

# 2026 Mid-Year Salary Guide



## Talent Intelligence & Compensation Benchmarks

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ACCOUNTING & FINANCE  
HUMAN RESOURCES  
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
MARKETING, DIGITAL & CREATIVE  
CORPORATE OPERATIONS  
FINANCIAL SERVICES

# Inside this mid-year report

The compensation benchmarks shared in this resource are informed by real-time placement data and the engagements currently shaping the market.


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AccruePartners is the Carolinas' leading talent advisory and workforce solutions firm. For more than 20 years, we've built people, companies, and careers through deep market and talent intelligence, strong relationships, and a human-centered approach. Our experts collaborate across six divisions - Accounting & Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Marketing Digital & Creative, Corporate Operations, and Financial Services - to deliver one seamless Accrue experience.


**Workforce Solutions To Move Companies & Careers Forward**

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Interim Staffing

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Direct Hire, Executive & Retained Search

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Project Solutions

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HR Advisory

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# Key Findings at a Glance

## Why Adaptability Has Become a Leading Hiring Criterion

One of the most consequential shifts shaping the hiring market isn't visible in job titles or descriptions; it's happening inside the roles themselves. Job titles may look the same, but the context surrounding them has changed dramatically. Technology, automation, and AI are reshaping how the work gets done, what tools professionals are expected to use, and how value is measured.

This shift has elevated a set of skills that don't show up cleanly on a resume: adaptability, curiosity, and learning agility. A candidate's ability to absorb new tools, evolve with shifting priorities, and stay curious in the face of change now matters as much as their technical credentials and sometimes more. For hiring managers, this means an increasing importance on evaluating the way someone has grown, learned, and adapted in past roles.

The risk for employers is real: in a market where the structure of roles is changing faster than job descriptions can keep up, the most expensive hire isn't an underqualified one, it's an inflexible one.

### AI Skills

Are now the most in-demand across all business functions.

Source: LinkedIn's 2026 Talent Report

### 42 Days

Is the average time it takes to fill an open position.

Source: SHRM Human Capital Benchmarking Report

### 50% to 200%

*of Salary (based on role level)*

The cost to hire a replacement, from voluntary turnover.

Source: Gallup

## The Carolinas Targeted for Job Growth

North Carolina and South Carolina rank highest for projected employment growth, with North Carolina also identified as a top state for IT and tech jobs.

### 01 AI Fluency

AI fluency is listed among the top in-demand skills in finance/accounting, human resources, marketing, customer support, information technology, and legal.

Source: LinkedIn's 2026 Talent Report

### 02 Talent Shortage Among Record Applications

45% of employers say they struggle to find qualified candidates, and 69% of employers report difficulty sourcing candidates with the right qualifications, with the average time to fill a position sitting at 42 days.

Source: SHRM Human Capital Benchmarking Report

### 03 The Cost of Hiring Wrong

U.S. businesses lose roughly \$1 trillion annually to voluntary turnover, with the cost of replacing a single employee ranging from 50% to 200% of their annual salary.

Source: Gallup



*The most expensive hire isn't an underqualified one; it's an inflexible one.*

# Trends Shaping the Talent Landscape

The current hiring landscape is being shaped less by what companies need their teams to do and more by whom they need to do it. Across all divisions, leaders are rewriting their hiring profiles around adaptability, curiosity, and the human capabilities AI can't replicate. The trends below are drawn from the insights local business leaders shared at our exclusive Power Breakfast and roundtable events, and from our ongoing conversations with hiring managers and leaders, and capture what's happening across the Carolinas talent market and where hiring trends are heading next.



## Accounting & Finance

Leaders are evaluating A&F talent differently, prioritizing grit, curiosity, and adaptability, while treating digital fluency as a baseline expectation. Organizations that build intentional cultures, create rotational programs, and define meaningful career paths are the most attractive to candidates.



## Human Resources

HR leaders are prioritizing "talent athleticism," the ability to adapt quickly while maintaining performance. Organizations want HR professionals who enable speed with structure and partners who help the business move quickly and with intention.



## Information Technology

IT leaders are prioritizing domain expertise, business acumen, and the ability to articulate a problem over traditional technical credentials when hiring. This means a focus on finding talent with curiosity, cross-functional range, and the capacity to translate business problems into solutions.



## Marketing, Digital & Creative

Leaders expect marketing talent to use AI as a creative and production partner, meaning candidates with strategic judgment, cultural relevance, and creative instinct will stand out. Marketing is being treated as a growth-systems function tied to measurable business outcomes.



## Corporate Operations

Tariff volatility and shifting trade policy have blurred the traditional separation between buying and compliance in Corporate Operations. Employers are hiring hybrid talent that can perform across sourcing, cost, and regulatory requirements.



## Project Solutions

Leading companies are building hybrid project teams, utilizing project-based resources who bring platform-specific expertise in Workday, Salesforce, Microsoft Dynamics 365, SAP S/4HANA, and Tableau to their initiatives.

# Accounting & Finance

The bar has moved in Accounting & Finance as digital fluency is expected, adaptability and flexibility are required. The ranges below reflect what Carolinas employers are paying for professionals who meet both.

<b>FINANCE</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
CFO (Chief Financial Officer)	\$250K	\$300K+
VP of Finance	\$200K	\$240K+
Director of Finance/FP&A	\$160K	\$190K
Financial Systems Manager	\$145K	\$160K
FP&A Manager	\$125K	\$140K
Senior FP&A Analyst	\$90K	\$110K
FP&A Analyst	\$70K	\$85K

<b>ACCOUNTING</b>		
VP, Corporate Controller	\$225K	\$250K
Controller	\$130K	\$180K
Assistant Controller	\$130K	\$150K
Accounting Manager	\$115K	\$130K
Senior Accountant	\$85K	\$100K
Staff Accountant	\$65K	\$75K
AP/AR Specialist	\$60K	\$70K

<b>TAX</b>		
Chief Tax Officer	\$250K	\$300K
Tax Director	\$190K	\$240K
Senior Tax Manager	\$160K	\$180K
Tax Manager	\$130K	\$150K
Senior Tax Analyst	\$90K	\$110K
Tax Analyst/Accountant	\$75K	\$90K

# Accounting & Finance continued

PAYROLL	LOW	HIGH
Director of Payroll	\$140K	\$160K
Payroll Manager	\$100K	\$130K
Payroll Supervisor	\$85K	\$95K
Payroll Analyst	\$70K	\$85K
Payroll Specialist	\$60K	\$70K
<b>TREASURY</b>		
VP of Treasury	\$180K	\$220K+
Director of Treasury	\$160K	\$185K
Treasury Manager	\$130K	\$145K
Senior Treasury Analyst	\$85K	\$100K
Treasury Analyst	\$70K	\$85K
<b>AUDIT</b>		
Audit Manager	\$130K	\$150K
Senior Auditor	\$90K	\$105K
Internal Auditor	\$75K	\$85K

# Human Resources

As organizations demand HR leaders who can build infrastructure at speed without sacrificing structure, compensation has followed—particularly at the Business Partner, Total Rewards, and Talent Acquisition levels where strategic horsepower is now a baseline expectation.

HUMAN RESOURCES	LOW	HIGH
CPO/CHRO	\$250K	\$300K+
Vice President	\$175K	\$250K
Director	\$140K	\$200K
Talent Management/L&D Manager	\$110K	\$140K
Business Partner/Manager	\$100K	\$140K
Learning & Development Specialist	\$80K	\$110K
Specialist/Generalist	\$70K	\$95K
Instructional Design	\$70K	\$90K
<b>HRIS</b>		
Director of Payroll	\$135K	\$160K
Payroll Manager	\$120K	\$150K
HRIS Specialist/Analyst	\$80K	\$110K
<b>TALENT ACQUISITION</b>		
Vice President	\$200K	\$275K
Director	\$150K	\$200K
Manager	\$120K	\$150K
Recruiter/Talent Acquisition	\$75K	\$110K
Recruiting Coordinator	\$60K	\$75K
<b>TOTAL REWARDS/BENEFITS/COMPENSATION</b>		
Vice President	\$185K	\$275K
Director	\$150K	\$200K
Manager	\$125K	\$165K
Specialist/Analyst	\$85K	\$110K

# Marketing, Digital & Creative

As marketing shifts from a cost center to a measurable growth driver, organizations are paying accordingly with the widest ranges concentrated in roles where strategic judgment, AI fluency, and creative instinct converge.

MARKETING/COMMUNICATIONS	LOW	HIGH
CMO	\$275K	\$350K
VP of eCommerce	\$200K	\$250K
VP of Marketing	\$200K	\$275K
Director of Marketing	\$140K	\$200K
Marketing Analytics Manager	\$130K	\$160K
Product Manager	\$130K	\$160K
eCommerce Manager	\$90K	\$140K
Product Marketing Manager	\$90K	\$125K
Communications Manager	\$85K	\$140K
Marketing Manager	\$85K	\$125K
Consumer Insights Analyst	\$75K	\$115K
Marketing Analyst	\$75K	\$115K
Marketing Specialist	\$70K	\$85K
<b>DIGITAL</b>		
Director of Growth	\$175K	\$225K
CRM Manager	\$100K	\$150K
Paid Media Manager	\$90K	\$130K
Email Marketing Manager	\$90K	\$130K
SEO Specialist	\$90K	\$115K
Digital Content Strategist	\$85K	\$125K
<b>CREATIVE</b>		
Art Director/Creative Director	\$140K	\$185K
UX/UI Designer	\$115K	\$150K
Graphic Designer	\$75K	\$100K
Copy Writer	\$70K	\$90K

# Corporate Operations

Corporate Operations has become one of the most expansive talent categories in the market, spanning administrative leadership, customer success, supply chain, and legal. While tariff volatility and shifting trade policy have created particular urgency around supply chain and procurement talent, the ranges below reflect what employers are paying across every discipline as complexity and hybrid expectations rise.

<b>ADMINISTRATIVE</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
Chief of Staff	\$150K	\$220K
Executive Assistant	\$75K	\$125K
Administrative Assistant	\$65K	\$75K
Office Manager	\$60K	\$90K
<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE/CARE/SUCCESS</b>		
Vice President	\$200K	\$275K
Director	\$140K	\$185K
Manager	\$90K	\$140K
Specialist/Associate	\$55K	\$80K
<b>SUPPLY CHAIN</b>		
VP of Supply Chain/Logistics	\$185K	\$250K+
Senior Director/Director of Supply Chain/Logistics	\$150K	\$200K
Supply Chain/Logistics Manager	\$120K	\$140K
Senior Buyer	\$90K	\$120K
Purchasing Manager	\$85K	\$110K
Purchasing Specialist	\$65K	\$85K
Buyers	\$65K	\$90K
Supply Chain/Logistics Support	\$65K	\$85K
<b>LEGAL</b>		
General Counsel/VP of Legal	\$225K	\$300K+
Corporate Counsel	\$185K	\$225K+
Employment and Labor Counsel	\$165K	\$210K
Contracts Manager	\$90K	\$140K
Paralegal	\$80K	\$110K

# Information Technology

IT hiring has moved well beyond technical credentials and today's most competitive candidates bring business acumen, curiosity, and cross-functional range, and the ranges below reflect what that combination is worth in the Carolinas market.

## IT CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

### LOW

### HIGH

	LOW	HIGH
CIO/CTO	\$260K	\$500K
CISO	\$210K	\$400K
VP of Data & Analytics/BI	\$200K	\$280K
VP of IT	\$185K	\$300K
Director of IT	\$150K	\$200K

## DATA MANAGEMENT & ANALYTICS

Data Scientist	\$150K	\$225K
Data/BI Architect	\$135K	\$190K
Data Engineer/BI Developer	\$110K	\$175K
Database Admin	\$95K	\$130K
Data/BI Analyst	\$75K	\$130K

## CORE INFRASTRUCTURE/TECH SERVICE

IT Service Manager	\$120K	\$150K
Systems Administrator/Engineer	\$110K	\$140K
Network Administrator/Engineer	\$110K	\$140K
Desktop Support/Help Desk Analyst	\$55K	\$90K

## ENGINEERING/DEVELOPMENT/ARCHITECTURE

Solutions Architect	\$140K	\$225K
Software Engineering Manager	\$130K	\$190K
DevOps Engineer	\$130K	\$180K
Software Developer/Engineer	\$110K	\$155K

# Information Technology continued

## CYBERSECURITY

### LOW

### HIGH

Cybersecurity Manager/Director	\$140K	\$180K
Security Architect	\$140K	\$180K
Security Analyst	\$95K	\$135K

## AGILE DELIVERY

Agile Coach	\$115K	\$170K
Product Owner	\$120K	\$160K
SCRUM Master	\$100K	\$150K

## ERP, TECHNO/FUNCTIONAL RESOURCES

Program Leader	\$160K	\$220K
Work Stream Leader	\$120K	\$150K
ERP Implementation	\$130K	\$180K

# Project Solutions

As leading companies shift from staffing project seats to building outcome-driven teams with platform-specific expertise, compensation for project-based talent has expanded significantly and particularly in transformation leadership roles where the cost of the wrong hire is measured in months, not dollars.

<b>PROJECT &amp; TRANSFORMATION LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>
PMO Director	\$175K	\$300K
Business Transformation Leader	\$170K	\$290K
Finance Transformation Leader	\$160K	\$275K
Program Manager	\$150K	\$260K
Project Manager	\$130K	\$225K
Finance Transformation Manager/Director	\$120K	\$220K
Business Transformation Manager/Director	\$115K	\$205K
Project Coordinator	\$80K	\$140K
<b>FUNCTIONAL LEADERSHIP</b>		
Risk & Compliance Leader	\$150K	\$270K
Finance & Accounting Project Leader	\$135K	\$225K
Organizational Change Management (OCM) Leader	\$120K	\$220K
OCM Manager/Director	\$120K	\$210K
Risk & Compliance Manager/Director	\$110K	\$210K
Finance & Accounting Project Manager/Director	\$110K	\$195K
<b>TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP</b>		
Data & Analytics Leader	\$150K	\$260K
Business Technology Leader	\$140K	\$260K
Data & Analytics Manager/Director	\$125K	\$210K
Business Technology Manager/Director	\$110K	\$200K
Quality Assurance & Testing Professionals	\$95K	\$200K
Training Consultant	\$90K	\$160K

# How to Put the Salary Guide to Work

Reliable compensation insight and talent intelligence are essential when preparing budgets, refining talent strategies, and planning business-impacting initiatives.

## Business leaders use our Salary Guide data to:

- > Build competitive offers in a high-demand talent market
- > Strengthen resource needs and role evolution conversations
- > Assess team structure against growth goals
- > Understand talent scarcity and forecast gaps

## The One Accrue Experience - Six Divisions, One Team

# Complete Talent Advisory & Workforce Solutions



### Interim Staffing

Flexible, on-demand talent that keeps work moving during change, growth, or gaps.



### Direct Hire, Executive & Retained Search

Discreet, disciplined search for leaders who align with culture and drive outcomes.



### Project Solutions

Specialized teams built and managed to execute complex, business-critical initiatives.



### HR Advisory

Align culture, capability, and strategy to drive sustained organizational performance.

## Building People, Companies, and Careers

AccruePartners is the Carolinas' leading talent advisory and workforce solutions firm. For more than 20 years, we've built people, companies, and careers through deep market and talent intelligence, strong relationships, and a human-centered approach to search, interim staffing, and project solutions.

The difference is in how we work. Our experts collaborate across divisions to deliver one seamless Accrue experience, providing our clients, candidates, and consultants with the right expertise at the right moment.

Each division offers deep experience in Accounting & Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Marketing Digital & Creative, Corporate Operations, and Financial Services.

We empower our clients, candidates, and consultants with confidence that they're making the right decisions. When you partner with Accrue, you benefit from experts who know the market, understand the nuances of company cultures, and invest in solutions that truly move companies and careers forward.

