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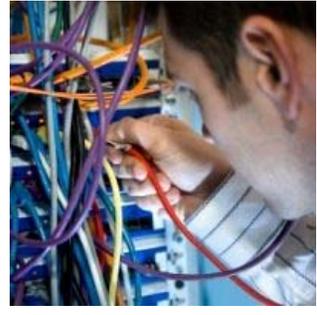
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### 20 Highest-Paying Careers

By Anthony Balderrama, CareerBuilder.com writer



Celebrity blogs and magazines are plastered with pictures of high-profile **actors**, **athletes** and **business** leaders, so you might think that these occupations are your only route to wealth.

If you want to make several million dollars for a few months' work, then, yes, you probably should star in a Hollywood blockbuster. But if you're looking for careers to lead you to financial success, remember to put everything into perspective.

You will rarely find a **physician** making as much money as George Clooney, but remember that he's one of only a few celebrity actors. The majority of actors aren't recognizable faces and they surely are not earning seven figures. The odds of being a famous athlete or **CEO** are just as slim.

If money's what you're after, then set your sights on more realistic goals by looking at the everyday occupations around you. The 20 highest-paying jobs in the U.S. are within your grasp. That's not to say they're easily attained -- they all require hard work and years of experience, and most of them require extensive education. Still, your odds of becoming a **physicist** are probably better than becoming quarterback for the New England Patriots.

Hopefully your name's at the top of the draft picks next season. Until then, look over this list of the 20 highest-

paying jobs, according to [CBSalary.com](#), and their projected employment in 2016. The education and experience for each of these jobs vary.

**Physicians** provide health care to patients in private practices or clinics.  
Mean annual salary: \$147,405\*  
2006 employment (including surgeons): 633,000\*\*  
2016 projected employment (including surgeons): 723,000

**Top corporate controllers** supervise the financial and budget departments of corporations and create financial reports that assess the company's financial situation.  
Mean annual salary: \$115,818  
2006 employment (all financial managers): 506,000  
2016 projected employment (all financial managers): 570,000

**Engineering managers** oversee the engineers designing and producing products and machinery.  
Mean annual salary: \$100,038  
2006 employment: 187,000  
2016 projected employment: 201,000

**Corporate attorneys** work for corporations and do trial work and consultation, and handle all legal issues that impact the company.  
Mean annual salary: \$93,250  
2006 employment (all attorneys): 761,000  
2016 projected employment (all attorneys): 844,000

**Physicists** observe the laws of physics, develop new theories and apply their knowledge to the development of products and scientific processes.  
Mean annual salary: \$93,073  
2006 employment: 17,000  
2016 projected employment: 18,000

**Systems and programming managers** draw up plans for an organization's computer network and its security.  
Mean annual salary: \$90,138  
2006 employment: n/a\*\*\*  
2016 projected employment: n/a

**Pharmacists** fill prescriptions for patients and administer medical advice in pharmacies.

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Mean annual salary: \$89,564  
2006 employment: 243,000  
2016 projected employment: 296,000

**Marketing managers** create the marketing plan for a company or organization, including how it will be publicized and who the target audience is.

Mean annual salary: \$87,038  
2006 employment: 167,000  
2016 projected employment: 192,000

**Financial analysis managers** assess the state of financial investments and decide what course of action should be taken based on economic data and trends.

Mean annual salary: \$86,739  
2006 employment: 506,000  
2016 projected employment: 570,000

**Lead computer programmers** oversee a group of programmers and delegate work as needed, often for a specific project.

Mean annual salary: \$80,182  
2006 employment (all programmers): 435,000  
2016 projected employment (all programmers): 417,000

**Lead systems analysts** oversee a group of analysts who address computer problems for an organization and ensure that the computer system fulfills the demands of that organization.

Mean annual salary: \$79,479  
2006 employment (all analysts): 504,000  
2016 projected employment (all analysts): 650,000

**Personnel managers** are involved in the creation, development and implementation of human resources policies and activities for an organization.

Mean annual salary: \$77,984  
2006 employment: n/a  
2016 projected employment: n/a

**Benefits managers** ensure that employee benefits programs are administered properly within an organization.

Mean annual salary: \$75,425  
2006 employment: 49,000  
2016 projected employment: 55,000

**Electrical engineers** are involved in the planning, development and creation of electrical equipment.

Mean annual salary: \$75,094  
2006 employment: 153,000  
2016 projected employment: 163,000

**Sales area managers** are in charge of an organization's sales group, including who is assigned to what territory and what the sales strategy is.

Mean annual salary: \$73,146  
2006 employment: 318,000  
2016 projected employment: 351,000

**Chemical engineers** use their knowledge of chemicals to handle any issues that arise during the production of chemicals or biochemicals or of products that use chemicals in a variety of industries.

Mean annual salary: \$71,942  
2006 employment: 30,000  
2016 projected employment: 33,000

**Purchasing managers** often supervise purchasing agents in the purchase of a good, such as steel or lumber.

Mean annual salary: \$69,980  
2006 employment: 70,000  
2016 projected employment: 72,000

**Mechanical engineers** are involved in the creation, production and use of mechanical equipment and machines that vary from everyday consumer goods to large-scale, commercial items.

Mean annual salary: \$68,775  
2006 employment: 226,000  
2016 projected employment: 235,000

**Civil engineers** oversee the design and construction of public structures, such as roads, airports and bridges.

Mean annual salary: \$61,681  
2006 employment: 256,000  
2016 projected employment: 302,000

**Computer programmers** create and troubleshoot the programs that computers use to perform tasks.

Mean annual salary: \$60,682  
2006 employment: 435,000  
2016 projected employment: 417,000

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\*Salary figures based on data from [CBSalary.com](#).

\*\*Employment projections based on data from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

\*\*\*Employment data pertaining to this specific position was unavailable.

*Anthony Balderrama is a writer and blogger for CareerBuilder.com. He researches and writes about job search strategy, career management, hiring trends and workplace issues.*

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