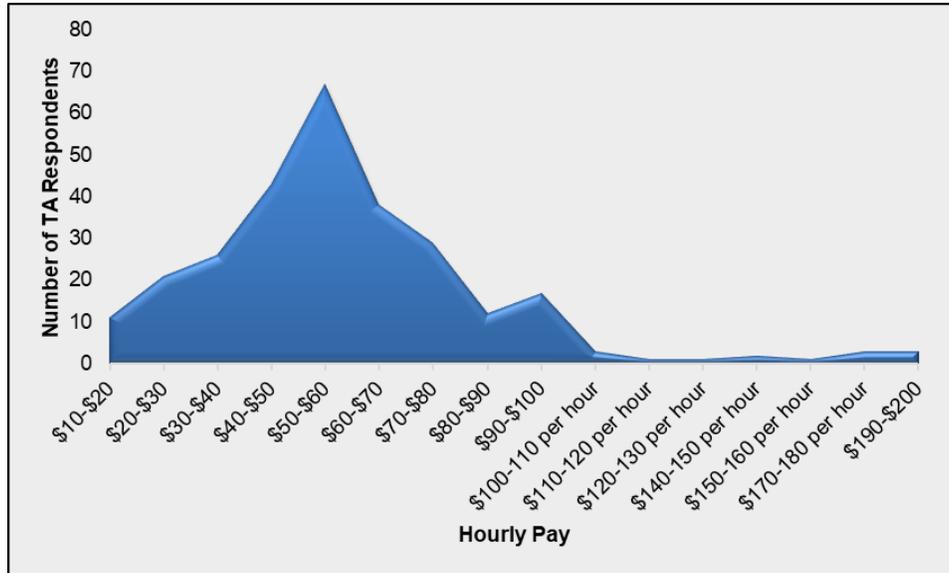


**Figure 7: TA Total Annual Income (from all sources of income)**



**Figure 8: Percentage of Income from TA Work**

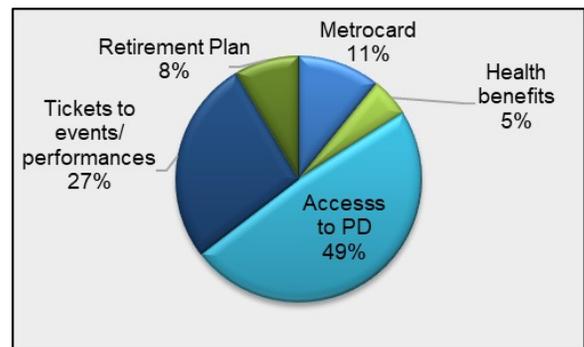
**52% of TAs made an annual income of \$35,000 or less.**



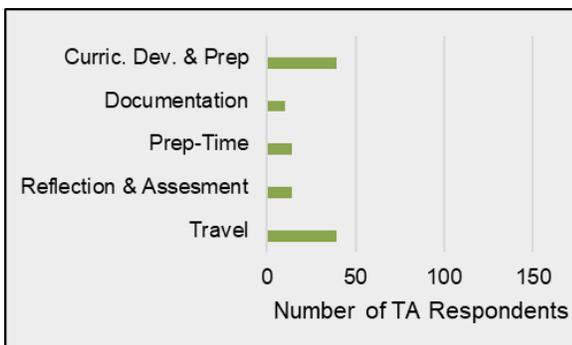
**Figure 9: TA Estimated Hourly Pay (Base Pay)**

Only 14% of gigs have TAs bill separately for curriculum development and lesson planning.

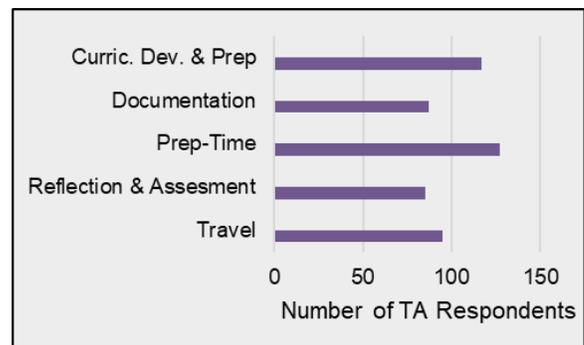
65% of gigs reported an estimated rate of hourly pay (base pay) to be \$60/hour or less. In addition to teaching time, respondents reported base pay was inclusive of compensation for curriculum development and lesson planning, documentation, reflection and assessment, and travel. Only 14% of gigs reported on in the survey have TAs bill separately for curriculum development and lesson planning or travel. TAs reported information on additional benefits, outside of base pay, received by their TA gigs with access to professional development being the highest reported benefit.



**Figure 10: Additional Benefits**



**Figure 11: Billed for Separately**



**Figure 12: Included in Base Pay**

## WHAT IS NEW YORK CITY DOING WELL?

The majority of TA gigs surveyed (71%) are paying their TAs as employees and not as independent contractors, therefore taking a portion of the self-employment tax burden off of the TA. However, of the 29% of gigs that are paying TAs as independent contractors, 80% are for arts and non-profit organizations which should be compensating TAs as employees according to New York State Labor Law. New York State Labor law specifies that an employer-employee relationship is one where an employer directly supervises an employee, sets the hours of work, sets the rate of pay, evaluates job performance, and reserves the right to review and approve a work product (Independent Contractors, n.d.).

**Non-profit organizations should compensate TAs as employees according to New York State Labor Law.**

TAs in New York City make an average hourly base pay of \$60/hour, which is higher than the \$40/hour national average found in a 2011 study by NORC at the University of Chicago on the TA field (Rabkin, N., Reynolds, M., Hedber, E., Shelby, J. p. 9).

## WHAT CAN NEW YORK CITY IMPROVE ON?

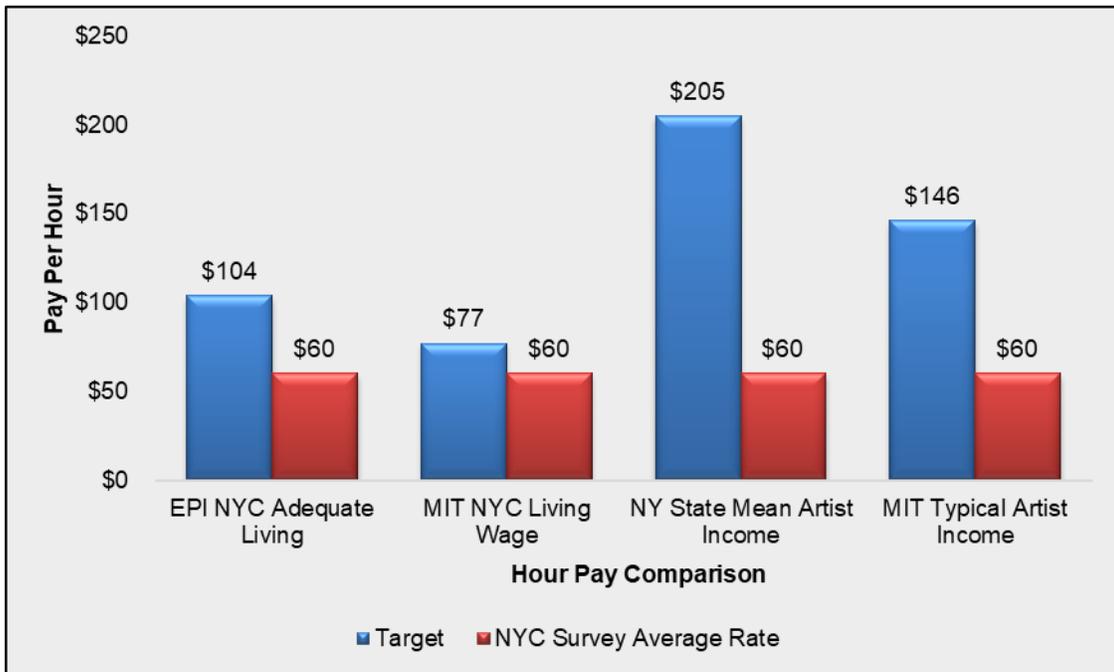
### Pay

While the New York City TA average hourly pay is higher than the national average with available data, this average wage does not meet living wage data for NYC, or compare to the mean wage for artists in New York City. The Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) Family Budget Calculator estimates a single person with no children to need an annual income of \$43,519 in the New York metro area in order to attain a modest, yet adequate, standard of living (Family Budget Calculator, 2016). MIT Living Wage calculators estimate a living wage to be \$32,241 in NYC (Living Wage Calculation, 2017). More than half of TAs surveyed make less than \$35,000/yr. 75% of TAs surveyed make \$45,000 or less per year. The New York State Department of Labor indicates that the average annual income for persons in New York City in Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media professions is \$86,210. They also list an entry level annual income for this occupation as \$39,100 (Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, 2016). MIT research indicates the typical annual salary in NYC for the same occupation to be \$61,170 (Typical Annual Salaries, 2017). The average annual income for TAs surveyed in this report was \$38,185.

**The average annual income for TAs surveyed was \$38,185**

The TAA Committee estimates there to be 42 weeks per year of paid TA work (40 weeks of school per year, plus 6 weeks of summer work, minus 4 weeks at the beginning and end of the school year and days devoted to standardized testing). An estimated heavy teaching load of 10 classes per week, teaching a morning and afternoon gig each day, equals 420 hours of available work per year. A full-time TA, whose only source of income is TA work would need to earn \$104/hour to meet the

EPIs modest, yet, adequate, standard of living of \$43,519. To meet the New York State Department of Labor's mean income for persons in the Arts of \$86,210 a full-time TA teaching 10 classes per week would need to earn \$205/hour.



**Figure 13: Comparison of NYC Survey Average Hourly Rates**

**Raises, Tenure, and Career Longevity**

Nearly half of all TA respondents in this survey had only worked for an organization between 0-3 years. When asked how long TAs would continue to work in the field, only 23% responded that they definitely plan to keep working as a TA. Of the TAs who reported working for an organization for 8 or more years, 25% had never received a raise. Of those who worked for an organization for 13 or more years, 19% had never received a raise.

**Gender Pay**

In general, although female identified TAs make up a majority of the TA employment market in New York City, male identified TAs are the higher earners. 24% of female identified TAs earn less than \$40/hour, compared to 1% of male TAs. 10% of male TAs earn \$100/hour or more compared to 3% of female TAs. Twice as many male than female TAs earn in the highest reported pay bracket of \$190-\$200/hr.

**Only 23% of TAs responded that they definitely plan to keep working as a TA.**



## CONCLUSION

There is a TA pay gap in NYC. No TA should be earning less than a living wage for their work anywhere in the country. Given the level of quality the NYC arts and arts education fields require TAs to perform at, the average TA wages should reflect that quality standard. Research indicates that even the lowest NYC living wage calculation from MIT of \$32,241 would still require a full time TA to be paid at \$77/hour. A \$17 gap from the average reported rate in this survey.

The Teaching Artist Guild (TAG), a member driven national organization committed to the professionalization and visibility of artists who teach (About, 2018) released a beta version of a TA Pay Rate Calculator in the fall of 2017 (Teaching Artist Pay Rate Calculator, 2017). This calculator is modeled off the Economic Policy Institute's (EPI) Living Wage Calculator. In addition to factoring in location and size of family, the TA Pay Rate Calculator also considers the size of the organization the TA works for and how many years of TA experience the TA has. This formula calculates an hourly wage based on a 40 hour work week (Teaching Artists Guild, 2017). For a master level teaching artist, TAG calculates a rate at 200% of the EPI adequate living wage, \$87,038, roughly the same amount as the NY State mean artist income. TAG subsequently calculates an additional 25% for medium sized organizations and 50% for large organization (K. Allen, personal communication, January 25, 2018).

As the current TA employment market gives TAs little negotiating power for rates, the TAA Committee believes the responsibility for increasing TA wages in NYC falls on the organizations that employ them. The TAA Committee seeks to use the data from this report to support conversations with organizations to advocate for compensating NYC TAs at or above a living wage at a rate of \$80-\$200/hour dependent on experience level and size of organization. Other areas of compensation best practices include, offering additional benefits such as retirement savings options (matched or unmatched), compensation for transportation costs and time, flexible spending accounts, health benefits, and raises for education, merit, and tenure.

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