

# The 2021 **Security Clearance** Compensation Report

# **RESILIENT AND READY**

The defense industry showcased a deep level of strength in 2020. Despite the challenges of navigating a pandemic and evolving workplace dynamics, national security employees showed they are poised to meet those challenges as they come. An agile workforce is always growing and learning—able to work remotely or in the office. In 2020, employers dialed in on retention and rewarding employee performance, and that resulted in not only a stable year, but also a workforce that is ready to meet the challenges and threats of tomorrow.

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# **Salary Query**

Get salary estimates based on clearance level, industry type, geography, and experience at: **about.clearancejobs.com/salary/salary-calculator**.



# Letter from the President

The 2021 Security Clearance Compensation Report displays the strengths of the national security workforce despite the many challenges the past year delivered. Telework has long been a pie in the sky possibility at many agencies, but today many cleared workers are exercising virtual work options, hybrid work environments, shift schedules, and other innovative approaches to the (no longer) nine-tofive. Legislation has ensured benched contractors continue to get paid, and defense industry professionals continue to find and pursue new opportunities. In contrast to 2019, which was the year of the government shutdown, 2020 was the year the world shut down—but the national security workforce kept moving forward.

Security clearance compensation remained solid across industries, and professionals recognize the stability of working in national security, with more respondents saying they were not likely to leave the cleared industry. A desire to stay in the cleared workforce doesn't correlate with a lack of interest in making a career move, however—more respondents said they were likely to change jobs in the coming year.

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While speculation has abounded that the pandemic could push more government and national security career opportunities outside of the beltway, the D.C. metro continues to dominate in the number of respondents, and even gained more respondents in 2020. The beltway has never been the only pathway to a cleared career, but it continues to be the widest one.

National security employers will have critical decisions to make if CARES Act provisions expire this spring. The relative stability of the defense industry means many candidates will feel comfortable making a career move. The increase in respondents who were likely to change jobs may also be related to growing candidate confidence. As the pandemic moves from the foreground to the background in more offices and agencies, cleared professionals who saw their compensation stall in 2020 may seek greener opportunities in 2021.

> **Did you know?** The typical January hiring push may arrive in spring this year, as April ushers in an end to CARES Act provisions and government contractors reevaluate their bench.



Evan Lesser President and Founder <u>ClearanceJobs.com</u>



# Overview

Security clearance total compensation averaged \$103,199 in 2020. Respondents in the 2019 survey had an average total compensation of \$101,168, giving the industry a 2% pay bump even during a pandemic year. Although the difference between base salary and total compensation decreased by 1% in 2020, employers still issued increases that kept job and salary satisfaction levels stable in 2020—which is a feat other industries cannot claim.

The majority of respondents (82%) reported being with their current employer for five years or less, and 63% said they were with their current employer for two years or less. Respondents who stayed true to their employers past the six-year or 16-year mark saw a 6% higher bump in 2020 than in 2019, showcasing the value of an employee dedicated to an organization.

Despite the uncertainty of the year, respondents still have options within the cleared industry, and many are willing to make a move—85% of candidates reported that they were at least somewhat likely to change jobs in the coming year, a 4% increase from 2019. While many factors play into a candidate's decision to stay put or jump ship, it's clear that money matters, since the likelihood of changing jobs decreased with higher salary levels.

## Compensation by Clearance Level

Intelligence community security clearances continue to pay out the highest average total compensation, but Top Secret or Top Secret/SCI clearances represent the largest cohort of cleared professionals at 47%. At every career level, a Top Secret paid at least \$8,000 more.

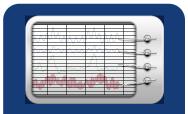
#### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY CLEARANCE

|                    | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS | % CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Confidential       | \$82,707           | 1%               | 8%                 |
| Secret             | \$89,452           | 34%              | 2%                 |
| Top Secret         | \$107,872          | 14%              | 2%                 |
| Top Secret/SCI     | \$112,173          | 33%              | 1%                 |
| DoE (Q or L)       | \$111,567          | 2%               | 1%                 |
| Intel              | \$129,131          | 6%               | <1%                |
| DHS                | \$100,907          | 2%               | 8%                 |
| Public Trust       | \$81,235           | 3%               | <1%                |
| Other Gov't Agency | \$105,599          | 5%               | 6%                 |



# Compensation by Polygraph Level

Most respondents do not hold a polygraph; but, for those who do, a poly pays. The 25% of respondents with a polygraph earn \$16,000 to \$20,000 more than those with a Secret or Top Secret clearance that does not require one.



#### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY POLYGRAPH

|                              | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS | % CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Counterintelligence Poly     | \$119,334          | 16%              | 2%                 |
| Lifestyle or Full Scope Poly | \$115,176          | 9%               | <0%                |
| Don't have current polygraph | \$98,286           | 75%              | 2%                 |

# Compensation by Role in National Security

2020 was not a year for shutdowns or continuing resolutions. It was a year contractors and federal agencies united to make sure employees were supported and missions were met. Despite a global pandemic, the national security field found ways to work remotely—either on rotating schedules for those who live the SCIF life, or by parsing out unclassified work that could be accomplished at home.

While the contractor life has its perks-and often the higher salary to go along with it, working directly for the

government provides more stability. Whether it's the marathon process of getting hired by the federal government or the great benefits, government employees are stable in their responses to stay or go. However, contractors tend to fluctuate a little more in satisfaction and likelihood to leave the industry.



#### **COMPENSATION BY OCCUPATIONAL SETTINGS**

|   | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS | % CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|---|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Government Employee   | \$100,858          | 15%              | 3%                 |
| Government Contractor   | \$105,218          | 73%              | 1%                 |
| Independent Consultant  | \$131,437          | 3%               | 5%                 |
| Private Business Owner<br>(not a consultant)                  | \$98,350           | 1%               | <1%                |
| I am employed, but no<br>longer work in a cleared<br>position | \$80,446           | 8%               | 4%                 |



# Compensation by Government Agency

The Department of Defense may be the biggest employer, with almost 60% of respondents supporting DoD, but the National Security Agency pays an average of \$114,280 and the Central Intelligence Agency pays an average of \$130,395. Working for the largest employer doesn't always mean the highest compensation, but it does mean a diversity of career opportunities that come with supporting an employer with a \$740.5 Billion budget and 4,800 worldwide sites.

#### SALARIES BY GOVERNMENT AGENCY



#### Compensation by Career Level

The majority of respondents (70%) are mid to senior level; however, candidates at all experience levels enjoyed at least some increase in base pay and total compensation. Professionals in their early career had the lowest increases, and management level had the highest. Of course, those in senior leadership positions achieved the highest differential, as well as highest total compensation and base pay.

#### **COMPENSATION BY CAREER LEVEL**

|   | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS | % CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|---|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Entry Level<br>(less than 2 years experience) | \$60,387           | 5%               | <1%                |
| Early Career<br>(2+ yrs experience)           | \$70,815           | 11%              | 1%                 |
| Mid Level Career<br>(5+ yrs experience)       | \$85,791           | 24%              | 2%                 |
| Senior Level Career<br>(10+ yrs experience)   | \$112,508          | 46%              | 2%                 |
| Management<br>(Manager/Director of Staff)     | \$135,909          | 13%              | 4%                 |
| Executive (SVP, EVP, VP)                      | \$176,288          | 1%               | 3%                 |
| Senior Executive<br>(President, CEO)          | \$162,114          | 0%               | 2%                 |



### Compensation by Education Level

Although 65% have a bachelor's degree or higher, respondents report an over \$20,000 difference in salaries

between those with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. For years, candidates have debated whether or not to pursue more education. While candidates at the entry level saw little to no difference between an undergraduate or graduate degree, at the five-year mark, the difference in pay begins to widen.



#### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY EDUCATION

|  | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| High School Graduate, Diploma or the Equivalent (for example: GED) | \$77,884           | 4%               |
| Some College Credit, No Degree                                     | \$86,463           | 15%              |
| Trade/Technical/Vocational Training                                | \$90,505           | 4%               |
| Associate Degree   | \$87,175           | 10%              |
| Bachelor's Degree  | \$101,921          | 37%              |
| Master's Degree  | \$123,101          | 26%              |
| Professional Degree  | \$135,995          | 1%               |
| Doctorate Degree   | \$144,216          | 2%               |
| I prefer not to answer   | \$111,737          | 1%               |

#### THE TRIPLE THREAT:

#### Experience, Education and Certifications



## Compensation by Certification Level

Not every career calls for a certification, but many jobs in the cleared industry do. This year, ClearanceJobs asked candidates whether or not they had a career certification, and almost half responded yes. Average total compensation was higher for the respondents who selected at least one certification. The most selected certification was CompTIA Security+ and respondents with a Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) certification had the highest total compensation (\$143,294).

#### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY CERTIFICATION

|  | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| I currently have at least one career certification | \$110,857          | 49%              |
| I do NOT currently have any career certifications  | \$96,177           | 51%              |

#### WHAT CERTIFICATIONS DO OUR RESPONDENTS HAVE?

| CompTIA Security+  |                 | 21%     |
|--|-----------------|---------|
| Six Sigma  | 6%              |         |
| Project Management Professional (PMP)  | 6%              |         |
| CompTIA Network+   | 5%              |         |
| Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL)<br>Foundations                | 4%              |         |
| Certified Information Systems Security<br>Professional (CISSP)                     | 3%              |         |
| Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA)   | 3%              |         |
| ScrumMaster  | 3%              |         |
| Amazon Web Services (AWS)  | 3%              |         |
| Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE)  | 2%              |         |
| Certified Information Security Manager (CISM)                                      | 1%              |         |
| GIAC Certifications  | 1%              |         |
| VMware Certified Professional/VMware Certified<br>Advanced Professional (VCP/VCAP) | 1%              |         |
| Microsoft Certified: Azure Administrator Associate                                 | 1%              |         |
|  | 0% 5% 10% 15% 2 | 20% 25% |



#### MAKING THE MILITARY TRANSITION

Veterans make up 53% of survey respondents, but total compensation is slightly higher for respondents who never served. Coast Guard vets make top compensation but also represent the smallest number of respondents. In contrast, Air Force vets make up a quarter of the cleared veteran population and also bring in compensation well above the average. U.S. Space Force has only existed for a year but has already churned out 9 veterans with average compensation of \$105,272. While veterans in the civilian population generally make more than non-vets, respondents in our survey showed slightly lower salaries—there are likely two factors at play. Veterans are slightly less likely to work in the higher-paying IT, engineering, and business fields and more likely to work in industries like law enforcement and intelligence. A higher percentage of veterans live outside of the D.C. metro, with 67% of veterans working outside the beltway in lower paying states like Nebraska, Louisiana, and Indiana.

#### VETERAN OR NOT?

| ARE YOU A MILITARY VETERAN? | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Yes                         | \$102,348          | 53%              |
| No                          | \$104,209          | 46%              |
| Prefer not to answer        | \$101,842          | 1%               |

| WHICH BRANCH DID YOU SERVE? | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Air Force                   | \$107,342          | 25%              |
| Army                        | \$101,064          | 38%              |
| Coast Guard                 | \$109,627          | 1%               |
| Marine Corps                | \$101,404          | 11%              |
| Navy                        | \$102,882          | 20%              |
| National Guard              | \$87,507           | 5%               |
| Space Force                 | \$105,272          | <1%              |



## NEED A CANDIDATE WILLING TO RELOCATE? Look for a

transitioning service member. Veterans are professional movers and may be more likely to respond to your relocation package than a non-veteran. With 200,000 service members transitioning annually, if you need to hire an already-cleared professional for a position outside of the D.C. metro, your best bet may be a vet.



# WHAT JOBS and STATES Pay More in National Security

# **Compensation by State**

Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, California, Florida, and Texas accounted for 62% of all the respondents in the United States, with 22% based in Virginia. Some locations compensate cleared talent better than others, with nine locations (in order of compensation and highlighted in green on the chart below,

Massachusetts, Virginia, Maryland, District of Columbia, Colorado, California, New York, Nevada, and Hawaii) reporting a mean total compensation above \$100,000. Not surprisingly, in areas where cost of living is higher, candidates report higher average total compensation.



#### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY STATE

|               | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS | CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Alabama       | \$97,075           | 2%               | -2%              |
| Arizona       | \$92,616           | 2%               | 2%               |
| California    | \$106,641          | 7%               | <1%              |
| Colorado      | \$107,374          | 4%               | 3%               |
| D.C.          | \$108,284          | 9%               | 1%               |
| Florida       | \$93,523           | 7%               | 3%               |
| Georgia       | \$88,309           | 3%               | 11%              |
| Hawaii        | \$100,676          | 1%               | 7%               |
| Illinois      | \$93,974           | 1%               | 2%               |
| Kentucky      | \$85,128           | 1%               | 9%               |
| Louisiana     | \$82,835           | 1%               | 1%               |
| Maryland      | \$109,685          | 9%               | 1%               |
| Massachusetts | \$112,702          | 1%               | 2%               |
| Missouri      | \$96,036           | 1%               | 4%               |
| Nevada        | \$103,925          | 1%               | 7%               |
| New Jersey    | \$98,271           | 1%               | -2%              |
| New Mexico    | \$95,496           | 1%               | <0%              |
| New York      | \$106,249          | 1%               | 14%              |



|                | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS | CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| North Carolina | \$91,173           | 2%               | 3%               |
| Ohio           | \$97,754           | 2%               | 6%               |
| Oklahoma       | \$87,546           | 1%               | 3%               |
| Pennsylvania   | \$91,331           | 1%               | <0%              |
| South Carolina | \$86,931           | 1%               | 5%               |
| Tennessee      | \$92,745           | 1%               | 3%               |
| Texas          | \$94,467           | 6%               | 3%               |
| Utah           | \$95,036           | 1%               | 5%               |
| Virginia       | \$111,502          | 22%              | 1%               |
| Washington     | \$98,046           | 1%               | <0%              |

(Only states with 100 or more respondents shown)

#### **U.S. VERSUS WORKING ABROAD**



Just like last year, most respondents (95%) are based in the U.S. However, the **5% located overseas** had a substantially higher average total compensation than their cleared counterparts stateside. Differential pay, such as bonuses, danger pay, overtime, and housing allowances are key components of the total compensation package for those outside the U.S.

While the majority of these respondents are based in Afghanistan, that number decreased by 2% this year. Overseas respondents deceased 1%, potentially due to COVID-19 restrictions.

# D.C. Metro vs. the Rest of the United States

Despite a switch to more remote work during a pandemic year, the sample size in the DC Metro (DC-MD-

VA) grew from 39% in 2019 to 42% in 2020. Mean total compensation and mean base pay figures in the D.C. Metro area are considerably higher than the rest of the U.S. in 2020 (\$14,001 higher in total compensation and \$14,719 higher in base salary). However, the percentage of compensation above base salary is lower in the D.C. Metro area than the rest of the U.S., with slightly lower increases than the rest of the country.



#### D.C. METRO VS. REST OF U.S.

|                         | % OF<br>RESPONDENTS | TOTAL<br>COMPENSATION | TOTAL<br>BASE PAY | % COMP ABOVE<br>BASE PAY |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| D.C. Metro (DC, VA, MD) | 42%                 | \$110,381             | \$103,870         | 6%                       |
| Rest of U.S.            | 58%                 | \$96,380              | \$89,151          | 8%                       |

## **Compensation by Occupation**

The cleared industry has some frontrunners when it comes to compensation. Management and business sales continue to top the lists for high paying jobs, with business sales getting an 11% bump in 2020. While many industries struggled in the midst of a pandemic year, the stability of the defense industry meant that sales work found the gas pedal in 2020. The cleared tech industry dominates the category of six-figure salary occupations (highlighted in green on the chart below), with the majority of IT and engineering positions paying over \$100,000, on average. While not every tech position pays top dollar, the field consistently delivers higher compensation.

#### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY JOB CATEGORY

|                          | TOTAL COMPENSATION | CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Aerospace and Aviation   | \$107,432          | 4%               |
| Business - HR            | \$88,269           | 6%               |
| Business - Legal         | \$113,583          | 2%               |
| Business - Sales         | \$132,035          | 11%              |
| Business - Support       | \$72,574           | 4%               |
| Construction/Facilities  | \$97,287           | 4%               |
| Emergency                | \$98,822           | 5%               |
| Engineering - Chemical   | \$97,385           | -10%             |
| Engineering - Civil      | \$105,730          | 4%               |
| Engineering - Electrical | \$104,446          | -1%              |
| Engineering - Mechanical | \$101,096          | -5%              |
| Engineering - Systems    | \$131,613          | 1%               |
| Finance                  | \$96,447           | -1%              |
| Government Contractor    | \$99,304           | 5%               |
| Healthcare and Science   | \$95,558           | 3%               |
| Intelligence             | \$105,607          | 2%               |
| IT - Database            | \$111,787          | 1%               |
| IT - Data Science        | \$120,986          | 4%               |
| IT - Hardware            | \$105,835          | <1%              |
| IT - Security            | \$116,263          | 1%               |
| IT - Software            | \$127,482          | <0%              |
| IT - Support             | \$82,177           | 2%               |



#### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY JOB CATEGORY (CONT'D)

|                              | TOTAL COMPENSATION | CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| IT - Tech Writing            | \$86,083           | 2%               |
| IT - QA and Test             | \$105,743          | -2%              |
| Linguist                     | \$92,781           | 4%               |
| Logistics                    | \$85,069           | 10%              |
| Management                   | \$124,854          | 2%               |
| Military and Law Enforcement | \$109,056          | 7%               |
| Security                     | \$79,247           | -2%              |
| Trainer/Instructor           | \$96,421           | 4%               |
| Visual and Creative          | \$98,118           | 4%               |

# Pay Differentials by Occupation

Not surprisingly, in 2020, those in emergency/healthcare and science enjoyed the highest differential, earning 13% beyond their base pay, and were also among those with the greatest increases in total compensation and base pay (as a percentage). Engineering respondents had the highest mean total compensation. While IT professionals make up 28% of the sample and are the highest paid group, they have the lowest differential between base pay and total compensation.

#### **BIGGEST PAY DIFFERENTIALS BY JOB CATEGORY**

|  | BASE PAY  | TOTAL COMPENSATION | DIFFERENTIAL |
|--|-----------|--------------------|--------------|
| Business/Finance/<br>Management                                    | \$99,295  | \$107,177          | 8%           |
| Engineering  | \$107,640 | \$116,469          | 8%           |
| Emergency/Healthcare and Science                                   | \$85,959  | \$96,863           | 13%          |
| Intelligence/Linguist  | \$95,943  | \$103,842          | 8%           |
| Information Technology   | \$100,847 | \$106,697          | 6%           |
| Government Contractor/<br>Military and Law<br>Enforcement/Security | \$85,540  | \$94,070           | 10%          |
| All Other Positions  | \$87,683  | \$98,135           | 12%          |



# Satisfaction: Jobs, Salaries, and Cleared Industry

# Salaries by Year with Current Employer

Sometimes, it pays to jump ship and garner a higher salary; however, that often rings truer for the younger crowd. Out of the 12,355 respondents who reported less than two years with their current employer, 79% were Millennials or Generation X. When it comes to plans to change jobs or employers in the coming year, Millennials and Generation X also dominate, with 79% of those likely or very likely to jump ship. If you're thinking about candidate retention strategies, it is clear who is a flight risk.

#### COMPENSATION BY YEARS WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER

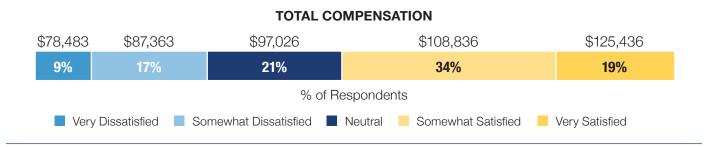
|                  | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS | % CHANGE FROM 2019 |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Less than 1 year | \$94,411           | 24%              | 1%                 |
| 1 to 2 years     | \$99,008           | 39%              | 1%                 |
| 3 to 5 years     | \$106,621          | 19%              | 4%                 |
| 6 to 10 years    | \$116,018          | 8%               | 6%                 |
| 11 to 15 years   | \$119,470          | 5%               | 3%                 |
| 16 to 20 years   | \$129,663          | 3%               | 6%                 |
| >20 years        | \$133,273          | 3%               | 1%                 |



# Salary and Job Satisfaction

Respondents were asked about their base pay, and 61% reported an increase in their base pay in 2020. Only 5% reported a decrease in base pay this past year, and 18% reported no change at all. Out of those who reported an increase, 32% said it was 3% or less, and 29% reported a 4% increase or greater.

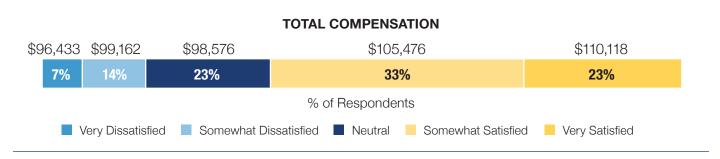
#### SALARY SATISFACTION



Fewer respondents in 2020 report being 'satisfied' with their jobs, down almost 8% from 2019, to 56%. Likewise, more respondents in 2020 report being 'dissatisfied' with their job, up over 3% from 2019. Those reporting being 'neutral' also increased from 19% to 23% in 2020. While job dissatisfaction is not completely correlated with total compensation, respondents with lower compensation levels were the most likely to report dissatisfaction with their jobs.

Additionally, 63% of respondents who reported receiving a 5% or greater increase landed in the satisfied category. In 2020, the proportion of respondents with a stronger-than-average satisfaction for their job is 56%.

#### JOB SATISFACTION



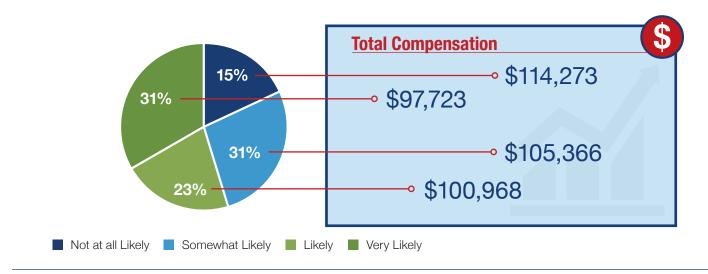


# Likelihood of Changing Jobs or Leaving the Cleared Industry

In a stable industry during a pandemic year, candidates felt the freedom to jump ship with 85% of respondents at least somewhat likely to change jobs or employers in the coming year, which is a 4% increase from 2019.

Only 15% see no reason to entertain a career move this year. Respondents with zero plans to change jobs earned over \$15,000 more in total compensation than those who were likely or very likely to change jobs.

#### LIKELIHOOD OF CHANGING JOBS AND/OR EMPLOYERS



#### PANDEMICS AND PAY

The defense industry was largely inoculated from layoffs and other issues related to COVID-19. That was in large part due to the extension of Section 3610 of the CARES Act, which allowed government contractors to reimburse for leave paid to employees because of the pandemic. Of the 18% of respondents with no change in salary, 8% said it was because of COVID. Respondents with

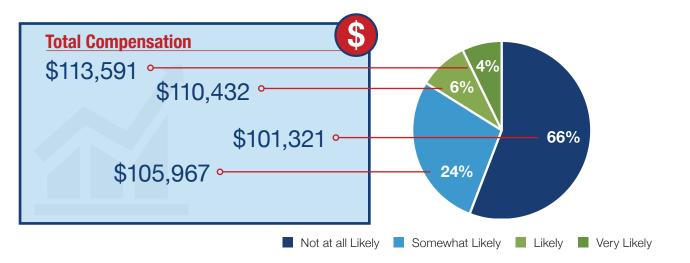


no change or a decrease expressed some confusion about how long the pay freeze or decrease would last, with 46% unsure if it was temporary or permanent.



In 2020, the majority of respondents (66%) report being 'not at all likely' to leave the cleared industry in the next five years, up 9% from 2019. Only 9% report being 'likely or very likely' to leave, down 6% from 2019. In a year where many industries have had to lay off workers, respondents seem to recognize the stability that the cleared industry provides. When respondents were asked about their reasons to leave the cleared industry, most, in order, cited 'prefer to keep my options open,' followed by 'retiring' and 'seeking higher compensation.' Those who cited 'retiring,' not surprisingly, enjoyed the highest mean total compensation and base pay (likely due to age and experience).

When asked how likely they are to leave the cleared industry in the next five years, those responding 'very likely' show the highest mean total compensation and base pay in 2020 and also show the highest level of compensation above base pay and the highest increase in total compensation and base pay. Conversely, those who report being 'not at all likely' to leave the cleared industry fair the worst on all the measures above. For some high-paying fields in the cleared industry, candidates can still make more money in the commercial sector. Some roles come down to maximizing earning potential, as well as balancing that with location and mission.



#### LIKELIHOOD OF LEAVING THE CLEARED INDUSTRY

Don't use the pandemic as an excuse to put your hiring efforts on hold. More candidates are willing to make a move, and those who report being unsure of whether their current pay raise is permanent are **likely to be first on the list**.



# **Compensation and Demographics**

With each year, the makeup of the national security field adjusts—adding in new generations and more diversity. The majority of respondents were age 24 to 55, with an even breakdown between Millennials and Generation X. With a difference in total compensation of \$55,804 between Boomers and Generation Z, it's clear that base pay and total compensation grow with age. While Generation Z had a higher percentage of

respondents in D.C. or Maryland, all ages were relatively even in Virginia, with Generation Z and Millennials having a slightly higher percentage.

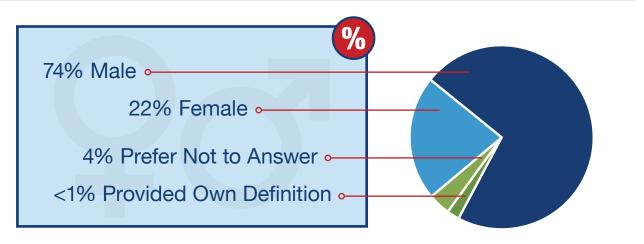


#### **COMPENSATION BY AGE**

| AGE CATEGORY                  | TOTAL COMPENSATION | % OF RESPONDENTS |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Generation Z (born 1997-2012) | \$64,586           | 2%               |
| Millennials (born 1981-96)    | \$88,486           | 38%              |
| Generation X (born 1965-80)   | \$110,901          | 38%              |
| Boomers (born 1946-64)        | \$120,390          | 21%              |
| Silent (born 1945 or earlier) | \$119,546          | 1%               |

When it comes to location, 53% of female survey respondents are located in the D.C. Metro area, compared to 37% of male respondents. While other areas around the country were either even or had more men, women in the cleared industry flock more to the D.C. metro area.

#### **RESPONDENTS BY GENDER**





# Conclusion

#### 2021: RESILIENT WORKFORCE IS READY TO ADAPT AND GROW

It's hard to know how new White House and Congressional leadership could change the course of national security compensation. Whether it's government shutdowns or sequestrations, the defense industry isn't immune from change, even if it's stayed inoculated from the pandemic. If this year has proven anything, it's that the workforce is able to stay mission focused and collaborate remotely and even get creative with splitting schedules for on-site classified work and taking unclassified work safely home. Likelihood of changing jobs has not decreased, but the job security of this industry means 66% of respondents said they were unlikely to leave the cleared industry, up 9% from the last survey. Candidates may be open to changing jobs, but they are more likely to keep supporting national security work.



## **Important Information About Our Survey**

The survey for the 2021 Security Clearance Compensation Report was administered online by ClearanceJobs from September 17, 2020 to December 31, 2020. In 2020, there were 45,748 survey participants, an increase of 14% over the 2019 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 incomplete or duplicate questionnaires, there remained 20,548 usable responses in 2020. Survey results are compared to the 19,413 useable responses captured in 2019 that followed the same parameters.



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