

COMPENSATION FOR CLEARED CANDIDATES IN THE U.S. SOUTHEAST





COMPENSATION FOR CLEARED CANDIDATES IN THE U.S. SOUTHEAST:
ALABAMA, ARKANSAS, GEORGIA, KENTUCKY, MISSISSIPPI, NORTH CAROLINA, PUERTO RICO, SOUTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE, VIRGIN ISLANDS, VIRGINIA, WEST VIRGINIA

Life below the Mason-Dixon line has more than just sweet tea for cleared candidates. In fact, 42% of the cleared population call the Southeast their home. With warm, humid summers and mild winters, the southeastern region is an enjoyable place to live and work. The region is rich with opportunities for blue collar and white collar workers. With a variety of housing options, cleared candidates can find the best of all worlds in the Southeast.

Defense contractors offer cleared candidates a variety of options throughout the Southeast. From Booz Allen in Virginia, Raytheon in Kentucky, Huntington Ingalls Incorporated in Mississippi, and Lockheed Martin in Puerto Rico, cleared candidates have a lot of employers and states to pick from. While Virginia’s average housing price is \$350,000, West Virginia is only \$122,000. Other locations like North Carolina have an average housing price of \$284,000. Although housing prices vary depending on the state, so does compensation.

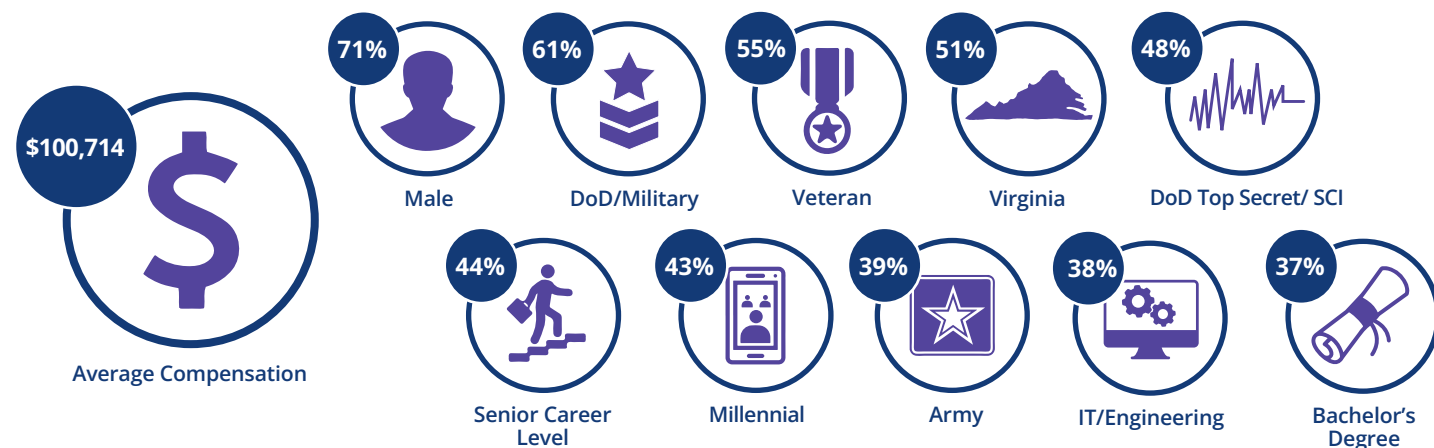
Average total compensation in the Southeast is \$100,714 - a 1% decrease year-over-year. As more candidates look for lower cost areas for their cleared careers, it takes time for regional compensation to reset. The Southeast remains an attractive region for businesses, with states like Florida offering a streamlined regulatory environment and a pro-business approach.

Total Compensation

	2020	2021	% Change
Average Total Compensation	\$102,202	\$100,714	-1%

THE SOUTHEAST AT A GLANCE

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS OF CLEARED EMPLOYEES



Clearance and Compensation Levels

When it comes to compensation, security clearances matter. The harder it is to fill a role, the higher the compensation. Those with a Lifestyle or Full Scope Polygraph earned on average \$119,573 in 2021, which is \$13,115 more than a Top Secret

clearance. Intel also continues to be the highest paying clearance, proving that it pays to be trusted. But while clearance levels are important, it's only one number in the overall earning power equation.

Total Compensation by Clearance

	2020	2021	% Change
Dept of Defense Confidential	\$82,640	\$76,721	-7%
Dept of Defense Secret	\$86,997	\$83,447	4%
Dept of Defense Top Secret	\$106,747	\$106,458	0%
Dept of Defense Top Secret/SCI	\$110,500	\$110,712	0%
Dept of Energy (Q or L)	\$112,973	\$101,109	-10%
Intelligence Agency (CIA, FBI, NSA)	\$132,330	\$133,036	1%
Dept of Homeland Security	\$97,772	\$100,651	3%
Public Trust	\$80,152	\$85,467	7%
Other Government Agency	\$99,465	\$97,313	-2%

Experience and Education Compensation Levels

The higher you climb on the career ladder in the Southeast, the higher the compensation. Respondents note a significant jump from mid-level to senior-level roles. Getting over the 10-year mark translates to over \$25,000 more in compensation. Because the Southeast has multiple states with lower cost of living, compensation for the region is more middle of the road - even at the senior

level. Candidates with over 10 years of experience can earn more in the Northeast or West; however, the Southeast also pays senior-level candidates \$7,000-\$10,000 more than the Midwest and Southwest. With a multitude of cleared options in the Southeast, cleared candidates have more opportunities to jump around when compensation isn't where it needs to be.

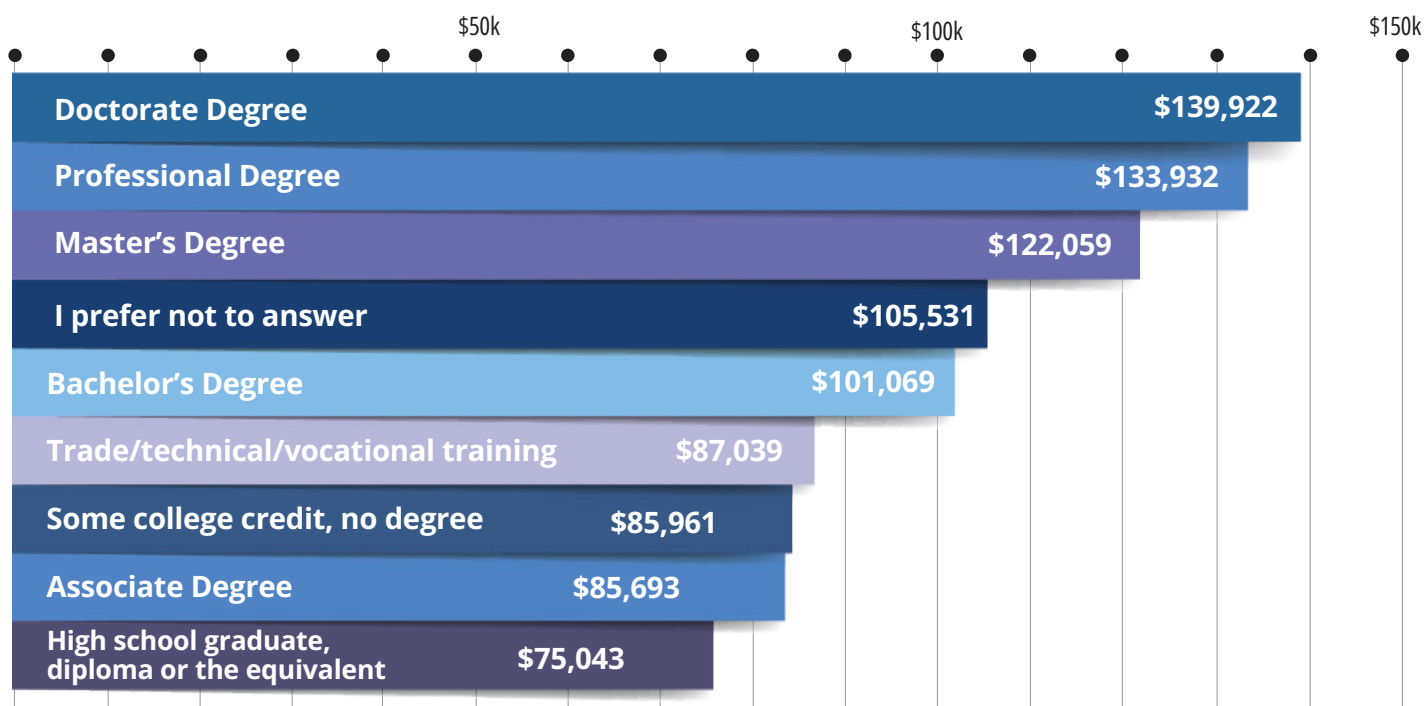
Compensation by Career Level

	2020	2021	% Change
Entry Level (less than 2 yrs experience)	\$59,268	\$61,460	4%
Early Career (2+ yrs experience)	\$69,474	\$71,212	3%
Mid Level Career (5+ yrs experience)	\$83,644	\$85,160	2%
Senior Level Career (10+ yrs experience)	\$111,294	\$110,969	0%
Management (Manager/Director of Staff)	\$133,958	\$133,356	0%
Executive (SVP, EVP, VP)	\$183,610	\$163,388	-11%
Senior Executive (President, CEO)	\$179,683	\$190,803	6%

Albert Einstein once said, "Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death." The good news is that a learning mindset also translates to higher compensation. And with colleges and universities throughout the Southeast, cleared employees have many opportunities to further their knowledge and increase their earning potential. Going for a master's translates to an average of \$21,000 more than a bachelor's in the Southeast.

The median annual salary for all individuals with a high school diploma is \$38,792. Those with a highschool diploma and a security clearance earn \$75,043 annually. The pay gap continues up the education ladder for clearance holders, proving that a role in national security translates to higher pay - no matter the education level. Cleared jobs hubs throughout the Southeast mean jobs for both blue and white collar workers.

Compensation by Education Level



Average Compensation by State



Alabama: \$95,626
6.4% Respondents



Arkansas: \$81,351
0.5% Respondents



Florida: \$95,105
17.5% Respondents



Georgia: \$86,900
7.4% Respondents



Kentucky: \$80,882
1.1% Respondents



Louisiana: \$82,891
1.6% Respondents



Mississippi: \$79,751
0.9% Respondents



North Carolina: \$89,928
6.3% Respondents



Puerto Rico: \$84,783
0.1% Respondents



South Carolina: \$83,968
3.8% Respondents



Tennessee: \$90,103
2.0% Respondents



Virgin Island: \$110,000
0.03% Respondents



Virginia: \$110,096
51.3% Respondents



West Virginia: \$85,302
1.0% Respondents

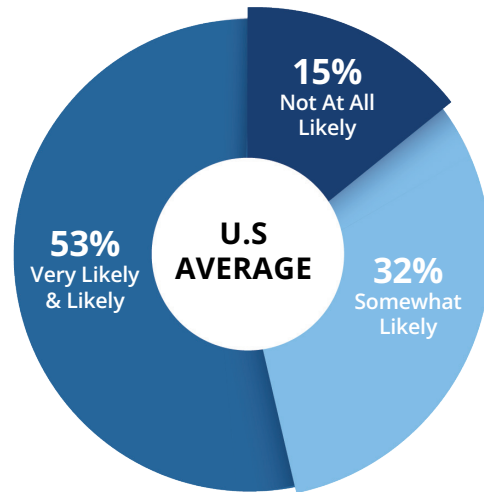
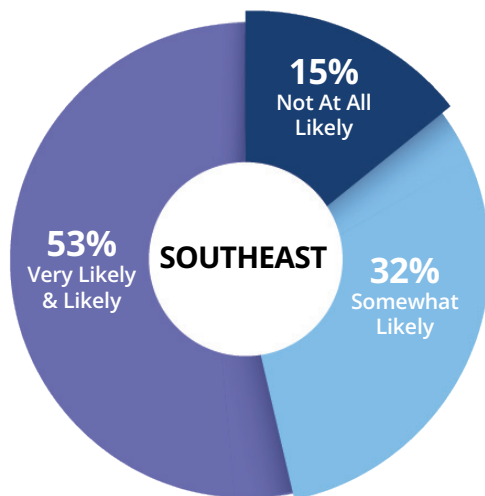
Although Virginia boasts the highest percentage of respondents in the Southeast (51%), don't sleep on Florida. With its lower cost of living and growing presence in national security, Florida continues to shine. Dollars in Florida go a little farther thanks to lower tax rates. Virginia does offer the highest average compensation, but it also has the highest cost of living to match. But where there's high cost, there is also a lot of opportunity - especially around the Pentagon. Alabama is continually growing its national security footprint and national recognition. Huntsville - aka Rocket City - was named the best place to live in America by U.S. News and World Report for 2022. In May, President Joe Biden visited Lockheed Martin in Troy, AL, to recognize their role supporting the defense of Ukraine. From contractors to government agencies, the Southeast has a diverse range of opportunities and a number of benefits.

Job Hopping in the Southeast

Candidates in the Southeast are similar to the national average in their desire to keep their options open. Cleared hubs continue to grow in different regions, and while the Southeast will feel that competition, their presence is also growing outside of Virginia. Not surprisingly, in the Southeast, those who are ready to jump ship earn \$12,000 less than respondents with zero plans to look around at other options. When it comes to retention strategies, compensation is still consistently the number one factor in getting an employee to stick around longer.



Likelihood of changing jobs/employer in the next year



TOP 10 HIGHEST PAYING JOBS IN THE SOUTHEAST

While systems and software engineering are in the top three, the cleared sales professional takes the top spot for a high-paying job in the Southeast. And the six-figure salaries didn't just end with the top 10 for the Southeast. Other jobs, like military and law enforcement, finance, or intelligence bring in six-figure salaries, too. The Southeast has the opportunities and the compensation.

JOB	AVERAGE COMPENSATION
Business Sales	\$134,099
IT-Software	\$130,025
Systems Engineering	\$128,551
Project and Program Management	\$124,786
Data Science	\$120,081
Legal	\$114,880
Cybersecurity	\$112,080
QA Testing	\$111,989
Civil Engineering	\$111,421
Database Administration	\$110,605

The cost of living in the Southeast is relatively low, and locals are never far from mountains, beaches, or both. Mild winters offer the chance to spend time outdoors year-round, and miles of beaches and plenty of parks and forests provide the perfect place to spend time outside of the office. The area boasts professional and collegiate sports teams, amazing cuisine, and plenty of charm and hospitality.

Major corporations and federal agencies are continually spreading out in the region, with a national security presence increasing in states like Florida and Alabama. With a moderate cost of living for the majority of the region, the Southeast is a dream for cleared professionals who want to give back and get back and enjoy the diverse opportunities the region has to offer.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT OUR SURVEY

The 2022 Security Clearance Compensation Survey was administered online by ClearanceJobs from September 17, 2021 and December 31, 2021. In 2021, there were 52,028 survey participants, an increase of 14% over the 2020 survey. After excluding survey respondents without a security clearance, unemployed, active-duty military, students, those whose compensation was below \$18,000 or above \$300,000, and finally incomplete or duplicate questionnaires, there remained 24,089 usable responses in 2021. ClearanceJobs studied the following five regions across the United States: northeast, southeast, midwest, southwest, and west.

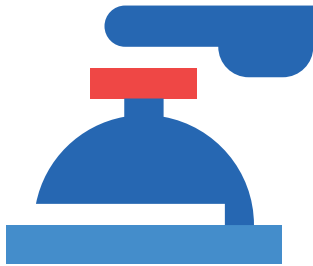
The southeast region had 8,803 usable responses. Survey results are compared to the 8,352 usable responses captured in 2020 that followed the same parameters.

ClearanceJobs®

A MODERN MARKETPLACE FOR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
IN NATIONAL SECURITY

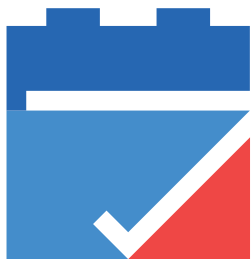
ClearanceJobs is your all-in-one recruiting solution. Much like a CRM, our unique system lets you target top candidate leads, converting cool passives to active candidates ready to make a move—to your company.

STRUGGLING TO HIRE? TRY OUR SOURCING SERVICES



ClearanceJobs Sourcing Services matches you with a dedicated recruiting team that actively sources engaged cleared candidates, reviews their skills, and performs phone screens—all in a cost-efficient way, so you can make the best hires within your budget.

CHECK OUT CLEARANCEJOBS CAREER EVENTS



Our **career events** are turnkey—scheduled, organized, and advertised to deliver prime cleared candidates for you in person and virtual. Simply show up! With over 20 career fairs held each year throughout the country, ClearanceJobs Career Events is the leading producer of career fairs catering to security-cleared professionals.

Want to learn more?

Connect with a ClearanceJobs Recruiting Specialist today at 1.866.302.7264
or visit our website at www.clearancejobs.com