



DATA CENTER SALARY SURVEY 2026 (USA)

Taking a close look at the compensation packages of 1700+ data center employees

INSIGHTS ON SALARIES, BONUSES,
AND BENEFITS IN THE SECTOR

FOREWORD FROM THE CEO



The data center industry is still one of the most exciting places to be, and we're proud to be part of it. Growth hasn't slowed, innovation hasn't slowed, and the scale of opportunity keeps getting bigger. But that growth brings its own pressure. Finding people with the right skills is harder, what candidates expect from a package is shifting fast, and the businesses that get this right are pulling further ahead of the ones that don't.

Against this backdrop, the **2026 Data Center Salary Survey** gives you a clear picture of not just what people are earning, but what they actually want from their next move, and where the gaps are between what you're offering and what would keep them. This year, that means a closer look at where new talent is really coming from, which benefits are landing and which aren't, why people leave even when the pay is competitive, and where opportunity still isn't equal.

For **employers**, this is your benchmark. It's a way to check whether your offer holds up in a market that's moving fast, and whether it's doing what you need it to do: helping you find, attract, and keep the people who'll drive your business forward. For **professionals**, it's a chance to see how your role and your package really compare, so you can make your next career decision with confidence, not guesswork.

Putting this together is no small task, it takes months of data collection, conversations, and analysis. We do it because you ask us for this information all year round, and our goal has always been simple: to put it directly in your hands so you can make better decisions, whichever side of the hiring table you're on.

The result is a survey shaped by the community, for the community.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part. We're proud to share this snapshot of where the industry stands, and to keep supporting both businesses and individuals as we shape the future of the data center workforce, together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Liam Thomas". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Liam Thomas
Co-founder and CEO, [DataX Connect](#)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This year's report takes a close look at the compensation packages of data center professionals across the United States. Thank you to everyone who took part; your answers are what make this benchmark worth trusting. It paints a picture of an industry that's still growing fast, but one where finding, attracting, and keeping the right people is getting harder, not easier. Here's what stood out.

FINDING TALENT

This year, we asked our survey participants which industry they worked in immediately prior to the data center industry. Almost 2 in 5 came from energy backgrounds (renewables, oil and gas, nuclear) and military backgrounds, 36.9% in total. We all know that finding talent in this sector is a challenge, and these stats give us a clue as to where we can find talent with transferrable skills. We've done a detailed breakdown for some of the most established markets including Texas and Virginia. In Texas, for example, 38% came from energy backgrounds alone, with military backgrounds in second place (13%).

ATTRACTING TALENT

We also asked our survey participants for more information on the benefits they want to see in their compensation package. 38.1% of US respondents want a car/gas allowance included in their benefits package - the most requested benefit in the survey. Worth thinking about if you're trying to attract top notch talent.

RETAINING TALENT

In last year's survey we uncovered that 38% of respondents got a pay rise in the last twelve months and still planned to move jobs. This year, we've asked why. Salary is the biggest reason people are planning to move company in the next 12 months, cited by 29%, ahead of career development (26%) and other remuneration e.g. bonuses, commission, and equity (11%). People in the US are motivated to move, and pay is what gets someone through the door. Having said that, over a quarter of respondents listed career development, so it's the path forward that also decides whether they stay. We're now supporting companies across the globe with apprenticeship programs - [get in touch](#) if you're interested.

EQUALIZING OPPORTUNITY

Half of women say their gender has hurt their pay or career progression, 51.4%, vs just 2.2% of men. In fact, 90% of the women who said their career had been impacted in some way described the effect as negative. As an industry I know we can do better to equalise pay and opportunity among men and women.

If you want to know exactly where your offer stands against this data, [get in touch](#). We do everything from individual role benchmarking to a full strategic compensation review, so you can make your next hiring or retention decision with real numbers behind it.

Andy Davis

Director, DataX Connect

Founder of The Data Centre Club and Host of the Inside Data Centre Podcast

DATA CENTRE CLUB

DCMC
DATA CENTRE MARKETING CLUB

DATA CENTRE
2025

DCTC
DATA CENTRE TALENT CLUB

Inside Data Centre Podcast.
WITH ANDY DAVIS

RESEARCH SYNOPSIS

2026 DATA CENTER SALARY SURVEY

SURVEY DATE: JUNE-JULY 2026

REGION: UNITED STATES

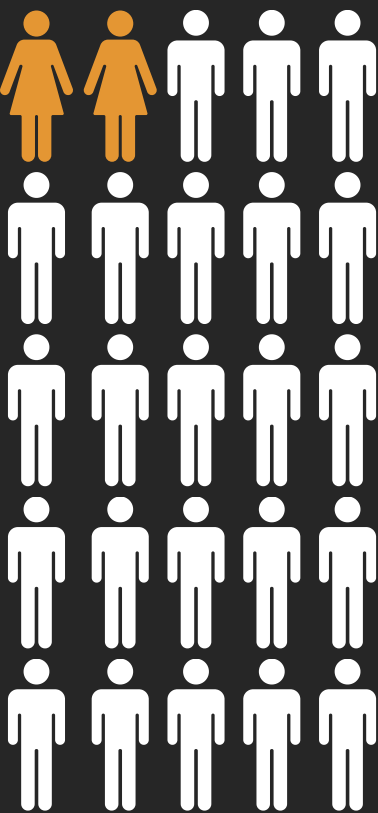
Focus roles: BAS and Controls, Commercial, Commissioning, Construction Management, Data Center Engineering, Design, Development, Operations, Project Management, and Quality.

METHODOLOGY

DataX Connect surveyed data center professionals employed in Europe and the USA with questions related to experience, salaries, bonuses, and benefits. The survey was conducted online and respondents were recruited via email, telephone, and LinkedIn. Data was also collected from placements made by DataX Connect. Respondents represent approximately 100 different job roles across the sector. This report is specifically based on respondents in the USA; a separate European report is also available [here](#).

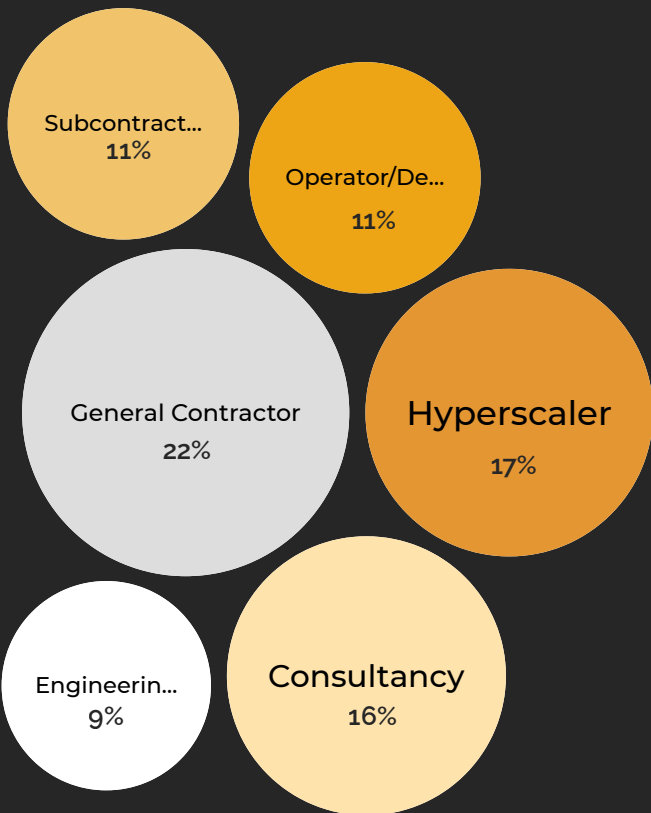
RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC

GENDER

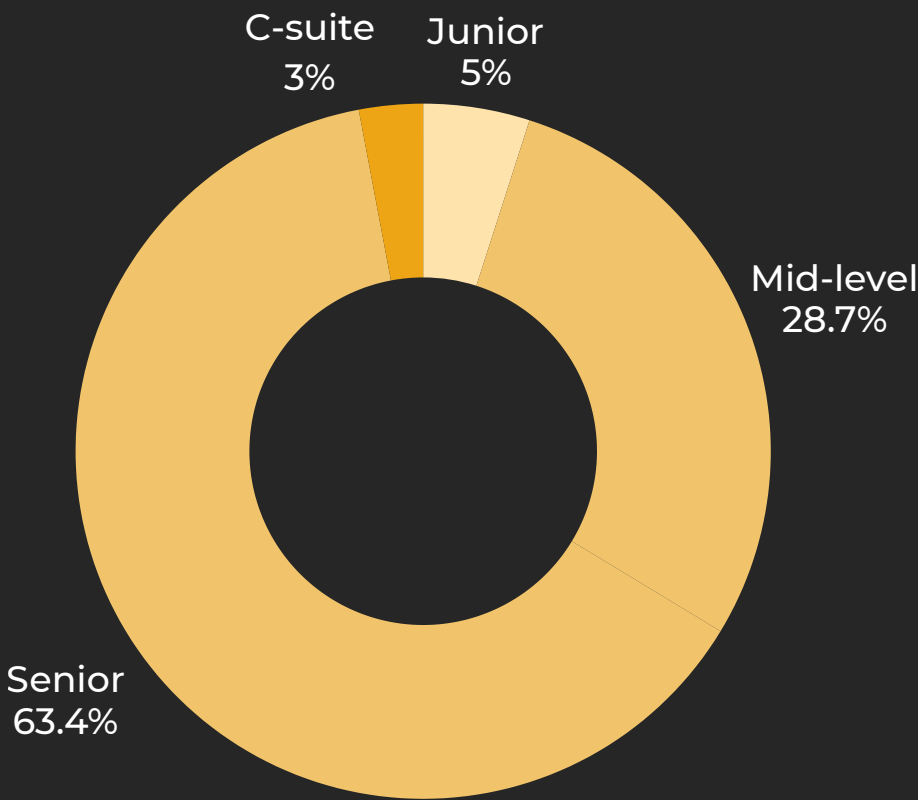


2 in 25
respondents
are female

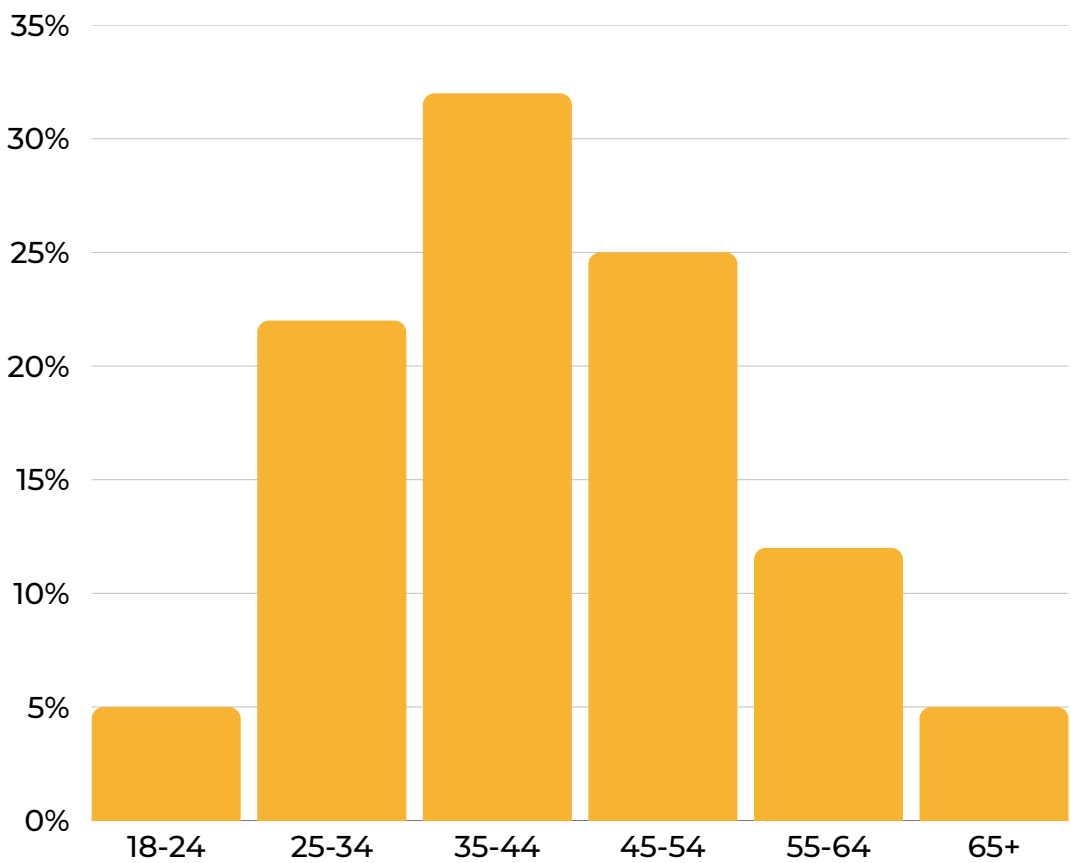
COMPANY TYPE



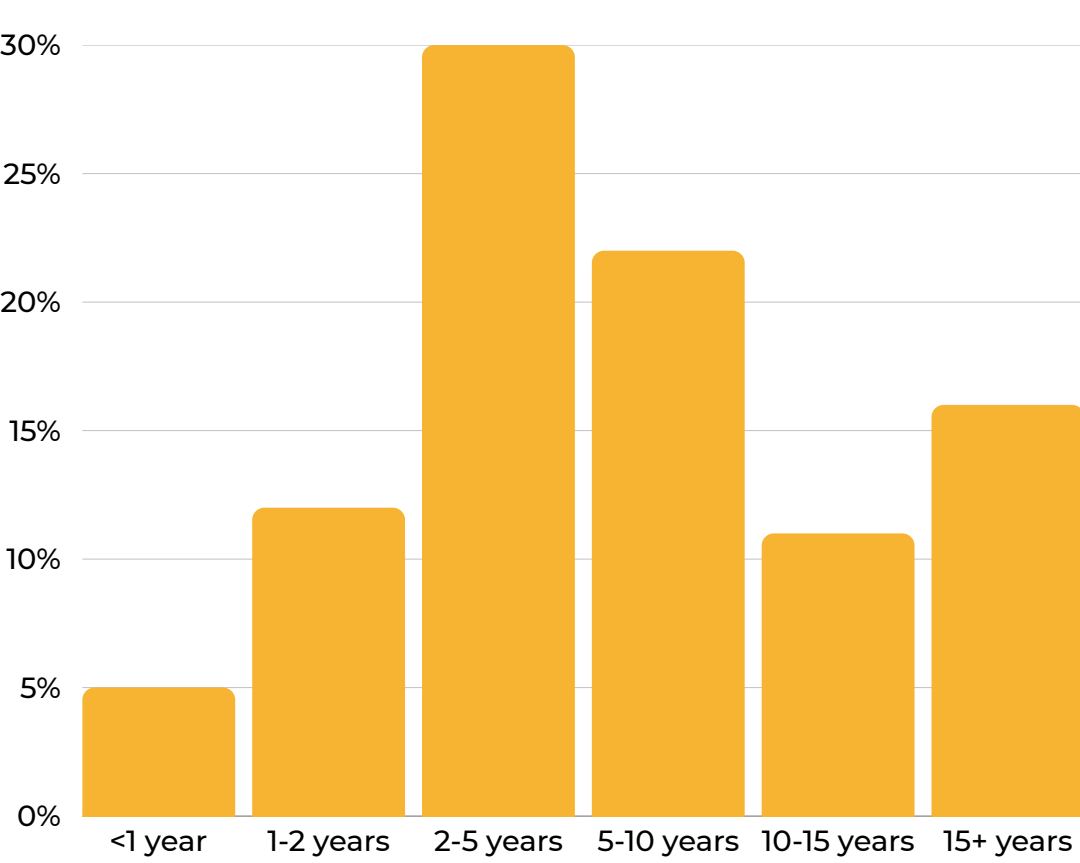
SENIORITY



AGE



EXPERIENCE



TALENT CROSSOVER

ALMOST **2 IN 5** CAME FROM THE
ENERGY SECTOR OR MILITARY



36.9% of USA respondents worked in energy (e.g. renewables, oil and gas, nuclear) or military roles before moving into data centers.

PERMANENT SALARIES

The average salary for a permanent data center position in the **US** is **\$175,000 per year**.

The average salary for a permanent data center position in **Europe** is **€122,000 per year (\$142,000 per year)**.

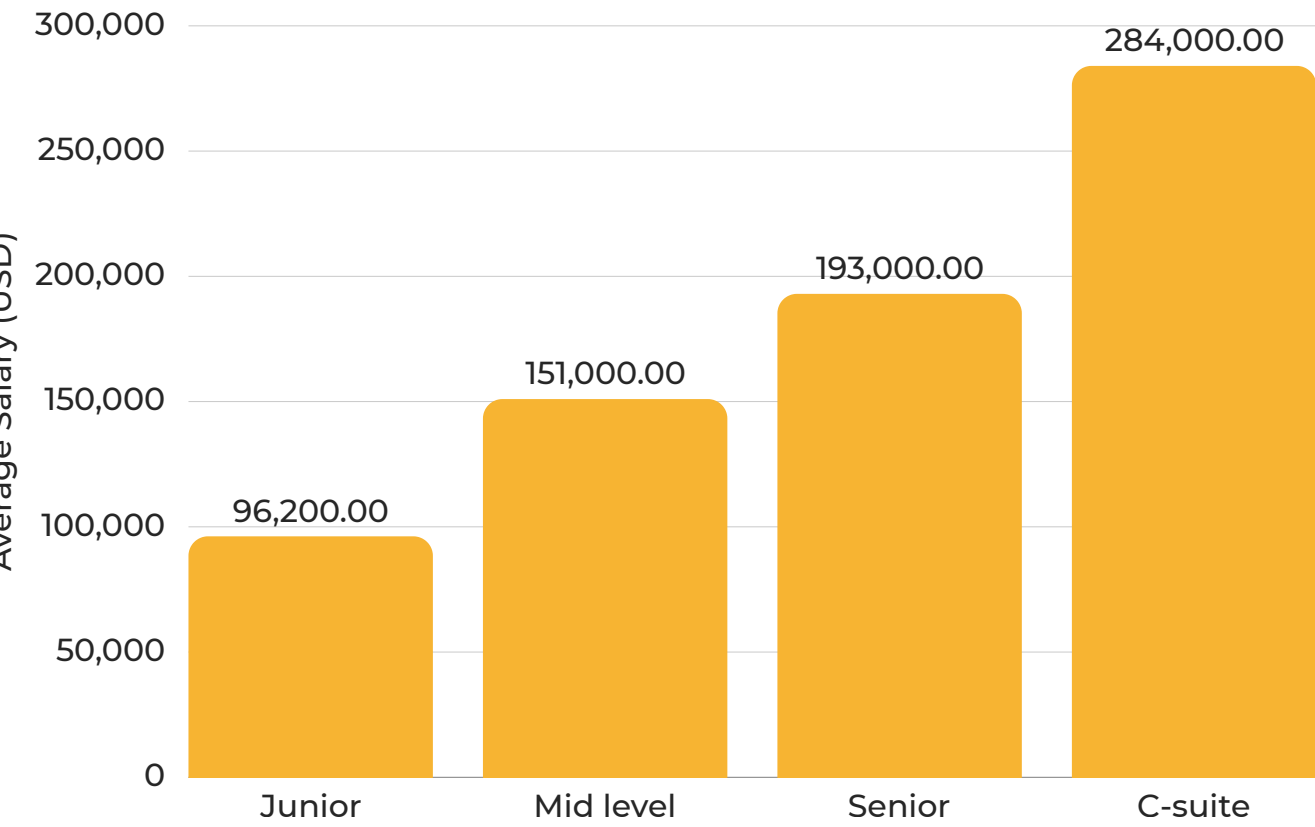
The average salary for a permanent data center position in the **UK** is **£119,000 per year (\$160,000 per year)**.



PAY RISES

71% of **US** respondents in permanent roles received a salary increase in the last twelve months. **32%** of people who received a salary increase had an increase of **between 0% and 4%** and **28%** had an increase of **between 4% and 8%**.

SALARY BY SENIORITY



AVERAGE SALARY

BAS AND CONTROLS	\$134,000
COMMISSIONING	\$149,000
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT	\$189,000
DESIGN	\$200,000
DEVELOPMENT	\$227,000
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	\$175,000

[Read the full breakdown by job title](#)

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

“The numbers tell us something important: women may be satisfied with their pay, but that doesn’t mean they believe the system is fair. Half of the women surveyed feel their gender has affected their career progression or pay - and 97% of them [globally] say that impact has been negative. It would appear that women are still very much viewed through the through the prism of gender and recompensed as a result of this as opposed to their experience, skills or knowledge, and that is a much bigger issue than the number on a payslip.”



LIZZY MCDOWELL
MARKETING DIRECTOR AT KAO DATA AND FOUNDING PARTNER OF CRITICAL CAREERS

CONTRACT RATES

The average rate for a contract data center position in the **USA is \$85 per hour**.

The average rate for a contract data center position in the **UK is £530 per day (\$716 per day)**.

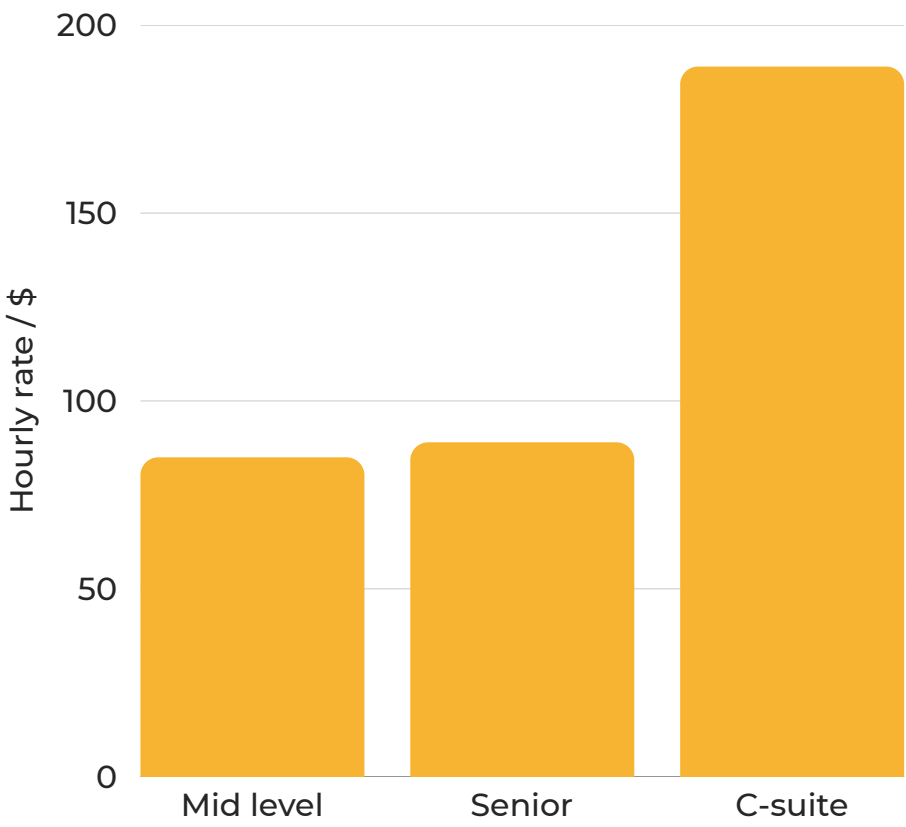
The average rate for a contract data center position in **Europe is €640 per day (\$744 per day)**.



PAY RISES

38% of **US** respondents in contract roles received a rate increase in the last 12 months. **83%** had an increase of more than **4%** and **50%** had an increase of **12%** or more.

HOURLY RATES BY SENIORITY



\$82 / hr

average rate of a contractor working in commissioning

\$79 / hr

average rate of a contractor working in construction management

[Read the full breakdown by job title](#)

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

“Young people aren’t just looking at what they can earn; they’re looking at where a career can take them. The rapid progression we’re seeing is hugely positive, but the fact that career development is also the biggest reason young professionals are considering leaving should make the industry take notice. At GeN+1, we want the next generation to see this as an industry where they can build, develop and grow for the long term.”



HOLLY FENNER
HEAD OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS, GEN+1

GAS MONEY

OVER **A THIRD** WANT
MORE TRAVEL SUPPORT

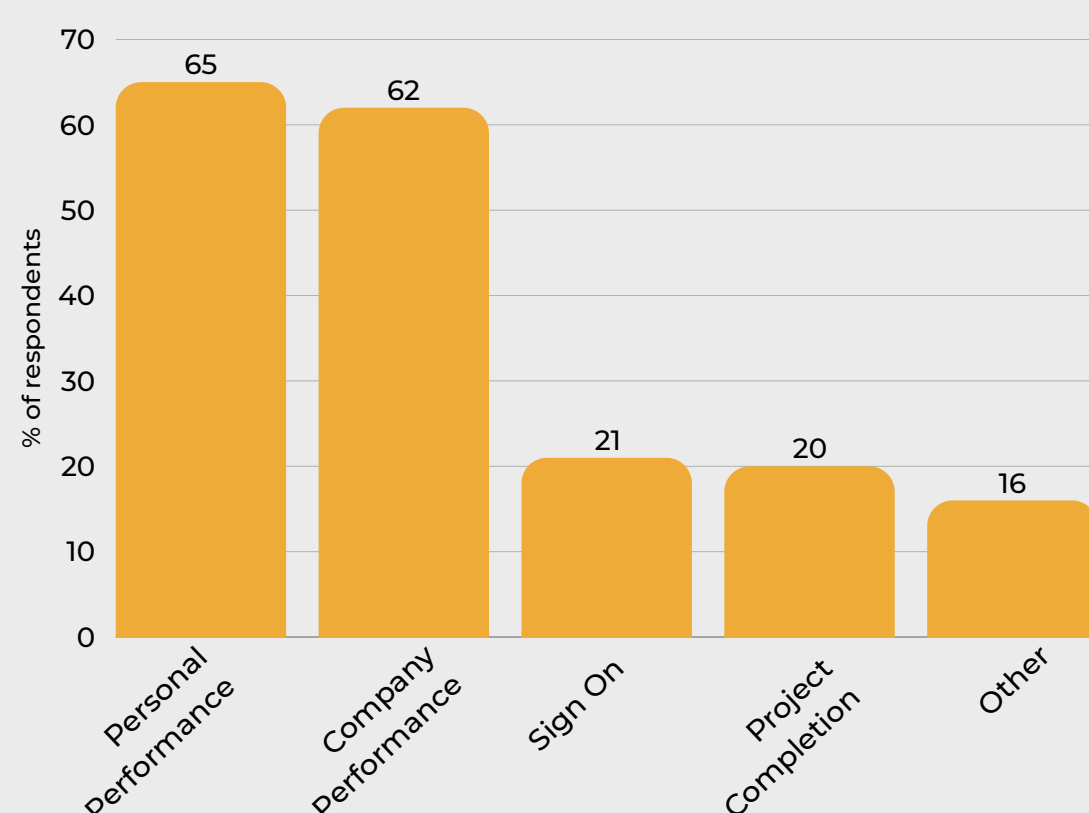


38.1% of US respondents want a car/gas allowance included in their benefits package - the most requested benefit in the survey.

BONUSES

85% of US respondents in a permanent role received a bonus in the past twelve months.

The percentage of US respondents in a contract role who received a bonus was 33%.



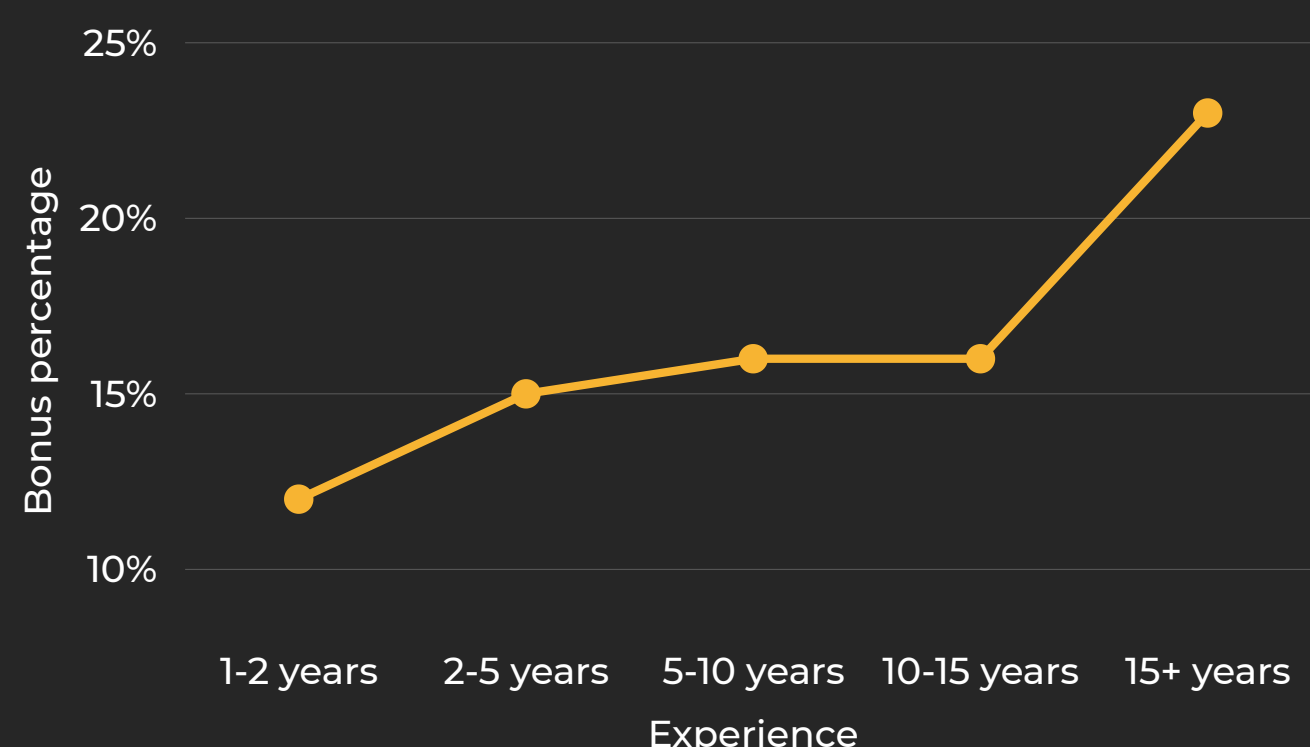
BONUS PAYMENT TYPES

65% of US respondents said they received a bonus related to **personal performance**.

62% of US respondents said they received a bonus related to **company performance**.

21% of US respondents said they received a **sign-on** bonus.

AVERAGE BONUS (% OF ANNUAL BASE SALARY)



BONUS PAYMENT AMOUNTS

Across all job titles, bonus amounts generally rose with experience. Those with under five years in the data center sector typically received bonuses of around 13% of base salary, while more seasoned professionals earned over 20%.

Project Management and Commissioning professionals saw average bonuses of 12-13%, with Construction Management at 14%.

By company type, hyperscalers and operators/developers awarded the highest bonuses, while engineering firms offered the lowest.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

"Once in a generation transformational infrastructure revolutions follow a pattern - they recruit and rely on talent from adjacent industries. The two industries that consistently being tapped for talent [in the USA] are the energy vertical and the military, which remains the home for some of the most advanced weapons, machines and technologies ever built. The AI Boom is simply a labor boom and an energy boom all wrapped up in one. As demand for talent continues to outpace supply in the data centre industry, we should continue to see an uptick in recruiting from both sectors throughout Europe and America in the years to come."



KIRK OFFEL

CEO AT OVERWATCH MISSION CRITICAL (SDVOB), HOST OF DATA CENTER REVOLUTION, FOUNDER OF DCAC

BENEFITS

83% of US respondents receive benefits related to healthcare as part of their employment in the data center industry.

61% receive travel allowance (e.g. flights, car, gas) benefits.

14 days is the average annual holiday allowance for respondents working in permanent roles.



BENEFITS SATISFACTION

11% of respondents in permanent roles indicated that they are unsatisfied with their current benefits package, rating their satisfaction 1 or 2 out of 5.

62% of respondents indicated that they are satisfied with their current benefits package, rating it 4 or 5.

Just under two thirds of permanent workers are satisfied with their benefits package, but the remaining third who are unsatisfied or neutral are a flight risk to companies who do not have a competitive offering.

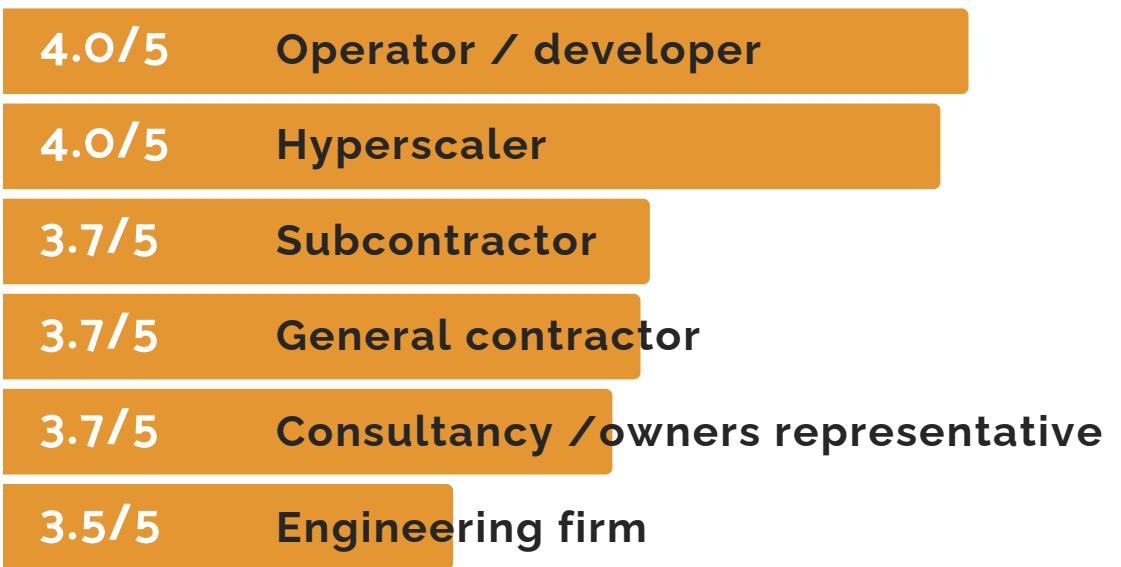


REGIONAL COMPARISON

Satisfaction with benefits is similar across the regions, with respondents in the USA being marginally more happy.



COMPANY TYPE COMPARISON



ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Respondents were asked to suggest additional benefits that they would like their current employer to offer. Over a third (38.1%) said they would like a car/gas allowance as part of their benefits package.

21% of respondents answered 'none' when asked if they wanted any additional benefits.

% of respondents who selected at least one benefit

CAR / GAS ALLOWANCE	38.1%
WORK PHONE	35.3%
SHARES / STOCKS / EQUITY	34.9%
COMPANY CAR	25.7%
FLEXIBLE / REMOTE WORKING	23.4%

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

TEXAS

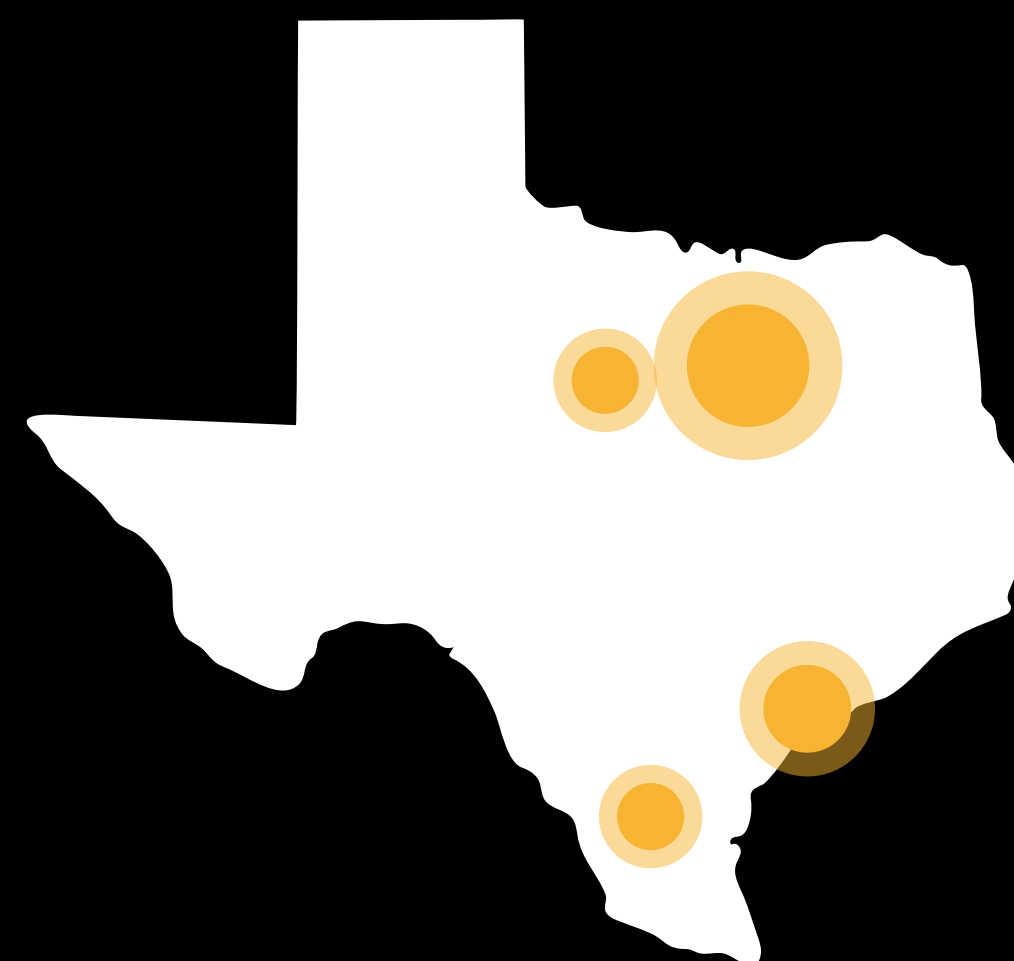
VIRGINIA

TEXAS

Texas is the fastest-growing data center market in the country, and power, not capital, is what's setting the pace. ERCOT's interconnection queue has reached somewhere between **438 and 474GW** of requested capacity, **more than five times** the state's record peak electricity demand, with around 90% of new power requests coming from data centers (Utility Dive, 2026). Not every one of those requests will become a real site: ERCOT's own analysis shows average peak consumption running at only about half of requested capacity, and the state's ongoing audit could delay a meaningful share of announced load (Data Center Knowledge, 2026; BloombergNEF, 2026).

Development is concentrated in North Texas, Abilene, West Texas, and the Houston corridor, with major campuses tied to OpenAI, Oracle, Meta, Crusoe, CoreWeave, and Soluna among others. Construction spending hit \$4.8 billion in 2025, with more than \$7 billion in the announced pipeline for 2026-2028.

Texas is repeatedly named as one of the tightest data center labor markets in the country. A 2026 industry report specifically flags Northern Virginia, Texas, and Arizona as the tightest markets for skilled trades. Nationally, the construction industry faces an estimated 439,000-worker shortage tied to data center growth (ITIF, Jan 2026), with journeyman electricians, MEP engineers, commissioning agents, and hyperscale-experienced project managers cited as the hardest roles to fill. [Sources: BRG/ThinkSet, 2026; VALINTRY, 2026; ITIF, 12 Jan 2026]



Texas development hotspots

474GW of requested capacity in ERCOT's interconnection queue [Source: Utility Dive, 2026]

\$7bn construction spending in the announced pipeline for 2026-2028

90% of new power requests in the state coming from data centers [Source: Utility Dive, 2026]

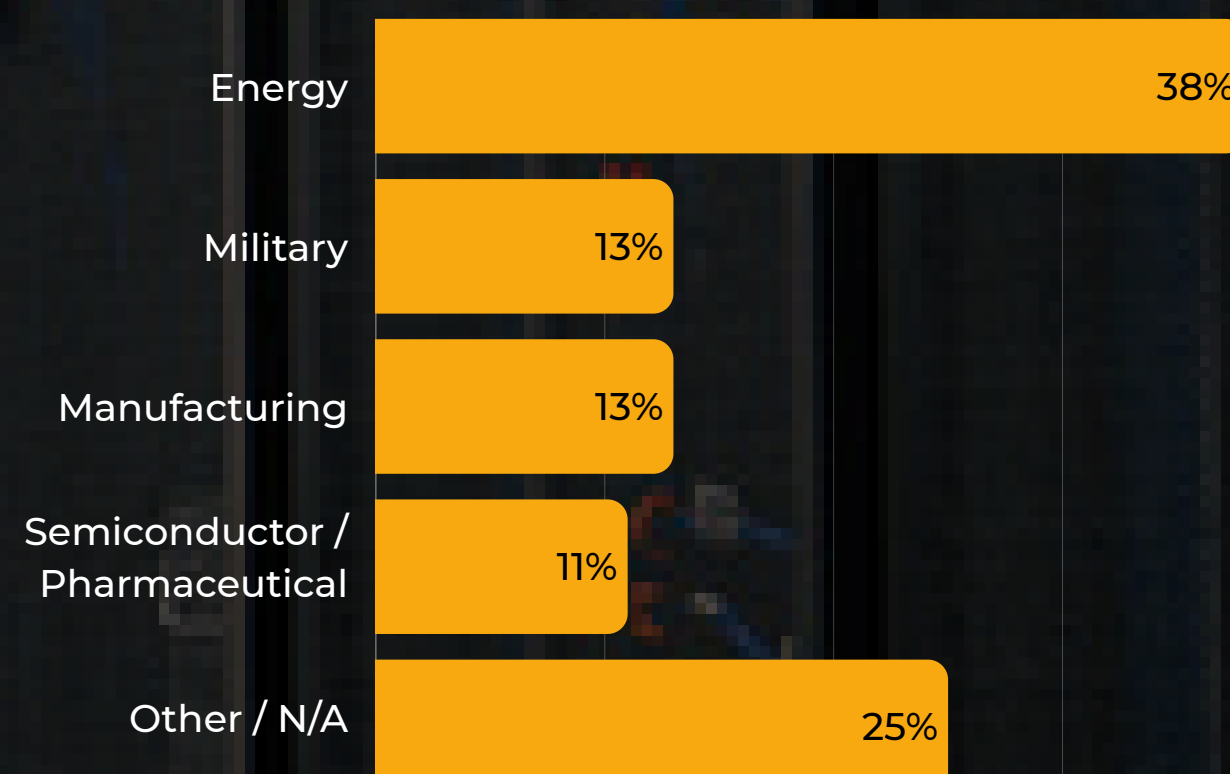
WHERE YOUR TALENT POOL COMES FROM

Energy backgrounds dominate here more than in any other region in this report, well over a third of respondents, reflecting the state's existing oil, gas, and renewables workforce feeding directly into data center roles.

Military and **manufacturing** backgrounds each supply a further meaningful slice, and **semiconductor/pharmaceutical** rounds out a genuinely broad base, four solid adjacent industries to recruit from beyond the sector itself.

Experience is well spread across career stages too, from early-career through 15+ years, so there's depth to hire at almost any level.

Q: Which industry did you work in prior to data centers?



38% come from an energy background

Experience in the data center sector





34%

of Texas respondents are looking to move jobs **in the next twelve months.**

★ **3.9** /5 average satisfaction rating for base pay

★ **3.5** /5 average satisfaction rating for bonus payments

★ **3.6** /5 average satisfaction rating for benefits

HIRING ADVICE

Where to find talent:

Lean into the state's existing energy workforce first, it's the single largest adjacent pool by a clear margin, alongside military and manufacturing backgrounds already well represented among current data center professionals here.

How to attract talent:

Texas is named alongside Northern Virginia and Arizona as one of the tightest skilled-trades markets in the country, tight enough that some contractors won't bid without cost-escalation clauses built in (BRG/ThinkSet, 2026). That competition is spilling into other sectors too, data center wages are pulling electricians away from residential construction, a sign of just how hot demand for this talent really is.

How to retain talent:

34% of people working in Texas said they plan on moving company in the next 12 months. Meta's training partnership with CBRE and ABC Central Texas's dedicated apprenticeship program both show what investing directly in the local pipeline looks like, worth matching that approach rather than competing on salary alone.

MARKET INTELLIGENCE SUITE

ROLE BENCHMARK

Know what to pay: a focused benchmark for roles + levels + region.

- ✓ Salary benchmark by role, level, and region
- ✓ Clear recommendations on how to position your offer
- ✓ Basic executive dashboard

Email connect@dataxconnect.com to discuss your market intelligence needs.

ROLE INTELLIGENCE

Know how to compete: deeper intelligence for one or multiple roles.

- ✓ Full executive dashboard
- ✓ Competitor talent and compensation review
- ✓ Hot skills and emerging trends
- ✓ Market and hiring trends
- ✓ Talent pool availability and analysis
- ✓ Workshop walk through of the report and its findings

Plus everything in the 'Role Benchmark' package

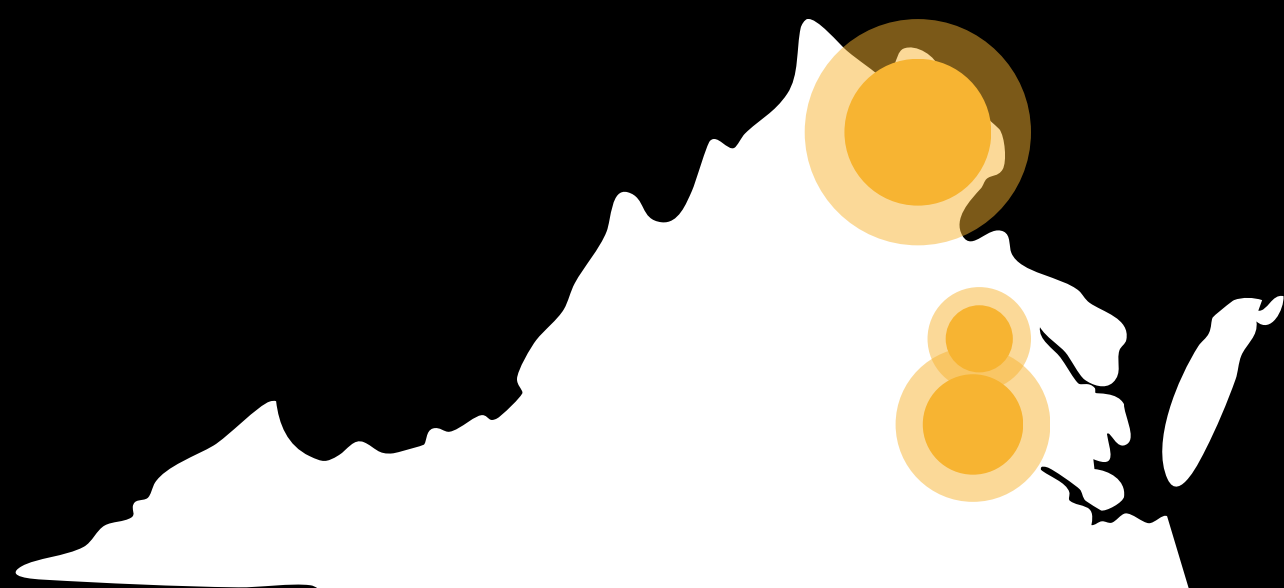
STRATEGIC WORKFORCE INTELLIGENCE

Know what to change: bespoke analysis of your workforce and reward strategy.

- ✓ Full executive dashboards with recommendations
- ✓ Existing workforce compensation analysis
- ✓ Workforce planning support
- ✓ Pay compression, equity, and salary inversion analysis
- ✓ Workforce risk identification
- ✓ Job grouping review

Plus everything in the 'Role Intelligence' package

VIRGINIA



Virginia is the world's largest data center market, and it's still growing. CBRE puts Northern Virginia's year-end 2025 inventory at just over 4,000MW, with vacancy at a razor-thin 0.5% and 96% of 2026's new supply already pre-committed (CBRE, 2026).

Widen the lens to include planned and in-development capacity and JLL's tracking runs well beyond 5,000MW as of mid-2025 (JLL, 2025), different boundary, same story: demand keeps outpacing supply. An estimated 70% of global internet traffic passes through facilities in Loudoun, Prince William, and Fairfax counties alone.

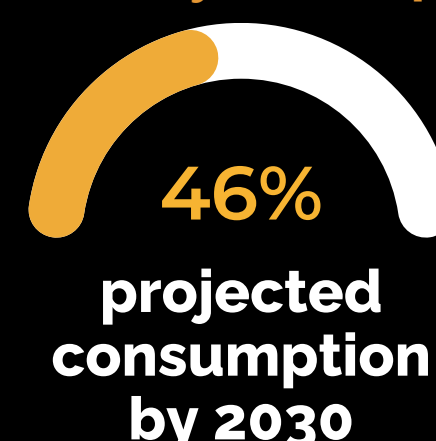
Data centers already consume around 25% of Virginia's electricity, projected to hit 46% by 2030, and the average wait for a 100-megawatt grid connection in Northern Virginia now runs to seven years, against a four-year national average (JLL, 2026 Global Data Center Outlook). Dominion Energy's own resource plan calls for an 85% rise in load over the next 15 years just to keep pace. That's genuinely good news if you're willing to look beyond the traditional Loudoun core, which ended by-right data center approvals in March 2025. Growth is spreading into Prince William, Culpeper, Stafford, Caroline, and Louisa counties, with more than 29GW now planned or live outside Loudoun. Recent moves include Vantage Data Centers' \$2 billion campus in Stafford County and CleanArc's 900MW build in Caroline, both signals of where the next wave of hiring will land.

0.5% vacancy at the end of 2025, with 96% of 2026's supply pre-committed [Source: CBRE, 2026]

4GW inventory in Northern Virginia as of year-end 2025 [Source: CBRE, 2026]

7 yr average wait for a 100-megawatt grid connection against a four-year nation average [Source: JLL]

Proportion of Virginia's electricity consumption



WHERE YOUR TALENT POOL COMES FROM

This is a market of established professionals: over two-thirds of respondents sit between 2 and 15 years' experience, so you're recruiting people building a career here, not just passing through.

Virginia sits at the sharp end of a well-documented national data center construction labor shortage, with Northern Virginia named specifically (alongside Phoenix, Dallas, and Atlanta) as a market where recruiters report urgent, ongoing demand for data center superintendents, project managers, and estimators. [Sources: ITIF, 12 Jan 2026; The Birmingham Group, 29 Jan 2026]



29%
of the region is open to a move in the next 12 months

★ **4.0** /5 average satisfaction rating for base pay

★ **3.5** /5 average satisfaction rating for bonus payments

★ **3.8** /5 average satisfaction rating for benefits

WHERE TO FIND TALENT

Northern Virginia Community College runs data center-specific programs with direct hiring pipelines into major operators, one of a small number of institutions named nationally alongside Microsoft's Datacenter Academy and AWS's Workforce Accelerator. These are genuine, ready-made sourcing channels, not just training in the abstract.

HOW TO ATTRACT TALENT

Expect real competition. Northern Virginia is named specifically, alongside Phoenix, Dallas, and Atlanta, as a market where recruiters report urgent, ongoing demand, part of a national data center construction shortage estimated at up to 439,000 workers through 2026-2027 (ITIF, 2026). Wage premiums already reflect that pressure, data center construction here can carry a premium of up to 30% over comparable non-data-center work, and local electricians report earning \$120,000+ annually.

HOW TO RETAIN TALENT

With satisfaction already comparatively strong and under a third open to a move, this is a market where staying ahead of competitors means keeping bonus and benefits pace with base pay, not waiting until a stronger offer from a competitor tests your retention story.

MARKET INTELLIGENCE SUITE

ROLE BENCHMARK

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PAY TO STAY

ALMOST 40% CITED MONEY AS THE
REASON THEY'RE MOVING JOBS



39.3% of US respondents planning to move company in the next 12 months cited pay as the reason why (28.6% said salary, and 10.7% said other remuneration e.g. bonuses, commission, or equity).

AVERAGE SALARIES AND DAY RATES

BAS AND CONTROLS

COMMISSIONING

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

DESIGN

DEVELOPMENT

OPERATIONS AND DATA CENTER MANAGEMENT

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Job titles vary hugely between companies, and two people with the same title can carry very different levels of responsibility. Use these figures as a general guide rather than a like-for-like match to your own roles. Want a comparison built around your actual job specs? Email benchmarking@dataxconnect.com to chat about bespoke benchmarking tailored to your organization.

BENCHMARKING HUB

Our interactive site: benchmark salaries, bonuses and pay rises, compare benefits, explore where people are looking to move and discover how the market differs by role, level and region.

[VISIT THE HUB](#)

BAS AND CONTROLS

AVERAGE SALARIES - PERMANENT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Average salary	Upper range
BAS / Controls Systems Engineer	\$118k	\$134k	\$137k
BAS / Controls Project Manager	\$133k	\$148k	\$163k

COMMISSIONING

AVERAGE SALARIES - PERMANENT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Average salary	Upper range
Commissioning Engineer	\$112k	\$122k	\$131k
Commissioning Lead	\$139k	\$156k	\$172k
Commissioning Manager	\$149k	\$167k	\$185k
Commissioning Director	\$175k	\$187k	\$200k

AVERAGE HOURLY RATES - CONTRACT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Upper range
Commissioning Engineer	\$79	\$85
Commissioning Manager	\$80	\$100
Commissioning Lead	\$95	\$118

If the job title you are looking for is not present please contact us and we will be happy to benchmark it for you. Ranges are based on average min/max of reported salary bands from survey respondents. Email benchmarking@dataxconnect.com.

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

AVERAGE SALARIES - PERMANENT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Average salary	Upper range
Assistant Superintendent	\$103k	\$111k	\$120k
Superintendent	\$157k	\$176k	\$196k
Construction Manager	\$165k	\$178k	\$191k
Construction Director	\$216k	\$244k	\$272k
Pre-Construction Manager	\$125k	\$142k	\$158k
VP Construction	\$220k	\$255k	\$290k

AVERAGE HOURLY RATES - CONTRACT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Upper range
Construction Manager	\$66	\$75
Superintendent	\$50	\$70
Lead Superintendent	\$69	\$85

DESIGN

AVERAGE SALARIES - PERMANENT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Average salary	Upper range
Design Engineer	\$99k	\$105k	\$111k
Design Manager	\$172k	\$174k	\$176k
Design Director	\$213k	\$243k	\$273k

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DEVELOPMENT

AVERAGE SALARIES - PERMANENT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Average salary	Upper range
Development Manager	\$189k	\$209k	\$229k
Senior Development Manager	\$175k	\$212k	\$250k
Development Director	\$208k	\$239k	\$270k
Land Acquisition Manager	\$200k	\$225k	\$250k
VP Development	\$275k	\$292k	\$308k

OPERATIONS

AVERAGE SALARIES - PERMANENT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Average salary	Upper range
Operations Manager	\$140k	\$181k	\$195k
Data Center Manager	\$142k	\$162k	\$183k
Operations Director/VP Operations	\$190k	\$217k	\$245k

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

AVERAGE SALARIES - PERMANENT ROLES

Job Title	Lower range	Average salary	Upper range
Project Engineer	\$100k	\$113k	\$125k
Project Manager	\$128k	\$143k	\$157k
Senior Project Manager	\$165k	\$192k	\$219k
Project Director / Executive	\$171k	\$206k	\$242k

If the job title you are looking for is not present please contact us and we will be happy to benchmark it for you. Ranges are based on average min/max of reported salary bands from survey respondents. Email benchmarking@dataxconnect.com.

REGIONAL INSIGHTS

HOW DOES THE UNITED STATES COMPARE WITH EUROPE?

SALARIES

The average salary for a **permanent** data center position in the US is

\$175,000 per year

This is \$33k per year more than the equivalent in Europe.

BONUSES

85%

of **permanent** data center professionals in the US received a bonus in the last twelve months.

This is 7 percentage points more than the equivalent in Europe. **15.5%** is the average bonus amount (as a percentage of salary) in the USA compared with **16.7%** in Europe.

PAY RISES

71%

of **permanent** data center professionals in the US received a pay rise in the last twelve months.

This is 6 percentage points higher than the equivalent in Europe.

38%

of **contract** data center professionals in the US received a pay rise in the last twelve months.

This is 9 percentage points lower than the equivalent in Europe.

33%

of **contract** data center professionals in the US received a bonus in the last twelve months.

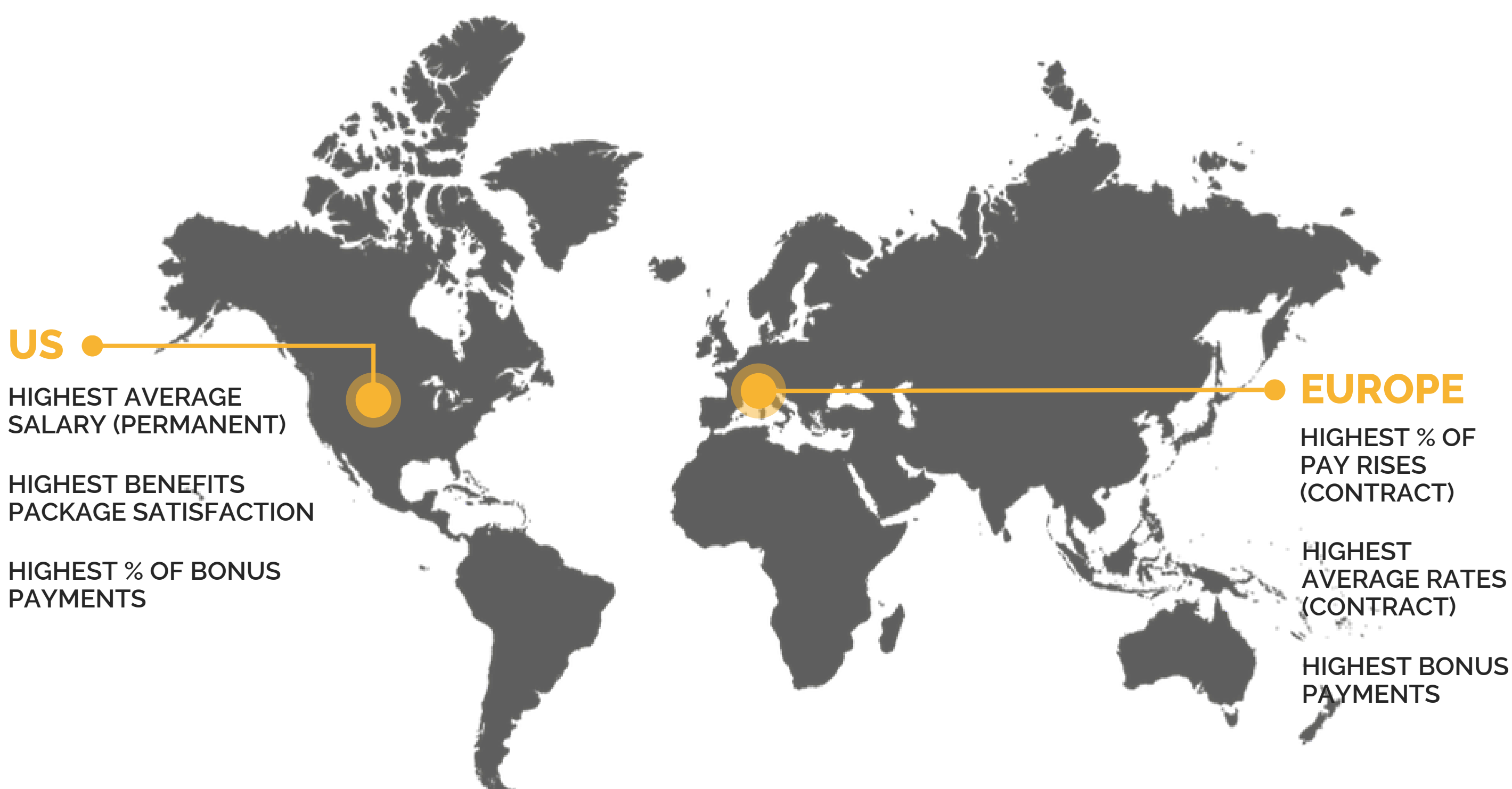
This is 17 percentage points more than the equivalent in Europe.

BENEFITS



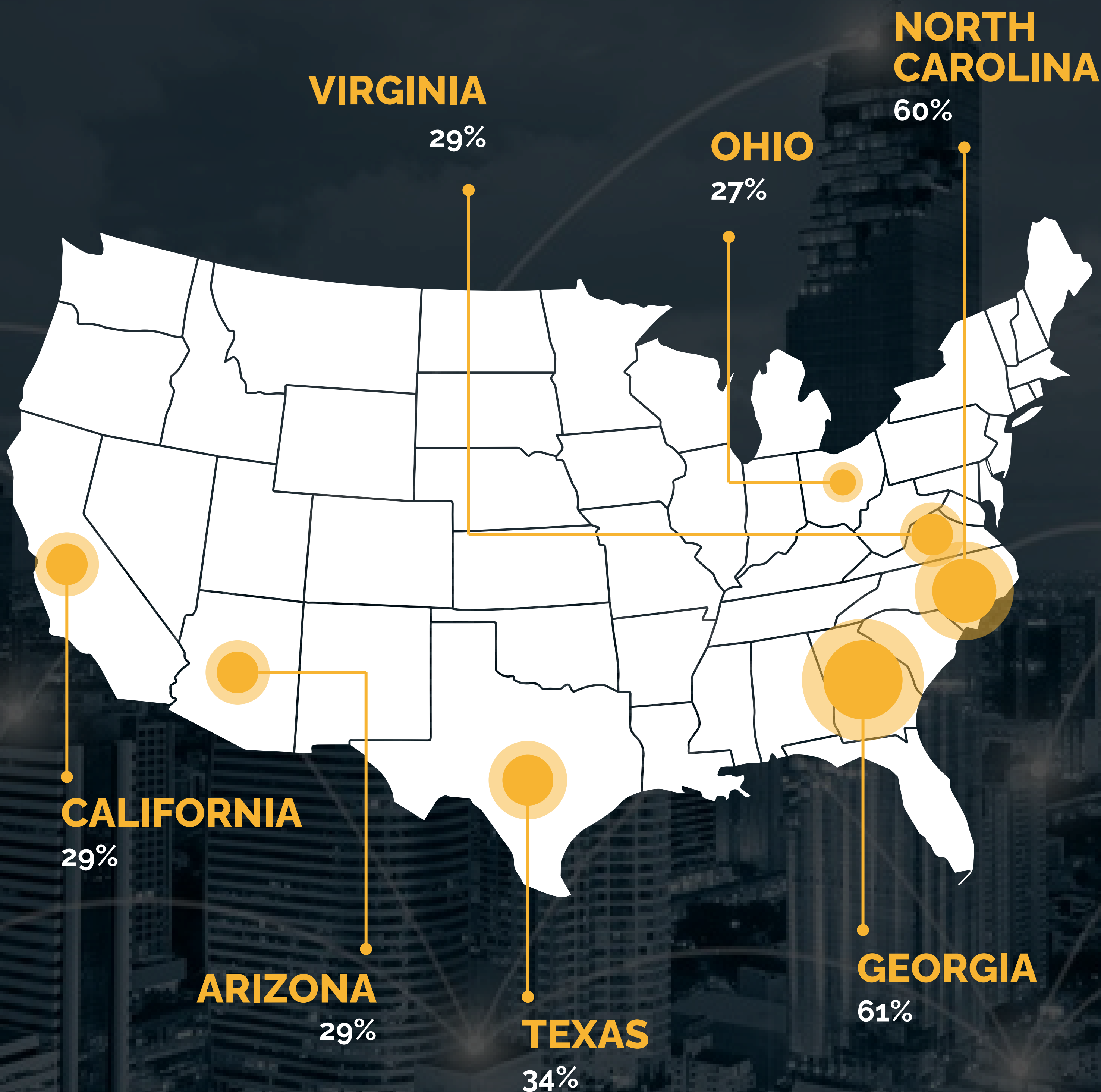
US data center professionals in permanent positions rated their satisfaction with their current benefits package **3.8 out of 5**.

This is higher than Europe (3.6/5).



MARKET MOBILITY

FLIGHT RISK BY STATE



Percentage of respondents planning to move company in the next twelve months by state

MARKET MOBILITY

PERMANENT ROLES

42.9% of permanent professionals changed company in the last 12 months, and 37.8% are planning to move again in the next year. If you're only thinking about attracting people who are actively job hunting, you're missing most of the market.

Where is the talent pool? Nearly a fifth of permanent hires with a prior industry (18.4%) came from energy, but the standout for the US specifically is military background: 15.6% of respondents previously served in the armed forces, notably higher than the equivalent figure in Europe.

Telecommunications and semiconductor/pharmaceutical each contribute 14.5%, and manufacturing another 12.3%. Veterans and engineers from these adjacent, safety-critical, high-stakes sectors already have much of what a data center role demands, discipline, technical rigour, and comfort with mission-critical environments.

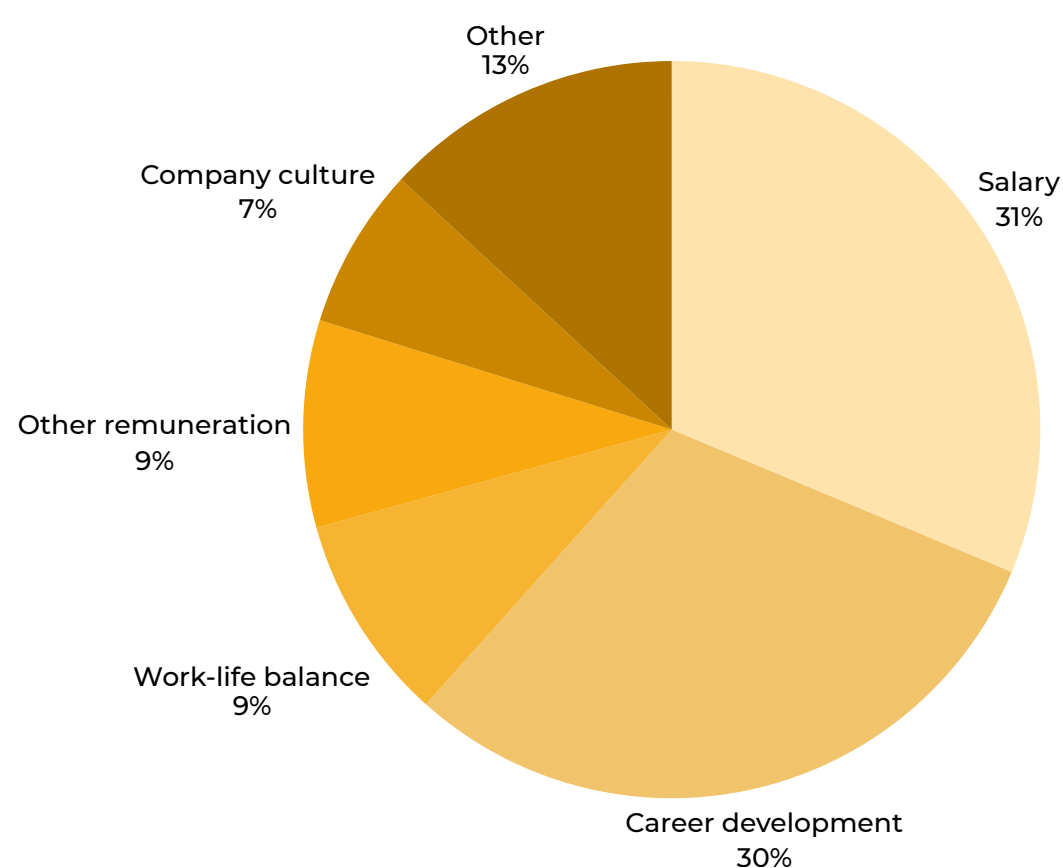
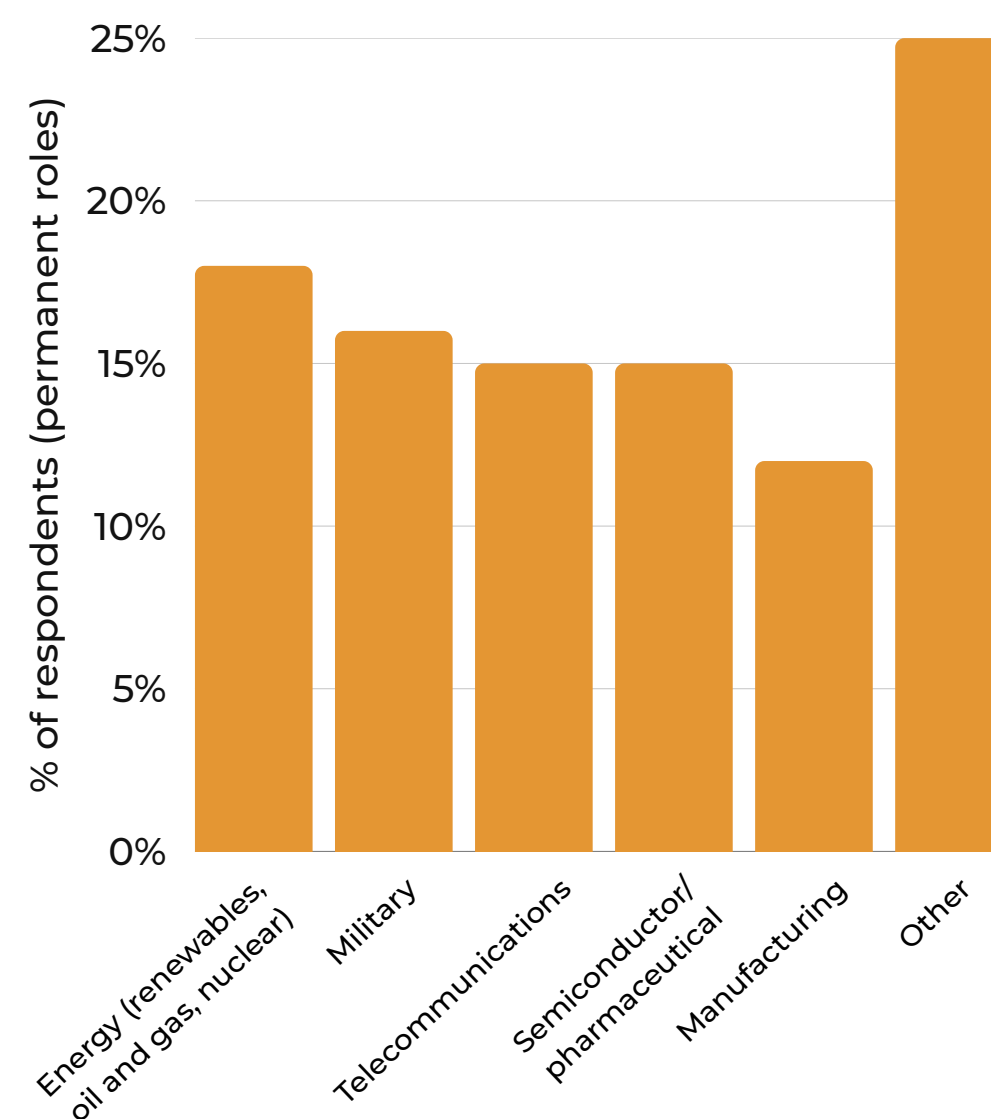
43%

moved company in the last twelve months.

38%

are planning to move company in the next twelve months.

Q: Which industry did you work in immediately prior to the data center industry? (Permanent roles)



Data for professionals in permanent roles

REASONS FOR LEAVING

So what will actually move them? Salary (31.4%) and career development (29.5%) are almost on par as the single biggest reasons permanent employees give for planning to change company. Pay competitiveness has to be part of your pitch, but it is not the whole story: nearly three in ten are leaving for growth, not just money. An offer that leads with compensation and backs it with a visible development path will outcompete one that leads with pay alone.

UPSKILLING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Your workforce upskilling, training, and technical skills programs, managed from start to finish - designed and run in partnership with you, so they stay compliant, deliver real impact, and get a strong return.

- ✓ Skills strategy and program design
- ✓ Provider management and SLA governance
- ✓ Budget optimization and funding compliance
- ✓ Performance reporting and risk management
- ✓ Stakeholder engagement and program oversight
- ✓ Certification readiness and outcome tracking
- ✓ Reporting and insights for your leadership team

Email connect@dataxconnect.com to talk through your workforce development plans.

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

"**Employee Flight Risk is up 10%**. That is the big story from this year's People Behind The Racks survey. The explanation sits in the numbers around it: Talent Latency fell, meaning there is less slack in the system, in the shape of untapped talent, to absorb the pressure of schedules which keep tightening. The picture is of a workforce being driven harder with less capacity to absorb the pressure. This produces a siege mentality. People close ranks around their immediate project and colleagues, because that is where the work feels winnable. Attachment moves to the immediate team and away from the employer. Once that happens, Organisational Satisfaction drops and leaving costs people (emotionally) less than it used to. **The biggest single factor behind the fall in organisational satisfaction this year was a perceived lack of support for career development and opportunity to progress.** In order to retain the best talent, organisations need to focus not just on fighting short-term fires, but also on developing people for the long-term."



MARK SCHOFIELD
FOUNDER, MINDALPHA

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

"The data is telling us that progression, **learning and future opportunity matter more than pay** when people consider changing companies. For employers, that should be a clear signal that investing in development is no longer a nice-to-have. Retaining and developing talented people requires meaningful learning opportunities and the visibility of what growth can look like across the organisation. That means helping employees understand what their next role could be, what skills they need to get there, and actively supporting that growth through regular development conversations. Just as importantly, organisations should be looking to fill more opportunities internally, demonstrating that career progression doesn't have to mean changing employer. Organisations that take this approach will be better placed to build sustainable workforces and create an environment where people can see a long-term future for their careers."



SOPHIE PARKER
HEAD OF PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT & TALENT ACQUISITION, PURE DATA CENTRES GROUP

DEEP DIVIDE

HALF OF WOMEN SAY THEIR
GENDER HAS HURT THEIR PAY OR
CAREER PROGRESSION

51.4% of women say their gender has had a negative effect on their pay or career progression, vs just 2.2% of men.

OTHER INSIGHTS

INDUSTRY PERCEPTION

Respondents were asked to rate the competitiveness of their current data center salary and benefits in comparison to other industries they have worked in.

60% of US respondents rated their current benefits as **'much more competitive'** or **'somewhat more competitive'** than benefits in other industries they've worked in.

17% of US respondents rated their current benefits as **'somewhat less competitive'** or **'much less competitive'** than benefits in other industries they've worked in.

GENDER PAY GAPS (PERMANENT ROLES)

Women are earning on average 3% less than men in mid-level roles, and 27% less in senior roles.

Seniority	Average salary	
	Men	Women
Mid level	\$151k	\$147k
Senior	\$202k	\$148k

36%

of 18-35 year-olds are planning to change company in the next 12 months

\$140k

is the average salary of 18-35 year-olds

9%

of 18-35 year-olds say gender has affected their pay in comparison to 13% of 35+ year-olds

FUTURE TALENT

3% of global respondents were aged 18-24 and 22% were aged 25-34. **10%** of US respondents between the ages of 18 and 35 with 1-5 years experience hold a Senior or C-Suite title.

The data shows that fast career progression is not just possible in this sector, but the norm.

UPSKILLING AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR EMPLOYERS

FINDING TALENT



Look beyond the data center sector for your next hire.

More than 2 in 5 crossed over from energy and semiconductor or pharmaceutical roles. If your sourcing strategy only looks at people already in the sector, you're fishing in a much smaller pond than you need to. Widen your search to adjacent industries with transferable technical skills, and you'll find candidates your competitors are overlooking.

ATTRACTING TALENT



Make growth visible, not just available.

A development pathway that exists on paper doesn't do much for someone who can't see it. Pair whatever financial incentives you're already offering with real recognition, promotions, training, and progression people can actually picture themselves reaching. A visible route forward is what makes people stay.

RETAINING TALENT



Retention isn't just a pay problem, so don't treat it like one.

Salary and bonuses will always matter, but they're not what's actually keeping people at your company right now. Almost 2 in 5 of your permanent people in the United States are already weighing up a move in the next 12 months, and career development is one of the reasons, alongside financial compensation. If your retention plan starts and ends with the next pay review, you're solving the wrong problem.

EQUALISING OPPORTUNITY



Representation closes gaps that policy alone can't.

Mentorship schemes and formal pipelines matter, but so does what people can actually see day-to-day. A woman early in her career who can point to someone senior who looks like her, who's visibly mentoring, being recognised, being promoted, gets a very different signal than one reading about "equal opportunity" in a policy document. If you want to close the pay and progression gap for women in your organization, invest in the pipeline and make sure the women succeeding in it are seen, not just supported quietly in the background.

FOR INDIVIDUALS



Your compensation is important, but salary alone shouldn't define your career choices. When discussing your package with employers, consider the full picture - progression opportunities, benefits, training, and flexible working can all make a significant difference.

Be proactive:

- **Do your homework** – A number you can back up with a proper regional and experience-level benchmark lands very differently to a guess. Want to chat about your role? Email connect@dataxconnect.com or give us a call.
- **Speak up** – if you're not satisfied with your compensation, have an open and respectful conversation with your employer. Good talent is hard to find, and most employers would rather retain you than lose you.
- **Bring evidence** – back up your case with research and evidence, showing your request is thoughtful and fact-based.
- **Find mentors** – experienced leaders in the industry can guide your career and help you navigate challenges.

CONTRIBUTORS

DataX Connect would like to thank the contributors to this report:



MINDALPHA



pure^{DC}



VERWATCH

WE BREATHE DATA CENTERS.

DataX Connect is a global data center recruitment specialist. When searching for talent, or when seeking a career move, you want to work with an organization that is embedded in the data center sector.

We work with the leading data center organizations across the globe and have a network of the best talent in the industry. Connecting data center talent with leading organizations across the globe is our passion.

We understand the challenges faced when recruiting talent, retaining staff, and job seeking in the data center market.

We go beyond recruitment, delivering research, insights, networks, and solutions.



Call us

US (New York): +19142335289
UK (local): +441489 888499
Ireland (Dublin): +35316994424



Where to find us

DataX Connect
Unit 1 and Unit 2
Mill Court, The Sawmills
Durley, SO32 2EJ



Email us

connect@dataxconnect.com
www.dataxconnect.com

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