

SECURITY CLEARANCE COMPENSATION REPORT VIRGINIA



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



Virginia's cleared professionals boast the highest average total compensation in the country, \$108,030. When it comes to cleared job opportunities, Virginia opportunities continue to skyrocket, and competition for top talent is fierce. Virginia is home to more than 274 aerospace companies, and Amazon's HQ2 office is Crystal City's newest

resident. Major defense contractors are increasingly making Virginia home, whether their focus is cybersecurity and the cloud or satellites and software. Tysons Corner, Falls Church, and Reston are major defense hubs in the state, but not the only ones. Virginia Beach and Hampton Roads are home to a heavy concentration of military installations and defense contractors, as well.

Virginia Total Compensation

Average total compensation is \$108,030, a 3% increase from 2018, the last time ClearanceJobs administered a comprehensive compensation survey. Virginia benefits from its diversity of job opportunity, from the CIA's headquarters in Langley to logistics opportunities in Hampton Roads.

TOTAL COMPENSATION

	2018	2020	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Average Total Compensation	\$104,885	\$ 108,030	3%

The diversity of job opportunities in Virginia continues to drive up salaries. And every year, new major employers from Silicon Valley to start-ups decide to make Virginia home. That's good news for cleared professionals, and keeps salaries high.



Compensation by Clearance Level

Confidential clearance holders saw the biggest salary jump, fueled by the fact that fewer than 1% of Virginia's respondents had confidential clearances. DHS clearance compensation also decreased, and saw a dwindling number of respondents. Skill and state tend to trump clearance level as a compensation driver.

TOTAL COMPENSATION BY CLEARANCE

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Confidential	\$66,750	\$81,395	22%
Secret	\$83,719	\$87,361	4%
Top Secret	\$106,964	\$108,736	2%
Top Secret/SCI	\$111,688	\$116,487	4%
DoE (Q or L)			
Intel	\$131,296	\$137,343	5%
DHS	\$105,193	\$95,165	-10%
Public Trust	\$77,641	\$83,924	8%
Other Government Agency	\$103,462	\$107,997	4%

Gray box indicates <20 responses.

Compensation by Polygraph Level

Virginia security clearance holders have the second highest percentage of polygraphs, with 33% of respondents having a Lifestyle, Full Scope or Counterintelligence polygraph. Pay increases were 4% higher for polygraph holders than those without a polygraph.

TOTAL COMPENSATION BY POLYGRAPH

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Counterintelligence Poly	\$116,417	\$123,389	6%
Lifestyle or Full Scope Poly	\$125,845	\$133,486	6%
Don't have current polygraph	\$96,414	\$98,604	2%

The polygraph is more about getting scared people to admit what they would have otherwise omitted on their SF-86 than it is about actually digging up deception independently. Bearing that in mind, here is the reality: the scare tactic works subconsciously on many people.



Salaries by Year with Current Employer

Respondents with 16 to 20 years of with their employer reported the highest pay increases, and those with 3 to 5 years at their employer reported the smallest increases. The most common increase was 5%, including for those with less than one year at their employer or more than 20.

COMPENSATION BY YEAR WITH CURRENT EMPLOYER

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Less than 1 year	\$96,583	\$101,641	5%
1 to 2 years	\$101,691	\$107,094	5%
3 to 5 years	\$106,744	\$109,559	3%
6 to 10 years	\$107,861	\$112,749	5%
11 to 15 years	\$117,688	\$118,999	1%
16 to 20 years	\$107,757	\$117,267	9%
>20 years	\$123,711	\$130,078	5%

Compensation by Career Level

Early-career professionals (those with between 2 to 5 years of experience) saw the largest salary increases (9%). But when it comes to the career level that pays, professionals with 10 years of experience or more can make it rain in Virginia, making \$32,401 more than those with 5 to 10 years of experience.

The major pay bump that comes with experience makes sense in a state dominated by defense contracting and with a heavy military presence. In both military service and government contracting, tenure matters, with pay scales and government pay rates going up based on skills, certifications and experience. And with 10% of Virginians also veterans, many cleared professionals bring both military and civilian experience to the career table. 21,210 veterans are projected to transition out of service in Virginia in 2020 alone, and the state frequently ranks high on lists of top states for military retirement. That creates a qualified pool of cleared talent that frequently goes to work in Virginia's [thousands of cleared job opportunities](#).

COMPENSATION BY CAREER LEVEL

	2018 COMPENSATION	2020 COMPENSATION	% CHANGE FROM 2018
Entry Level (less than 2 years experience)	\$58,786	\$62,564	6%
Early Career (2+ yrs experience)	\$65,685	\$71,758	9%
Mid Level Career (5+ yrs experience)	\$80,712	\$86,225	7%
Senior Level Career (10+ yrs experience)	\$113,374	\$118,626	5%
Management (Manager/Director of Staff)	\$135,426	\$142,567	5%
Executive (SVP, EVP, VP)	\$178,207	\$186,310	5%
Senior Executive (President, CEO)	\$167,733	\$178,435	6%



FROM THE PENTAGON TO NATIONAL LANDING

Arlington's Pentagon complex is still the world's biggest office building at 6.5 million square feet. Approximately 26,000 military, civilian, and contract employees go to work in the Pentagon every day. Cross under I-395 and you'll arrive at the new National Landing—and soon to be home of 5,000 Amazon employees.

PENTAGON

FROM D.C.

395

NATIONAL LANDING

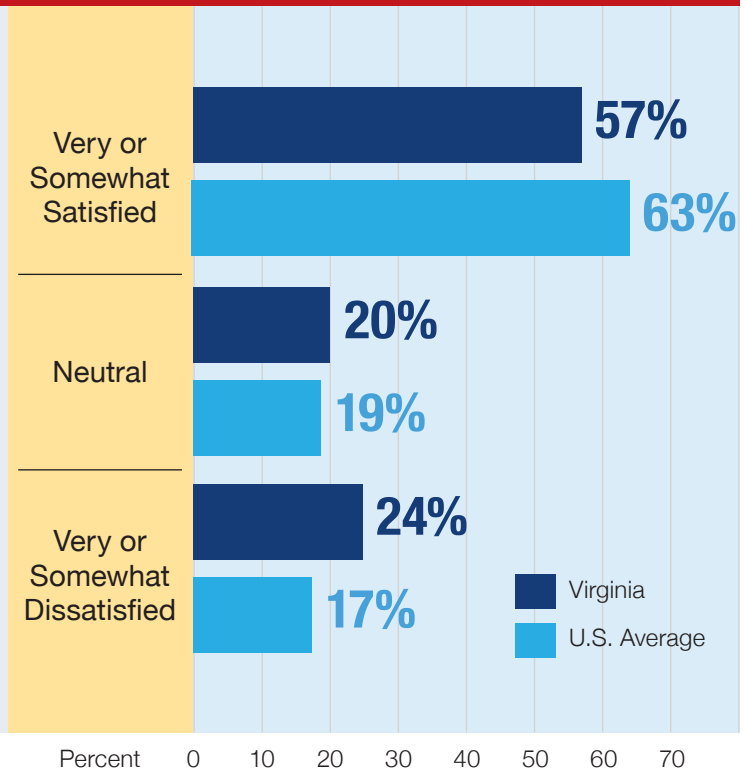
Long Bridge Drive

Satisfaction with Job

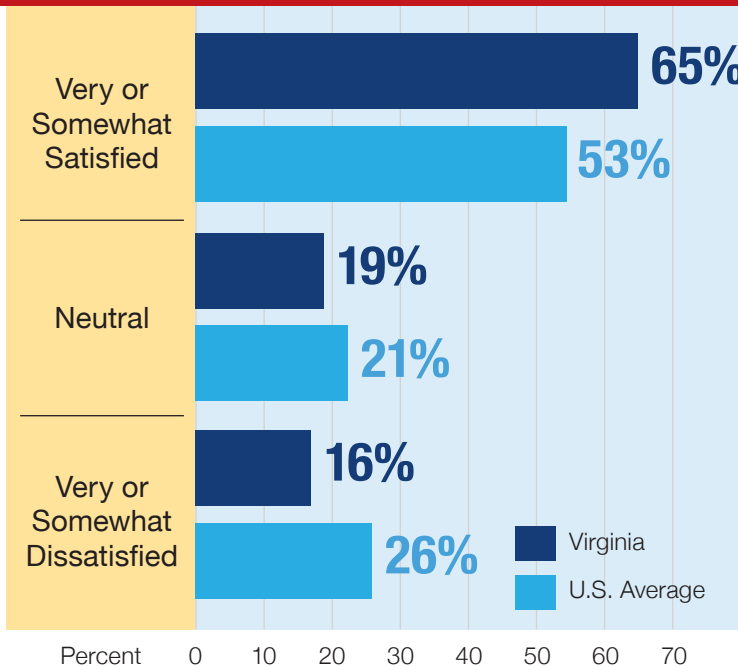
We'll Blame the Traffic

Virginia joins Washington, D.C. and Maryland as having respondents who are more dissatisfied with their jobs than the national average. Nearly a quarter of Virginia's respondents said they were very or somewhat dissatisfied with their jobs.

Hot job competition, the increased presence of major Silicon Valley employers like Amazon and Microsoft, and frequent calls from recruiters looking to staff positions may contribute to a grass is greener philosophy for Virginia workers. Virginia is also in the shadow of the nation's capital, highly affected by the congressional volley of continuing resolutions and government shutdowns, which have become business as usual.



Satisfaction with Salary



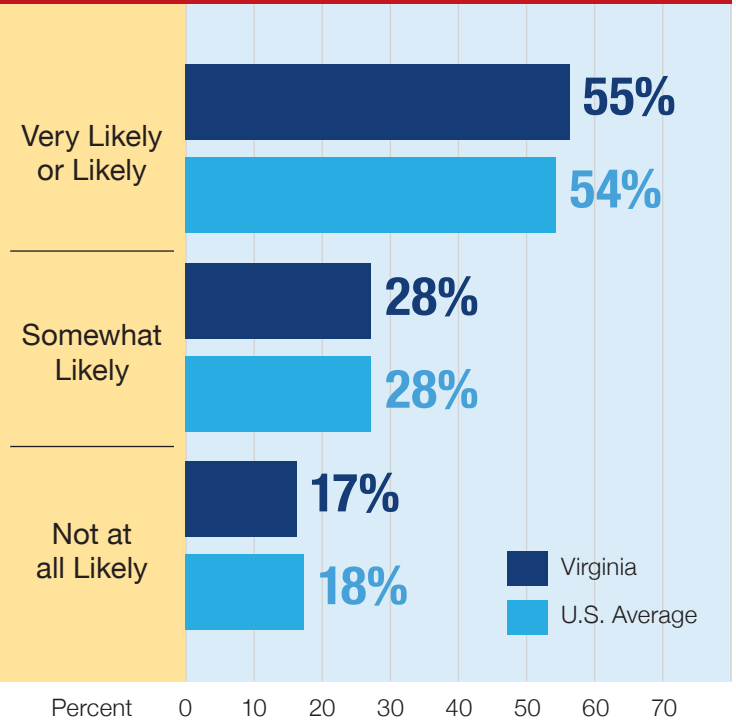
High Salary: High Satisfaction

Despite their job dissatisfaction, Virginia respondents were largely happy with their salaries, with 65% saying they were very or somewhat satisfied with their current salary. With Virginia respondents largely satisfied with their salaries, but dissatisfied with their work, it shows the way to lure a new candidate to a different opportunity may be more about the mission than the money.

Likelihood of Changing Jobs or Employer in the Next Year

In Demand and Ready to Move

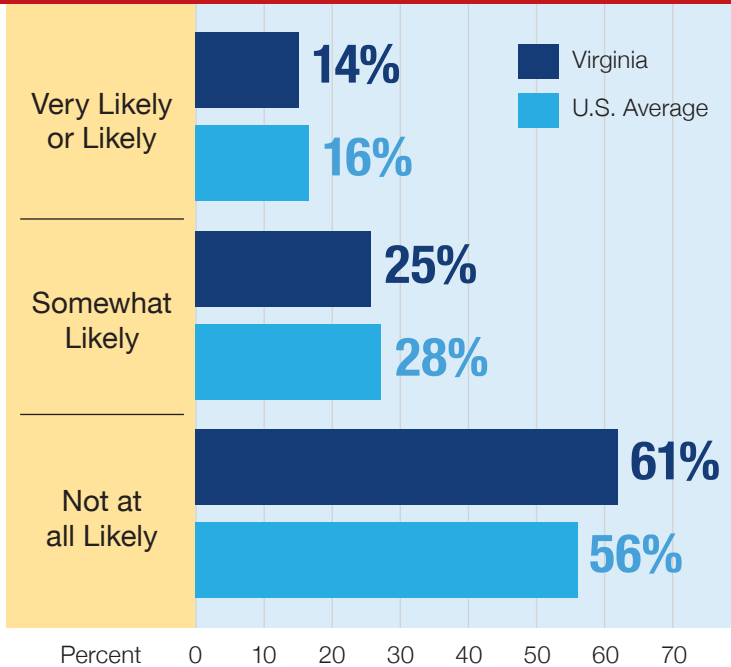
Virginia respondents are 83% very to somewhat likely to change jobs in the coming year, reflective of the job movement trends of the overall cleared population. The increased likelihood of job moves is also fueled by the increasing number of millennials in the workforce. A Gallup report on the millennial workforce found 21% had changed jobs in the prior year. Cleared workers may be even more likely to change jobs than the average millennial, however. The same survey found 60% of millennials are open to a new opportunity—a full 20% less than the 83% of Virginia clearance holders who are open to their next opportunity.



Leaving Cleared Industry in the Next Five Years

For Love of Country

Virginia workers are committed to their national security careers, with 61% of Virginia respondents saying they're not at all likely to leave the cleared industry in the next five years. That is good news for government and contract employers in the state, who have expressed concern that highly sought after cleared tech professionals will flee to better-paying opportunities in the commercial sector, with leading employers like Amazon. Cleared Virginians may be likely to make a job move, but they're not likely to leave their clearance behind to do it.



Top 5 Highest Paid Jobs:



\$146,627

BUSINESS - SALES

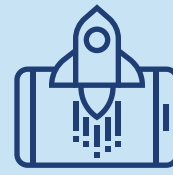
Business Development,
Account Management



\$141,784

IT - SOFTWARE

Development, Web,
Engineering, Management



\$139,495

ENGINEERING - SYSTEMS

Aerospace, Avionics, Geospatial,
Modeling, Simulations, Management



\$133,042

MANAGEMENT

Team Lead, Project Manager,
Program Manager, Supervisor



\$131,026

IT - DATABASE

Administration,
Architecture, Management

Business Sales rises to the top of Virginia's most well-paid positions. It makes sense that business and sales positions are king in a state with one of the world's biggest buying powers—the Pentagon. From unmanned systems to renewable energy, if it's being made, the Department of Defense is probably purchasing it. Business Sales professionals help make contracts happen, and facilitate the funneling of new tools and technologies into the military supply chain. IT-Software and Engineering professionals are two and three on the list, emphasizing the continued demand and need for tech and cybersecurity professionals. That includes software developers to work for defense contracting companies like Booz Allen and Leidos, and geospatial and aerospace engineers to work at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Hampton Roads and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency in Springfield.

Behind those business sales professionals is Management (including program managers), who came in at #4 highest paid Virginia professionals. Once the contracts happen, program managers ensure proper execution and delivery. Rounding out the top five are IT-Database, including architects and database administrators. These are the professionals who will carry out the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure (JEDI) contract, a \$10 billion Department of Defense cloud computing contract.

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 work candidate leads through a funnel, converting cool passives to active candidates ready to make a move—to your company.

STRUGGLING TO HIRE? TRY 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.

CLEARANCEJOBS CAREER EVENTS



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