

SECURITY CLEARANCE COMPENSATION REPORT ALABAMA



ClearanceJobs takes a deep dive into compensation, job and salary satisfaction, and the likelihood of changing jobs for cleared professionals in Alabama.



Alabama played a critical role in space history, and it continues to carry forward major missions in defense and aerospace. Redstone Arsenal, a secure, 38,000 acre federal campus remains the heart of Rocket City, the affectionate nickname given to Huntsville, AL. With space making a comeback, Alabama salaries are also skyrocketing, with a growth of 11% from 2018 to 2020. In Alabama, the average total compensation is \$95,852, compared to \$88,915 in the rest of the U.S. Growth is the name of the game in Alabama, and engineers are poised to take the state there.

Among the top-paying professions, engineering ranks number one, with average salaries of \$132,347.

Aerospace contributes more than 60,000 jobs to the Alabama economy, and brings in billions in economic impact. It's not just engineering, but research and development that drives Alabama salaries and job growth. Alabama universities are working hard to churn out new talent in everything from cybersecurity and optics to robotics. Research is at home in Rocket City, the site of one of the largest research parks in the U.S., with over 300 companies.

Alabama Total Compensation

Average total compensation in Alabama is \$95,853. That’s an 11% change from 2018, the last time ClearanceJobs administered a comprehensive compensation survey. Average total compensation is above the national average, and Alabama’s low cost of living makes it a prime pick for cleared employees. Growing defense appropriations and the creation of the U.S. Space Force are good news for Alabama.

TOTAL COMPENSATION

	2018	2020	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Average Total Compensation	\$86,178	\$95,853	11%



Compensation by Clearance Level

All clearance levels are experiencing major growth from Alabama’s compensation boom. Compensation for Secret, Top Secret, and Top Secret/SCI all grew from 2018 to 2020. Secret and Top Secret/SCI compensation increased by 11%, and Top Secret compensation increased by 15%. While some regions heavily emphasize only TS/SCI or specific clearance levels, every clearance level in Alabama got shown the money in 2020. As Alabama’s aerospace industry and defense foothold continues to deepen, its compensation for Secret, Top Secret, and Top Secret/SCI grows, too.

TOTAL COMPENSATION BY CLEARANCE

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Confidential			
Secret	\$78,380	\$86,612	11%
Top Secret	\$99,701	\$114,158	15%
Top Secret/SCI	\$101,718	\$112,528	11%
DoE (Q or L)			
Intel			
DHS			
Public Trust			
Other Government Agency			

Gray box indicates <20 responses.

Compensation by Polygraph Level

While 82% of respondents from Alabama work for the DoD, 91% of respondents do not have a poly. The 6% that have a counterintelligence polygraph make approximately \$18,000 more than the rest of the country who have a counterintelligence polygraph.

TOTAL COMPENSATION BY POLYGRAPH

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Counterintelligence Poly	\$115,427	\$118,111	2%
Lifestyle or Full Scope Poly	\$83,608	\$93,035	11%
Don't have current polygraph	\$84,777	\$94,390	11%



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Salaries by Year with Current Employer

Retention has long been promoted as valuable to companies, but employees do not often feel the benefits of staying with employers for the long haul. However, between 2018 and 2020, cleared professionals in Alabama who stayed with their employer for 11-15 years saw a 30% increase in yearly compensation. In some areas, it pays to jump ship often, but increased length of time with an employer in Alabama brings a large pay increase.

At the same time, cleared employees who were at their jobs under five years still saw a decent increase from 2018 to 2020. Those who remained with their employers for 6-10 years only received a marginal increase.

COMPENSATION BY YEAR WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Less than 1 year	\$83,220	\$94,523	14%
1 to 2 years	\$82,437	\$96,242	17%
3 to 5 years	\$83,089	\$95,266	15%
6 to 10 years	\$87,608	\$89,893	3%
11 to 15 years	\$83,786	\$108,553	30%
16 to 20 years			
>20 years			

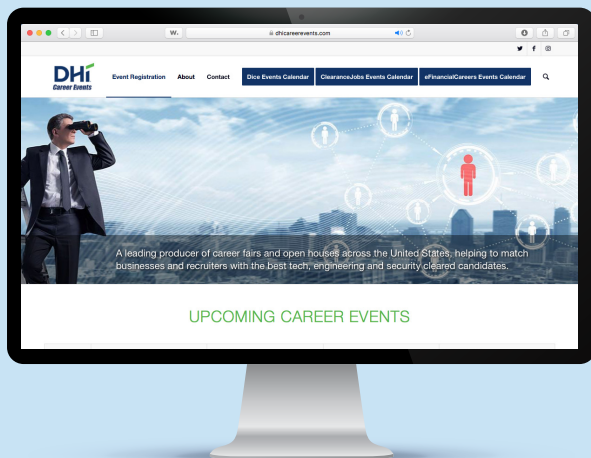
Compensation by Career Level

In Alabama, management is the place to be when it comes to compensation. While 10 years or more in the industry will pay almost double an entry level position, the leap to management is where the money is at, with almost an additional \$30,000 over a senior level career position. So, for those who enjoy managing people and projects, it does pay to take technical skills and apply them to the management track.

Between 2018 and 2020, early career professionals saw the highest compensation increases, with a 24% increase. Senior level professional salaries also rose between 2018 and 2020 with an 18% bump. Candidates with experience in highly technical positions, like engineering and cybersecurity, can push for the accompanying compensation.

COMPENSATION BY CAREER LEVEL

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Entry Level (less than 2 years experience)	\$55,054	\$50,094	-9%
Early Career (2+ yrs experience)	\$51,372	\$63,505	24%
Mid Level Career (5+ yrs experience)	\$66,752	\$71,277	7%
Senior Level Career (10+ yrs experience)	\$90,268	\$106,402	18%
Management (Manager/Director of Staff)	\$119,140	\$131,221	10%
Executive (SVP, EVP, VP)			
Senior Executive (President, CEO)			



FIND YOUR NEXT HIRE OR TAKE YOUR CAREER TO THE NEXT LEVEL

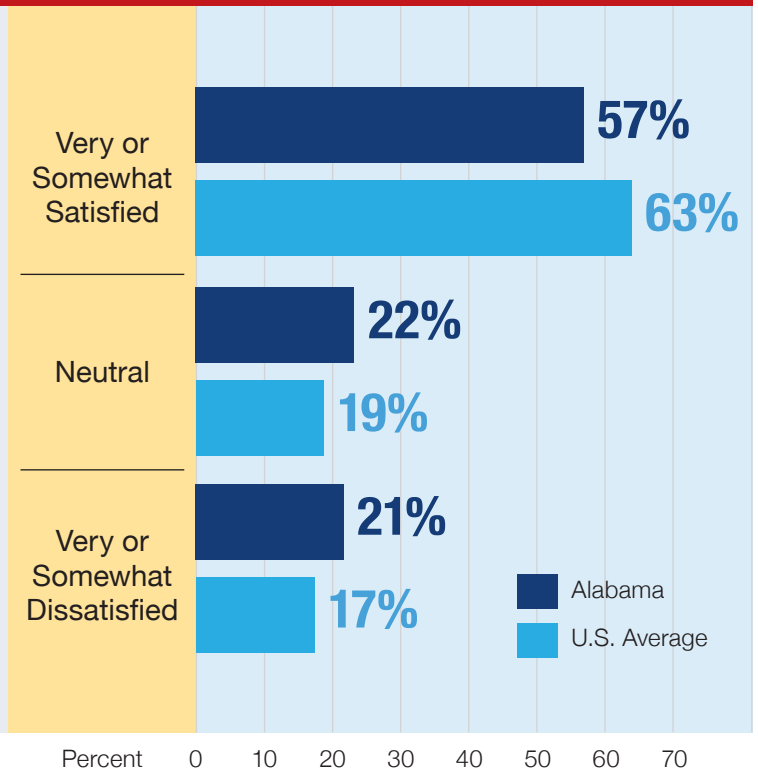
Virtual Career Fairs connect top technology, engineering and security cleared professionals in a virtual, online environment, without the cost, time, and effort of travel.



Satisfaction with Job

Fed Up in Alabama

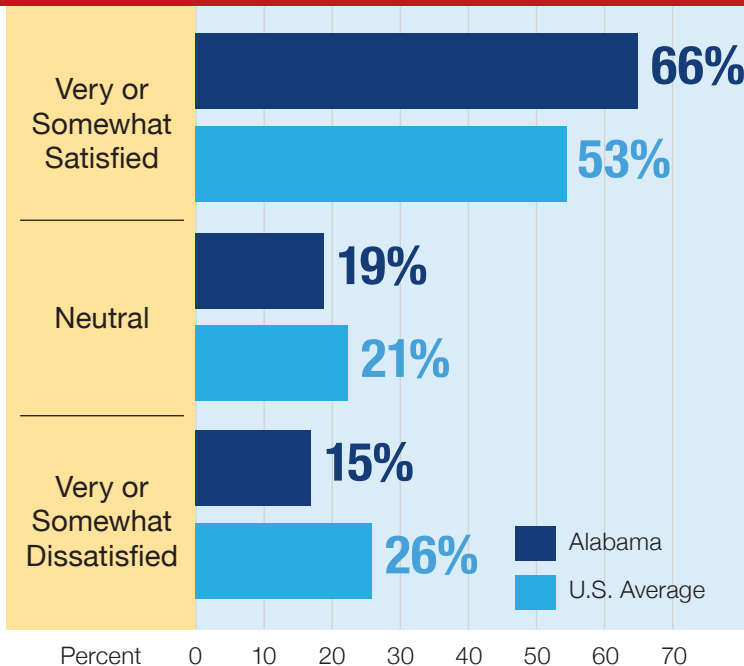
The work may pay well and the overall mission is a key driver to career direction, but the contract life can leave something to be desired. While contractors and agencies in the cleared world have made marked improvements over the years to better support employees, it's apparent that there are still opportunities to increase employee satisfaction. Alabama's cleared workforce is less satisfied in their job than the rest of the U.S.



Satisfaction with Salary

But Satisfied with Salaries

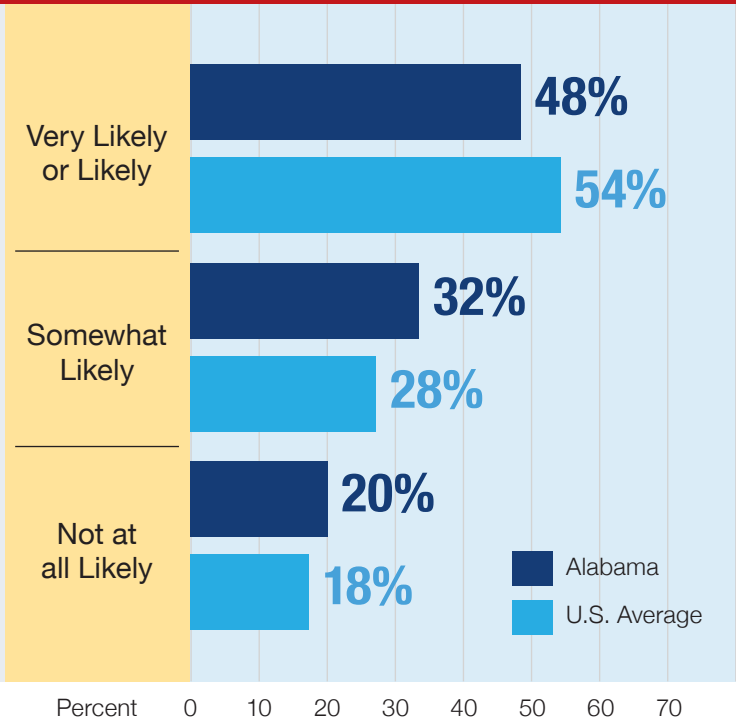
In Alabama, the data indicators point to a high satisfaction with salary. With many key industries that offer high paying opportunities, professionals in the state of Alabama have a variety of options that keep their salaries moving up the ladder. Major defense contractors, including Boeing and SAIC, continue to invest in Alabama's defense industry. With a strong aerospace industry and continued growth—and a relatively low cost of living—cleared Alabamans get to see their salaries go further, which also supports overall satisfaction with compensation.



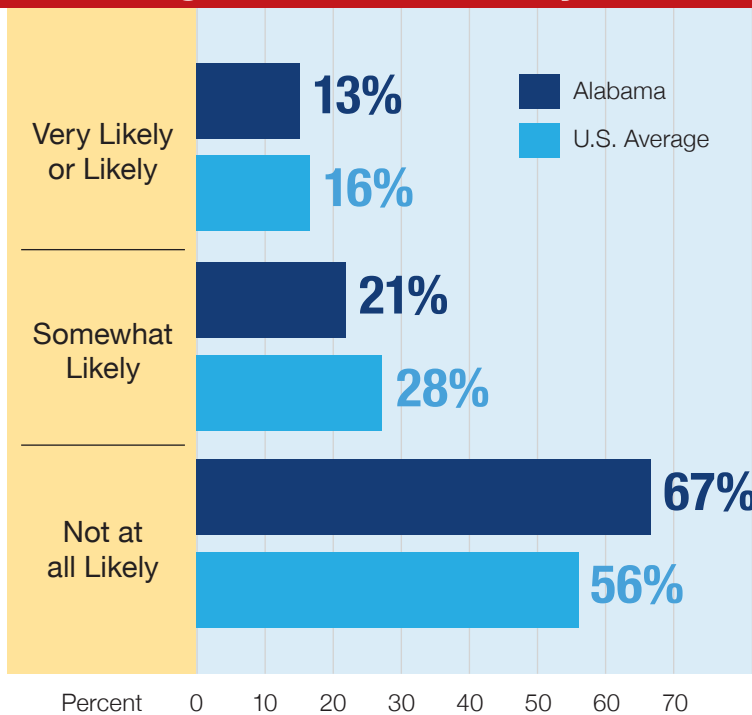
Likelihood of Changing Jobs or Employer in the Next Year

Alabama on the Move

Depending on the project role, the options to change employers can sometimes demand a location change. With Alabama's cost of living benefits and varied terrain options throughout the state, the urge to adjust jobs seems to be a little bit less for the cleared Alabama workforce than the rest of the U.S. However, with more defense contractors joining the mix and plenty of military bases to support, Alabama's cleared workforce has many options to consider. With the Marshall Space Flight Center and AIDT's Robotics Technology Park, options to support worthy missions abound without ever leaving the state.



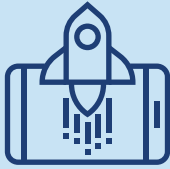
Leaving Cleared Industry in the Next Five Years



Cleared Pros in it for the Mission

Alabama's cleared workforce is dedicated to cleared work, to a significant degree more than the rest of the country. More than two-thirds say they are highly unlikely to leave the cleared industry. With a significant percentage of workers supporting Department of Defense missions and a high percentage of veterans in the workforce, professionals in Alabama clearly appreciate the value of their clearance and have a desire to keep doing cleared work. The combination of competitive salaries, heavy commercial sector investment, and a variety of career options keep the cleared workforce in Alabama strong.

Top 5 Highest Paid Jobs:



\$132,347

ENGINEERING - SYSTEMS

Aerospace, Avionics, Geospatial, Modeling, Simulations, Management



\$119,772

MANAGEMENT

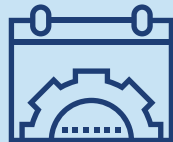
Team Lead, Project Manager, Program Manager, Supervisor



\$115,600

ENGINEERING - MECHANICAL

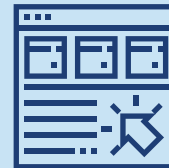
Materials, Structural, Fluid, CAN/CAM, Thermo, Management



\$112,561

IT - SECURITY

Cybersecurity, Defense, Attack, Policy, Emergency Response, Management



\$105,986

IT - DATABASE

Flight Test, Manufacturing, Quality Assurance, Maintenance, Machinist, Communications, Satellite

Aerospace and engineering garner top salaries in Alabama, with Rocket City's space and cyber missions pushing the emphasis on aviation and engineering careers. Systems engineering, with a focus in aerospace, avionics, geospatial, modeling, simulations, and management, paid the most with average compensation of \$132,347. Project managers earn the second highest salaries in Alabama. Someone has to keep the gears moving and make sure those rockets take off on time and within budget, and that's what cleared management professionals are able to do—and they earn top salaries to do it. Redstone Arsenal alone is home to more than 60 federal agencies with a federal budget of more than \$50 billion.

IT Security and Aerospace Aviation careers round out the top five highest paid industries in Alabama. The demand for cybersecurity professionals is high everywhere, including Alabama. High compensation for aerospace is unique to the needs of Alabama's space and Air Force industries, where flight testing and quality assurance professionals are always in demand.

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