



ClearanceJobs®

PROFILE OF A CAREER-MINDED CLEARED CANDIDATE

A STUDY OF NEWLY REGISTERED CLEARANCEJOBS CANDIDATES



Profile of a Career-Minded Cleared Candidate

In a candidate's market, you need a candidate-first strategy.



What's the power of customization? When it comes to establishing relationships with candidates today, customization is key. You can't just think broadly about your industry or applicants; you need to think individually.

It makes sense, after all, that in a world that customizes everything—from suggesting the shows you watch, the playlists you should listen to, or even delivering a custom wardrobe to your door each month—the cleared workforce also expects the

messaging it receives to be custom made. Today's tight recruiting market has flipped the old recruiting paradigm on its head. You're no longer scanning candidate resumes searching for a fit for a specific position. In an ultra-competitive market and ultra-competitive industry, you're hand-selecting candidates who may have the right skills for your company. In a candidate's market, you need a candidate-first strategy.

In light of this market, ClearanceJobs recently took a deep dive into its candidate database, specifically highlighting newly active cleared candidates, those who had registered on the site between June 1, 2018 and March 14, 2019.

What do we know about these candidates?

- **They're career minded** (*they've just registered and activated their profiles*).
- **They're in demand** (*60% of profiles had already been viewed by a recruiter*).
- **21.5% IT; 13.3% Military/Law Enforcement; 10.5% Intelligence; 6.2% Engineering.**



How Much Does a Newly Registered Candidate Make?



Newly registered cleared candidates reported an average salary of \$70,892.

Of 43,482 candidates registering on ClearanceJobs from June, 2018 to March, 2019.



Newly registered cleared candidates reported an average salary of \$70,892. This is below the overall average base salary of a security-cleared candidate, which was \$83,221 according to the 2018 ClearanceJobs Compensation Survey (total compensation raised the figure to \$93,004).

Why the salary disparity? In addition to being recent site registrants, we know these candidates have:

- **Fewer years of experience**
(44% with 10+ years of experience vs. 65% in the 2018 survey)
- **Lower-level clearances**
(48% with a Secret clearance vs. 36% in the 2018 survey)
- **Fewer intel clearances**
(2% with an intel clearance vs. 7% in the 2018 survey)

We can speculate that a newly registered candidate is also newer to the job market. Newly registered candidates may have recently departed the military, graduated from college, or be new to the national security industry.

Desired Salary vs. Current Salary



In addition to current salary, the ClearanceJobs candidate database includes desired, or ‘make a move’ salary for security-cleared candidates. Desired salary averaged \$83,903 for newly registered candidates. That means even newly registered candidates report a desired salary \$13,011 over their current salary.

“Today’s recruiting market, which is fueled by poaching already cleared candidates from competitors, has created significant salary pressure,” said Evan Lesser, Founder and President of ClearanceJobs. “Candidates who are being wooed by other employers on a daily basis know their worth in the market. That means pay increases of 10-15% are the standard – if not the minimum – for candidates contemplating a change from one employer to another.”

Cleared candidates are looking for salaries \$13,011 over their current salary.

When it comes to desired versus current salary, the desired increases vary by industry. The biggest gaps between desired and current salary showed up in Intelligence (+\$18,827); IT-Security (+\$18,857); and IT-Software (+\$14,818).

Desired Increases by Industry



GAPS BETWEEN CURRENT AND DESIRED SALARY BY INDUSTRY

	Current Salary	Desired Salary	Gap	Difference
Intelligence	\$65,424	\$84,251	\$18,827	28.78%
Military & Law Enforcement	\$59,017	\$73,306	\$14,289	24.21%
IT-Security	\$78,264	\$97,121	\$18,857	24.09%
Security	\$58,485	\$71,357	\$12,872	22.01%
IT-Support	\$64,151	\$78,070	\$13,919	21.70%
Engineering (Other)	\$70,075	\$83,895	\$13,820	19.72%
IT-Database/Hardware	\$73,855	\$88,076	\$14,221	19.26%
Healthcare & Science	\$64,988	\$76,842	\$11,854	18.24%
Aerospace & Aviation	\$74,213	\$85,904	\$11,691	15.75%
Logistics	\$62,943	\$72,576	\$9,633	15.30%
IT-Software	\$97,041	\$111,859	\$14,818	15.27%
Finance	\$76,051	\$87,375	\$11,324	14.89%
Business - Support	\$61,992	\$70,643	\$8,651	13.96%
Business HR	\$63,253	\$70,701	\$7,448	11.77%
Systems Engineer	\$98,819	\$109,895	\$11,075	11.21%
Management	\$97,663	\$104,113	\$6,450	6.60%

Location is still one of the biggest salary factors. Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland are the top-paying states for career-minded cleared candidates, followed by Colorado and California.

SALARY BY LOCATION

Location	Current Salary	Desired Salary
Virginia	\$85,250	\$96,928
D.C. Metro Area	\$82,638	\$95,104
Maryland	\$79,571	\$92,872
Colorado	\$72,587	\$85,290
California	\$71,749	\$86,411
Alabama	\$70,514	\$82,601
Florida	\$69,618	\$79,925
Texas	\$64,257	\$76,348
Washington	\$63,734	\$77,782
Georgia	\$62,442	\$77,003
North Carolina	\$60,053	\$75,098

TOP-PAYING LOCATIONS

- 1 VIRGINIA**
\$85,250
- 2 D.C. METRO**
\$82,638
- 3 MARYLAND**
\$79,571



Willingness to Relocate

Fortunately there is good news for cleared recruiters: 83% of candidates indicated they were willing to relocate for a position. Geography may seem like a limiting factor, but with career-minded candidates willing to make a move, recruiters can leverage that flexibility to attract candidates who may not be in the right location today – but could be enticed to move there.

Where do cleared candidates want to go? The most desired states to relocate to are Georgia, Colorado, and Hawaii. Who's most willing to relocate? Civil Engineers (93% willing to relocate); Linguists (93%); Chemical Engineers (90%) and Emergency Workers (90%).



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The most desired states to relocate to are Georgia, Colorado, and Hawaii.



Who's most willing to relocate?
93% Civil Engineers 90% Chemical Engineers
93% Linguists 90% Emergency Workers



What Creates the Biggest Salary Bump?



We know salary figures vary significantly based on a variety of characteristics – from industry to geography. It is very difficult to do an apples-to-apples comparison of salary. Even in the same industry and region, salary can be based on factors like years of experience and level of education.

ClearanceJobs drilled into the data on recently registered candidates and statistically controlled across all characteristics in order to create an ‘all things being equal’ equation that allows us to see the individual factors resulting in more pay.*

What does the data mean? Security clearance compensation and salary offers should be as

customized as the candidates themselves – with specific consideration for industry, education, clearance issuing agency, level of experience, and military service.

Consider the following figures as you navigate your cleared salary offers. If you find the perfect cleared, career-minded candidate – but they currently have a master’s degree and an intelligence community clearance – they will expect a compensation package that takes that into account.

Security clearance compensation and salary offers should be as customized as the candidates themselves.



Salary Bumps by Category*

1 EDUCATION

Candidate Characteristic	Mean Salary Difference
Associate	+\$3,572
Bachelor's	+\$14,971
Certification	+\$5,536
Doctorate	+\$42,017
Master's	+\$29,769

2 CLEARANCE, AGENCY, POLYGRAPH

Candidate Characteristic	Mean Salary Difference
Agency	
Department of Energy	+\$10,193
Clearance	
Intel	+\$10,494
Top Secret	+\$6,345
Polygraph	
CI Scope Polygraph	+\$10,444
Full-Scope Polygraph	+\$11,042

3 INDUSTRY

Candidate Characteristic	Mean Salary Difference
IT - Software	+\$22,263
Engineering - Systems	+\$21,616
IT - Database	+\$19,291
IT - QA and Test	+\$12,840
IT - Data Science	+\$12,022
IT - Security	+\$11,415
Engineering - Electrical	+\$10,430
Business - Sales	+\$8,287
Aerospace and Aviation	+\$7,877
Business - Legal	+\$6,792
IT - Hardware	+\$6,684
IT - Support	+\$4,716
Engineering - Mechanical	+\$4,603

4 CAREER LEVEL

Candidate Characteristic	Mean Salary Difference
Mgmt. (Mgr./Dir. of Staff)	+\$12,659
Exec. (SVP, EVP, VP)	+\$41,623
Sr. Exec. (President, CEO)	+\$47,524

*To isolate the relationship between specific characteristics and pay, we completed a multivariate regression analysis where 'current pay' is the predicted variable. This controls for each characteristic in the database, to identify pay differentials between groups of people, all other things being equal. The 'boost' shows the difference in pay, on average, for individuals with that characteristic vs. those without it.

Profile of a Cleared Candidate: A Transitioning Veteran

Richard served 20 years in the U.S. military. Upon separating from service, salary was one aspect of his job search—but not the most important one.

“For me, it was about the location and type of job I would be doing that drove my decision,” said Richard. With annual compensation of \$70,000 in military retirement and disability, salary was not as important to Richard as it may be for other candidates. Benefits were not a factor, either, because medical, dental, and life insurance benefits were all covered through the military.

Despite never before having to negotiate compensation, Richard didn't enter salary discussions uninformed. He did online research at a variety of websites, and also compared his military rank to GS-positions. That gave him a starting point, since his military pay would not be equivalent to what someone with his experience and degree could anticipate in the private sector.

• **Richard had a master's degree**, and he factored that into the salary he expected.

• Other than career level, **college degree is the biggest differentiator in salary**. +\$29,769 increase in base salary for a master's degree.

• **He already had compensation of \$70,000** from his military service.

• **Location and mission** are most important to Richard.

• **Registered with ClearanceJobs in winter 2018; received an offer and began post-military employment** while still on terminal leave.

Profile of a Cleared Candidate: A Recent College Graduate

Ann graduated with a degree in geography and a minor in GIS – and a security clearance that is still current from a summer internship.

Graduating from a school in Washington, D.C., she had a number of friends pursuing careers with the federal government. Most of them were applying for GS-7/9 positions, with starting salaries ranging from \$47,616 to \$57,510.

“I did a lot of online research, both to see what government positions paid and what companies were paying for starting salaries,” noted Ann. Even as a recent graduate, she was able to obtain multiple job offers from employers.

“I don’t even think I applied for any positions,” said Ann. I just posted my resume and maybe ‘liked’ a few positions I saw, and recruiters started to message me.”

Starting salary was important, but Ann also carefully considered benefits like 401(k) and tuition reimbursement. Location was a factor – she wanted to stay in D.C. or another major city. “I definitely didn’t feel like I had to take the first offer that I received – I was able to weigh different benefits of the job, including the company culture.”

④ The **national average annual salary** for college students (both cleared and uncleared) graduating this year is **\$51,347***

④ Even recent graduates are **weighing multiple job offers**.

④ **Tuition reimbursement and company culture** are aspects of compensation.

④ Ann negotiated a **\$10,000 annual stipend** toward an MBA as part of her **compensation package**.

**Korn Ferry study reports flat salaries for recent college graduates.*

WHAT IS THE SALARY FOR AN ACTIVE CLEARED CANDIDATE?

It depends on the candidate. Whether they're a recent graduate or a 20-year service member leaving active duty, candidates are looking at the total package – and total compensation – when they consider job offers.

To successfully recruit a candidate with multiple job offers, you need to provide the missing piece they're looking for – whether it's relocation, tuition reimbursement, or a mission that resonates with them. Make your salary offers as customized as your candidate messages. It's the best way to turn a salary offer into job acceptance.



Want to learn more?

Connect with a ClearanceJobs Recruiting
Specialist today at **1.866.302.7264**
or visit our website at www.clearancejobs.com