



Compensation Cut: Security-Cleared Professionals Take Home Less

Nearly a Quarter of Defense Contractors Make More By Changing Employers, Finds ClearanceJobs.com Study

Des Moines, Iowa, February 28, 2011 – Average earnings of security-cleared professionals slipped four percent from the previous year to \$88,894, according to ClearanceJobs.com, the leading online career site for professionals with active government security clearance. Overall, security-cleared salaries averaged \$72,717 while other forms of compensation including overtime, danger pay and bonuses contributed another 18 percent, or \$16,177, to total compensation. Nearly 8,500 security-cleared professionals participated in the study in what is considered the most comprehensive report on compensation for the industry.

“The decline in total compensation for security-cleared professionals is likely due to lower usage of signing bonuses in the United States, and the reduction in both the number of contractors in Iraq and their earnings - whose total compensation is significantly higher than average,” said Evan Lesser, founder and Managing Director of ClearanceJobs.com.

As the Department of Defense begins efforts to constrain future defense spending as part of the government-wide push for fiscal austerity, security-cleared professionals are relatively unconcerned about any impacts to their careers. Only 23 percent of respondents indicated they are extremely concerned about “contract loss” or “loss of contract funding” in 2011; that result was nearly identical when the same question was posed to security-cleared professionals a year ago. In addition, only 20 percent of respondents were extremely concerned about lower salary increases, lower billing rates or position elimination, which is essentially the same as those who were extremely concerned last year.

“Although federal government budgets continue to be negotiated, defense and intelligence agency professionals with security clearance remain insulated and their career concerns are relatively limited,” added Mr. Lesser. “We continue to see security-cleared government contractors that are prepared to switch employers to further their career and increase their earnings potential. This is a workforce that is swift to move and is used to continuous change related to budgets, priorities and contracts.”

Total compensation for government contractors inched ahead to total \$98,221, as compared to \$98,088 last year. Nearly a quarter (22%) of government contractors with increased earnings indicated that changing employers was the primary reason, while another eight percent of contractors changed positions within their current employer.

Despite the decline in total compensation, cleared professionals continue to give high marks for job and salary satisfaction. More than half (58%) of security-cleared professionals were satisfied with their salaries. Of those content with their wages, on average their salaries were \$81,509. The quarter of respondents (26%) who were dissatisfied reported much lower average salaries of \$56,942.

From the perspective of job satisfaction, 60 percent of cleared professionals expressed satisfaction with their current work, down slightly from 62 percent who were satisfied a year ago. Twenty-three percent reported dissatisfaction, a slight increase from 21 percent a year ago. By clearance level, *Department of Energy* clearance-holders report the lowest levels of job satisfaction (55%) and the highest levels of dissatisfaction (26%). This compares with job satisfaction for *Department of Defense Confidential* holders at 72 percent, while 23 percent were dissatisfied.

A Closer Look at the Capital Region

Security-cleared professionals working in the Capital region (D.C., Maryland and Virginia) earn on average \$94,512, down three percent from the \$97,821 earned a year ago. In the region, base salaries totaled \$83,037 this year. Security-cleared government contractors in the region report average earnings of \$97,548, a nine percent premium to their government employee counterparts with clearance who earn \$89,365 annually. The gap expands to 13 percent when looking at base salaries alone, for government contractors' base salaries total \$87,938, while government employees take home on average \$78,176.

Outside of New Jersey (\$99,443), Virginia, Maryland and Washington D.C. security-cleared professionals earn the most. Rounding out the top five, California-based security-cleared professionals reported \$87,549 in total annual compensation. Followed by, Massachusetts (\$86,749), Colorado (\$85,594), Hawaii (\$84,360), Arizona (\$84,200) and New York (\$82,344).

Compensation Abroad

In the Middle East, security-cleared professionals earned on average \$141,166, a five percent decrease from the \$148,427 earned a year ago. Average base salaries in the Middle East are \$79,732 and substantially surpass security-cleared professionals' salaries in Europe (\$65,947) and in the United States (\$72,449). Middle East-based security-cleared professionals earn on average an additional \$61,434 or 77 percent of their salaries in other compensation, while Europe-based professionals earn an additional \$28,479 or 43 percent of their salaries. In the two war zones, salaries for security-cleared professionals in Iraq are \$82,144, slightly ahead of their counterparts in Afghanistan at \$81,501.

Methodology

The 2011 ClearanceJobs Compensation Survey was administered online between October 2010 and January 18, 2011 with 8,461 respondents. Participants had to have a current, active federal security clearance and be currently employed. Kleinhenz & Associates, a business and economics consulting firm, provided the statistical and economic analysis for the ClearanceJobs Compensation Survey. For the white paper of the study, please visit www.clearancejobs.com/files/salary.html.

About ClearanceJobs.com

ClearanceJobs, a Dice Holdings, Inc. service, is the leading Internet-based job board dedicated to matching job seekers who hold an active security clearance with the best hiring companies searching for new employees. Authorized U.S. government contractors and their representatives utilize the service to quickly and easily locate candidates with specific security clearance requirements to fill open jobs. For more information, please visit www.ClearanceJobs.com.

Media Contacts:

ClearanceJobs
Jennifer Bewley, 212-448-8288
cjmedia@clearancejobs.com

- or -

Makovsky + Company
Kona Luseni, 212-508-9684
kluseni@makovsky.com