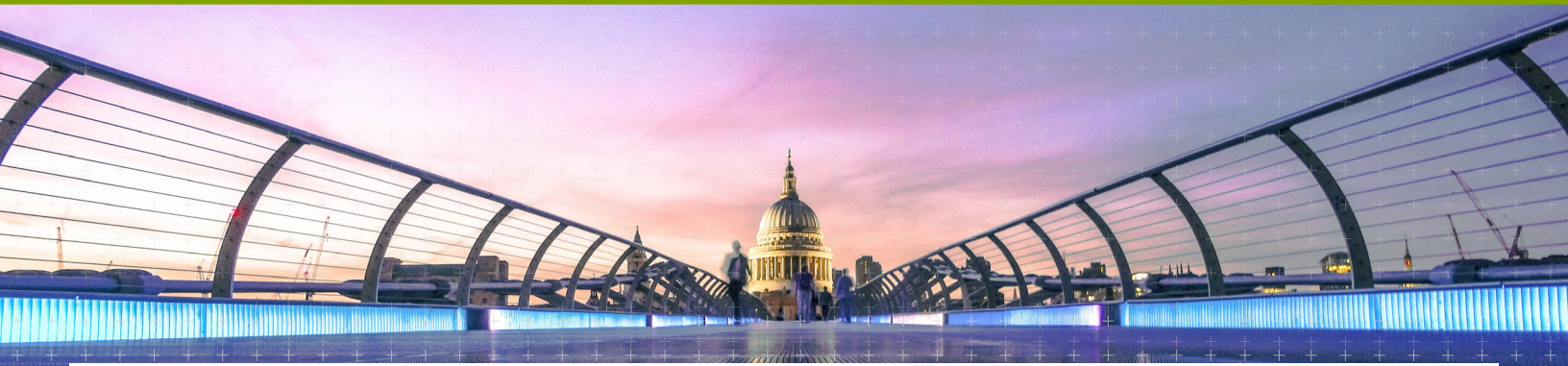




**Pearl Meyer**

# 2026 Cyber Security, AI, and Data Science Survey



## About the Survey

The **Cyber Security, AI, and Data Science Survey** reports competitive base salary, total cash compensation, and total direct compensation data for professionals working in cyber security, artificial intelligence, robotics, and data science roles. One hundred and forty-one (141) leading organizations participated in the survey providing current pay information for over 33,000 employees.



### Comprehensive

- + 13 Positions
- + 33,000 Employees
- + Exclusive Insight into Policies & Practices



### Credible

- + 141 Institutions
- + Rigorous quality assurance process



### Customized

- + Dedicated account manager
- + Online tools for easy data submission and analysis

The Cyber Security, AI, and Data Science Survey provides you with a best-in-class compensation information solution, offering you a rare combination of accuracy and affordability.



## Comprehensive

You will be assigned a dedicated account manager to walk you through the survey submission process, making it easy to integrate and match your information to our database.

Our account managers have several years of survey experience, ensuring you receive the highest quality of guidance and confidentiality.

### Streamlined Policies and Practices Information

- + Hiring & Retention of Staff
- + Cyber Security Certifications & Skills Sought
- + Cyber Security Role Structure
- + Internships/Grad Hiring
- + Compensation/Benefits
- + Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence
- + Telecommuting
- + Turnover/Acceptance Rates

Hiring & Retaining Cyber Security Staff	
What approaches have you taken or are considering to address challenges in retaining cyber security staff?	
<b>Hire at upper end into defined pay range</b>	
Use this approach	55.1%
Considering using this approach	31.6%
Don't use and not considering this approach	13.3%
<b>Pay over maximum of pay range</b>	
Use this approach	18.1%
Considering using this approach	16.0%
Don't use and not considering this approach	65.9%

Telecommuting	
Do cyber security employees at your organization telecommute (work from home)?	
Yes	48.6%
No	30.3%
Other	21.1%
What is the required tenure (years of service) to be eligible for telecommuting?	
No tenure required	85.1%
3 months to less than 6 months	4.1%
6 months to less than 1 year	1.4%
1 year	2.7%
Other	6.8%

Internship/Grad Hiring	
Does your organization have a cyber security internship program?	
Yes	39.0%
No	61.0%
At what degree level does your company hire interns?	
Associate's Degree	27.1%
Bachelor's Degree	90.6%
Master's Level Degree	51.8%
Doctorate/Post Master's Degree	28.2%
Other	10.6%

## Access to Detailed Data

141

Participating Institutions

13

Positions

33K

Employees

### Key Data Reported:

- + Base Salary
- + Short-Term Incentives
- + Long-Term Incentives

## Job Families

Top Cyber Security

Top Artificial Intelligence \*Added in 2025\*

External Cyber Security

- + Penetration Testing & Vulnerability Assessment \*Added in 2024\*
- + Reverse Engineering & Vulnerability Research \*Added in 2024\*

Data Scientist

Internal Cyber Security

- + Information Systems Security \*Added in 2024\*
- + Data Privacy, Data Security, and Compliance \*Added in 2024\*

Cyber Security Roll-Up

Artificial Intelligence Engineer

Quantum Research Engineer

Robotics Engineer

## 2026 List of Participants (alphabetical order)

Accenture LLP	George Washington University	Olsson
ADT Inc	Georgia Tech Research Institute	Oncor Electric Delivery Company
AECOM	Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, The	Oriental Bank
Air Products & Chemicals	Halliburton Company	PACCAR Inc
Albertson's, Inc.	HDR Corporate Services	Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
Ally Financial Inc.	Henderson Engineers	Parsons Corporation
American Institutes for Research	Hilton Grand Vacations	Penn State Health
Applied Physics Laboratory/University of Washington	HP Enterprise Services	Peraton
AT&T Inc.	Idaho National Laboratory	Port Authority of NY/NJ
Barton Malow	Institute for Defense Analyses	Propetro Holding Corp
Bechtel Global Corporation	Jack Henry & Associates, Inc.	Prudential Financial Inc.
Bell Flight	Jackson National Life Insurance	Publix Super Markets, Inc.
Black & Veatch Corporation	Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.	RAND Corporation
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Tennessee	JE Dunn Construction Group	Ricoh Americas Corporation
BMC Software, Inc.	Jefferson Laboratory	Riverside Research Institute
BNSF Railway Company	Jet Aviation	Ryder System Inc.
Booz Allen Hamilton Inc.	Jet Propulsion Laboratory	Salt River Project
Brookhaven National Laboratory	Johns Hopkins University	Sandia National Laboratories
Burns & McDonnell Engineering	Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory	Savannah River National Laboratory
Carnegie Mellon Software Engineering Institute	Kiewit Corporation	Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, LLC
Caterpillar	Kohls Corporation	SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory
CENIC	Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory	Southwest Research Institute
Cheniere Energy, Inc	Lockheed Martin Corporation	Space Dynamics Lab
Cherokee Nation Businesses, LLC	Los Alamos National Laboratory	Stanford University
Ciena Corp	Lower Colorado River Authority	State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company
CIGNA Corporation	Lumen	Stryker Corporation
Cisco Systems, Inc.	LyondellBasell	Target Corporation
Cleveland Clinic	ManTech International Corporation	Terracon Consultants, Inc.
Cleveland-Cliffs Inc.	Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company	The Aerospace Corporation
CNA	Memphis Light, Gas and Water	The Applied Research Laboratory at PSU
Comcast Corporation	Merck & Co., Inc.	The Capital Group
Consolidated Nuclear Security, LLC	Michael Baker International	The Home Depot Inc.
Daher	Micron Technology, Inc.	The MITRE Corporation
Day & Zimmermann	Mini Circuits	The TJX Companies, Inc.
Deloitte LLP	MIT Lincoln Laboratory	Toyota Motor North America
DISH Network Corporation	MODEC America, Inc.	UKG Inc.
Dominion Energy, Inc.	Motorola Solutions	United Fire Group, Inc.
Draper Laboratory	National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR)	University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR)
Duke Energy	National Rural Electric Cooperative Association	USAA
Edwards Lifesciences	NCCI Holdings, Inc	Virgin Galactic
Epiq	Nightwing	Vontier Corporation
Epsilon Data Management, LLC	Noblis, Inc.	Wawa, Inc.
Equinix	NorthForest	Wood
Fannie Mae	Novartis Corp.	Workers' Credit Union
Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory	Oak Ridge National Laboratory UT-Battelle, LLC	Worley
Fidelity Investments	Okuma America Corporation	WSP
Fluor Marine Propulsion		Ziegler CAT
Genuine McCarthy Enterprises, Inc		



## Customized

Looking for a snapshot into the pay practices of your peers? Look no further than our comprehensive and objective compensation report.

### Flexible Report Formats

Survey results are easily downloaded from the Pearl Meyer survey client website and available in PDF and Excel. Data in excel gives you the ability to isolate key data points and identify salary trends.

Results By Position													
External Cyber Security - Specialist Level Professional (EGSI4)													
Data Effective 1/1/2020	# Firms	# Empl	Avg Base	25th %ile Base	50th %ile Base	75th %ile Base	% Elig STI	% Rcvg STI	Avg Awd (\$)	Avg Total Cash	25th %ile Cash	50th %ile Cash	75th %ile Cash
All Firms	54	1719	\$140,066	\$124,300	\$140,041	\$154,800	87.2%	57.4%	\$22,482	\$152,961	\$129,030	\$145,300	\$180,537
<b>Degree</b>													
Comp Sci w/ Engineering Emphasis - Bachelors	12	99	\$147,305	\$135,013	\$145,749	\$158,000	75.3%	42.5%	\$27,713	\$159,087	\$136,921	\$150,255	\$186,173
Comp Sci w/ Engineering Emphasis - Masters	12	104	\$154,247	\$140,067	\$152,600	\$166,280	90.0%	63.4%	\$99,989	\$192,256	\$147,000	\$165,070	\$207,000
Comp Sci w/ Engineering Emphasis - PhD	6	23	\$156,638	\$138,489	\$151,000	\$178,500	74.6%	66.1%	\$63,140	\$198,402	\$145,736	\$178,500	\$205,400
Comp Sci w/ Info Security Emphasis - Bachelors	5	13	\$130,025	\$124,440	\$135,819	\$146,200	75.5%	58.9%	\$3,501	\$132,122	\$125,940	\$139,072	\$147,200
Comp Sci w/ Info Security Emphasis - Masters	12	36	\$146,374	\$136,000	\$147,971	\$157,300	91.7%	53.9%	\$8,631	\$151,028	\$138,010	\$152,000	\$166,376
Comp Sci w/ MIS/IS Emphasis - Bachelors	16	98	\$137,553	\$121,803	\$140,590	\$149,839	75.5%	55.2%	\$15,980	\$146,154	\$127,055	\$145,000	\$156,000
Comp Sci w/ MIS/IS Emphasis - Masters	10	87	\$147,828	\$127,317	\$147,659	\$161,400	84.6%	54.9%	\$25,571	\$161,857	\$129,877	\$149,500	\$173,330
Comp Sci w/ MIS/IS Emphasis - PhD	3	10											
Systems Engineering - Masters	4	61											
Software Engineering - Masters	5	13	\$142,684	\$133,260	\$136,948	\$151,200	75.5%	75.5%	\$37,711	\$171,156	\$134,266	\$136,948	\$171,490
Other - Bachelors	26	336	\$138,524	\$122,899	\$139,704	\$154,500	88.1%	47.6%	\$9,316	\$142,960	\$125,867	\$140,397	\$156,816
Other - Masters	19	269	\$140,560	\$129,474	\$142,000	\$157,300	88.2%	49.6%	\$30,336	\$158,720	\$130,000	\$145,977	\$161,000
Other - PhD	15	55	\$156,239	\$139,769	\$152,235	\$170,300	80.0%	47.3%	\$85,006	\$195,708	\$142,861	\$165,400	\$191,000
Associates Degree	12	45	\$125,245	\$114,800	\$122,000	\$135,901	70.0%	48.4%	\$8,615	\$128,593	\$115,000	\$122,000	\$135,000
<b>Degree Level</b>													
Bachelors	31	578	\$139,721	\$124,992	\$140,358	\$154,500	83.1%	49.0%	\$11,407	\$145,337	\$127,500	\$140,000	\$161,000
Masters	25	590	\$146,833	\$132,275	\$148,000	\$159,431	91.0%	59.5%	\$30,777	\$165,145	\$130,000	\$145,000	\$170,000
PhD	16	94	\$156,483	\$143,999	\$153,100	\$169,700	84.5%	52.3%	\$80,765	\$181,000	\$140,000	\$155,000	\$180,000
<b>Work Department</b>													
R&D Engineering	11	278	\$160,000	\$146,000	\$155,800	\$170,040	73.0%	43.8%	\$10,000	\$156,000	\$140,000	\$150,000	\$165,000
IT Group (Internal)	15	117	\$126,189	\$112,899	\$125,000	\$140,055	59.0%	53.8%	\$10,000	\$116,899	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$120,000
IT Group (Internal/External)	11	409	\$124,013	\$113,818	\$122,000	\$136,000	91.8%	50.0%	\$10,000	\$113,818	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$120,000
Cust Solutions Development & Implementation	5	247	\$129,823	\$115,720	\$131,851	\$144,822	80.0%	50.0%	\$10,000	\$115,720	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$120,000
Other	6	53	\$129,612	\$116,108	\$122,491	\$141,800	80.0%	50.0%	\$10,000	\$116,108	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$120,000
<b>Type of Security Clearance</b>													
TS/SCI	5	151	\$130,060	\$113,880	\$133,875	\$148,000	80.0%	50.0%	\$10,000	\$113,880	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$120,000
Top Secret	12	341	\$142,511	\$129,600	\$136,000	\$150,000	80.0%	50.0%	\$10,000	\$129,600	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$120,000
Secret	10	111	\$130,851	\$113,300	\$118,000	\$130,000	80.0%	50.0%	\$10,000	\$113,300	\$100,000	\$110,000	\$120,000
Dept. of Energy Q Clearance	3	48											
Unknown	12	336											
<b>Region</b>													
Central / Midwest	18												
MA 129/495													
Mid-Atlantic													
Mountain States													
Northeast													
Pacific Northwest/Northern CA													
Silicon Valley													
Southeast													
Southern CA													
Southwest													
Texas													

All of this provides you with the most accurate, affordable, reliable data that you can use to attract and retain your most important, and often most expensive, asset.

The high-level data from the survey is complimentary to participants. Full survey results and/or a custom peer group report are available for an additional fee. Contact our survey team to purchase.

### Survey Dates

- Data Effective Date:** 1/1/2026
- Submission Due Date:** 2/6/2026
- Survey Results Published:** Week of 4/13/2026

## Contact Us

To learn more about our Cyber Security, AI, and Data Science Salary Survey or to participate, please contact our survey group at [survey@pearlmeyer.com](mailto:survey@pearlmeyer.com).

You will be assigned a dedicated account manager who will be available to walk you through the survey submission process, making it easy to integrate and match your information with our database. Our account managers have several year of survey experience, ensuring you the highest level of data quality and integrity.

Your account manager will email you a link to the submission materials, your log-in credentials, and instructions on how to complete and return your survey data.

**By email:**

[survey@pearlmeyer.com](mailto:survey@pearlmeyer.com) or [daniel.besser@pearlmeyer.com](mailto:daniel.besser@pearlmeyer.com)

**By phone:**

ask for the survey group from our general number 508-460-9600

### Dedicated Team of Account Managers



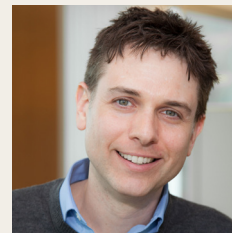
**Rebecca Toman**  
Vice President,  
Survey Business Unit



**Nana Adu**  
Survey Account Manager



**Dan Besser**  
Survey Account Manager



**Jason Dionne**  
Associate Account  
Manager



**Matt Donahue**  
Senior Survey Account  
Manager



**Jordan Gagnon**  
Survey Project Manager



**Andrew Guigno**  
Survey Operations  
Manager



**Benji Sheiffer**  
Senior Survey Account  
Manager



**Rhonda Snyder**  
Survey Project Manager

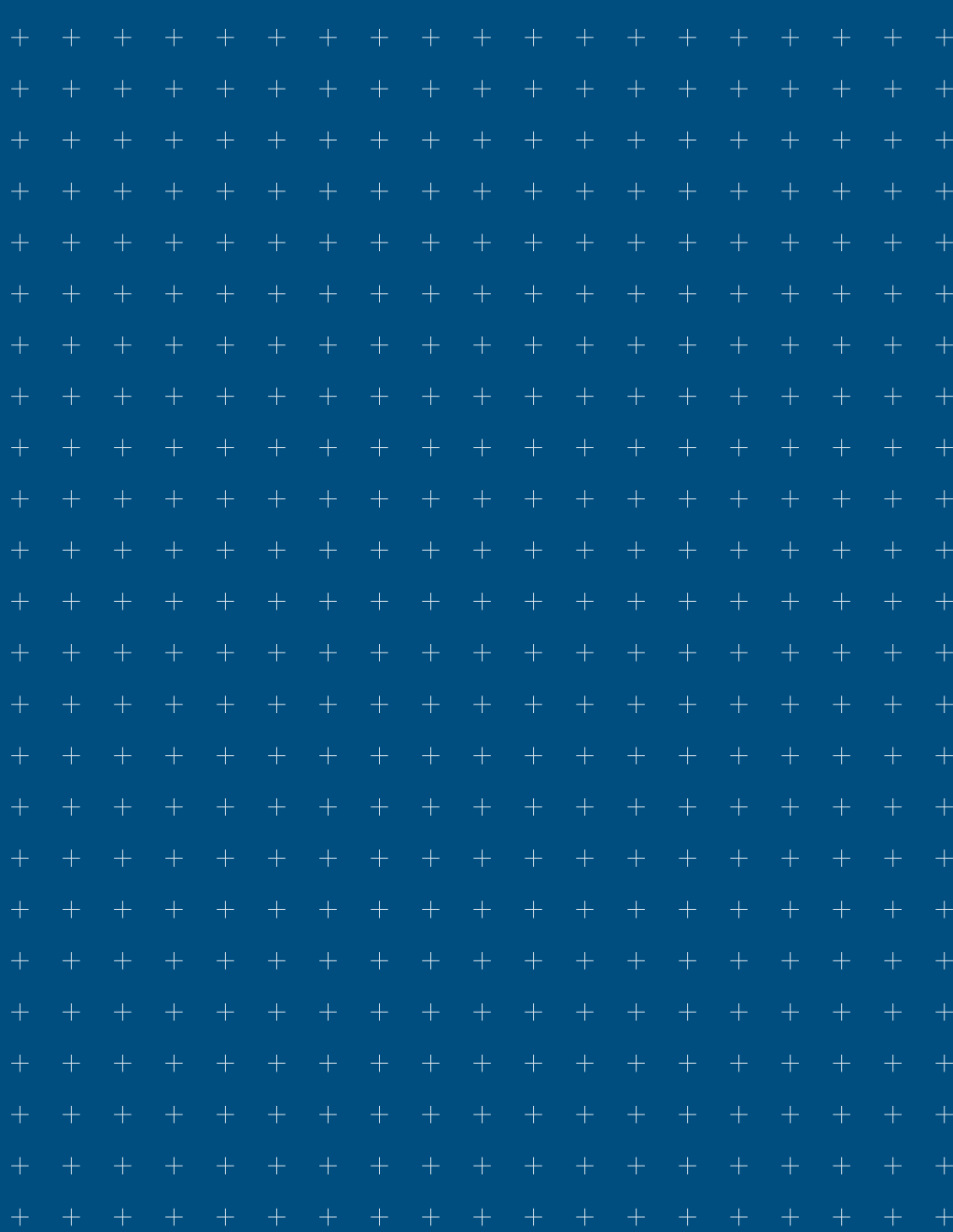


**Veronika Valcheva**  
Senior Survey Account  
Manager

### About Pearl Meyer

[pearlmeyer.com](http://pearlmeyer.com)

Pearl Meyer is the leading advisor to boards and senior management helping organizations build, develop, and reward great leadership teams that drive long-term success. Our strategy-driven compensation and leadership consulting services act as powerful catalysts for value creation and competitive advantage by addressing the critical links between people and outcomes. Our clients stand at the forefront of their industries and range from emerging high-growth, not-for-profit, and private organizations to the Fortune 500.



For more information on Pearl Meyer,  
visit us at [www.pearlmeyer.com](http://www.pearlmeyer.com) or  
contact us at (212) 644-2300.

**Pearl Meyer**  
**pearlmeyer.com**