

2026 Bay Area

Technology Salary Guide & Industry Report





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About DeWinter

DeWinter provides world-class accounting, finance, and technology recruiting services.

Our **Consulting** team helps bridge resource gaps with contract and contract-to-hire finance and accounting talent.

Our **Direct Hire** team has set the standard for connecting finance and accounting professionals with top companies on an executive search basis.

Our **Retained Search** division team's with growth-stage and venture-backed companies to find the right professionals to move them forward.

Our **Technology** team powers top companies with exceptional technology talent and project delivery services.

Since our founding in 2000, DeWinter has been the first choice for companies looking for the highest standard of care and a trustworthy firm that understands and exceeds their needs.

We build our network one relationship at a time.

A Message From the CEO



To Our Valued Clients and Candidates,

As we release our 2026 Salary Guide and Industry Review, we recognize that the current business landscape, while dynamic, presents a wealth of new opportunities for those prepared to seize them. Our guide is crafted to empower you to update business strategies, make informed hiring decisions, and confidently navigate the evolving hiring market. While change is constant, our team views the coming year with excitement and is uniquely prepared to help you turn market shifts into competitive advantages. Our commitment remains unwavering: to deliver the precise talent solutions our clients need and the rewarding career opportunities our candidates seek, ensuring success in a rapidly evolving world.

2025 was a landmark year for DeWinter. We celebrated our 25th anniversary with our first all-company retreat in Banff, CA. We also made strategic investments for the future, unveiling a new logo and unifying our finance, accounting, and technology recruiting teams under one stronger, united DeWinter brand. Overall, we put our people first, making sure they had the best training and support, while also significantly enhancing our technology—including bringing in cutting-edge AI—to keep us at the forefront of the industry. It's all about making sure our partnership with you is based on superior market insight and the most efficient, effective processes possible.

The foundation we've built prepares us to turn market uncertainty into opportunity for you. We are ready to leverage our decades of experience, our talented team, and our enhanced technology to deliver even better solutions to all our partners in 2026. We are excited about the journey ahead and eager to make 2026 an incredible year of growth and success for our clients and candidates. Thank you for your continued trust in DeWinter.

Derek DeWinter
CEO & Founding Partner, DeWinter

2026 MARKET OVERVIEW

\$100K H-1B FEE ACCELERATES U.S. TECH SHIFT TO OFFSHORING

- New H-1B visa rules, effective September 2025, impose a \$100,000 fee on all new petitions, forcing U.S. tech companies, especially mid-sized firms and startups, to drastically reevaluate their hiring strategies.
- In response, tech executives are leveraging nearshore and offshore talent pools (e.g., Latin America, Eastern Europe) as a strategic shift to bypass the prohibitive financial and administrative burden of the new H-1B fees.



64%

Percentage of 2024 H-1B petitions that were computer-related, according to the Dept. of Homeland Security.



73%

Percentage of funding for AI-related startups, claimed by the Bay Area in Q1 '25.

BAY AREA DOMINATES NORTH AMERICAN AI STARTUP FUNDING

- The Bay Area stands as the unrivaled global leader in AI-related startup investment, having secured a massive 73% of all AI-related venture funding across North America in Q1 of 2025, according to Crunchbase.
- Overall, 57% of all U.S. venture capital went to the Bay Area in Q3 '25, according to Pitchbook.

2026 MARKET OVERVIEW

IT SKILLS SHORTAGE TO COST GLOBAL ECONOMY

- A widening IT skills gap, particularly in AI and IT Operations, is severely impacting nine out of ten organizations worldwide, leading to missed revenue, quality issues, and customer dissatisfaction, according to IDC.
- The global economy is predicted to lose approximately \$5.5 trillion by 2026 due to skill crises.



\$5.5T

Forecasted cost to the 2026 global economy due to IT skills shortage.



98%

Increase since '24 in AI skill requirements listed in job openings.

INCREASING DEMAND FOR AI SKILLS FACES A TALENT GAP

- As of late 2025, 50% of U.S. tech job postings now require AI skills, marking a nearly 100% surge from the previous year, signaling that AI has shifted from an experiment to an essential requirement, according to Dice.
- As demand for AI skills skyrockets, hiring managers face an obstacle: a growing AI talent gap. A survey of 1,010 global executives by BearingPoint found that 94% of leaders reported facing AI-critical skill shortages today, with one in three reporting gaps of 40% or more.

COMPENSATION GUIDE: AI & MACHINE LEARNING

	1st Quartile	Mean	3rd Quartile
AI/Machine Learning Engineer	\$171,008	\$190,675	\$212,569
Deep Learning Engineer	\$128,897	\$164,757	\$211,015
Computer Vision Engineer	\$140,499	\$182,902	\$247,295
AI/ML Infrastructure Engineer	\$113,538	\$151,443	\$160,962
Applied Scientist	\$174,765	\$214,215	\$266,372
Prompt Engineer/Developer	\$101,380	\$130,264	\$166,889
AI/ML Solutions Architect	\$116,188	\$191,992	\$241,401
AI Product Engineer/Developer	\$114,950	\$153,455	\$193,370
MLOps / AI Ops Engineer	\$142,668	\$169,403	\$197,278
Product Manager	\$158,804	\$185,167	\$189,773
Project Manager	\$145,200	\$161,607	\$263,650
AI Governance Manager	\$154,819	\$176,781	\$207,557

COMPENSATION GUIDE: DATA ANALYTICS

	1st Quartile	Mean	3rd Quartile
Business Intelligence Analyst	\$148,458	\$164,064	\$179,409
Business Intelligence Architect	\$187,002	\$205,787	\$224,042
Data Analyst	\$142,885	\$158,031	\$172,915
Data Architect	\$168,115	\$184,396	\$200,177
Data Engineer	\$163,325	\$180,387	\$197,154
ETL Developer	\$149,990	\$165,694	\$181,126
Data Scientist	\$141,336	\$190,356	\$207,270
Research Scientist	\$147,754	\$162,367	\$176,979

COMPENSATION GUIDE: SOFTWARE

	1st Quartile	Mean	3rd Quartile
Back-End Engineer	\$169,822	\$186,412	\$202,484
Embedded Engineer	\$144,757	\$176,653	\$208,550
Full Stack Engineer	\$186,804	\$205,053	\$222,733
DevOps Engineer	\$166,243	\$183,613	\$200,683
Front End Engineer	\$159,909	\$175,947	\$273,952
Mobile Applications Developer	\$152,017	\$166,932	\$181,377
Site Reliability Engineer	\$157,930	\$191,959	\$209,805
Software Architect	\$191,463	\$205,593	\$218,310
Software Developer	\$164,489	\$180,273	\$195,551
Technical Writer	\$119,863	\$130,795	\$140,991
QA Automation Engineer	\$118,266	\$145,352	\$172,438
SDET	\$148,811	\$177,964	\$207,117

COMPENSATION GUIDE: BUSINESS SYSTEMS

	1st Quartile	Mean	3rd Quartile
Business Systems Analyst	\$151,110	\$165,961	\$180,342
ERP Administrator	\$142,711	\$157,224	\$171,302
ERP Programmer	\$161,791	\$177,729	\$193,161
Integration Consultant	\$150,261	\$165,987	\$181,439
Engagement Lead	\$164,351	\$180,125	\$195,395
Solutions Architect	\$195,302	\$209,490	\$222,593

COMPENSATION GUIDE: INFRASTRUCTURE & CLOUD

	1st Quartile	Mean	3rd Quartile
Cloud Administrator	\$141,692	\$156,741	\$171,532
Cloud Architect	\$207,234	\$222,965	\$241,765
Cloud Engineer	\$186,735	\$204,584	\$221,847
DevOps Engineer	\$173,799	\$191,959	\$209,805
Information Security Analyst	\$137,611	\$151,441	\$164,845
Information Security Engineer	\$166,867	\$183,820	\$200,432
Security Architect	\$194,119	\$208,295	\$221,263
IT Auditor	\$133,943	\$148,329	\$162,501
Mainframe Systems Programmer	\$118,009	\$128,454	\$140,804
Penetration Tester	\$149,408	\$164,137	\$178,398
Product Support Specialist	\$93,176	\$103,543	\$113,680
Support Desktop Specialist	\$79,125	\$87,494	\$95,448
Systems Administrator	\$130,664	\$144,754	\$158,652
Systems Analyst	\$147,620	\$162,219	\$176,352

COMPENSATION GUIDE: DIGITAL DESIGN & PRODUCTION

	1st Quartile	Mean	3rd Quartile
Web Developer	\$150,176	\$165,238	\$179,828
Instructional Designer	\$102,502	\$113,077	\$123,400
Interaction Designer	\$141,879	\$156,253	\$170,213
Marketing Automation Consultant	\$126,120	\$141,614	\$157,298
Product Designer	\$103,776	\$114,659	\$125,287
Product Marketing Consultant	\$107,345	\$119,330	\$131,204
User Experience Designer	\$141,642	\$153,321	\$163,968
User Experience Researcher	\$144,240	\$158,590	\$172,479
Visual Designer	\$127,943	\$138,528	\$148,178

COMPENSATION GUIDE: CONTENT DEVELOPMENT

	1st Quartile	Mean	3rd Quartile
Copy Editor	\$86,987	\$96,317	\$105,313
Copywriter	\$99,059	\$108,882	\$118,217
Digital Product Manager	\$153,530	\$171,348	\$189,096
Social Media Manager	\$81,586	\$100,757	\$119,928
Technical Writer	\$119,863	\$130,795	\$140,991
Web Author	\$96,945	\$105,091	\$112,441
Web Content Administrator	\$96,945	\$105,091	\$112,441

COMPENSATION GUIDE: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

	1st Quartile	Mean	3rd Quartile
Agile Coach	\$156,504	\$186,889	\$216,907
Business Analyst	\$137,601	\$151,430	\$164,832
Business Process Architect	\$146,529	\$176,162	\$198,710
Change Manager	\$160,252	\$178,536	\$196,634
Program Manager	\$169,210	\$183,851	\$205,272
Project Coordinator	\$68,614	\$77,599	\$86,395
Project Manager	\$158,817	\$177,845	\$191,784



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