

# **AEROSPACE SALARIES:**

## **AEROSPACE ENGINEERING**

### **How Much Can You Earn?**

Aerospace engineering salaries vary in nature, but most careers in this field offer the chance for comfortable living. Most people plan their college career around finding a job that not only satisfies their likes and dislikes, but also provides them with a salary that will allow for the basics: clothing, housing, heat, and food. Choosing your major should depend on not only your passion but aerospace engineering salaries must also be kept in the back of your mind. It can be extremely difficult to live on \$40,000 a year in many parts of the United States like California or New England where mortgage costs are skyrocketing.

Aerospace engineering salaries depend mainly on the level of aerospace engineer that one holds. Just starting out, salaries will be much lower than those of someone who has been working for twenty years. The base salary for a first-level aerospace engineer range from \$45,000 to \$63,000 with the median salary falling at around \$50,000. These aerospace engineering salaries will vary from state to state. Usually, the highest salaries are found in states like Arizona, California, or Florida where there are larger corporations hiring aerospace engineers.

A second-level aerospace engineer generally has four years of experience. These aerospace engineering salaries range from \$55,000 to \$82,500 with the median income standing at around \$70,000. The third-level aerospace engineering salaries climb up to \$61,500 to \$95,000 with the majority of these skilled professionals earning \$78,000. Third-level aerospace engineers generally have worked for at least five years making them more experienced than the other levels.

By the time a person has been working in aerospace engineering for eight years, they climb to the fourth-level aerospace engineer. Fourth-level aerospace engineering salaries range from \$75,000 to \$105,000 with most earning around \$89,000. Finally, the fifth-level of aerospace engineering requires at least ten years of experience and offers the highest aerospace engineering salaries. After ten years of experience, the aerospace engineering salaries climb to \$80,000 to \$130,000 with the majority of these experienced workers earning \$100,000.

### **What is the Median Salary Range for Aerospace Engineering Careers?**

U.S. Median Salary (starting):\$59,600

U.S. Median Salary (mid-career):\$109,000

Note: These numbers are national averages so you could make more or less than these amounts. Actual expected salaries will vary depending on your chosen career path, experience, and even your geographic location. Are you interested in detailed information about the forecasted demand for a particular profession? Are you interested in the estimated salaries such positions are likely to pay? This government Web site allows you to search on a particular job, whether listed here or not, to give you this information.

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## Job and Salary Outlook

The employment outlook in the geosciences -- as in any profession -- varies with the economic climate of the country. The long-range outlook is good at this time. Dwindling energy, mineral, and water resources along with increasing concerns about the environment and natural hazards present new challenges to geoscientists.

According to the National Science Foundation, about 125,000 geoscientists work in the United States. Most geoscientists are employed by industries related to oil and gas, mining and minerals and water resources.

Many geoscientists are self-employed as geological consultants or work with consulting firms. Most consulting geologists have had extensive professional experience in industry, teaching, or research.



Also, many geoscientists work for the federal government or a state government agency. The U.S. Geological Survey (Department of the Interior), Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state geological surveys, and state departments of environment and resources all employ geoscientists.

Salary scales vary from employer to employer depending on the career path, location, qualifications of the geoscientist, and, of course, the economy.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), jobs in the geosciences are expected to grow by 22 percent between 2006 and 2016. This is a much faster increase in employment that is the average for all occupations. Geoscientists with Master's degrees are expected to have the most employment opportunities of all degreed geoscientists.

Salary estimates released by BLS for 2008 indicated that the mean annual salary for geoscientists was \$89,300. Geoscientists in the petroleum and mining industries earned the highest salaries (\$95,200 - \$130,620) and those in state government earned the least (\$59,830). Geoscientist faculty earned a mean annual salary of \$74,770 in 2008. Additionally, according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, average starting salaries for college graduates with geoscience bachelor's degrees were \$40,786 in 2007.