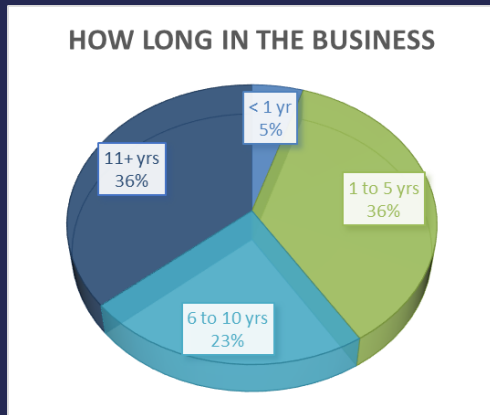


About the survey

This survey was distributed to comics writers (including graphic novelists), and posted on a comics writers website.

A total of 61 people responded to the survey, collectively providing payment information for a total of 106 works.

About the respondents



Respondents were asked how long they have been publishing comics and/or graphic novels. As shown above, only 5% had been in the business less than a year; 36% had 1 to 5 years in the business; 23% had 6 to 10 years in the business, and 36% had been in the business for 11 years or more. Six respondents in the latter group had been in the business for more than 20 years.

When asked the date of their most recent publications, most respondents (93%) indicated publication dates in 2019 or later. The remainder had their most recent publications between 2016 and 2018.

2020/2021 Comics Committee Survey: Rate Survey for Comics Writers

Pay rates for writing



Respondents were asked to provide information regarding up to ten works.

The charts above show the highest, lowest, and median (middle) response for writers for each payment type: page rate, advance and other. The median was used rather than the mathematical average because the latter is more affected by outliers.

For rate per page, while the high response was \$100, the median response of \$60 was closer to the low response.

For advances, there was a wide range from low to high, with a median of \$9,400. **Special note: the low advance of \$50 was for a very short (four-page) work; \$1,000 was the low advance for works normally paid in this manner.**

For writers paid another way, the range from low to high, as well as the median, was similar to those paid by way of advances. The median was \$8,780. When asked to explain the payment mechanism for these other ways, half explained they were paid royalties only (no advance).

Companion survey: Asking editors, publishers & agents

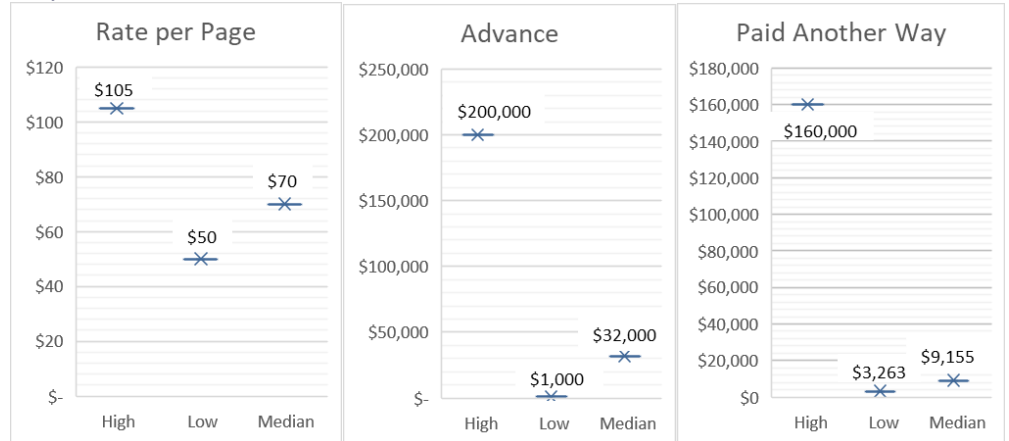
In addition to this survey of comics writers, the SFWA Comics Committee also surveyed editors, publishers and agents who work in comics to gain their advice on minimum professional pay rates. The results of this survey are available in a separate document.

Together, these surveys will inform the Comics Committee as it proceeds in its work to establish guidelines for the admission of comics writers into SFWA.

This analysis, performed by Lettie Prell in January 2021, is sourced from a survey conducted by the Comic Writers Committee in Winter 2020. Committee Members: Alison Wilgus (Chairperson), Shaenon Garrity, Jessica Maison, and Tim Susman. Directors-At-Large: Phoebe Barton, Monica Valentinelli.

Pay rates: When the writer is also the artist

The majority of works for which payment information was submitted were in cases where the respondent was both the writer and the artist. The charts below, in comparison with the writer-only data on the previous page, indicate that page rates payments are not all that different for the writer/artist. Advances and other means of payment, however, are generally higher than writer-only payments, with the exception of the median for “paid another way”, which is in line with writer-only medians.



Income streams for writer/artists who are “paid another way” more commonly made greater use of Kickstarter, Patreon and crowdfunding (over half of respondents), and direct sales, compared with the “writer only” group.

Further detail regarding payments by age category as well as by publisher are also being made available to the SFWA Comics Committee.

Other considerations

In addition to this summary, more detailed information is being provided comparing average pay rates by age category, and also by publisher name (where that information was provided by respondents). Both lists compute average pay for writer-only separately from writer/artist. General observations of these lists include:

- Age category of a work does not consistently indicate whether a writer or writer/artist will be paid more or less on average.
- While some publishers do not pay large advances for works on average, their average page rates are often similar to, or higher than, publishers who generally pay substantially higher advances.

Regarding the latter point, some respondents used space designated for explanation of “other pay” to let us know that they received royalties in addition to their advances. That is, advances in some cases (particularly lower than average ones) may not be an adequate indicator of income generated from a work.