



Money Talks: Finding the Highest Paid Careers in the US Today

Looking for the best career bets in the current job market? If you're looking to change your current career path, or even if you're just starting out on your first career decision, you already know that some directions will be more profitable than others. But which careers are the best for maximizing salaries in today's competitive job market? What skills or preparation will you need to enter a high paying career? How many years will it take and what are your prospects once all your preparation is complete? Our overview of the highest paying jobs in the United States today may be just what you need to set your career-seeking feet on the right path.



The Big Picture

As cited in Forbes magazine and based on current U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the top five highest paid careers are:

1. Surgeon
2. CEO
3. Engineering Manager
4. Airline Pilot
5. Dentist

Sound interesting? Here's what you'll be doing, how you'll get there, and how much you'll typically earn in your new possible career:

Physicians and Surgeons

The Job: "Be a doctor!" It looks like Mom's advice was right; consistently, the highest paid careers are among the [medical field](#), with surgeons taking home the lion's share of the salaries. As a medical professional, you'll have one of the most challenging and rewarding jobs of all—saving people's lives. You'll work out of a [hospital](#) or have a medical practice, using the most advanced medical technologies and pharmacological breakthroughs to help, cure and enhance the lives of your patients. But there's a downside; with an additional 7 to 10 years of medical school and residency, it's going to take a lot longer to get to the start of your professional career. In addition, most medical students end up paying off steep college and med school loans at the end of their studies, so be sure to factor that into your plans.

- Training: 4 years college (biological or premed majors preferred), 4 years medical school, 3-7 years residency in a hospital. Licensing required as well.
- Prospects: Excellent.
- Surgeons: \$137,050/yr
- Obstetricians and gynecologists: \$133,430/yr

- Internists, general: \$126,940/yr
- Anesthesiologists: \$131,680/yr
- Pediatricians, general: \$116,550/yr
- Family/general practitioners: \$110,020/yr

Chief Executive Officer

The Job: Although in light of recent financial events this ranking may be shifting slightly, CEOs of large corporate firms still rank among the highest paid jobs in the US today (remember, Bill Gates is a CEO!). While becoming a CEO doesn't necessarily require a lot of beforehand [training](#), it may take some time to get there unless you're the founder of the company. As a CEO, you'll set the overall strategic operations goals of your company, leading the charge to make it profitable and able to provide jobs to many hundreds or thousands of people working there.

- Training: 4 years college (business majors preferred). MBA is a plus.
- Prospects: Good.
- Chief Executives: \$107,670/yr, not counting stock and other compensations.

Engineering Manager

The Job: If you've got a head for combining management with technical problems, this may be the slot you're perfect for. [Engineering](#) managers coordinate plans for technical or engineering projects. They may oversee other skilled technical managers such as computer scientists or engineers on a variety of projects from building structures, aviation design, computer systems or managing natural resources.

- Training: 4 years college (science or technical field majors preferred). Masters degree in Science (computer science or other technical area). Typical 6-8 years on the job training in a specialist field.
- Prospects: Excellent.
- Engineering Managers: \$140,210/yr



Career Tips

Airline Pilot

The Job: There's a reason why pilots call their cockpits "the office;" that's where you'll go to work. Modern [aircraft](#) are some of the most technically sophisticated machines in the world, and you'll master them from nose to tail. Everyone knows that being a commercial pilot is a great job—you only work an FAA mandated 100 hours a month, and you get to [travel](#) the world for free. However with current cutbacks among airlines, competition is stiffer than usual; pursuing a career in cargo private flying may be easier. Gaining your training can be expensive, while many pilots attend private flight schools, another popular option is to become a military pilot first, then transfer to commercial piloting when your hitch is up.

- Training: Must be 18 years with over 250 hours of flight experience, licenses in instrument and non-instrument flight. Commercial pilots must be 23+, with over 1,500 air hours, have licenses in instrument and non-instrument flight and pass FAA exams.
- Prospects: Good.
- Airline pilots, co-pilots and flight engineers; \$99,400/yr

Dentist

The Job: If you like looking down in the mouth, the [dental](#) profession may be for you. As a dentist, you'll most likely work out of a dental group or private practice, repairing damaged teeth or cosmetically improving them as needed. You'll oversee a staff of well trained assistants and use x-ray machines and specialized tools to perform your work.

- Training: 4 years college (biological or premed majors preferred), 4 years dental school (you must graduate from one of the 56 ADA accredited schools around the US, so competition is tight), 2-5 years additional training for specialization. Licensing required as well.
- Prospects: Excellent.
- Dentists: \$110,820/yr



Other Top Paying Careers

While these are the top five, there are still a lot of options if you're looking to score that big six figure payday. We've made it easy to find what might appeal to you by breaking the list into areas of interest:

Medical

- Podiatrists: \$94,500/yr
- Pharmacists: \$110,240/yr
- Psychiatrists: \$113,570/yr
- Optometrists: \$88,100/yr

Financial

- Investment Banker: \$134,000/yr starting
- Actuary: \$119,680/yr
- Marketing Managers: \$78,410/yr

Legal

- Lawyers: \$91,920/yr
- Judges: \$79,540/yr

Technical

- Computer and information systems managers: \$83,890/yr
- Physicists: \$83,750/yr
- Air traffic controllers: \$83,350/yr
- Petroleum Engineers: \$81,800/yr
- Nuclear Engineers: \$80,200/yr

Summary

As in many previous years, careers in the medical profession, especially surgeons and other medical specialists, have the highest paying careers in the US today, followed (again not unexpected) by careers in the financial and corporate sector. But as the world becomes more and more technical, the need for skilled managers to direct that technology is also become more important. So if you like to work with technology, whether in an office (as an engineering manager) or in the air (as a pilot), this year's highest paying careers have a lot of new options for you.

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.