

# Despite some setbacks, CS salaries continue climb

by Julie E. Williamson

While many would agree that the Central Service profession, on a whole, may still not receive the recognition and respect it deserves, it does appear that the technicians, supervisors, managers, and directors who keep the cogs turning in the vital department are making some significant inroads.

Healthcare Purchasing News' 2008 CS Salary Survey, which drew a record-breaking 249 respondents (up nearly 30% over 2007 totals), garnered some key insights - many of which go beyond which CS professionals are reaping the biggest financial rewards.

That said, overall, across-the-board salaries are holding their own, with the average CS salary coming in just under \$50,000. Although that figure is nearly \$2,300 less than what was reported in 2007, it's important to realize that each year brings a different respondent pool - and different job titles - which can affect the data and prevent a true "apples to apples" comparison. The 2008 survey, for example, had greater representation from CS technicians/coordinators (17% versus 9% in 2007), which could help explain the salary differential.

As one might expect, CS directors were the highest earners, with average salaries topping \$65,600. CS managers drew the second highest income with an average salary of \$60,846 - a roughly \$2,600 jump over last year's reported earnings for those with the same title. CS supervisors' salaries climbed

from \$41,056 in 2007 to nearly \$45,000 in 2008. Educators, who reported a \$54,520 salary in 2007, noted a much lower salary of \$40,833 in 2008 (again, a different set of respondents with varying experience and professional backgrounds could account for the decline), while average CS technician salaries of \$33,095 stayed relatively on par with last year's reported earnings. Surgical instrument technician salaries jumped significantly, on the other hand, with respondents earning \$31,385 versus \$25,000 in 2007.

Despite some notable salary fluctuations, industry professionals believe that, overall, the figures are good news for the CS discipline.

"It's great to see that people in this profession are earning this kind money," said Jean Sargent, director of supply chain management for University of Kentucky Healthcare, Lexington. The reported salary of \$79,000 for CS directors with a Bachelor's Degree particularly caught Sargent's attention.

"Seeing salaries close to the \$80,000 mark is very exciting and just goes to show that the opportunities are there."

## Knowledge is (salary) power

The fact that respondents earning the highest salaries are those who, by and large, hold secondary degrees underscores the value of education and professional advancement.

In fact, as the survey showed, salary is often affected more by education than on-the-

job experience. CS professionals with a Bachelor's Degree who have worked fewer than two years in CS, for example, make more than twice as much as their high school graduate counterparts (\$66,875 versus \$30,000). Associate's Degrees can also translate into bigger paychecks, although in this case the increase appears largely dependent upon the number of years spent in CS. Associate's degreed staffers with 20 to 24 years experience earn \$55,403, while those working in CS for two to four years earn \$16,590 less, survey respondents reported.

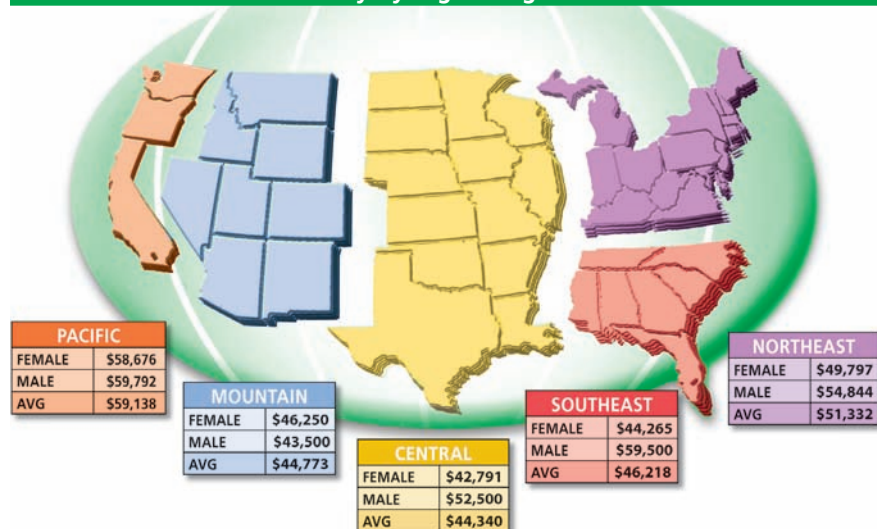
Interestingly, though, that's not always the case. As this year's survey revealed, degreed employees with minimal CS experience can earn significantly more than their more experienced counterparts. Specifically, the survey showed that average salaries for employees with Bachelor's Degrees who have been on the job for less than two years

See **SALARY** on page 40

## Salary by years in CS & education

Time	Degree	Salary
Less than 2	High-school	\$30,000
Less than 2	Associate's Deg.	\$47,500
Less than 2	Bachelor's Deg.	\$66,875
Less than 2	Post-grad	\$77,500
Less than 2	AVERAGE	\$56,563
2 - 4	High-school	\$34,778
2 - 4	Associate's Deg.	\$38,813
2 - 4	Bachelor's Deg.	\$45,000
2 - 4	Post-grad	\$45,000
2 - 4	AVERAGE	\$38,262
5 - 9	High-school	\$32,857
5 - 9	Associate's Deg.	\$49,808
5 - 9	Bachelor's Deg.	\$45,357
5 - 9	Post-grad	\$70,833
5 - 9	AVERAGE	\$44,257
10 - 14	High-school	\$38,804
10 - 14	Associate's Deg.	\$67,250
10 - 14	Bachelor's Deg.	\$51,944
10 - 14	Post-grad	\$47,500
10 - 14	AVERAGE	\$48,298
15 - 19	High-school	\$43,750
15 - 19	Associate's Deg.	\$54,750
15 - 19	Bachelor's Deg.	\$61,667
15 - 19	Post-grad	\$53,750
15 - 19	AVERAGE	\$50,188
20 - 24	High-school	\$44,405
20 - 24	Associate's Deg.	\$55,403
20 - 24	Bachelor's Deg.	\$72,500
20 - 24	Post-grad	\$58,750
20 - 24	AVERAGE	\$53,542

## Salary by region & gender



## SALARY from page 38

earn nearly \$22,000 more than those with two to four years experience. Those with Associate's Degrees and less than two years experience also earned more than those with the same educational background in the two to four year experience range (\$47,500 versus \$38,813, respectively). As one might expect, overall, CS professionals with a high school education made modest, incremental salary increases as they logged more time on the job.

Some of the higher salaries for lesser experienced employees could mean that employers are willing to pay more for educated individuals entering the profession, Sargent explained, noting that because employees have these degrees, they may be able to command more money from the start. And even though they may not have worked in CS very long, they may have come from other departments or disciplines, meaning that the level of experience they bring to the table could help justify the higher salary.

Richard Schule, director of Clinical Sterile Processes for Clarian Health Partners' Methodist Hospital, Indianapolis, IN, further pointed out the higher education warrants higher

salaries because it raises the level of quality and excellence within the discipline and beyond.

"CS professionals should continue to raise the bar. One way to accomplish this is through higher education," he stressed. "A well-rounded technician, supervisor and/or manager, is better equipped to assist the customer through their exposure to higher learning."

Formal college programs aren't the only way employees can enhance their knowledge and command higher salaries, however. In fact, those who regularly participate in continuing education opportunities may also see their salaries inch upward, while also driving quality and garnering much-deserved respect from administrators, managers and customers.

As the 2008 survey showed, CS professionals who earn no continuing education units make nearly \$10,000 less than those who earn a modest five to nine CEUs (\$38,611 and \$48,398, respectively). If that weren't enough incentive to commit to continuing education, consider this: respondents who received ten to 14 CEUs made \$54,683, and that figure

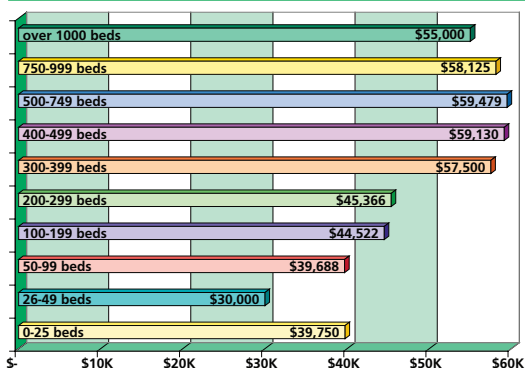
climbed to more than \$56,000 for those who logged 20 or more CEUs.

"This just goes to show that when it comes to continuing education, you really do reap what you sow," assured Sargent.

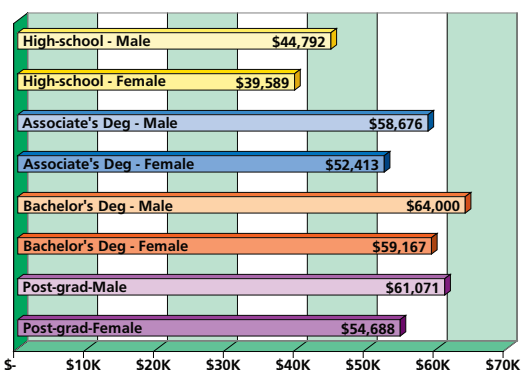
## An eye on certifications, affiliations

As the CS profession aims to increase awareness regarding its vital role in the delivery of quality patient care, there's been a growing emphasis placed on certification. More states are setting the ball in motion to follow in New Jersey's footsteps with mandatory certification,

### Salary by number of beds



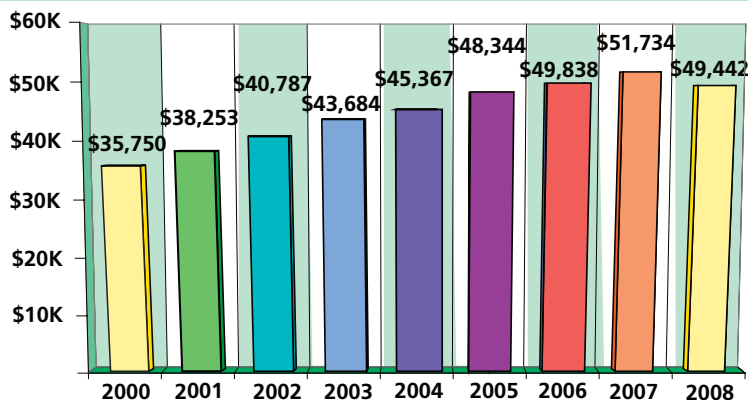
### Salary by gender & education



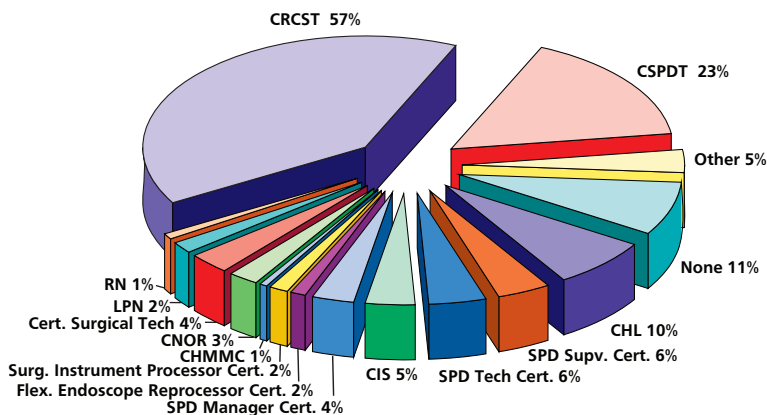
### Salary by title & education

Title	Degree	Salary
CS Director	High-school	\$50,833
CS Director	Associate's Deg.	\$75,833
CS Director	Bachelor's Deg.	\$79,000
CS Director	Post-grad	\$52,500
CS Director	AVERAGE	\$65,667
CS Manager	High-school	\$50,735
CS Manager	Associate's Deg.	\$61,400
CS Manager	Bachelor's Deg.	\$71,731
CS Manager	Post-grad	\$62,500
CS Manager	AVERAGE	\$60,846
CS Supervisor	High-school	\$41,929
CS Supervisor	Associate's Deg.	\$50,139
CS Supervisor	Bachelor's Deg.	\$45,833
CS Supervisor	Post-grad	\$45,000
CS Supervisor	AVERAGE	\$44,925
CS Technician/coordinator	High-school	\$32,000
CS Technician/coordinator	Associate's Deg.	\$37,500
CS Technician/coordinator	Bachelor's Deg.	\$35,833
CS Technician/coordinator	Post-grad	\$32,500
CS Technician/coordinator	AVERAGE	\$33,095
Educator	High-school	\$40,000
Educator	Post-grad	\$42,500
Educator	AVERAGE	\$40,833

### Salary Survey History 2000 - 2008



### Certifications



# CENTRAL SERVICES

for example, and many healthcare facilities across the country are now requiring that their technicians become certified.

Beyond that, many facilities are supporting their CS professionals by implementing continuing education and certification programs that promote more advanced, specialized skill set development within the discipline.

The 2008 salary survey validated this push for certification. More than half (57%) of respondents are IAHCSSM Certified Registered Central Service Technicians and nearly one-quarter (23%) hold CSPDT technician certification through the Certification Board for Sterile Processing and Distribution (CBSPD). Respondents held a wide range of other certifications as well. Ten percent of respondents are certified in Healthcare Leadership (CHL); six percent hold SPD Supervisor Certification and SPD Tech Certification, and 5% reported that they are Certified Instrument Specialists (CIS). Four percent of respondents are certified surgical techs and certified SPD managers, while 2% are certified flexible endoscope reproprocessors and surgical instrument processors. Nurses also comprised a small portion of this year's respondent pool, with 1% and 2% holding RN and LPN designations, respectively, and 3% holding the certified operating room nurses (CNOR) credential.

"I predict even more CS professionals will embrace certification opportunities as their employers develop career ladder programs that reward staff for their commitment to professional advancement," explained Don Gordon, central

service processing director for New York City's Hospital for Special Surgery.

Affiliations with professional organizations related to CS can also go a long way toward driving quality within the discipline – and, in turn, that may also lead to higher salaries. Although 72% of respondents are IAHCSSM members and another 14% belong to CBSPD, involvement in other organizations that have direct tie-ins to CS appears far less evident.

"It seems there are some missed opportunities in terms of membership involvement, particularly where it involves infection control – and that's a real shame because CS and infection control really should be working hand in hand," said Sargent.

Despite the overlap between CS and infection control, only 0.4% of respondents are members of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control & Epidemiology (APIC). Also noteworthy is that only 3% of respondents are members of The Association for Healthcare Resource & Materials Management (AHRMM), even though many CS employees have materials management responsibilities.

## Gender gap still wide

Another apparent drawback identified by the 2008 CS Salary Survey is the lingering salary gap between male and female employees.

In every region but Mountain, female employees earned significantly less than their male counterparts (women in Mountain states earn \$46,250 versus \$43,500 for men). According to the survey findings, the pay difference is particularly prevalent in the Southeast and Central regions, with females earning \$15,235 less and \$9,709 less than males, respectively. In the Northeast, female CS professionals' salaries averaged \$49,797, whereas male respondents received \$54,844. The gender pay gap was narrowest in the Pacific region. The combined salary average totaled \$59,138 (the highest of all regions), with female respondents reporting an average pay of \$58,676 and male respondents earning roughly \$1,100 more.

Again, though, it's important to point out that a commitment to education pays big dividends for both genders.

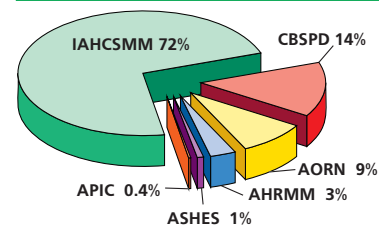
"If you compare the increase percentage in salary, females receive a greater salary increase for achieving their Bachelor's Degree," noted Schule, referring to the data presented in the "Salary by Gender & Education" chart on Page 40. "One could argue that compensation for higher education is certainly in their favor."

Of course, while salaries are undoubtedly important to any employee, CS professionals should also not underestimate how their

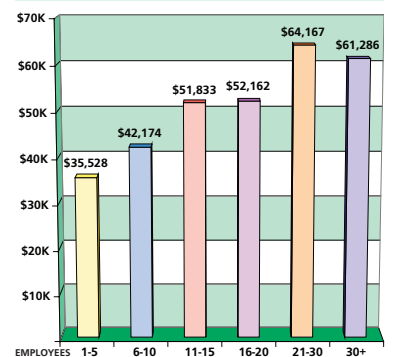
efforts to improve quality through education and skill development opportunities improve quality – both in and out of the department.

Added Schule: "Although the opportunity to serve our customers with higher educated CS professionals is synonymous with higher salaries, we must not forget that raising the bar through higher education also allows us to improve the products and services we provide." **HPN**

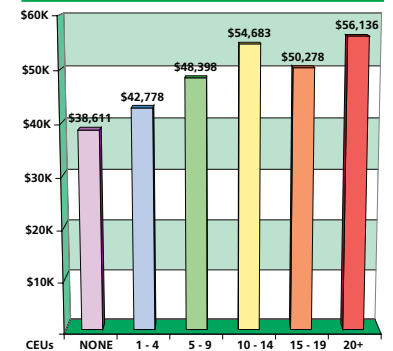
## Membership in Associations



## Salary by department size



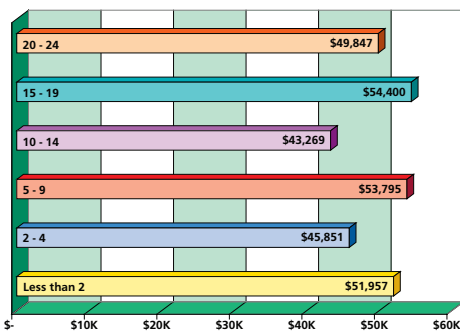
## Salary by CEUs per year



## Salary by location and type of facility

Location of Facility	
Rural	\$41,169
Suburban	\$49,807
Urban	\$54,879
Type of Facility	
For profit	\$43,520
Government-owned	\$42,115
Nonprofit	\$51,758

## Salary by years in current facility



## Salary by kind of facility

