Technology Executive Salary Guide 2026

Base salary benchmarks for technology leadership and senior technical roles across engineering, data and AI, product, security, and IT — by company stage and U.S. region.

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How to use this guide

Figures are annual base salary in U.S. dollars and exclude bonus, equity, and benefits. Ranges are shown in thousands for three company stages: startup or early stage (seed to Series B), growth stage (Series C to pre-IPO or PE-backed), and enterprise or public company. Apply the regional index on page 2 to adjust the national baseline for your market.

Base salary ranges by role ($ thousands)

Role	Startup	Growth	Enterprise
Executive Leadership			
Chief Technology Officer	190–265	265–360	350–550
Chief Information Officer	180–240	240–325	320–480
Chief Product Officer	180–245	245–330	320–470
Chief Information Security Officer	175–235	235–320	310–450
Engineering + Architecture			
VP of Engineering	180–235	230–310	300–420
Director of Software Engineering	155–200	195–255	245–320
Engineering Manager	140–180	175–225	215–280
Principal Software Engineer	165–210	200–265	255–340
Senior Software Engineer	135–175	165–215	200–265
Enterprise / Solutions Architect	145–185	175–230	215–285
DevOps / Platform Engineering Lead	145–185	175–225	210–275
Site Reliability Engineer	135–175	165–210	200–260
Data, AI + Analytics			
VP of Data + Analytics	170–220	215–290	280–385

Role	Startup	Growth	Enterprise
Director of Data Engineering	150–195	190–250	240–315
Machine Learning / AI Engineer	150–200	185–245	230–310
Senior Data Scientist	140–180	170–220	205–270
Data Engineer	120–155	145–190	175–230
Product, Security + IT			
VP of Product Management	170–220	215–290	280–380
Director of Product Management	150–190	185–245	235–305
Senior Product Manager	130–170	160–210	195–255
Director of Information Security	155–200	190–250	240–315
Security Engineer	125–165	155–200	190–245
Director of IT / IT Operations	130–170	160–210	200–265
IT Manager	105–135	125–165	155–200

Rounded to the nearest $1,000 and expressed in thousands. National baseline.

Regional cost-of-labor index

Multiply the national baseline range by the index below to estimate a market-adjusted range.

Region	Index
U.S. national average (baseline)	1.00
San Francisco Bay Area	1.22
Seattle + Pacific Northwest	1.14
Greater Los Angeles + San Diego	1.08
Sacramento + Central Valley	0.96
Northeast (NY / Boston)	1.15
Austin + Texas	1.02
Mountain West + Nevada	0.95

Beyond base salary

Annual bonus. 10% to 15% of base at manager level, 15% to 25% at director and VP, and 40% or more at C-suite.

Equity. 0.25% to 1.5% for VP hires at early-stage companies; $50,000 to $250,000 in annual RSU value at growth and public companies.

Equity refresh. Annual or performance refresh grants often matter more to candidates than the initial award.

Signing bonus. Commonly used to buy out unvested equity or a forfeited bonus.

Remote + flexibility. Fully remote roles typically band nationally; onsite roles in tight metros carry a premium.

Learning + certification. Cloud, security, and AI certification budgets are standard retention tools.

What moves a range up or down

- Company stage and funding — the strongest driver of cash versus equity mix.
- Team size and span of control for engineering and IT leadership roles.
- Product complexity: platform, infrastructure, and AI systems price above internal tooling.
- Applied AI, machine learning, and modern data platform experience.
- Security and compliance scope, including SOC 2, HIPAA, FedRAMP, and CJIS environments.
- Regulated or public sector environments, which trade lower cash for stability and pension value.
- Onsite requirements in high-cost metros versus a nationally banded remote role.

Methodology + sources

These ranges reflect Berkeley Search market intelligence gathered while conducting technology searches, benchmarked against published wage data for computer and information technology occupations (Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, BLS Employer Costs for Employee Compensation, and the Census Bureau Annual Business Survey). They are a planning reference, not an appraisal of any specific position. Last reviewed August 2026.

Need a benchmark for an open role?

We build stage-matched compensation comparisons as part of every technology search. Contact Berkeley Search Consultants at berkeleysearch.com/contact.