

# SECURITY CLEARANCE COMPENSATION REPORT CALIFORNIA



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



Defense industry professionals are some of the most highly-paid professionals in the state of California.

And while technology investment has spread across the country, the Silicon Valley advantage still exists. When it comes to doing cutting-edge work and getting paid well to do it, California is still king. Companies like L3Harris have found ways to work with state officials to cut costs in order to stay within California, close to the talent. The state boasts nearly 8 million jobs that support the national security industry. With the country's highest number of engineers, three NASA research centers, and two out of the top three universities

for aerospace engineering, California is dedicated to making an impact.

Risk-taking and forward-thinking often describe the California culture. That culture dates back to early aviators like Los Angeles resident Amelia Earhart. Not every risk ends in triumph. But companies in California demonstrate a willingness to push the boundaries, acquire risk, and aim for forward progress. With the takeoff of the aerospace industry once again in Southern California and 32 military bases within its borders, the hub of innovation grows again with both startup companies and historic defense contractors.

# California Total Compensation

California's average total compensation is over \$10,000 more than the rest of the U.S. at \$99,743. California employers know that happy employees are well-compensated employees. While the cost of living may not be the driving factor for talent to stay within the state borders, quality of life is a force in attracting talent to California. From the redwood forests of Northern California to 840 miles of coastline, California, offers both compensation and a lifestyle.

## TOTAL COMPENSATION

	2018	2020	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Average Total Compensation	\$96,699	\$99,743	3%



California's Aerospace Valley, also known as Antelope Valley encompasses Los Angeles County and areas of eastern Kern County. It's home to Edwards Air Force Base and United States Air Force Plant 42, a classified aircraft manufacturing plant.



## Compensation by Clearance Level

While a small percentage of respondents support the Department of Homeland Security, compensation for DHS cleared workers increased 11% since 2018, for average compensation of \$105,412. The majority of California respondents hold a Secret clearance, with average compensation of \$88,311. The real salary winners are Department of Energy and Intel clearance holders. Intel's workers had an average salary of \$125,213, and Energy's workers had an average salary of \$134,349.

## TOTAL COMPENSATION BY CLEARANCE

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Confidential			
Secret	\$84,425	\$88,311	5%
Top Secret	\$114,404	\$111,354	-3%
Top Secret/SCI	\$105,782	\$109,494	4%
DoE (Q or L)	\$125,558	\$134,349	7%
Intel	\$121,310	\$125,213	3%
DHS	\$94,691	\$105,412	11%
Public Trust	\$85,324	\$80,202	-6%
Other Government Agency	\$98,416	\$98,725	0%

Gray box indicates <20 responses.

## Compensation by Polygraph Level

Despite the fact that 53% of the respondents are government contractors, only 19% of professionals in California possess a poly. However, poly or not, all Californian respondents received a 3% jump since 2018. Pay increases were equal for candidates regardless of polygraph. Total compensation is another story—respondents with a CI poly were paid \$20,000 more than respondents without a polygraph.

### TOTAL COMPENSATION BY POLYGRAPH

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Counterintelligence Poly	\$113,146	\$116,416	3%
Lifestyle or Full Scope Poly	\$103,803	\$107,408	3%
Don't have current polygraph	\$93,344	\$96,609	3%



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## Salaries by Year with Current Employer

As new technologies and markets transform California’s aerospace industry, employers are responding by compensating talent accordingly. Despite the attractive top salaries for private sector positions in Silicon Valley, Southern California’s aerospace workers are among the highest paid in the region, according to the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation. Employers like Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman are leaders in California as they support contracts with California’s 32 military bases. The majority of survey respondents had the biggest increases in the first five years with their employers. However, respondents who spent 11-15 years with their current employer had the highest average salaries, \$127,768. While that’s only a 4% pay increase, it’s clear that sometimes it pays to stay.

### COMPENSATION BY YEAR WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Less than 1 year	\$85,240	\$93,721	10%
1 to 2 years	\$91,832	\$96,862	5%
3 to 5 years	\$90,662	\$91,644	1%
6 to 10 years	\$102,193	\$99,554	-3%
11 to 15 years	\$122,804	\$127,768	4%
16 to 20 years	\$107,290	\$117,318	9%
>20 years	\$124,799	\$120,074	-4%

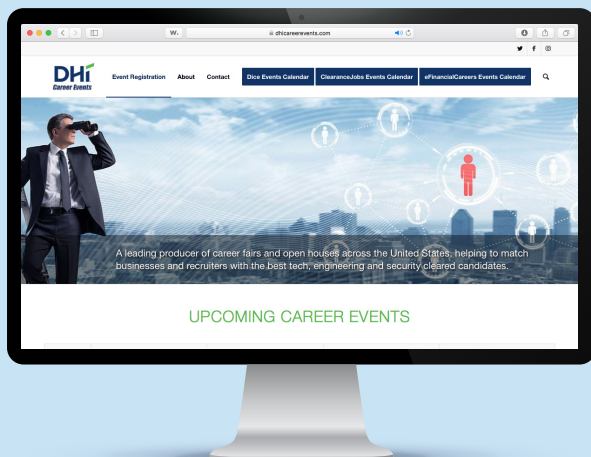
# Compensation by Career Level

California tracks with the rest of the country by increasing the compensation of its workforce based on experience. However, California is even more willing to pay its cleared workforce for their years of experience. While California tracks with the rest of the U.S. for entry and early-career professionals, with marginal increases, when cleared respondents reach the 10-year mark, California offers \$6,301 more. This theme continues all the way up to the executive level, with a \$14,073 difference between California and the rest of the U.S. When it comes to experience, California is willing and ready to compensate its cleared workforce. The demand to push pay upward likely coincides with the need for more money to afford California's higher cost of living—particularly for experienced professionals who are ready to buy homes and raise a family. For California professionals who reach the executive mark, compensation is nearly three times higher than what professionals make in their first years on the job.

## COMPENSATION BY CAREER LEVEL

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Entry Level (less than 2 years experience)	\$49,054	\$59,890	9%
Early Career (2+ yrs experience)	\$52,714	\$65,756	8%
Mid Level Career (5+ yrs experience)	\$72,191	\$77,898	-2%
Senior Level Career (10+ yrs experience)	\$103,456	\$111,187	7%
Management (Manager/Director of Staff)	\$122,875	\$137,119	10%
Executive (SVP, EVP, VP)	\$158,258	\$176,881	12%
Senior Executive (President, CEO)			

Gray box indicates <20 responses.



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

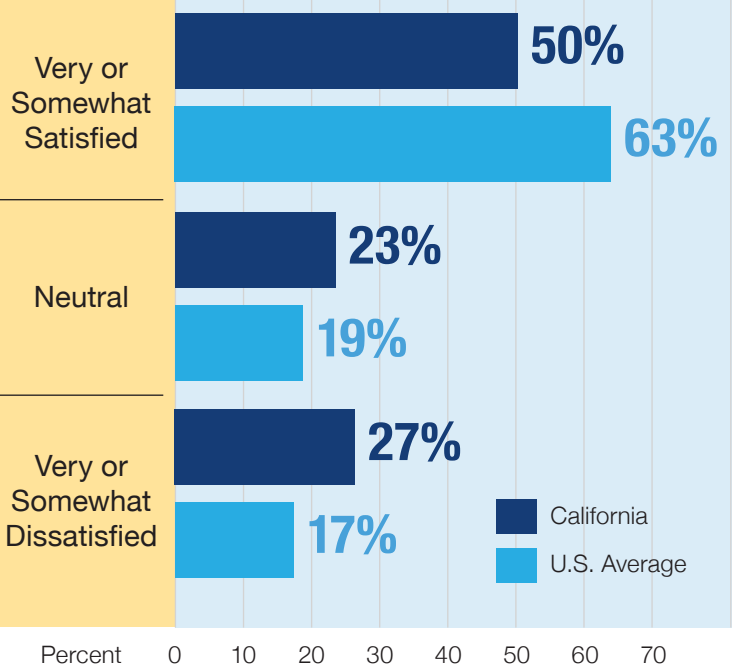
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## Satisfaction with Job

### Less Satisfied, More Likely to Leave

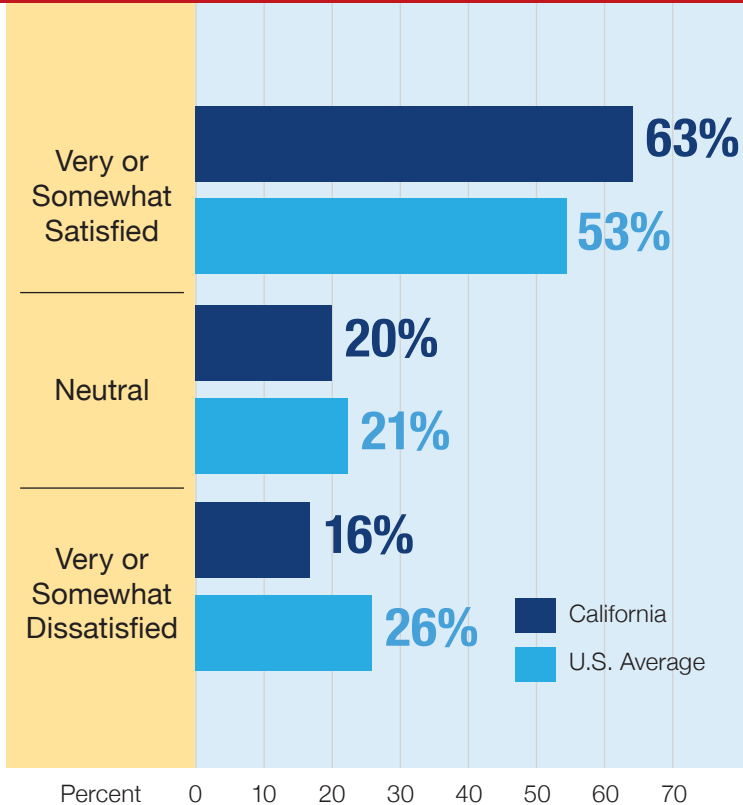
California respondents are 10% more likely to be dissatisfied with their jobs than the national average. While the defense industry can boast its stability, solid pay, and unique job prospects, the strength of the commercial sector can certainly contribute to decreased job satisfaction. When California professionals consider the work they do, they may be tempted by outside opportunities or commercial sector career options. That coincides with California respondents being somewhat more likely to leave the cleared industry than other respondents.



## Satisfaction with Salary

### High Salary Satisfaction

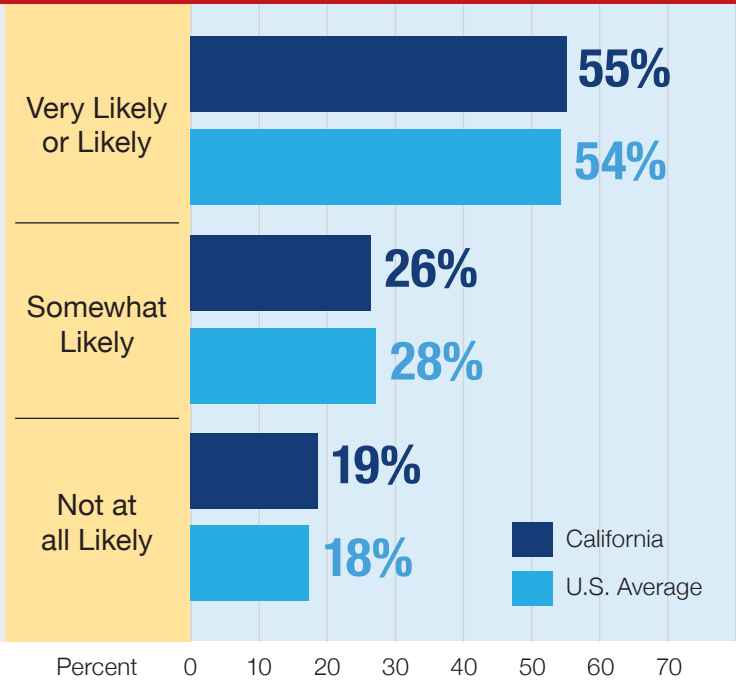
California respondents were 10% more likely to be satisfied with their salaries. Despite being more dissatisfied with their work, California respondents are more satisfied with their pay. When it comes to what cleared professionals in California think about their compensation, it's clear they're motivated by more than the money.



## Likelihood of Changing Jobs or Employer in the Next Year

### California on the Move

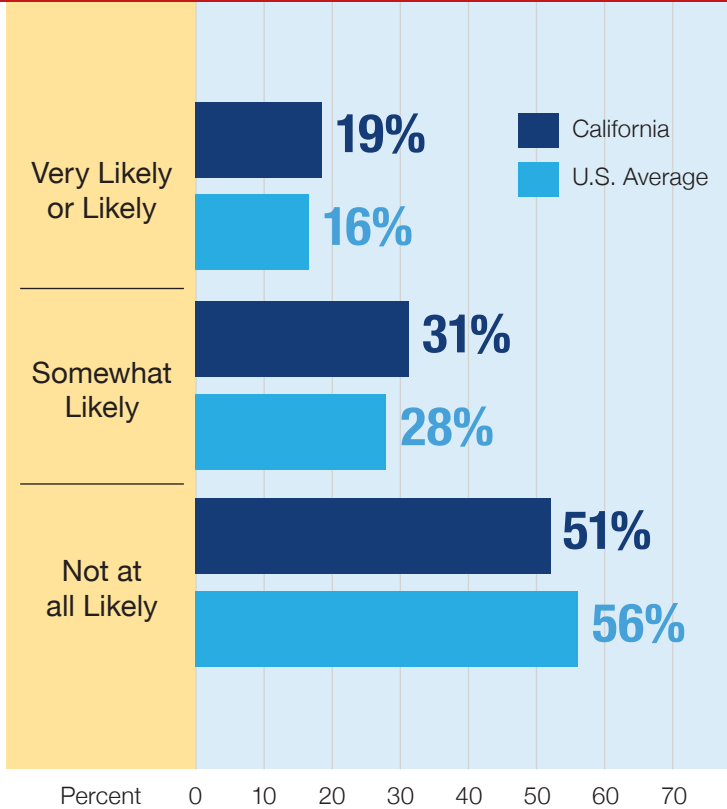
With progress on the mind, California's cleared employees are willing to take make a leap to strike it big, with 81% of respondents at least somewhat likely to change employers or jobs in the coming year. That's right on par with the national average. While 22% of respondents had been with their employer for less than a year, the figures show that professionals, regardless of tenure, are open to their next opportunity. With the defense industry remaining recession-proof, professionals, while not necessarily eager to make a move, are certainly willing to do it for the right opportunity.



## Leaving Cleared Industry in the Next Five Years

### Cleared Pros in it for the Mission

With the option of combining mission with innovation and competitive salaries on offer, 51% of the Californian cleared workforce said a big 'no thank you' to leaving the cleared life. California offers costs of living challenges, but with unique cleared career opportunities and the California sunshine both on offer, many cleared professionals, while open to a new opportunity, aren't open to leaving their clearance behind. From NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and a number of leading Silicon Valley companies doing cleared work, there are plenty of cleared missions to choose from. California is a leader in the intellectual and technological capital in the aerospace and defense industry, making it hard for the cleared employee to walk away.



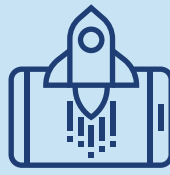
## Top 5 Highest Paid Jobs:



**\$142,571**

### ENGINEERING - CHEMICAL

Design, Manufacturing, Process,  
Materials, Management



**\$139,677**

### ENGINEERING - SYSTEMS

Aerospace, Avionics, Geospatial,  
Modeling, Simulations, Management



**\$129,265**

### IT - SOFTWARE

Development, Web,  
Engineering, Management



**\$123,537**

### BUSINESS - SALES

Business Development,  
Account Management



**\$117,695**

### ENGINEERING - MECHANICAL

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

When it comes to top paying cleared jobs in California, there are just three words: engineering, engineering, and engineering. Chemical engineering came in at number one, paying cleared employees in California \$142,571. Systems engineering placed second at \$139,677, and mechanical engineering rounding out the top five with average total compensation of \$117,695. IT-Software was third at \$129,265, showing that California's cleared IT industry is willing to contend with the tech giants and startups within the state. Business-Sales professionals, including business development and account management garnered the fourth highest salaries at \$123,537.

While aviation leaders like Amelia Earhart may have launched California's appetite for innovation and risk-taking, its current employees are proving that the sky is still no longer the limit for the state.

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