

# THE 2023 SECURITY CLEARANCE COMPENSATION REPORT

THE YEAR OF  
UPWARD TRENDS



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# 2023 SECURITY CLEARANCE COMPENSATION REPORT

A letter from our President and Founder, Evan Lesser

Cleared compensation is increasing, according to the results of the 2023 Security Clearance Compensation Survey. After several years of struggling with pandemic impacts and workforce shifts, the salary increases in the survey were decisive with the average respondent reporting a 7% increase in compensation. The demand for cleared talent continues to outpace the supply, and cleared employers are responding by showing candidates the money.

Across the country today, it pays to be cleared. The percentage of cleared professionals hitting the six-figure mark continues to increase, and today more than half of states (26) have average total compensation of over \$100,000. And while the number of D.C. metro respondents dipped slightly, the nation's capital remains king with both the largest overall number of respondents and the highest compensation.

The state of the national security job market remains strong, and as the commercial sector struggles, the benefits of national security work are clear. Finding, attracting, and keeping the right talent remains incredibly difficult. While much is made of the importance of mission, one should never undercut compensation as the critical factor motivating employees. When asked to pick the things their employer could change to increase their happiness and engagement, higher compensation was more than double the other options.



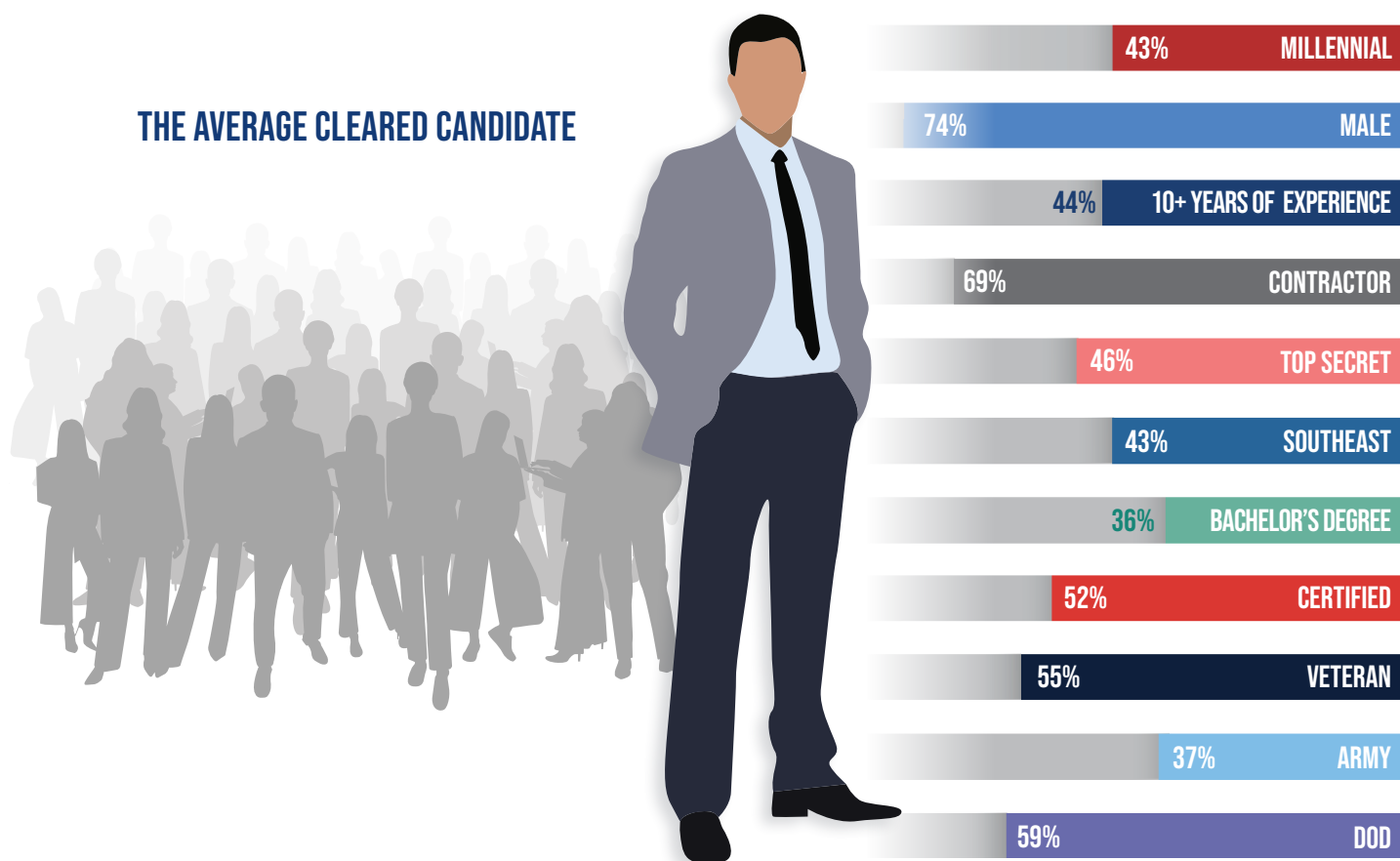
President and Founder of ClearanceJobs

## OVERVIEW: KEY CHANGES YEAR-OVER YEAR

Forget 'quiet quitting' or other cute terms coined in 2022. In national security, the job market was hot. From the siren song of industry for continued remote work to inflation increasing overhead costs, companies faced rising challenges in onboarding enough cleared candidates.

Cleared candidates saw a significant compensation increase in 2022. For a niche community, even small shifts can signal major changes. For 2022, average total compensation increased by 7% to \$108,611. In prior years, bonuses and high salaries were reserved for key positions. Now, over half of the cleared population earns a six-figure salary. Despite industry shifts since 2020, companies have found ways to keep up with compensation demands. Cleared candidates pushed for more, and companies responded. Over half of the respondents received bonuses this past year, and over two-thirds got an increase in their base pay in 2022.

### THE AVERAGE CLEARED CANDIDATE



What does the average cleared candidate look like? While the dial moves incrementally in changing the faces of national security, based on the highest averages in different categories, typically, you find a millennial, white male, or someone with a Top Secret clearance. You're more likely to find an Army veteran, a candidate from the southeast region for the DoD, or someone with 10+ years of experience. The average cleared candidate has at least one certification, a bachelor's degree, with some remote or hybrid-work options available.

## COMPENSATION BY CLEARANCE LEVEL

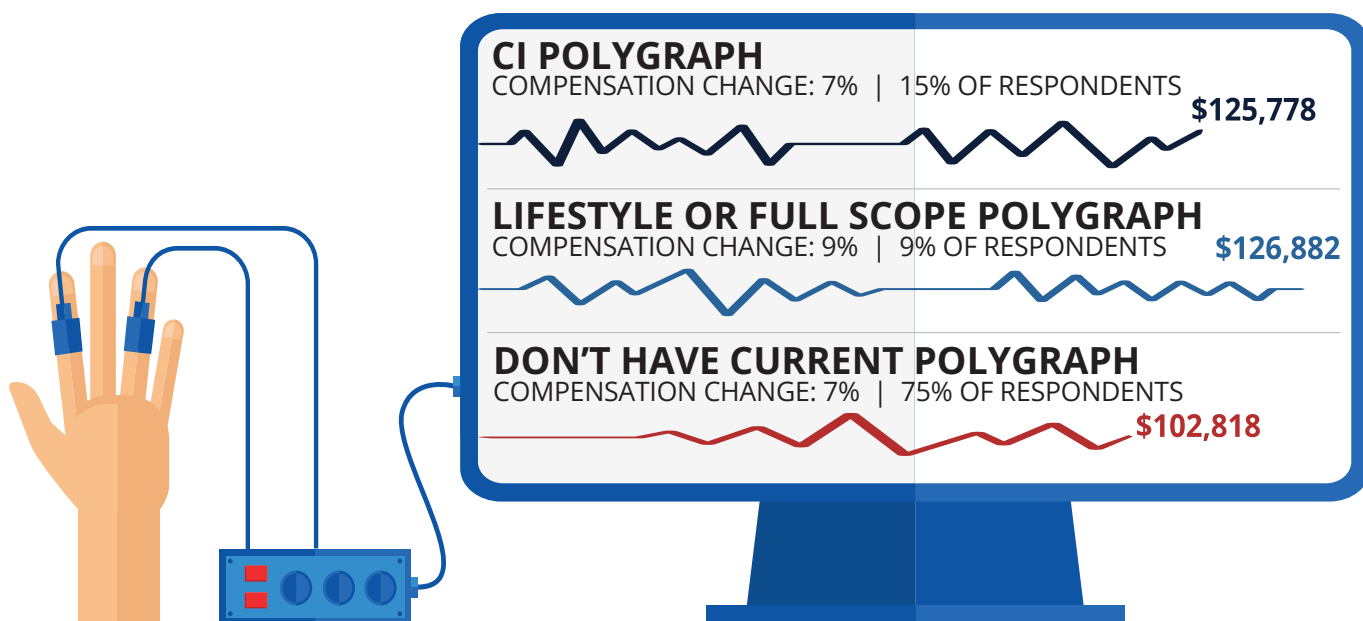
Just a third of Secret clearance holders earn over \$100,000 each year, compared to almost two thirds of Top Secret clearance holders. The higher the security clearance, the higher the salary. Cleared candidates in the Intelligence Community (IC) continue to earn the highest compensation. The good news is that in 2022, compensation went up for every clearance level, with Top Secret clearance holders getting an 8% raise.

CLEARANCE	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
Dept of Defense Confidential	\$81,714	N/A*	1%
Dept of Defense Secret	\$92,156	6%	35%
Dept of Defense Top Secret	\$116,009	8%	12%
Dept of Defense Top Secret/SCI	\$119,112	8%	34%
Dept of Energy (Q or L)	\$113,313	5%	2%
Intelligence Agency (CIA, FBI, NSA)	\$139,970	7%	6%
Dept of Homeland Security	\$108,621	5%	2%
Public Trust	\$91,335	6%	3%
Other Government Agency	\$106,131	6%	4%

\*N/A due to low sample size.

## COMPENSATION BY POLYGRAPH LEVEL

Questions about the polygraph persist, with many cleared candidates anxious to pass the test. It's not hard to understand why some may chase after conquering the alleged lie detector machine. Passing a polygraph can bump up annual salary by over \$20,000.



## COMPENSATION BY OCCUPATION

Do what you love, and you'll never have to work a day in your life. While there's truth in what Confucius says, there are other factors in job satisfaction. Compensation plays a key role in how much candidates love their jobs or their employers. While it's good to enjoy your work, it's also important to find a career that offers competitive compensation. In today's economy, a higher salary also helps insulate your budget from the negative effect of inflation.

OCCUPATION	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2022	EARLY CAREER	MID LEVEL	SENIOR	MANAGEMENT
Aerospace and Aviation	\$110,505	8%	\$81,613	\$88,497	\$113,810	\$147,191
Business - HR	\$92,517	7%	\$65,180	\$79,597	\$98,013	\$120,642
Business - Legal	\$116,804	8%	\$83,388	\$93,500	\$113,130	\$149,780
Business - Sales \$	\$137,014	15%	\$62,900	\$82,472	\$133,127	\$169,229
Business - Support	\$78,301	5%	\$61,245	\$72,638	\$87,337	\$106,720
Construction/Facilities	\$98,561	5%	\$62,446	\$82,755	\$108,834	\$123,864
Emergency	\$94,358	1%	\$64,480	\$81,976	\$97,029	\$127,628
Engineering - Chemical	\$99,251	8%	\$83,800	\$92,359	\$121,889	N/A*
Engineering - Civil	\$114,949	10%	\$110,200	\$86,889	\$119,168	\$129,864
Engineering - Electrical	\$109,166	7%	\$84,195	\$92,012	\$118,740	\$146,073
Engineering - Mechanical	\$107,128	4%	\$86,884	\$93,969	\$117,533	\$157,763
Engineering - Systems \$	\$138,446	7%	\$96,491	\$112,704	\$149,357	\$186,595
Finance	\$108,797	4%	\$79,647	\$90,563	\$115,143	\$141,141
Government Contractor	\$95,713	5%	\$68,701	\$80,497	\$106,469	\$125,798
Healthcare and Science	\$97,032	3%	\$61,084	\$85,787	\$106,811	\$129,476
Intelligence	\$112,798	9%	\$72,920	\$97,029	\$122,330	\$147,976
IT - Database	\$115,941	7%	\$80,231	\$101,820	\$136,233	\$152,733
IT - Data Science \$	\$134,648	12%	\$96,300	\$121,182	\$152,795	\$181,674
IT - Hardware	\$111,989	8%	\$85,651	\$98,676	\$123,536	\$142,691
IT - Security	\$124,393	9%	\$88,591	\$110,221	\$138,273	\$165,694
IT - Software \$	\$139,357	7%	\$104,408	\$121,314	\$153,898	\$175,263
IT - Support	\$85,624	7%	\$69,822	\$80,219	\$101,228	\$130,091
IT - Tech Writing	\$97,601	1%	\$71,058	\$93,792	\$108,135	\$123,167
IT - QA and Test	\$119,506	13%	\$81,500	\$99,857	\$131,336	\$146,727
Linguist	\$92,988	-1%	\$78,615	\$92,059	\$99,181	N/A*
Logistics	\$83,300	3%	\$62,862	\$73,878	\$86,775	\$109,566
Management \$	\$130,932	6%	\$80,478	\$100,236	\$126,101	\$145,688
Military and Law Enforcement	\$108,400	-3%	\$73,999	\$84,055	\$109,988	\$139,538
Security	\$86,375	5%	\$68,903	\$78,252	\$93,256	\$123,141
Trainer/Instructor	\$94,070	0%	\$64,682	\$79,166	\$98,256	\$102,945
Visual and Creative	\$99,513	10%	\$69,375	\$87,826	\$106,237	\$117,875

\$ = Top paying job categories

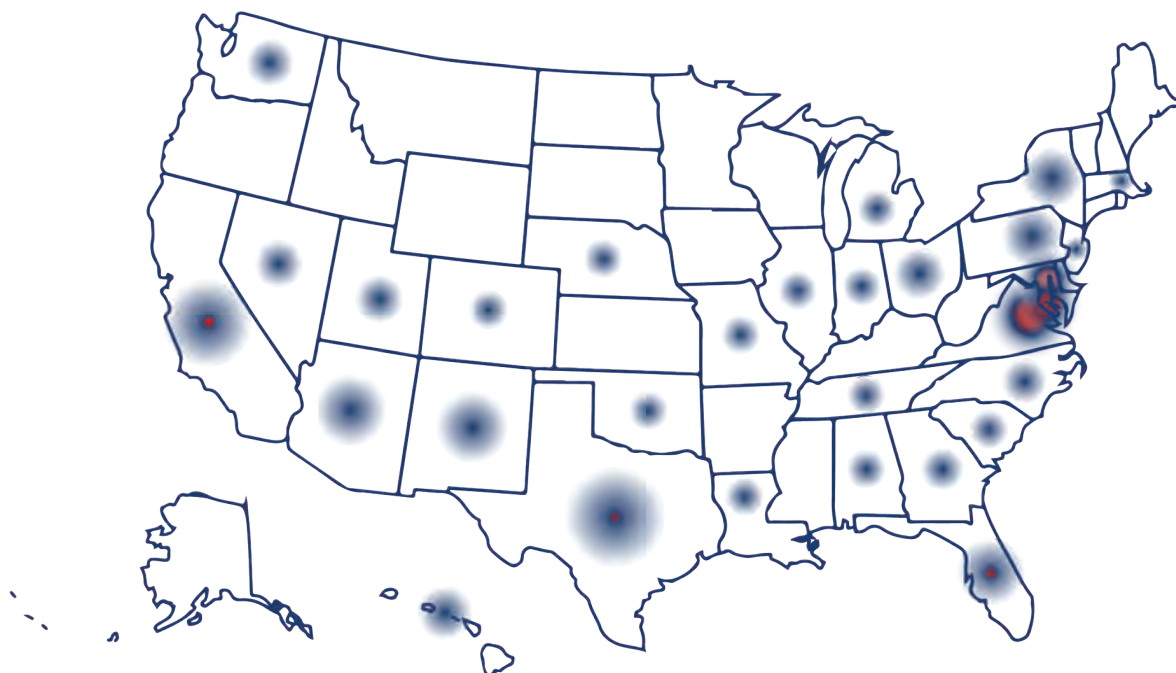
\*N/A due to low sample size for this occupation category.



## COMPENSATION BY LOCATION

In the past two years, the cleared population has slowly spread out, with more states joining the list with at least 100 cleared respondents. States with high housing costs, like D.C. and California, continue to drop a percentage each year. Some of those changes may be due to pandemic-response. It will take another year or two to see if those changes remain permanent. In the meantime, clearance holders are finding work in more states, opening up more options each year.

The good news is that from sea to shining sea, clearance holders got a raise in 2022. States that haven't previously offered six-figure salaries are now joining the ranks with competitive compensation to keep cleared talent from leaving for greener pastures. Two rising states in 2022 were Arizona and Georgia, with both showing double-digit compensation increases.



## TOTAL COMPENSATION BY STATE

States with 100 or more respondents shown

STATE	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
Alabama	\$103,554	8%	3%
Alaska	\$105,934	N/A*	<1%
Arizona	\$103,017	14%	2%
Arkansas	\$90,476	N/A*	<1%
California ★	\$109,840	6%	7%
Colorado	\$115,647	10%	4%
Connecticut	\$105,772	N/A*	<1%
Delaware	\$96,405	N/A*	<1%
D.C. ★	\$117,600	8%	7%
Florida ★	\$99,622	5%	7%
Georgia	\$97,348	12%	3%

STATE	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
Hawaii	\$108,544	N/A*	1%
Idaho	\$91,342	N/A*	<1%
Illinois	\$102,797	N/A*	1%
Indiana	\$94,046	N/A*	1%
Iowa	\$101,665	N/A*	<1%
Kansas	\$90,354	N/A*	<1%
Kentucky	\$87,447	N/A*	<1%
Louisiana	\$85,577	N/A*	1%
Maine	\$91,560	N/A*	<1%
Maryland ★	\$117,820	10%	9%
Massachusetts	\$125,254	11%	1%

STATE	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
Michigan	\$96,950	N/A*	1%
Minnesota	\$117,815	N/A*	<1%
Mississippi	\$88,906	N/A*	<1%
Missouri	\$106,491	N/A*	1%
Montana	\$83,777	N/A*	<1%
Nebraska	\$106,220	N/A*	1%
Nevada	\$95,357	N/A*	1%
New Hampshire	\$115,746	N/A*	<1%
New Jersey	\$108,060	N/A*	1%
New Mexico	\$103,895	8%	2%
New York	\$101,551	N/A*	1%
North Carolina	\$94,472	5%	3%
North Dakota	\$81,703	N/A*	<1%
Ohio	\$104,413	10%	2%
Oklahoma	\$91,460	N/A*	1%
Oregon	\$97,098	N/A*	<1%

STATE	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
Pennsylvania	\$103,161	N/A*	1%
Puerto Rico	\$87,648	N/A*	<1%
Rhode Island	\$106,004	N/A*	<1%
South Carolina	\$90,363	8%	2%
South Dakota	\$79,557	N/A*	<1%
Tennessee	\$92,706	N/A*	1%
Texas ★	\$98,597	6%	7%
Utah	\$100,826	N/A*	1%
Vermont	\$90,591	N/A*	<1%
Virgin Islands	\$195,000	N/A*	<1%
Virginia ★	\$118,169	7%	21%
Washington	\$106,032	N/A*	1%
West Virginia	\$92,054	N/A*	<1%
Wisconsin	\$83,098	N/A*	<1%
Wyoming	\$101,987	N/A*	<1%

★ =Top states based on respondents

\*Previous years did not have sufficient respondents to accurately compare.

## GOING OCONUS IN NATIONAL SECURITY

Opportunities to work in national security and live abroad are out there. With changing defense strategies, OCONUS opportunities may not be as plentiful, but cleared candidates can find different options around military bases throughout the world. The number of respondents reporting an OCONUS life has decreased in the past two years. But with geopolitical tensions rising in 2022, the next few years could see some shifts, depending on how the U.S. responds. Often where active duty moves to support military bases, opportunities arise for the contractor and civilian workforce.

### UNITED STATES

**TOTAL AVERAGE COMPENSATION: \$108,054**

96.58% of Respondents

### MIDDLE EAST

**TOTAL AVERAGE COMPENSATION: \$136,598**

0.97% of Respondents

### EUROPE

**TOTAL AVERAGE COMPENSATION: \$120,752**

0.84% of Respondents

### ASIA

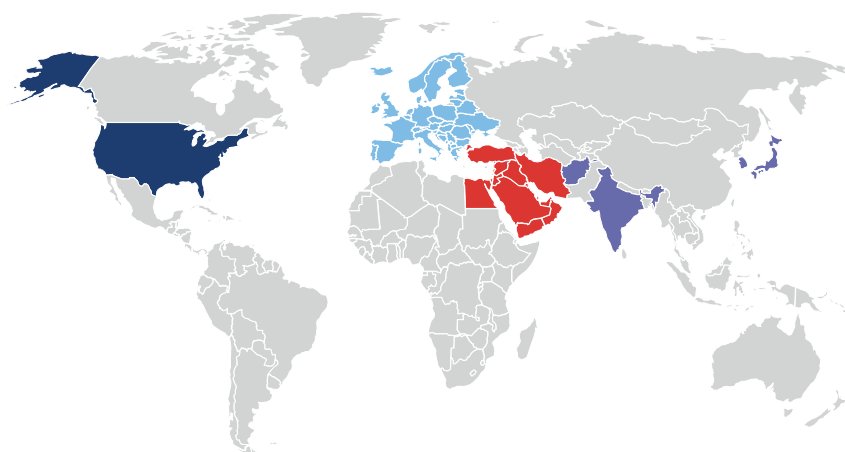
**TOTAL AVERAGE COMPENSATION: \$109,528**

0.45% of Respondents

### OTHER

**TOTAL AVERAGE COMPENSATION: \$122,446**

1.16% of Respondents

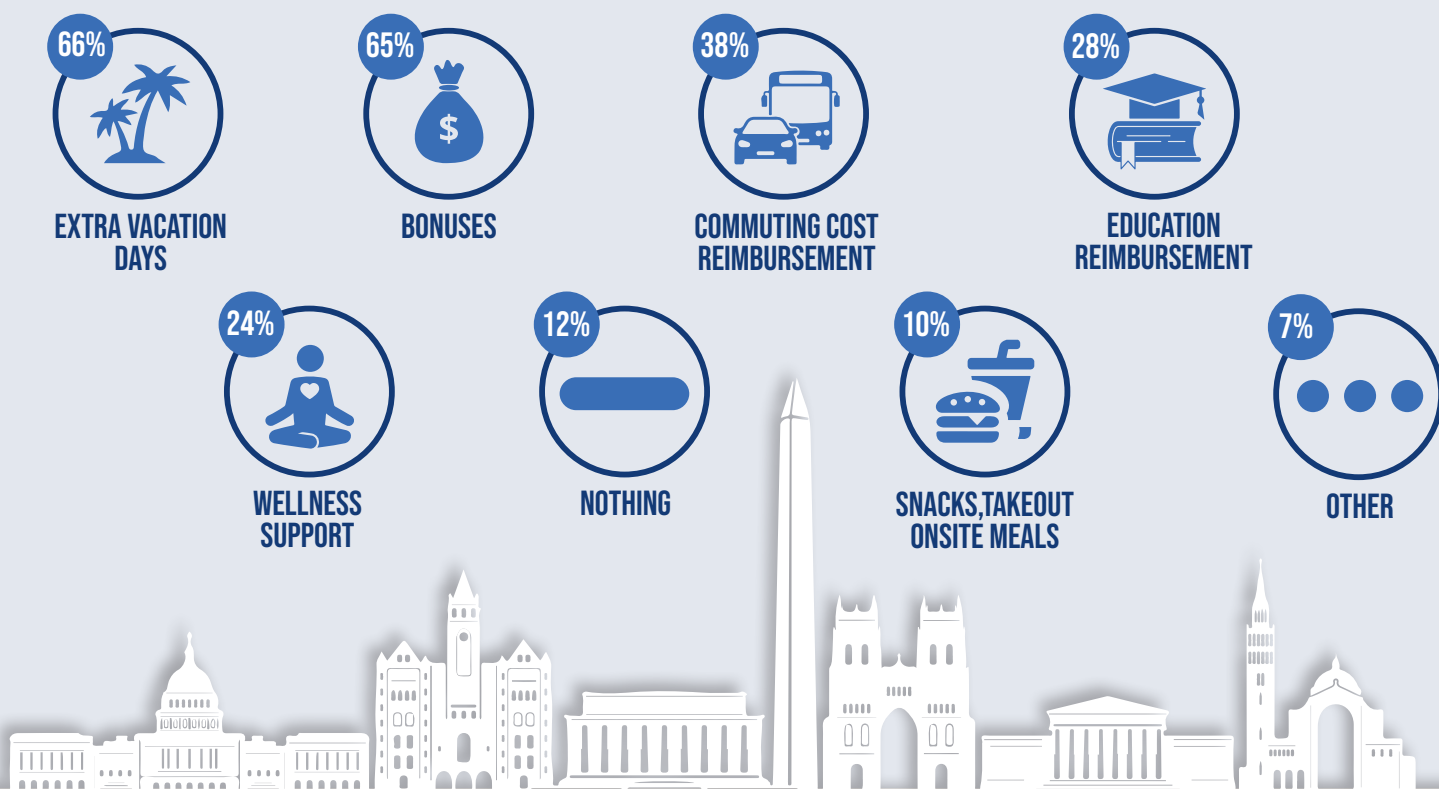




## REMOTE WORK: FADING FAD OR FACE OF THE FUTURE?

For the past two years, ClearanceJobs has asked respondents about the availability of remote work with their current employer. The number of respondents who now have remote or hybrid options jumped up to 53% in 2022, a 7% increase from 2021. Respondents who are allowed to have some element of remote work in their work week earn an average total compensation that's almost \$17,000 higher than those stuck in the SCIF.

The remote work trend could go in either direction, depending on candidate demands and future classification standards. However, in the meantime, candidates offered their preferred ways for employers to make up the difference. Aside from extra vacation days and bonuses, respondents want commuting costs to get reimbursed. For respondents who work in cities, parking garage costs can add up to a large chunk of change over the course of the year. If you want your employees to be in the room with everyone else, consider offering EZ Pass, mileage, or parking garage costs.



## THE LURE OF THE D.C. METRO AREA

Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. respondents have dropped by 4% since 2020. In 2022, just 37% of compensation report respondents in the U.S. were located in D.C., MD, or VA. Out of those respondents, 62% say they work in the actual D.C. Metro area for the majority of their work week. The cleared footprint in the D.C. metro may be shrinking slightly but the area still pays - D.C. Metro respondents earned an average of almost \$20,000 a year more.

The biggest pull to stay in a high-cost area? Most (82%) say it's because of the myriad career opportunities, with 66% specifically highlighting national security employment opportunities. The region has its perks - cultural diversity, education options, and food from all over the world. But the bottom line for cleared candidates who chose to stick around in the DMV? The work. They come, and they stay to grow their career.

## COMPENSATION BY CAREER LEVEL

While respondents with 10 or more years of experience dominate national security, entry to mid level career respondents got the biggest raises in 2022, jumping up 7-8%. Every job field has a different compensation strategy; however, the more experience added, the bigger the compensation jumps over time. Candidates shouldn't get too frustrated in their early career if compensation is moving slowly. It takes time - and sometimes another degree or certification - to see the desired increases.

TOTAL COMPENSATION BY CAREER LEVEL	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
Entry Level (less than 2 years experience)	\$66,061	8%	5%
Early Career (2+ years experience)	\$77,110	7%	10%
Mid Level Career (5+ years experience)	\$92,095	7%	26%
Senior Level Career (10+ years experience)	\$117,357	5%	44%
Management (Manager/Director of Staff)	\$141,968	5%	13%
Executive (SVP, EVP, VP)	\$187,334	N/A*	1%
Senior Executive (President, CEO)	\$179,235	N/A*	0.4%

## EDUCATION, CERTIFICATIONS, AND COMPENSATION

One way candidates can distinguish themselves in their job field is through education and certification choices. Moving up the education rungs and getting a master's degree can add another \$20,000 each year in compensation. Similarly, a certification can be the ticket to having enough income to take a family of four on vacation to Hawaii for a week.

Experience increases compensation, but over time, the key to a higher salary is adding more credentials. For example, in IT and engineering fields, the average cleared candidate with 10+ years of experience and a bachelor's degree earns \$40,000 more than others in the field with less experience. However, after adding both a graduate degree and a certification to the resume with 10+ years of experience, average compensation gets an additional almost \$30,000 bump.

### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY CERTIFICATION

#### I CURRENTLY HAVE AT LEAST ONE CAREER CERTIFICATIONS

52%

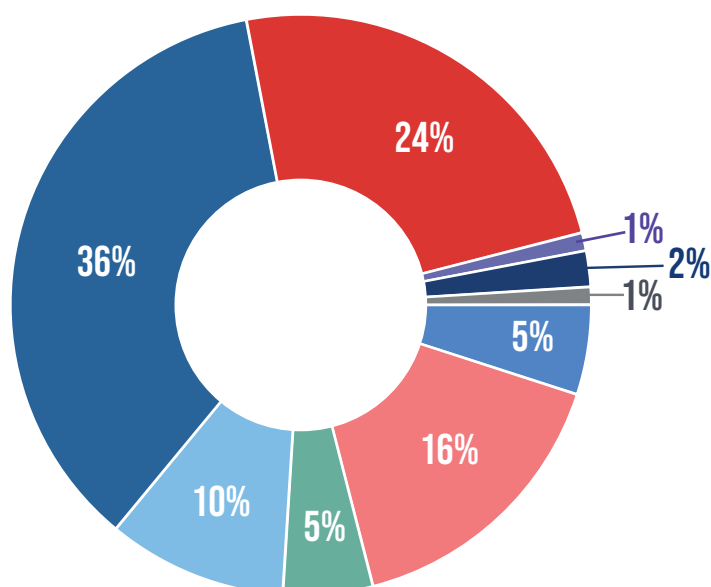
AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION: \$116,135

#### I DO NOT CURRENTLY HAVE ANY CAREER CERTIFICATIONS

48%

AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION: \$100,526

## TOTAL COMPENSATION BY EDUCATION LEVEL



EDUCATION LEVEL	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION
High school graduate, diploma or the equivalent (for example: GED)	\$81,746
Some college credit, no degree	\$90,732
Trade/technical/vocational training	\$93,755
Associate degree	\$93,011
Bachelor's degree	\$109,033
Master's degree	\$130,646
Professional degree	\$152,317
Doctorate degree	\$149,496
I prefer not to answer	\$112,248

## COMPENSATION BY ROLE IN NATIONAL SECURITY

This year, the compensation gap widened between government employees and contractors. What was previously a \$5,000 difference stretched to \$10,000 in 2022. While the White House signed an executive order to increase federal pay by an average of 4.6%, it didn't go into effect until January 2023. Federal employees at the top of the GS pay scale are also capped from exceeding the Senior Executive Service (SES) pay parameters. Pay compression is often ignored by Congress; however, as inflation drives up more salaries, the number of federal employees impacted will continue to grow.

One other trend to watch is the increase in 'employed but no longer working in a cleared position' category. This bumped up by 2% in 2022, and while government employees didn't jump ship, contractors did, dropping by about 3% this past year. Otherwise, respondent levels remain virtually unchanged each year.

EMPLOYER	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
Government Employee	\$102,140	3%	17%
Government Contractor	\$112,084	8%	69%
Independent Consultant	\$133,354	3%	2%
Private Business Owner (not a consultant)	\$109,198	12%	1%
I am employed, but no longer work in a cleared position	\$88,936	15%	10%



## VETERANS IN NATIONAL SECURITY

Veterans consistently make up over half of the cleared community, but each year, their average total compensation is less than all of the combined cleared respondents. It's even lower than cleared respondents who are not veterans. Despite veterans trending slightly older and more experienced, compensation is still routinely lower than the overall population.

Adding education and certifications helps ease the compensation gap. The difference between veterans and all respondents was less than \$1,000 for veterans with a graduate degree. Some certifications, like Network+, also leveled the compensation playing field.

Location also plays a role. While veterans tend to opt out of settling in the D.C. Metro region, compensation for veterans is higher than the overall cleared population and nonveterans in that region. Government agency choice is also a factor. Veterans earn more than the rest of respondents at the Department of State, Department of Justice, NSA, and CIA.

Veteran respondents lean towards the same job and compensation satisfaction levels as all other respondents.

### ARE YOU A MILITARY VETERAN?






IN WHICH BRANCH DID YOU SERVE?			
MILITARY BRANCH		AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	% OF RESPONDENTS
	Air Force	\$111,538	24%
	Army	\$105,398	37%
	Coast Guard	\$97,806	1%
	Marine Corps	\$103,532	12%
	Navy	\$106,174	20%
	National Guard	\$97,920	6%
	Space Force	**	<1%

\*\* Pay not shown due to small sample size

## COMPENSATION BY GOVERNMENT AGENCY

Average total compensation rose at every agency in 2022. But those candidates who showed up day in and day out to Fort Meade, MD in 2022 got an even bigger raise this year. Respondents who work in the intelligence field are more likely to support NSA or CIA, earning \$20-25,000 more in compensation than the average IC respondent. Working on-site has its downsides, and agencies with more rigid on-site hiring requirements are responding with higher compensation. Job satisfaction for the CIA trends a few notches lower than overall respondents, but salary satisfaction, on the other hand, is significantly higher than all of the other agencies.

GOVERNMENT AGENCY	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
 Dept of Defense and all Military Branches	\$108,233	7%	59%
 Dept of Homeland Security	\$107,662	3%	5%
 Dept of Energy	\$116,005	8%	2%
 Dept of State	\$110,460	6%	4%
 Dept of Justice (FBI, ATF, DEA, BOP)	\$112,362	8%	4%
 NSA	\$126,225	11%	3%
 CIA	\$140,472	5%	2%
 Other Government/Intelligence Agency	\$112,603	7%	10%
 N/A – Not Applicable	\$97,228	10%	13%



## SATISFACTION: JOBS, SALARIES, AND CLEARED INDUSTRY

### COMPENSATION BY YEAR WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER

Some say job hopping can grow salary potential, but year in and year out, compensation lags at the less than one-year mark, regardless of career level. The sweet spot, depending on career level, is around the two-year mark. However, for senior and management level, compensation is about the same whether you stay for two years or 10 years at an organization. A good company will offer bonuses and raises to manage retention risks. No need to jump ship unless you really want to make a change.

On a panel at the 13th Annual Billington Cybersecurity Summit, Managing Director at the Cyber Readiness Institute, Karen Evans, shared, “It’s about expectations and building a pipeline to rotate people out and allow them to easily come back.” The workplace gets richer. And if the work and culture are enjoyable and exciting, people will want to return.

And in the defense contracting world, it’s even more normal for candidates to jump around, building up their resume on different programs as one period of performance ends and another begins.

### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY YEARS WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER

YEARS WITH CURRENT COMPANY	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	COMP. CHANGE SINCE 2021	% OF RESPONDENTS
Less than 1 year	\$99,559	8%	25%
1 to 2 years	\$105,719	7%	32%
3 to 5 years	\$110,258	7%	22%
6 to 10 years	\$116,593	5%	9%
11 to 15 years	\$122,840	4%	5%
16 to 20 years	\$133,279	5%	3%
>20 years	\$140,496	6%	3%



# JOB AND SALARY SATISFACTION

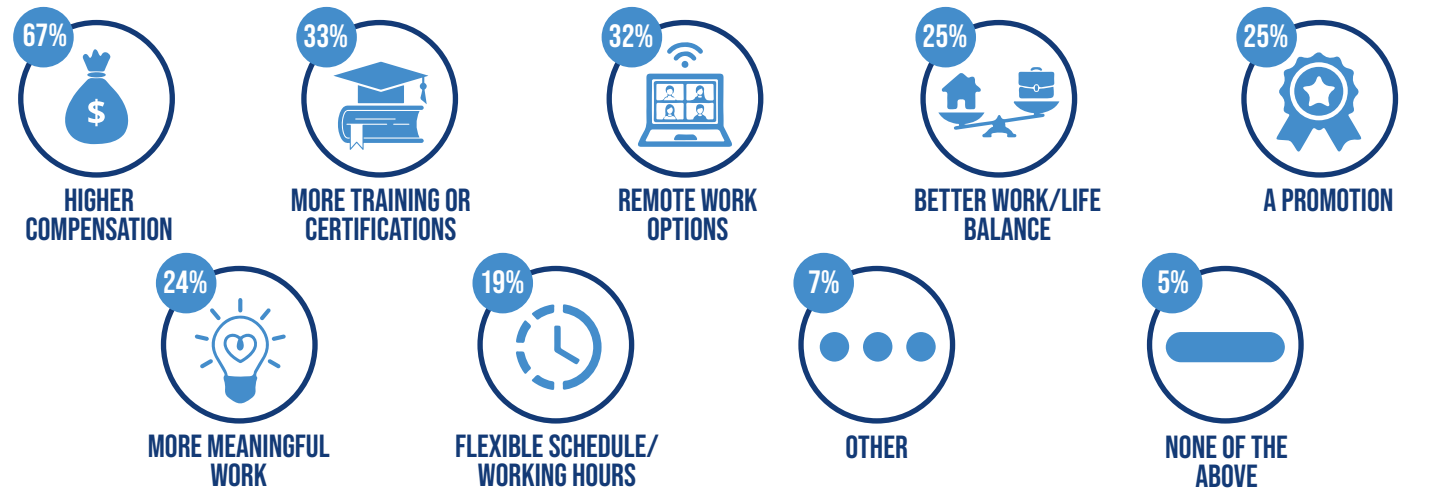
In 2022, salary satisfaction jumped up by 4%. As the layoff storm clouds started to roll into the technology landscape, the stability of government contracting began to shine a little brighter. While compensation does impact job dissatisfaction, it's not the only factor. Respondents who selected dissatisfaction with their current job had an average compensation relatively close to the overall total average compensation of all respondents. While job satisfaction may not be 100% related to pay, obviously, salary dissatisfaction is - respondents dissatisfied with their salary reported compensation over \$26,000 lower than the overall total average compensation.

Bottom line? The secret sauce to an engaged workforce is meaningful work + good office culture + great compensation. If any of those are missing, job or salary satisfaction will move in the wrong direction. The good news is that many employers offered higher compensation to go with the national security mission. And it shows in the results, with both salary and job satisfaction levels rising. That also means less disgruntled workers - decreasing potential insider threats.

JOB SATISFACTION		SATISFACTION LEVEL	SALARY SATISFACTION	
% OF RESPONDENTS	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION		AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	% OF RESPONDENTS
22%	\$113,897	Very Satisfied	\$132,199	19%
35%	\$110,516	Somewhat Satisfied	\$115,087	35%
22%	\$103,660	Neutral	\$100,176	19%
15%	\$106,396	Somewhat Dissatisfied	\$93,231	18%
6%	\$106,333	Very Dissatisfied	\$82,200	8%

# WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR EMPLOYER TO CHANGE TO INCREASE YOUR HAPPINESS?

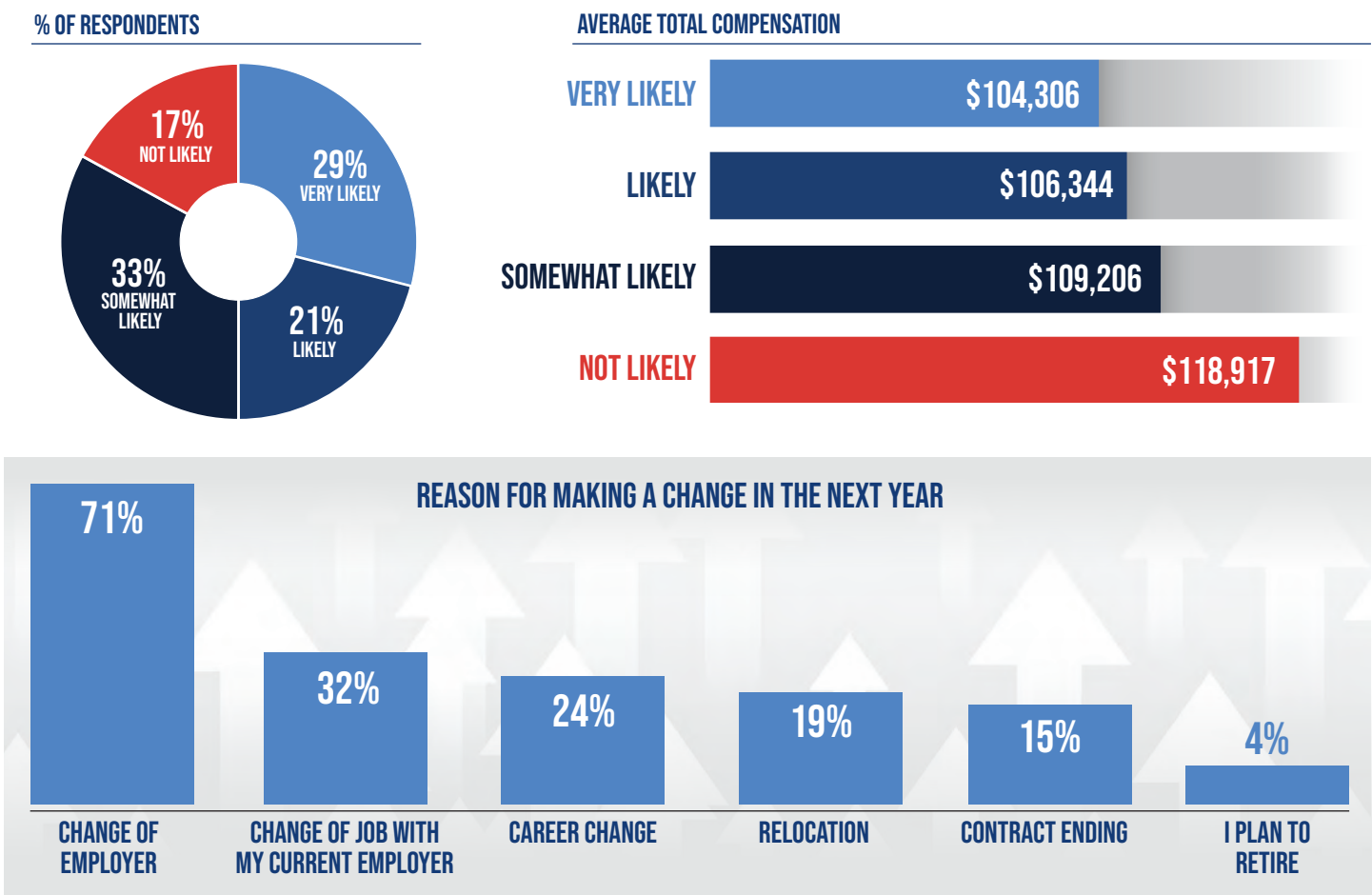
While money can't buy happiness, in today's economy, it certainly helps. Respondents were asked to pick the top three things their employer could change to increase their engagement and happiness at work. Over two-thirds selected higher compensation as one of their three choices. The other two front runners were remote work and training/certifications. But a quarter of the respondents want a promotion, better work/life balance, and more meaningful work, making it clear that while compensation is the biggest factor, the cleared community continues to remain engaged with more needs than remote work demands.



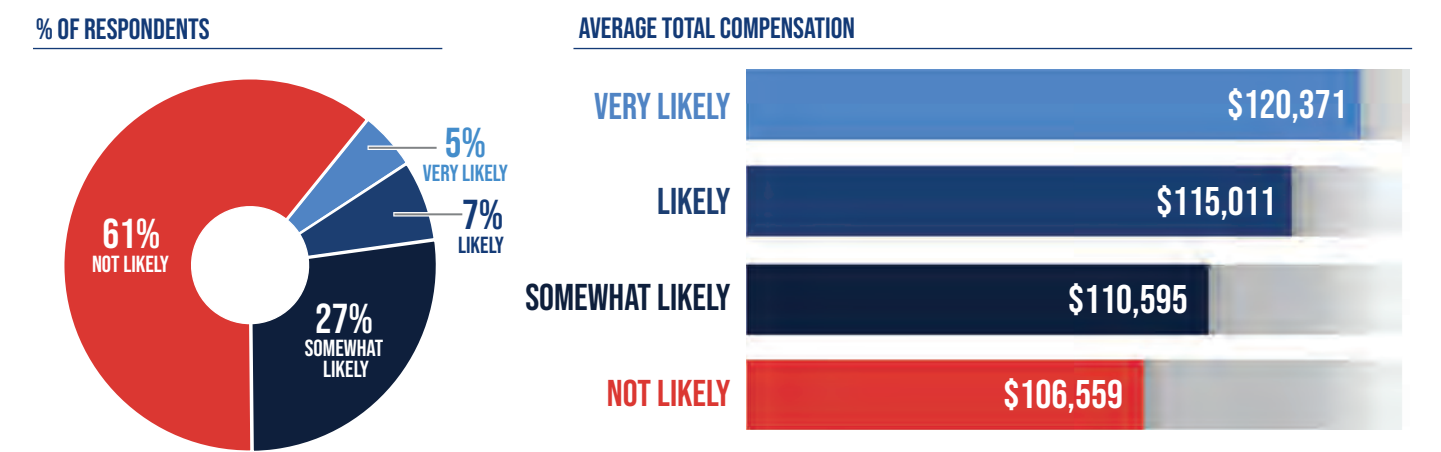
## LIKELIHOOD OF CHANGING JOBS OR LEAVING THE CLEARED INDUSTRY

Although respondents were a little less motivated in 2022 to change jobs or employers, their desire to leave the cleared industry in the years ahead remained the same as last year. With compensation numbers rising and the overall U.S. economy struggling, respondents show an increased willingness to stay with a good employer.

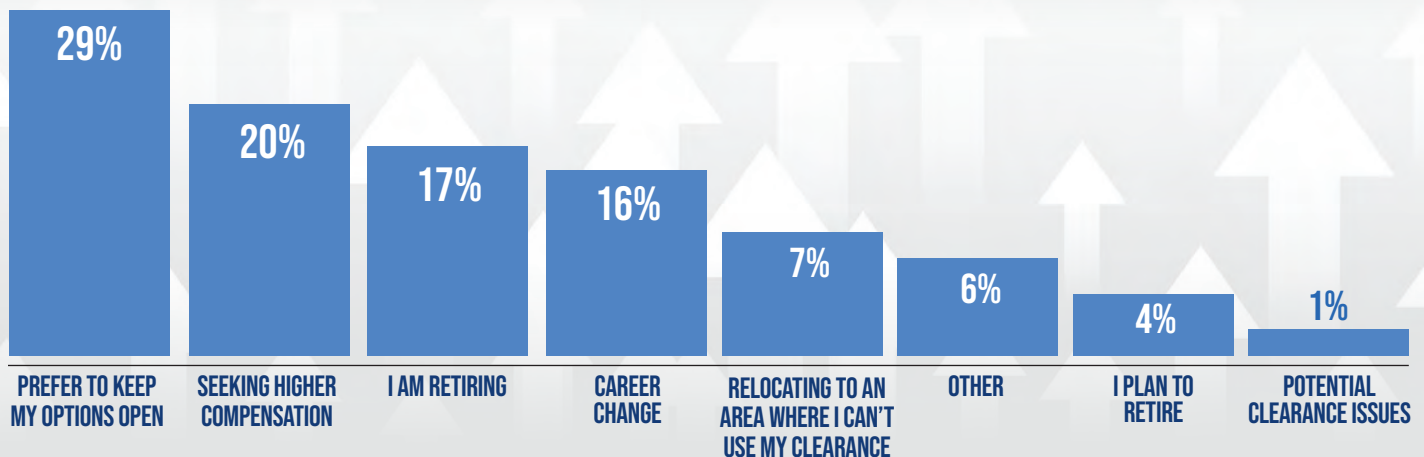
### LIKELIHOOD OF CHANGING JOBS AND/OR EMPLOYERS



### LIKELIHOOD OF LEAVING THE CLEARED INDUSTRY IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS



## REASON FOR LEAVING THE CLEARED INDUSTRY



## COMPENSATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Generation Z got an 11% raise in 2022, steadily growing their footprint in national security. Generation X and Millennials remained at the same distribution as last year, with a 7-8% salary increase. Boomers continue to slowly decrease. In 2020 they represented one-fifth (21%) of the cleared population, a figure that has dropped to 14% in 2022.

Despite the ongoing discussion about women in national security, the distribution of respondents remains the same. Additionally, compensation for women continues to lag behind men, each year, in almost every category.

### COMPENSATION BY AGE

AGE CATEGORY	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	% OF RESPONDENTS
Generation Z (born 1997-2012)	\$73,850	6%
Millennials (born 1981-96)	\$98,679	43%
Generation X (born 1965-80)	\$118,533	37%
Boomers (born 1946-64)	\$125,747	14%
Silent (born 1945 or earlier)	N/A*	<1%

### COMPENSATION BY GENDER

GENDER CATEGORY	AVERAGE TOTAL COMPENSATION	% OF RESPONDENTS
Female	\$97,920	23%
Male	\$111,933	74%
Provided Own Definition	\$94,487	<1%
Prefer Not to Answer	\$117,446	3%



## 2023 AND BEYOND

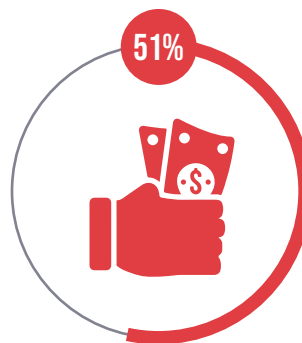
Spring 2023 will mark three years since the e-brake was pulled in the days following the initial spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, we asked respondents why they chose to work in national security. While a small percentage cited indifference, most cited a desire to protect the country. But not far behind this option was the steadiness of the work, decent compensation, or some form of a military background.



**DESIRE TO PROTECT AND  
STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY**



**STEADY WORK**



**GOOD  
COMPENSATION**



**MILITARY BACKGROUND -  
EITHER PARENTS OR PERSONAL**

As fads come and go and the country's economics keep life feeling unbalanced, it's important to lean into the messages that resonate with the cleared community. The work matters and makes a difference. Increase recruiting efforts in the broader military community - not just veterans but also spouses, dependents, and family members. Highlight how steady contracting and federal government support can be and the trajectory for compensation over time. It's easy to just chase a salary, but it's the work that matters over the long haul in the cleared community.



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**95%** OF CANDIDATES  
IDENTIFY A COMPANY'S  
REPUTATION AS A KEY CONSIDERATION  
WHEN EXPLORING NEW CAREER  
OPPORTUNITIES.

**93%** OF CANDIDATES SPEND  
AT LEAST 10 MINUTES  
RESEARCHING A PROSPECTIVE  
EMPLOYER'S BRAND

**69%** OF CANDIDATES WILL  
REJECT A PROSPECTIVE  
EMPLOYER IF THEY HAVE A BAD  
REPUTATION

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### Important information about our survey

The 2023 Security Clearance Compensation Survey was administered online by ClearanceJobs from August 16, 2022 and December 20, 2022.

In 2022, there were 50,616 survey participants, a decrease of 3% over the 2021 survey. After excluding survey respondents not having a security clearance, those who were unemployed, active-duty military, students, those whose compensation was below \$18,000 or above \$350,000, and finally incomplete or duplicate questionnaires, there remained 22,368 usable responses in 2022 and 24,089 usable responses in 2021. By definition, all respondents included in this analysis have an active or current security clearance issued by the U.S. federal government, are not active-duty military, are employed, and reported compensation figures between \$18,000 and \$350,000. Note that in reports completed prior to 2020, active-duty military were included in the analysis universe. Dollars are as reported in the survey year, and not adjusted for inflation. Also, prior to 2022, the high-end cap for compensation figures was \$300,000. That was increased to \$350,000 in 2022. This had a negligible impact on overall compensation figures (no impact on median, increased mean total compensation by \$546 and increased mean base pay by \$131).

Survey results are compared to the 24,089 usable responses captured in 2021 that followed the same parameters.

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