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ENGINEERING LEADERSHIP SALARY REPORT 2027

The AES 2027 U.S. Engineering Leadership Salary Report

Official BLS pay data for engineering managers, civil engineers, construction managers and senior executives across Florida, Texas, California, New York, the Northeast, the Southeast and 11 major metro areas.

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What engineering leaders are paid across the U.S.

The AES 2027 U.S. Engineering Leadership Salary Report brings together the latest official pay data for engineering managers, civil engineers, construction managers and senior executives. It covers Florida, Texas, California, New York, the Northeast and the Southeast, plus 11 major metro areas. We built it for boards and hiring leaders who need a realistic engineering leadership salary benchmark before they plan a senior hire in 2027.

Every figure is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and linked to its source, so you can check it. Where BLS does not cover a title, such as VP of Engineering or COO, we say so and show the closest public benchmark instead. In addition, Alexander Executive Search works with engineering firms of every size, from national and international firms to growing regional businesses, and this report is free to use.

KEY FINDINGS

Engineering leadership salary: the headline numbers

First, here are the figures that matter most for senior hiring. After that, we set out what stood out in the data.

$171,270
U.S. median
for architectural and engineering managers, the closest BLS category to engineering directors and VPs.

$210,280
California median
the highest of the four states in this report, 23% above the national figure.

$205,130
Boston median
the highest of the 11 metro areas we analyzed, for engineering managers.

$450,100
90th percentile
for chief executives in U.S. architectural and engineering firms.

What stood out in the data

- **The national baseline:** the median architectural and engineering manager earned $171,270 in May 2025, and the 90th percentile was $262,760. For comparison, the median was $100,840 for civil engineers and $114,990 for construction managers.
- **Florida and Texas track the national median:** engineering managers had a median of $170,740 in Florida and $171,370 in Texas, against $171,270 nationally. By contrast, New York was $175,710 and California $210,280.
- **The top of the market is in Boston, New York and Austin:** those three metros had the highest 90th percentile pay for engineering managers, at $290,440, $289,560 and $288,330.
- **Orlando leads Florida:** its engineering manager median of $177,990 was the highest of the four Florida metros, while Miami, at $167,160, was the lowest of all 11 metros.
- **The Northeast pays about 8% more:** by our calculation from BLS state data, the average engineering manager wage was $184,590 in the Northeast and $170,180 in the Southeast.
- **Executive pay sits well above the occupational data:** for example, chief executives in architectural and engineering firms had a median of $219,190 and a 90th percentile of $450,100, before bonuses and equity.
- **Engineering firms pay close to the national rate:** inside architectural, engineering and related services firms, the engineering manager median was $168,410, against $171,270 across all industries (BLS OEWS industry estimates).

Methodology: where the numbers come from

All U.S. pay figures come from the BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) program, May 2025 estimates, the latest release. We used the official state, metro area and industry-specific estimates and the downloadable data files on the BLS OEWS tables page.

OEWS reports straight-time gross pay. It includes base pay, incentive pay and production bonuses, but it excludes non-production and year-end bonuses, profit sharing, stock bonuses, relocation allowances

and benefits (BLS OEWS FAQ). As a result, the figures understate total pay for senior leaders, whose packages often include a large bonus or equity element.

First, we focus on three occupations: architectural and engineering managers (SOC 11-9041), civil engineers (17-2051) and construction managers (11-9021). In addition, for executive titles we also use chief executives (11-1011) and general and operations managers (11-1021) inside the architectural, engineering and related services industry. Similarly, regional averages are our own employment-weighted calculation from the published state figures. Every pay figure in this report comes from BLS data. Because BLS does not publish pay by job title, executive titles are shown against the closest BLS occupation and industry. However, none of the figures in this report are offers or recommendations for an individual role.

BY ROLE

Engineering leadership salary by role

Table 1 shows pay across all industries. In contrast, Table 2 shows the same roles inside engineering and design firms, which is closer to the market most of our clients hire in.

Table 1. U.S. pay by occupation, all industries (annual wages)

Occupation (SOC code)	Employment	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	90th percentile
Chief executives (11-1011)	204,350	$129,540	$213,990	$356,200	$507,730
General and operations managers (11-1021)	3,503,020	$72,320	$105,770	$167,280	$253,390
Architectural and engineering managers (11-9041)	220,260	$139,360	$171,270	$212,500	$262,760
Construction managers (11-9021)	380,360	$88,550	$114,990	$151,640	$189,440
Civil engineers (17-2051)	367,840	$79,930	$100,840	$129,680	$163,220

Engineering leadership salary inside engineering firms

Table 2. Pay inside engineering and design firms, United States (BLS industry estimates, annual wages)

Occupation, industry	Employment	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	90th percentile
Architectural and engineering managers, architectural, engineering and related services	57,730	$135,120	$168,410	$209,240	$255,730
Chief executives, architectural, engineering and related services	3,180	$149,480	$219,190	$342,870	$450,100
General and operations managers, architectural, engineering and related services	56,390	$107,720	$164,460	$218,180	$293,460
Construction managers, architectural, engineering and related services	11,690	$103,960	$132,020	$167,260	$211,190
Civil engineers, architectural, engineering and related services	201,620	$79,660	$100,640	$130,060	$165,150

Source: BLS OEWS, May 2025 national estimates; BLS OEWS, May 2025 national industry-specific estimates. However, industry figures are national only.

BY STATE

Engineering leadership salary in Florida, Texas, California and New York

California pays engineering managers the most of the four states. However, Florida and Texas both sit very close to the national median.

Table 3. Architectural and engineering managers by state (annual wages)

Area	Employment	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	90th percentile
United States	**220,260**	**$139,360**	**$171,270**	**$212,500**	**$262,760**
Florida	8,710	$138,760	$170,740	$208,370	$251,590
Texas	19,030	$144,340	$171,370	$216,670	$277,790
California	29,630	$169,140	$210,280	$251,890	$296,130
New York	8,250	$149,070	$175,710	$215,140	$274,870

Table 4. Civil engineers and construction managers by state (annual wages)

Area	Civil engineers: median	Civil engineers: 90th	Construction managers: median	Construction managers: 90th
United States	**$100,840**	**$163,220**	**$114,990**	**$189,440**
Florida	$98,570	$166,680	$113,130	$209,450
Texas	$96,860	$164,330	$101,470	$166,800
California	$122,500	$175,940	$133,160	$211,970
New York	$103,760	$169,050	$155,360	$244,590

Source: BLS OEWS, May 2025 state estimates. State names link to each BLS state profile.

BY REGION

Northeast and Southeast compared

The Northeast pays more for all three roles, most of all for construction managers. For engineering managers, for example, the average was $184,590 in the Northeast against $170,180 in the Southeast.

Table 5. Northeast and Southeast at a glance (annual wages)

Region	Occupation	Employment	Average wage (AES calculation)	Range of state medians
Northeast	Architectural and engineering managers	38,790	$184,590	$145,720 (Maine) to $201,430 (Massachusetts)
Southeast	Architectural and engineering managers	32,510	$170,180	$142,790 (Mississippi) to $170,740 (Florida)
Northeast	Civil engineers	58,990	$110,990	$95,600 (Vermont) to $106,730 (Massachusetts)
Southeast	Civil engineers	68,760	$103,900	$84,240 (Georgia) to $101,600 (South Carolina)
Northeast	Construction managers	41,020	$145,030	$103,450 (Vermont) to $155,360 (New York)
Southeast	Construction managers	85,730	$121,630	$96,960 (Alabama) to $113,130 (Florida)

State-by-state medians in each region

Table 6. Median annual wage by state, Northeast and Southeast

State	Region	Architectural and engineering managers	Civil engineers	Construction managers
Connecticut	Northeast	$175,490	$103,150	$125,190
Maine	Northeast	$145,720	$97,820	$110,070
Massachusetts	Northeast	$201,430	$106,730	$145,010
New Hampshire	Northeast	$172,240	$98,710	$129,260
New Jersey	Northeast	$180,640	$104,660	$138,230
New York	Northeast	$175,710	$103,760	$155,360
Pennsylvania	Northeast	$164,690	$97,850	$108,250
Rhode Island	Northeast	$175,910	$99,300	$103,990
Vermont	Northeast	$157,710	$95,600	$103,450
Alabama	Southeast	$162,350	$99,010	$96,960
Florida	Southeast	$170,740	$98,570	$113,130
Georgia	Southeast	$161,470	$84,240	$110,810
Kentucky	Southeast	$147,680	$100,930	$97,020
Mississippi	Southeast	$142,790	$100,170	$99,520
North Carolina	Southeast	$167,840	$100,730	$106,640
South Carolina	Southeast	$169,040	$101,600	$108,110
Tennessee	Southeast	$161,430	$95,910	$110,200

Source: BLS OEWS, May 2025 state estimates. Northeast is the nine states of the U.S. Census Bureau Northeast region. Southeast is the eight states of the BLS Southeast region. The average wage is an AES calculation: the employment-weighted mean of the published state mean wages. Medians cannot be combined across states, so we show the range of state medians instead.

BY METRO

Engineering leadership salary in 11 major metros

These are the metro areas where we run most of our searches. In general, medians tell you what a typical manager earns. However, the 90th percentile is a better guide for senior leaders.

Table 7. Architectural and engineering managers by metro area (annual wages)

Metro area	Employment	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	90th percentile
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	1,610	$132,350	$167,160	$203,900	$239,990
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	1,480	$137,270	$169,310	$205,740	$260,000
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	1,780	$158,600	$177,990	$213,580	$259,070
Jacksonville, FL	660	$134,270	$167,800	$209,490	$249,530
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	5,970	$141,460	$172,160	$219,080	$271,240
Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands, TX	5,330	$155,420	$172,020	$217,550	$285,950
Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX	3,130	$158,690	$176,540	$223,490	$288,330
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ	7,580	$157,290	$183,890	$222,800	$289,560
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	6,690	$167,540	$205,130	$226,770	$290,440
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	5,060	$141,790	$171,140	$204,630	$249,020
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	5,500	$161,470	$185,220	$215,010	$259,680

Table 8. Civil engineers and construction managers by metro area (annual wages)

Metro area	Civil engineers: median	Civil engineers: 90th	Construction managers: median	Construction managers: 90th
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	$83,750	$165,880	$126,110	$214,820
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	$100,570	$170,110	$120,800	$212,960
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	$100,740	$165,320	$108,010	$205,840
Jacksonville, FL	$102,280	$161,180	$107,200	$199,910
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	$96,920	$158,170	$103,550	$166,770
Houston-Pasadena-The Woodlands, TX	$100,950	$168,240	$103,530	$170,590
Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos, TX	$100,470	$162,770	$102,980	$169,110
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ	$107,330	$176,400	$158,000	$250,520
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	$107,670	$167,360	$156,470	$217,860
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	$99,410	$147,960	$124,990	$204,560
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	$101,780	$159,990	$129,650	$207,160

Source: BLS OEWS, May 2025 metropolitan area estimates. Metro names link to each BLS area profile. "n/a" means BLS did not publish that estimate.

More East Coast states and metros

Some searches cover a whole state or a smaller metro market. Of these nine markets, Massachusetts has the highest median for engineering managers ($201,430). Virginia Beach-Chesapeake-Norfolk, VA-NC has the lowest ($161,340). The national median is $171,270.

Table 9. More East Coast markets: states and smaller metros (annual wages)

Area	Engineering managers: median	Engineering managers: 90th	Civil engineers: median	Construction managers: median
United States	**$171,270**	**$262,760**	**$100,840**	**$114,990**
New Jersey (state)	$180,640	$275,950	$104,660	$138,230
Massachusetts (state)	$201,430	$286,410	$106,730	$145,010
Pennsylvania (state)	$164,690	$221,940	$97,850	$108,250
District of Columbia (state)	$185,220	$225,080	$103,880	$126,430
Virginia (state)	$176,160	$253,060	$97,120	$119,110
Trenton-Princeton, NJ (metro)	$196,870	$276,380	$101,090	$127,940
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA (metro)	$164,150	$218,490	$93,830	$106,720
Richmond, VA (metro)	$167,170	$236,770	$91,300	$110,350
Virginia Beach-Chesapeake-Norfolk, VA-NC (metro)	$161,340	$216,030	$94,680	$105,240

Source: BLS OEWS, May 2025 state estimates and metropolitan area estimates. "Engineering managers" means architectural and engineering managers. Area names link to each BLS area profile.

EXECUTIVE TITLES

VP, director and C-suite engineering pay

BLS does not publish pay for titles such as VP of Engineering, COO or Water Director. So, for each title we show the closest BLS benchmark, using the official BLS figures only.

Firm leadership: President, COO and regional roles

Table 10. Firm leadership: closest BLS benchmark

Title	Closest BLS benchmark (national)	Median	75th percentile	90th percentile
President or CEO, engineering and design firm	Chief executives, architectural, engineering and related services	$219,190	$342,870	$450,100
Chief Operating Officer (COO)	General and operations managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$164,460	$218,180	$293,460
Operations Director	General and operations managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$164,460	$218,180	$293,460
Regional Vice President	General and operations managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$164,460	$218,180	$293,460

Engineering leadership salary for VP and director roles

Table 11. VP and director roles: closest BLS benchmark

Title	Closest BLS benchmark (national)	Median	75th percentile	90th percentile
VP of Engineering	Architectural and engineering managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$168,410	$209,240	$255,730
VP of Civil Engineering	Architectural and engineering managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$168,410	$209,240	$255,730
Director of Engineering	Architectural and engineering managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$168,410	$209,240	$255,730

Practice, project and public-sector leadership

Table 12. Practice, project and public-sector roles: closest BLS benchmark

Title	Closest BLS benchmark (national)	Median	75th percentile	90th percentile
Project Executive	Construction managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$132,020	$167,260	$211,190
Water/Wastewater Director	Architectural and engineering managers, water, sewage and other systems	$142,760	$182,690	$227,340
Transportation Director	Architectural and engineering managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$168,410	$209,240	$255,730
Land Development Director	Architectural and engineering managers, architectural, engineering and related services	$168,410	$209,240	$255,730
Public-agency engineering director (city or county)	Architectural and engineering managers, local government	$160,240	$181,470	$217,870

Source: BLS OEWS, May 2025 national industry-specific estimates. BLS does not publish pay by job title, so each title is matched to the closest occupation and industry. These are proxies, not title data. "Construction managers" is the BLS occupation name (SOC 11-9021).

WHAT IT MEANS FOR HIRING

How to use engineering leadership salary data in a senior hire

Public data starts a pay conversation; it does not end it. So, here is how to use it.

Budget from the 75th to 90th percentile

Medians include managers at every level. Therefore, for a VP or director who will lead a business unit, the 75th to 90th percentile is usually the more realistic starting point. Nationally, that is $212,500 to $262,760 for engineering managers, before bonus.

Price the metro, not just the state

State figures hide big local differences. In Florida, for example, the engineering manager median ranges from $167,160 in Miami to $177,990 in Orlando, and Austin's 90th percentile is $288,330, well above the Texas figure of $277,790.

Plan for the Northeast gap

When you recruit a Northeast leader into a Southeast role, expect to bridge a gap of about 8% on average base pay for engineering managers. In addition, relocation support, a clear incentive plan and the scope of the role often matter as much as base salary.

Look beyond base pay

OEWS leaves out year-end bonuses, profit sharing and equity, which make up much of an executive package. That is why we define the role with RoleDNA™ Mapping first, then test the pay range against the real candidate market before outreach begins.

We work with engineering firms of every size, and a smaller firm can still win a strong leader with the right scope, incentive and story. 96% of the leaders we place are still in their role after 12 months, and 96% are still there after 24 months. In addition, 98% of the searches we take on end with a candidate placed. See how we run a VP of Engineering executive search or our executive search process for engineering firms under $120M.

Frequently asked questions

What is the typical engineering leadership salary in the U.S.?

In May 2025, the median annual wage for architectural and engineering managers was $171,270, and the 90th percentile was $262,760 (BLS OEWS). Senior leaders often earn more once bonus and equity are included.

Which metro pays engineering managers the most?

Of the 11 metros in this report, Boston had the highest median for architectural and engineering managers, at $205,130. Boston also had the highest 90th percentile, at $290,440 (BLS OEWS, Boston

metro).

Do these figures include bonuses and equity?

Only partly. OEWS includes incentive pay and production bonuses, but it excludes year-end and other non-production bonuses, profit sharing and stock bonuses. So, for executives, total pay is usually higher than the figures shown.

Why is there no BLS figure for a VP of Engineering or a COO?

Because BLS publishes pay by occupation, not by job title, it has no title-level figures. As a result, we match each executive title to the closest occupation and industry, and we show that BLS figure as the benchmark.

Do you work with smaller engineering firms?

Yes. We work with engineering firms of every size, and growing firms under $120M can also use our dedicated executive search process.

ALEXANDER EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Benchmark a senior engineering role

Want a confidential view on what a specific role should pay in your market, or help with a senior search? We work with engineering firms of every size, from national and international firms to growing regional businesses.

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Contact a partner: aesrecruitment.com/contact-aes-recruitment

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