



2022 IFT Compensation and Career Path Report

- Salaries reach a 20-year high
- Women a majority, but percentage dips
- Pay gap narrows, equity issues remain
- Job satisfaction ranks high

Median U.S. salaries rose to \$110,000

Pay makes biggest jump in 20 years

Median salaries for science of food professionals in the United States rose 16%, to \$110,000 in 2022, up from \$95,000 in 2019. It's the first double-digit increase since 2003, when pay rose 13%, and the biggest jump in more than 20 years.

28%
Increase in median salary for bachelor's degree holders from 2017 to 2022.

Total compensation, including bonus, stock grants, and overtime, rose even more, reaching \$120,000 in 2022, an 18% increase from 2019, when total comp was \$101,275. (See Appendix B, Historical Data.)

Starting salaries also increased, although the survey sample is likely too small to draw firm conclusions. The salary of professionals with one year or less of experience shot up 33%, to \$77,000 in 2022, from \$58,000 in 2019. That group accounts for just 3% of respondents.

The pay increases in 2022 offset minimal raises reported for more than a decade. The average reported salary increase was just 2% from 2011 to 2019.

Despite the overall increase in median salary, 28% of respondents said they had not received a raise in the previous 12 months. Among those who received a raise, the average one-year increase was 4.8%; the median was 3.9%

Looking at total compensation by sector, positions with nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations are the highest paid, while academic positions are the lowest.

Notable salary breakouts by job function include the following:

- The position receiving the highest salary is President/Owner/Partner/Officer (\$217,000), followed by Vice President in R&D/Sales/Marketing (\$205,000), other Management (\$192,500), Sales and Marketing (\$185,000), and General Manager (\$122,775).

- Other relatively well-paid managerial jobs include Sales/Marketing Manager (\$130,000), Engineering/Processing Director/Manager/Supervisor (\$130,000), Sales/Representative (\$120,000), Regulatory Specialist (\$111,750), and Program/R&D Manager (\$98,000).

Among the most common

positions in the Research & Development/Scientific/Technical category:

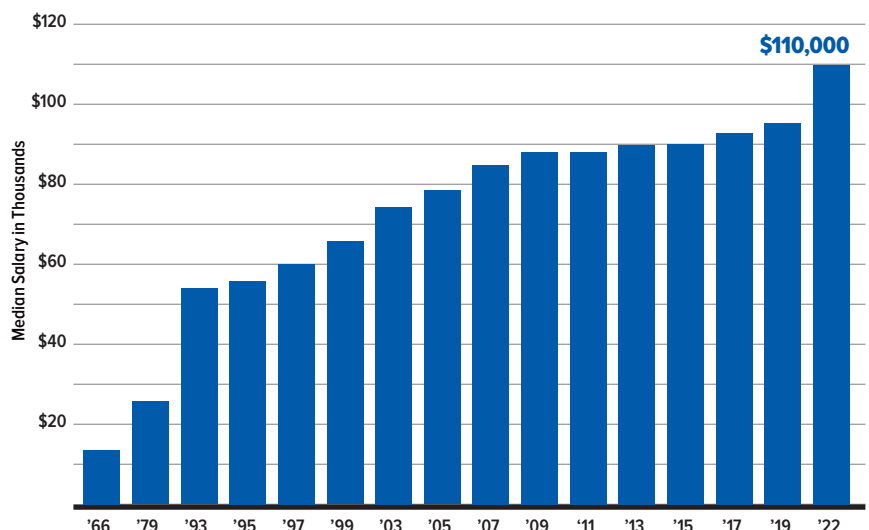
- The positions receiving the highest salaries are Flavorist (\$141,000) and Product Manager (\$135,000). Other relatively highly paid positions are Food Engineer (\$113,000), Director/Manager/Supervisor (\$110,000), Technical Sales Rep (\$103,000), Product Developer (\$98,470), and Research Chef (\$97,400).

- Lower-paying positions include Microbiologist (\$91,500), Sensory Evaluation Specialist (\$88,886), Food Scientist/Technologist (\$86,000), Chemist (\$82,000), and Quality Assurance/Quality Control non-Supervisor/Director (\$77,000).

Bigger paychecks

Salaries rose 16% from 2019 to 2022, the biggest percentage jump in more than 20 years.

Median salary



\$121,500
 Median salary in the South Atlantic region, highest in the U.S.

At the director-level positions, the pay range is as follows:

- Technical Director (\$160,000), Sales/Marketing Director (\$155,000), Research Director (\$150,000), Technical Services Director (\$120,000), Laboratory Director (\$120,000), and Purchasing/Procurement Director/Manager (\$111,000).

In education, Administrators are the highest paid at \$196,000. The salary range for others is as follows:

- Researchers with some graduate teaching earn a median of \$109,500; for those with some undergraduate teaching, the median is \$97,500.
- Undergrad teachers receive \$77,600, although some research boosts that to \$93,500.
- Extension workers receive \$99,700.
- Those who only do research reported the lowest pay, at \$60,000.

(See Appendix A, Compensation by Position.)

Education Gap

Education level continues to be a key driver of salaries. MBA recipients are the highest paid at \$143,407—a 20% hike over 2017—when the median salary was \$120,000.

Taking a longer view, those with an MBA have the highest cumulative pay increase (91%) since 1997, compared to those with bachelor’s (82%), a different master’s (83%), or a PhD (76%).

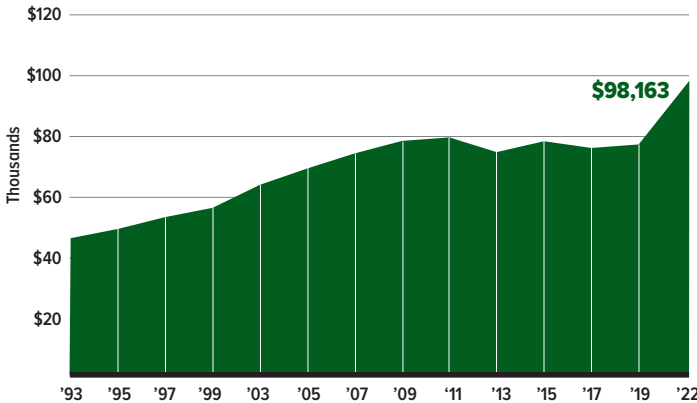
The lowest-paid employees, based on degree status, received the biggest increase in salary in 2022. Professionals whose highest degree is a bachelor’s saw their pay jump to \$98,163 in 2022, a 28% boost compared with 2017. The majority of that increase has come since 2019.

Because of the increase in pay for those

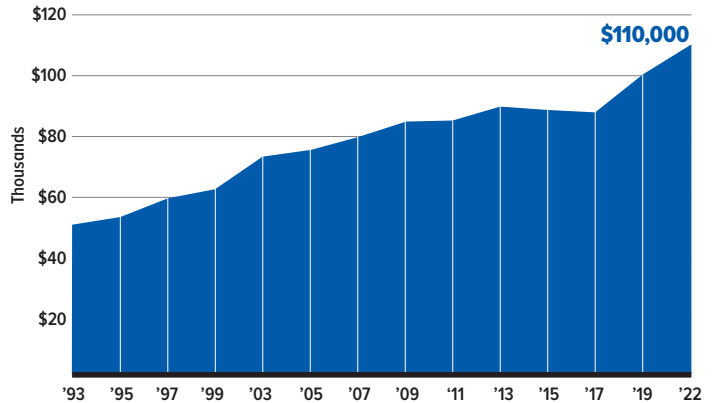
Matter of degrees

Professionals whose highest degree is a bachelor’s saw pay jump 28% from 2019 to 2022. That’s the largest group, comprising 36% of respondents. Pay for the second largest group, master’s degree holders, rose 10%.

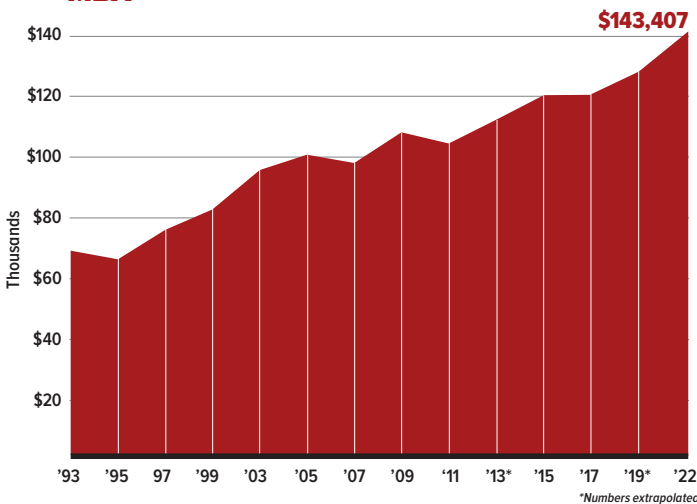
Bachelor’s



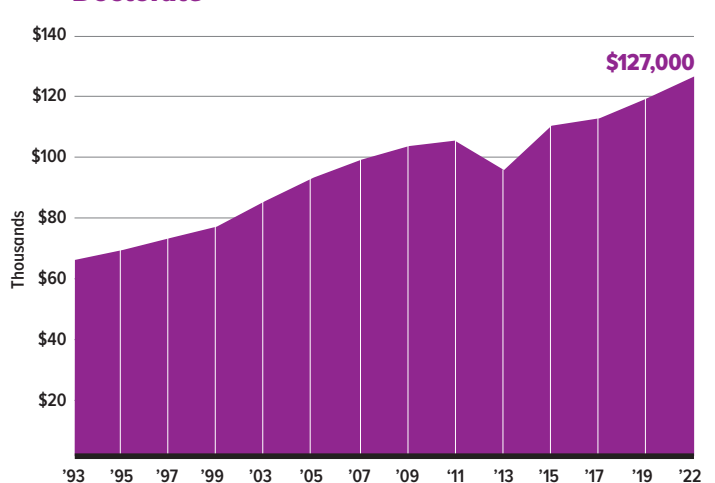
Master’s



MBA

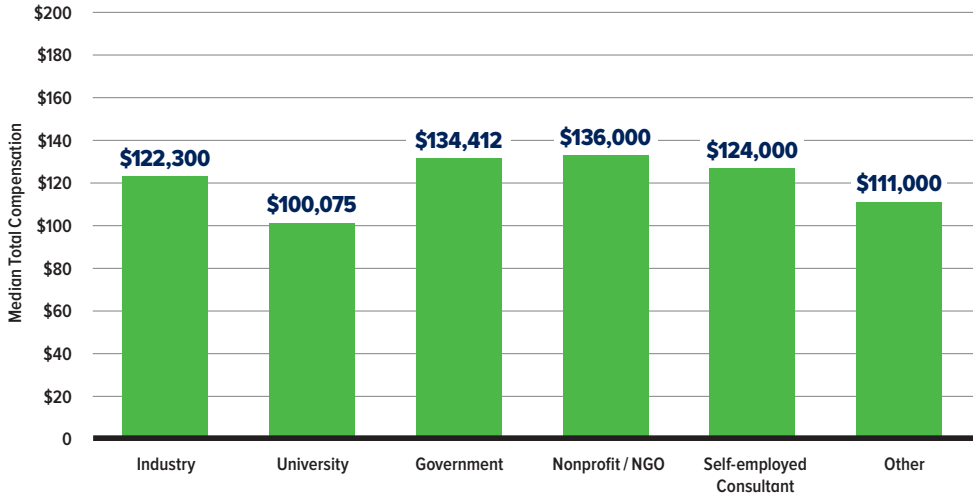


Doctorate



Tracking pay by sector

Median total compensation is the highest for jobs with nonprofits and nongovernmental organizations.



with bachelor's degrees, the gap narrowed between them and those with master's degrees. A master's degree commanded only a 12% salary premium in 2022, compared with 28% in 2019.

Location, Location

Professionals in the South Atlantic region, which stretches from Maryland to Florida, are the highest paid in the nation at \$121,500, edging out the Mid-Atlantic region, which was tops in salary in 2019. The South Atlantic saw an 18% jump in salary from 2019 to 2022, compared with 10% for the Mid-Atlantic region.

Salaries in California and the Pacific region climbed 24% from 2019 to 2020, the largest percentage increases in the nation.

Salaries in the West North Central region, which extends west of the Mississippi River, dipped 2% from 2019 to 2022, making it the lowest paid area in the nation.

Overall, respondents were positive, albeit muted, in their salary satisfaction. Asked to rate their satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, respondents averaged 3.4. A slight majority were

either highly satisfied (22%) or somewhat satisfied (30%). Those who were somewhat or highly dissatisfied totaled 26%.

Those highly satisfied with their compensation reported higher total compensation (\$174,100) and bigger raises (12%) compared with those who are highly dissatisfied, who reported lower total compensation (\$111,460) and raises (4%).

Among the 72% who reported receiving a raise over the previous 12 months, a large majority (64%) said it was the result of an annual compensation review. More specifically, 17% of respondents said their increase was due to a promotion, 12% said it was due to a job change, 11% said it was because of retention pay or a larger bonus, and 9% said the pandemic's impact on their employer prompted the pay increase. (Respondents were allowed to pick more than one option.)

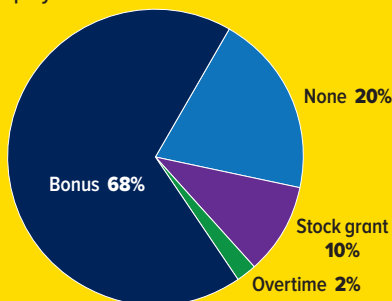
Side Jobs

Four out of 10 professionals said they receive compensation for work outside of their primary job. The most common side jobs are consulting (21%), research (18%), and teaching (17%).

Another 5% perform a variety of activities, including mentoring/coaching, serving on boards, editorial

Check the pay stub

Total compensation, including bonus, stock grants and overtime, reached \$120,000. The mix of other pay varied.



Side Jobs

Four out of 10 say they are paid for work outside their primary job.

Outside work is more common among academics than those who work in industry.

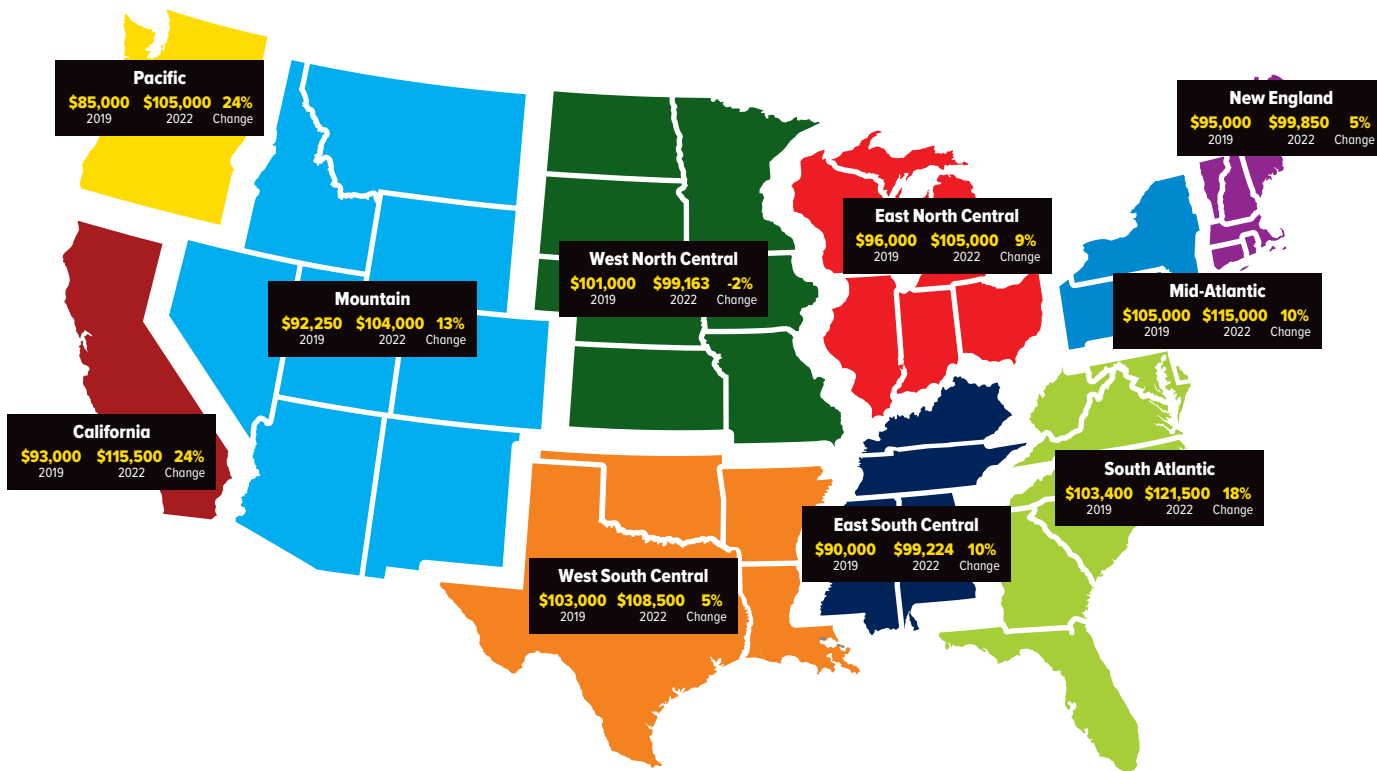
The most common outside activity is consulting (21%), followed by research (18%) and teaching (17%).

Research and development is the most common topic.

While 40% said they have outside jobs, only 6% reported compensation from a second job, with a median of \$10,000.

Gold Rush

Salaries in California and the Pacific Region spiked 24% since 2019, the biggest increases in the United States. Salaries in the West North Central Region dipped.



Health insurance is the single most important job benefit for 70% of respondents.

and writing services, extension work, inspection and food safety auditing, speaking or training, etc.

Among those in industry, 26% report outside jobs, compared with 41% of those who work for nonprofits and 42% in government. The majority of those who indicated outside jobs are academics (80%) and self-employed consultants (73%).

Benefits

The benefits most often provided by employers include health (96%) and dental (92%) insurance and paid vacation (91%).

Since 2017, the percentage receiving vision insurance grew from 79% to 87%; the percentage receiving life insurance grew from 77% to 82%.

At least 65% reported receiving other benefits, such as long-term and short-term disability insurance, Flexible Spending Accounts, and sick leave.

- For the first time, the survey asked professionals to rank benefits based on how important they are. (See Appendix C, Benefit Survey.)

Here are the findings:

- Health insurance is cited as the single most important benefit for 70%, while another 18% rank it as second- or third-most important.
- Vacation is regarded as most important by 9%, while 26% rank it as second and 22% as third.
- Retirement programs, such as a 401(k), are regarded as most important by 7%, while 24% rank it as second and 17% as third. ■

Climbing the ladder

Top executive positions are the highest paid professionals, while technical and government jobs are the lowest paid.

Position	Total Compensation	Position	Total Compensation
Consulting		R&D/Scientific/Technical	
Management/Administrative	\$163,000	Technical Services Director	\$135,000
Technical/Scientific	\$95,000	Laboratory Director	\$132,000
Education		Quality Director	\$126,500
Administration	\$199,194	Regulatory specialist	\$124,000
Research	\$137,541	Food Engineer	\$123,000
Research, some graduate teaching	\$110,000	Program/R&D Manager	\$112,000
Graduate teaching, some research	\$105,000	Research Chef	\$105,150
Research, some undergraduate teaching	\$99,000	Product Developer	\$105,000
Extension	\$98,400	Microbiologist	\$105,000
Undergraduate teaching, some research	\$93,650	Sensory Evaluation Specialist	\$94,747
Undergraduate teaching only	\$77,575	Other R&D/Scientific/Technical	\$94,500
Research only	\$57,771	Nutritionist	\$92,500
Management*		Food Scientist/Technologist	\$90,300
President, Owner, Partner, Officer	\$233,500	Chemist	\$87,000
Vice President	\$232,500	Quality non-Director	\$80,000
Engineer/Procurement Director/Manager	\$150,000	Sales/Marketing/Purchasing	
General Manager	\$140,892	Vice President	\$196,000
Other	\$122,000	Director	\$193,000
R&D/Scientific/Technical		Product Manager	\$160,000
Vice President	\$275,000	Sales Representative	\$142,500
Technical Director	\$200,000	Manager	\$141,750
Director of Research	\$175,000	Purchasing/Procurement Director/Manager	\$122,313
Flavorist	\$162,000	Technical Sales Representative	\$119,601

* Excluding Research and Development, Sales and Marketing.

IFT - In it for the long haul

This year's survey is the biggest and most ambitious effort to follow trends in the food science profession since IFT began its survey in 1966. Below is the history.

	1966	1979	1993	1999	2003	2007	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	2022
No. of questionnaires sent	7,100	12,370	18,916	19,478	13,667	11,139	10,901	10,282	11,178	10,817	11,345	28,734
No. of respondents	4,959	5,884	7,785	4,950	3,934	3,078	1,923	2,456	2,343	2,535	1,372	3,028
Percentage response	71%	48%	42%	26%	29%	28%	18%	25%	21%	24%	12%	10%
Men	NA	79%	66%	60%	56%	52%	50%	48%	45%	43%	41%	44%
Women	NA	17%	34%	40%	44%	48%	50%	52%	55%	57%	59%	54%
Men under age 30	NA	NA	32%	31%	26%	27%	27%	35%	26%	27%	23%	28%
Women under age 30	NA	NA	68%	69%	74%	73%	73%	65%	74%	73%	76%	70%
Highest degree in Food Science/Technology	17%	30%	41%	44%	45%	44%	54%	48%	48%	63%	65%	55%
BS degree	NA	47%	47%	46%	42%	41%	39%	38%	42%	41%	34%	32%
MS degree	NA	23%	23%	23%	25%	25%	26%	34%	26%	26%	34%	28%
PhD degree	NA	25%	23%	23%	24%	23%	26%	24%	22%	22%	23%	25%
MBA degree	NA	NA	6%	5%	4%	6%	7%	NA	7%	7%	NA	6%
Employed in Industry	74%	76%	67%	68%	66%	69%	68%	66%	74%	70%	56%	77%
Employed in Education	12%	13%	9%	9%	11%	8%	10%	12%	13%	9%	10%	13%
Employed in Government	8%	6%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%	2%	1%	3%
RGD/Scientific/Tech function	49%	50%	NA	70%	62%	63%	68%	63%	66%	68%	68%	65%
Management function	22%	20%	28%	8%	10%	10%	6%	8%	7%	6%	5%	7%
Sales & Marketing function	12%	12%	11%	10%	11%	9%	10%	8%	9%	9%	9%	9%
Education function	8%	9%	11%	7%	11%	9%	10%	12%	12%	9%	12%	10%
Government function	NA	NA	9%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%	2%
Median Salary (USD)	\$13,000	\$25,000	\$53,000	\$65,000	\$73,150	\$84,000	\$87,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$92,000	\$95,000	\$110,000

Notes: Compensation surveys conducted prior to 2001 were conducted by mail. Surveys after that were conducted via the internet. For "Percentage response," the percentage of male respondents was rounded down; the percentage of female respondents rounded up. "Employed in Industry" includes respondents who described the business of their employer as Food/Beverage Processor or Ingredient Manufacturer/Supplier.

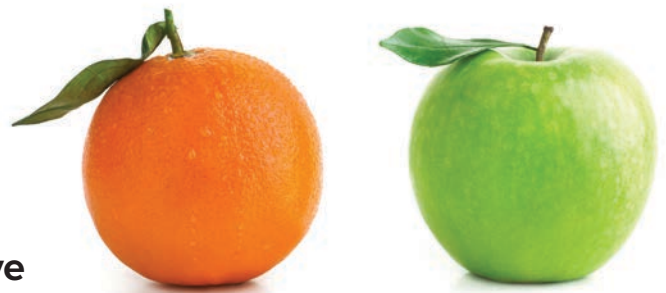
Experts agree that time away from the workplace has a negative impact on salary trajectories. “Ultimately, you almost always get to the potential conflict between demands of work and demands of family, and women are still primarily the ones who are in charge of organizing family life,” says Tolbert. “Exiting the workforce is indeed costly to women and men, but women are more likely to do this.”

“Economists note that technical skills get lost [or] rusty while people take time out of their careers, and employers often take this as a sign of lack of commitment to work,” Tolbert continues, “so if people return to work after time out, they’re less likely to be put in positions with a promotion path.”

Turetsky of salary.com thinks initiatives that reduce the emphasis on salary histories can help eliminate the compensation penalty for women who leave the workforce temporarily by putting the focus on position requirements rather than years of experience and/or past earnings.

One salary survey respondent, a flavor company account manager who is the mother of three sons, believes that it’s important not to paint the gender inequity issue with too broad a brush and to avoid hyperbolic headlines.

continued on page 38



Digital Exclusive

Talent acquisition has gotten trickier in the time of the “Great Resignation.” See what advice recruiters have for hiring authorities by scanning the QR code or visiting iftexclusives.org/recruiter-advice.



Who Earns What

Roles	Median Salary
Vice President of R&D	\$205,000
Director of Research	\$150,000
Flavorist	\$141,000
Product Manager	\$135,000
Food Engineer	\$113,000
Regulatory Specialist	\$111,750
Purchasing/Procurement Director/Manager	\$111,000
Graduate Teaching, Some Research	\$105,000
Technical Sales Representative	\$103,000
Product Developer	\$98,470
Research Chef	\$97,400
Undergraduate Teaching, Some Research	\$93,650
Microbiologist	\$91,500
Sensory Evaluation Specialist	\$88,886
Food Scientist/Food Technologist	\$86,000
Chemist	\$82,000
Quality Assurance/Quality Control (not a supervisor or director)	\$77,000



Talent in Transition

Thinking about a job change? Odds are good that some of your coworkers are.

One-quarter (25%) of salary survey respondents said they had pursued a job or career change in the past 24 months. Within this group, 23% said they are actively searching and interviewing, and 25% said they weren’t interviewing but were monitoring open positions. Another 32% said they were not actively looking but were open to offers, and 14% had accepted offers.

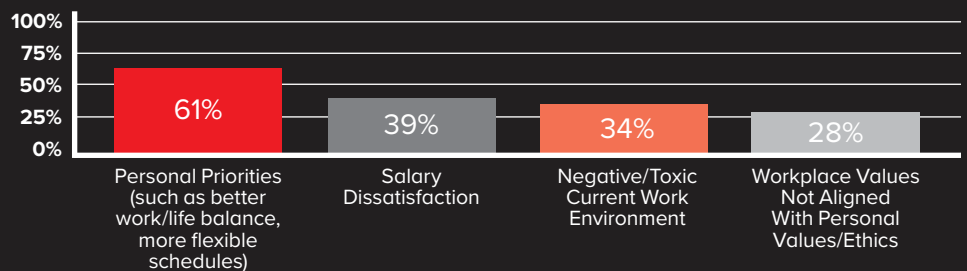
Now is the time to pay competitively, recruiters emphasize. “Preemptively give them that raise because they’re out there looking more than likely, and if so, they’re going to get an offer elsewhere with more money,” counsels Joel Oliver of executive recruitment firm OSI.

Typically, however, salary isn’t the primary motivator for a job change says recruiter Moira McGrath, president of OPUS International. “It’s never *just* the money,” she contends. “It’s the whole package. It’s the responsibilities of the job. It’s the opportunities for advancement. It’s relocation, if necessary, or remote [work]. It’s the culture fit as well as the money.”

Salary dissatisfaction was a motivator for 39% of those interested in changing jobs, a distant second to personal priorities, such as seeking better work/life balance, cited by 61%.

Change Motivators

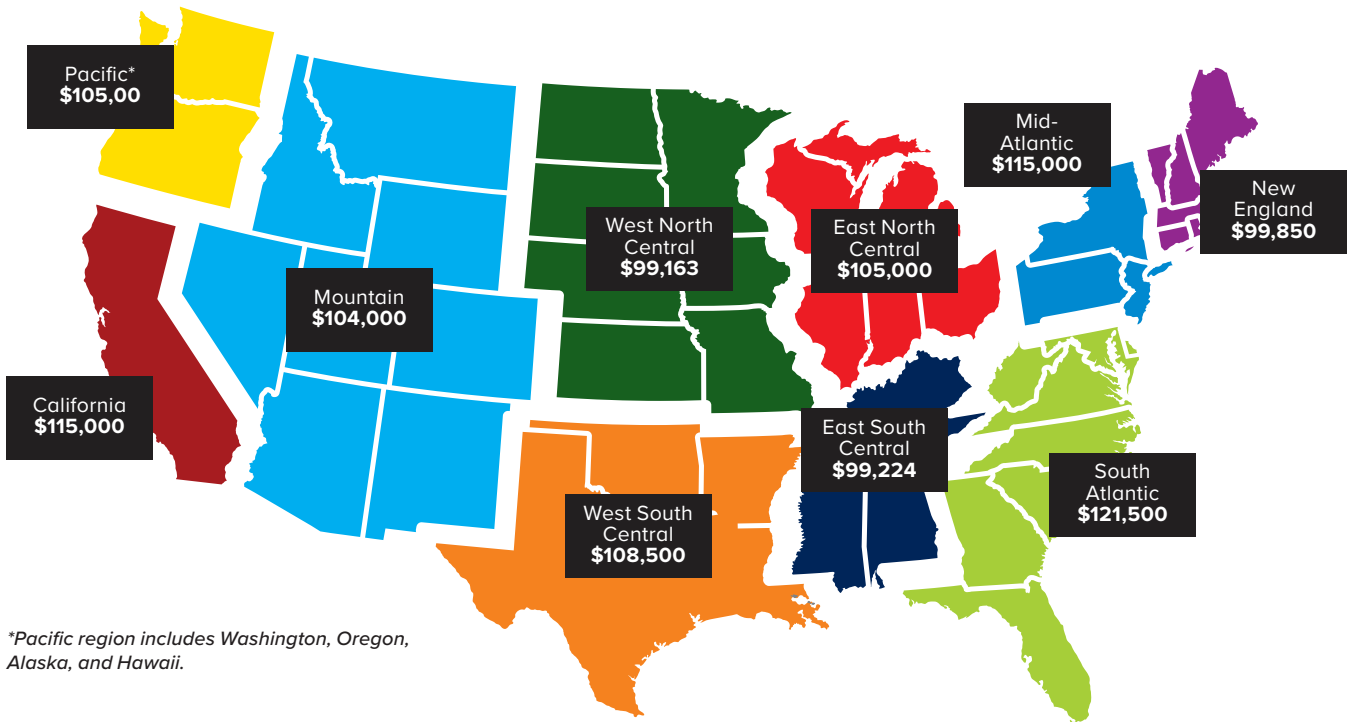
(Reasons for Interest in a Job Change)*



*Survey respondents could cite more than one reason

Mapping Out Earnings

Median Salaries by Geographical Region



*Pacific region includes Washington, Oregon, Alaska, and Hawaii.

“It’s a challenge,” Hyllberg agrees. “It’s balancing that internal equity—you’ve got to keep your internal top performers engaged and happy with their pay.” Employers should never lose sight of the importance of ensuring that their current talent pool is competitively compensated, Hyllberg counsels. Not only is it the fair thing to do, but it’s far more expensive to recruit and hire a new employee than to retain an existing one, she emphasizes.

“If you’ve got great, engaged employees, try to keep them,” says Hyllberg. “Add some compensation to keep them if they are critical to your success.”

Market Shifts Ahead

In the current climate, salary increases aren’t keeping pace with rampant inflation, even as employers strive to offer competitive compensation. The majority of U.S. employers (73%) are targeting payroll budget increases of 4% or more for the year—and 43% have increased their merit raise budgets by 5% or more, according to a salary.com survey of 1,173 compensation executives.

In periods of high inflation, employers typically give higher-than-normal increases and fund them by increasing the costs of their goods and services—leading to even more inflation, says O’Connor. “For the last 10 years, we have been in this market of 3% pay increases, 3% pay increases, 3% pay increases—and now things have been jolted.”

A Matter of Degree (median salaries by degree)

Bachelor’s
\$98,163

Master’s
\$110,000

PhD
\$127,000


MBA
\$143,407

Wage inflation can’t last forever, however. Giving “increase after increase,” isn’t feasible, says salary.com’s Turetsky. “Margins will dissipate. Companies will go under because they can’t afford to pay people anymore. It’s not sustainable in the long term.”

One change Turetsky expects to see is a move toward making salary information more transparent. “Employers will tell employees exactly how comp is done,” which will help to increase employees’ job satisfaction, he predicts.

Job market trends are cyclical and usually last two to three years, says Loyola University of Chicago professor Dow Scott, who specializes in human resources issues. “Right now, it’s turned on the employers,” he observes.

But given the uncertain economic situation, that could change quickly. “If the economy goes into a big dive, then all of a sudden, jobs will get more scarce,” Scott says.

Food industry recruiters are optimistic about the science of food jobs outlook, which tends to be fairly recession-proof since demand for food is a market constant. Eventually, though, the pendulum will swing, recruiter Oliver acknowledges. “I don’t think it will swing to the other end within the next 12 months. [But] I think it will fall back to the middle.” 

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