

2023 SALARY GUIDE

CREATIVE | MARKETING | TECH | GAMING

ONWARD > SEARCH[®]

A man with a shaved head, wearing a light blue denim shirt over a white t-shirt, is smiling broadly while looking at a white smartphone in his hands. He is sitting at a desk with a silver laptop open in front of him. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an office or home workspace at night. The lighting is soft, highlighting his face and the texture of his shirt.

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Knowledge is hiring power.

“What’s the pay?” Everyone looking for work wants the answer. Yet, no candidate can ever ask the question. And no one should ever need to ask. Much has changed in 2023, but salary remains a top priority for employees, and transparency has become an even greater necessity for employers. [72% of the US workforce](#) agree on its importance.

Job seekers today have more to consider than ever before. Virtual is [the new normal](#). DE&I initiatives are now imperative. And four-day work weeks are a thing. Yet, ‘salary and benefits’ remain the [most common reasons](#) companies win and lose great hires. Ongoing economic shifts have made job security and financial stability top-of-mind for creatives, marketers and professionals across industries.

At the same time, marketing, creative and digital teams everywhere are rethinking priorities, reallocating funds and restructuring with an emphasis on cost savings. [Contingent staffing](#) is surging as companies shift workforce strategies to augment full-time teams with on-demand talent.

To adapt in an ever-changing market, leaders need to be more strategic about who they hire, where they hire, and what compensation packages they offer. While the job landscape grows increasingly more competitive, talent remains in high demand. New [Web 3.0, extended reality \(XR\)](#) and [gaming jobs](#) are emerging quicker than companies can hire. And that’s not the only talent paradox to continue into 2023.

Reports show US companies plan to give [their largest pay bump in 15 years](#) despite reported low consumer sentiment and an unpredictable stock market. In many instances, economic challenges have ironically contributed to salary increases. Across the country, companies are adjusting their compensation packages for inflation.

Fortunately for brands and talent alike, we’re living in an era of salary transparency. Pay disclosure is on the rise as new state laws continue to go into effect throughout 2023. This Salary Guide offers a transparent view of US salaries for creative, marketing, and digital roles. We’re proud to share this research with you to ensure that people are paid their worth, help companies craft competitive salaries, and empower all to thrive in the future of work.

A few words about our many numbers.

The salary ranges presented in this guide are broken down into ranges which reflect education, experience and skill set. The ranges were collected from public data, cross-referenced against our proprietary database of talent compensation figures, and vetted by members of our nationwide team.

However, compensation determination is not an exact science. Factors such as location, cost of living, or supply and demand may cause salaries to fall outside the stated ranges. Thus, this guide should be used as guidelines, rather than lines drawn in the sand.

Adjusting to Location

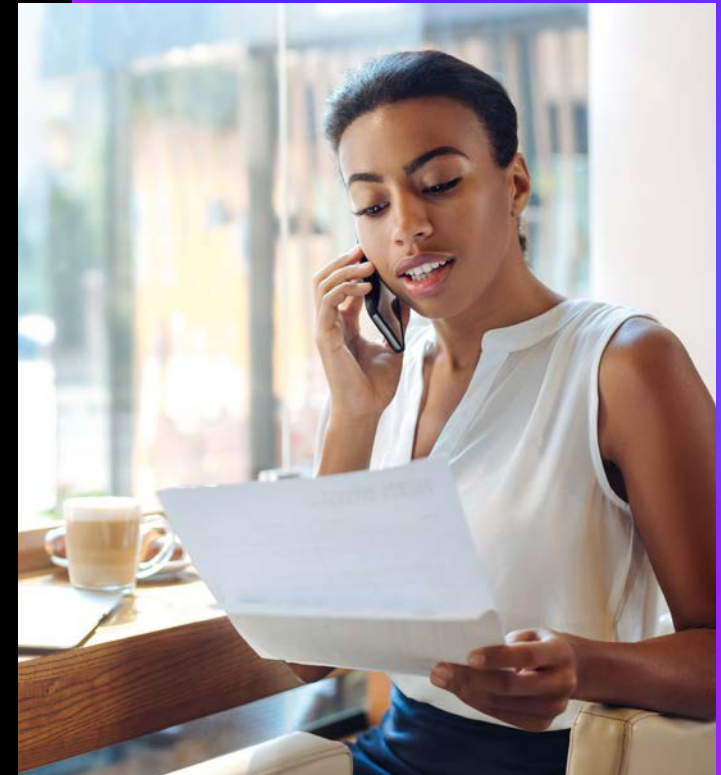
The salary ranges represent the national average for each position. To get a more accurate figure for your geographic location, simply use the percentage multipliers below to calculate the difference.

Location	%	Location	%	Location	%
Atlanta, GA	106	Las Vegas, NV	102	Phoenix, AZ	116
Austin, TX	110	Los Angeles, CA	132	Pittsburgh, PA	98
Baltimore, MD	104	Memphis, TN	96	Portland, OR	112
Boise, ID	90	Miami, FL	106	Providence, RI	102
Boston, MA	130	Milwaukee, WI	102	Raleigh, NC	104
Charleston, SC	96	Minneapolis, MN	107	Richmond, VA	100
Charlotte, NC	104	Nashville, TN	102	Salt Lake City, UT	110
Chicago, IL	120	New Orleans, LA	99	San Antonio, TX	101
Cleveland, OH	97	New York, NY	135	San Diego, CA	125
Dallas, TX	111	Newark, NJ	120	San Francisco, CA	140
Denver, CO	112	Oklahoma City, OK	94	Seattle, WA	130
Detroit, MI	100	Orange County, CA	125	St. Louis, MO	100
Houston, TX	109	Orlando, FL	101	Stamford, CT	130
Indianapolis, IN	97	Philadelphia, PA	116	Washington D.C.	133

Example (Atlanta): $\$100,000 \times 106\% = \$106,000$

Account Services

Role	Low	Medium	High
Account Executive	\$55,000	\$75,000	\$85,000
Account Manager	\$65,000	\$85,000	\$100,000
Account Director	\$95,000	\$115,000	\$165,000
Account Planner	\$62,000	\$71,500	\$107,000
Media Buyer	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$85,000
Media Planner	\$65,000	\$85,000	\$100,000
Media Director	\$95,000	\$115,000	\$165,000
Interactive Producer	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$150,000
Project Manager	\$56,000	\$75,000	\$102,000



The need for Project Managers is expected to grow, adding about 70,000 new roles a year over the next decade.

Source: [BLS](#)

Content & Writing

Role	Low	Medium	High
Content Marketing Manager	\$59,000	\$75,000	\$120,000
Content Strategist	\$57,000	\$72,000	\$114,000
Copy Editor	\$38,000	\$51,000	\$74,000
Copywriter	\$60,000	\$85,000	\$100,000
Digital / Web Copywriter	\$60,000	\$85,000	\$100,000
Proofreader	\$60,000	\$70,000	\$80,000
Proposal Writer	\$58,000	\$73,000	\$118,000
SEO Writer	\$45,000	\$55,000	\$84,000
Technical Writer	\$53,000	\$67,700	\$107,000

Short-form video (TikTok, IG reels) is the most engaging content type, with the highest ROI compared to any other content format.

Source: HubSpot





Creative

Role	Low	Medium	High
Production Artist	\$50,000	\$65,000	\$75,000
Graphic Designer	\$60,000	\$85,000	\$100,000
Art Director	\$72,000	\$90,000	\$120,000
Creative Director	\$100,000	\$140,000	\$175,000
Creative Services Manager	\$67,000	\$85,000	\$120,000
Illustrator	\$58,000	\$70,000	\$100,000
Instructional Designer	\$70,000	\$87,000	\$110,000
Product Designer	\$79,500	\$128,825	\$172,500
Web Designer	\$60,000	\$85,000	\$110,000
UX Designer	\$79,500	\$128,825	\$172,500
UI Designer	\$79,500	\$128,825	\$172,500
Production Manager	\$60,000	\$75,000	\$85,000
Traffic Manager	\$45,000	\$61,000	\$72,000
Photo Retoucher	\$41,000	\$70,000	\$80,000
Video Producer	\$75,000	\$90,000	\$125,000
Product Manager	\$85,000	\$97,500	\$150,000



89% of high-growth brands agree that their long-term success depends on their ability to foster creativity.

Source: [Deloitte](#)



Experience Design

Role	Low	Medium	High
UX Designer	\$79,500	\$128,825	\$172,500
UI Designer	\$125,000	\$131,650	\$170,000
Information Architect	\$85,000	\$105,000	\$165,000
Interactive Designer	\$80,000	\$90,000	\$150,000
Product Designer	\$79,000	\$93,000	\$120,000
UI Designer	\$125,000	\$131,650	\$170,000
UI Developer	\$110,000	\$150,000	\$185,000
UX Researcher	\$83,000	\$112,000	\$145,000
UX Content Strategist	\$80,000	\$102,000	\$117,000
Product Manager	\$110,000	\$150,000	\$170,000

As many services and products are delivered or supported digitally, UX research and design has become an even more critical component of software development.

Source: [ZDNet](#)



Gaming

Role	Low	Medium	High
VFX Artist	\$85,000	\$90,000	\$120,000
Level Designer	\$70,000	\$90,000	\$120,000
Game Designer	\$80,000	\$110,000	\$140,000
Combat Designer	\$70,000	\$90,000	\$120,000
Environment Artist	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$140,000
Character Artist	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$130,000
Technical Artist	\$100,000	\$130,000	\$150,000
Monetization Designer	\$70,000	\$90,000	\$120,000
Systems Engineer	\$90,000	\$120,000	\$160,000
Gameplay Engineer	\$111,468	\$149,625	\$177,989
Unreal Engineer	\$70,000	\$100,000	\$130,000
Unity Developer	\$60,000	\$90,000	\$120,000
Esports Producer	\$60,000	\$72,135	\$92,823
Metaverse Strategist	\$141,000	\$178,500	\$200,000
QA Tester	\$41,000	\$66,000	\$90,000
AR Developer	\$78,000	\$98,000	\$155,000
VR Developer	\$80,000	\$108,000	\$142,000



82% of executives expect metaverse plans to be part of their business activities within three years.

Source: [PWC Metaverse Survey](#)

Marketing & Communications

Role	Low	Medium	High
Brand Manager	\$80,000	\$120,000	\$150,000
Community Manager	\$50,000	\$65,000	\$85,000
Customer Experience Manager	\$85,000	\$120,000	\$140,000
Demand Generation Manager	\$85,000	\$101,000	\$125,000
Digital Acquisition Manager	\$85,000	\$105,000	\$125,000
Digital Analytics Manager	\$100,000	\$115,000	\$135,000
Digital Marketing Manager	\$70,000	\$85,000	\$105,000
Digital Strategist	\$75,000	\$100,400	\$125,000
Email Marketing Manager	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$120,000
Event Marketing Specialist	\$50,000	\$67,000	\$75,000
Marketing Analyst	\$58,000	\$70,000	\$86,000
Marketing Manager	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$120,000
Marketing Researcher	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$120,000
PR Manager	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$120,000
SEM Specialist	\$50,000	\$65,000	\$85,000
SEO Specialist	\$55,000	\$70,000	\$85,000
Social Media Manager	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$86,000
Visual Merchandising Manager	\$62,500	\$77,000	\$100,000

Since 2015, the top 10 skills for marketing professionals have changed by 50 percent. Marketers have to constantly modernize to stay relevant.

Source: LinkedIn



Technology

Role	Low	Medium	High
Accessibility Engineer	\$120,000	\$145,000	\$220,000
Accessibility Specialist	\$38,000	\$51,000	\$93,500
Accessibility Designer	\$50,000	\$72,000	\$109,500
Accessibility Lead	\$60,000	\$80,000	\$151,500
Accessibility Consultant	\$54,500	\$75,000	\$138,000
Web Accessibility Specialist	\$65,000	\$78,000	\$108,000
AI Architect	\$115,000	\$145,000	\$175,000
Applications Architect	\$95,000	\$120,000	\$150,000
Back-End Developer	\$113,200	\$137,000	\$170,000
Big Data Engineer	\$120,400	\$150,000	\$175,000
Business Intelligence Analyst	\$115,100	\$138,400	\$165,000
Cloud Computing Analyst	\$75,000	\$96,000	\$120,000
Cyber Security Analyst	\$85,000	\$120,000	\$160,000
Cyber Security Engineer	\$110,000	\$145,000	\$160,000
Data Analyst	\$97,000	\$115,000	\$140,000
Data Architect	\$90,000	\$126,000	\$150,000
Data Scientist	\$85,000	\$105,000	\$130,000



AI technology will be inserted into the processes and products of at least 90% of new enterprise apps by 2025.

Source: IDC

Technology CONTINUED

Role	Low	Medium	High
Database Developer	\$104,600	\$126,700	\$160,000
Database Manager	\$80,000	\$105,000	\$142,000
UI Developer	\$110,000	\$150,000	\$185,000
DevOps Engineer	\$108,200	\$137,200	\$170,000
Full Stack Developer	\$95,000	\$110,000	\$134,100
Mobile App Developer	\$96,100	\$121,800	\$165,000
Network Cloud Architect	\$110,000	\$155,800	\$175,000
Network Engineer	\$127,600	\$161,700	\$205,000
Project Manager	\$95,000	\$125,800	\$155,300
QA Manager	\$98,000	\$143,000	\$170,000
QA Tester	\$103,700	\$131,400	\$160,000
Rapid Prototyper	\$125,000	\$150,300	\$175,000
Scrum Master	\$120,000	\$150,000	\$185,000
Software Developer	\$100,000	\$130,000	\$165,000
Systems Analyst	\$125,300	\$160,000	\$190,000
UI Developer	\$110,000	\$150,000	\$185,000

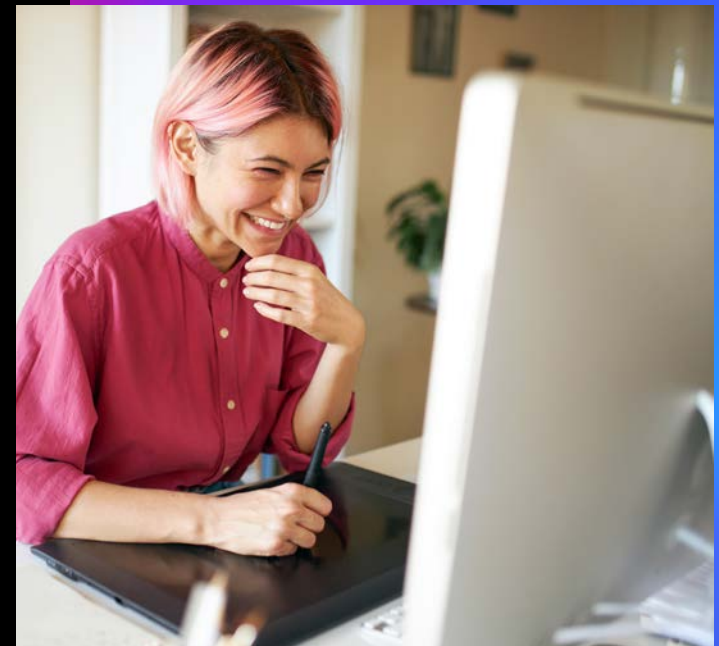


Video

Role	Low	Medium	High
3D Animator	\$80,000	\$110,000	\$125,000
Compositor	\$55,000	\$75,000	\$115,000
Motion Graphics Designer	\$60,000	\$75,000	\$115,000
Multimedia Designer	\$56,000	\$71,000	\$103,000
Producer (VFX)	\$71,000	\$92,000	\$150,000
Video Editor / Post Production	\$50,000	\$62,000	\$105,000

Videos are 53 times more likely to generate first-page rankings than other traditional SEO techniques.

Source: Forrester



It takes talent to know talent.

Onward Search is a specialized workforce solutions provider that empowers creative excellence, brand engagement and digital innovation. We help the nation's leading companies connect with remarkable talent, build scalable teams, and accelerate strategic projects.



Our Workforce Solutions

- 1 Contract, contract-to-hire, and direct hire staffing
- 2 Strategic advisors including organizational experts and industry veterans
- 3 Tailored teams of on-demand and fully-embedded experts
- 4 End-to-end resource management programs

Our Divisions

ONWARD IMAGINE

Onward Imagine powers brand experiences through advisory and managed solutions.

This division helps in-house teams optimize operations across functions, scale capabilities without compromise, and future-proof their organizations.

ONWARD PLAY

Onward Play powers gaming, Web3, & extended reality (XR) initiatives.

This division serves more than game studios, esports organizations, and immersive technology companies; it helps brands across industries connect with next-level talent.

ONWARD SELECT

Onward Select powers digital transformation (DX) initiatives.

This division equips companies with expertise across functions to reimagine business processes, brand cultures, and customer experiences for the digital age.

A young Black woman with long braids is smiling broadly, resting her chin on her hand. She is looking at a laptop screen which is mostly obscured by a dark blue overlay. The background is a dimly lit room with blue and purple lighting.

**Your search
ends here.**

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