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Career Level Guide

All new DHS Cybersecurity Service employees start at career levels and salaries matching their experience and expertise, and many progress to higher career levels and salaries over time.

Typical starting salary range below reflect the salaries *most* employees receive in *most* of the United States in calendar year 2025.

In certain geographic areas, average starting salaries will be higher because of a local cybersecurity labor market supplement. This includes metro Washington, D.C. where salaries include a 10 percent supplement.

In addition, actual starting salaries may be higher or lower than the figures provided depending on employees' qualifications and the specific work they are hired to perform.

ENTRY TRACK

Career Level	Cybersecurity Specialist
Description	An entry-level cybersecurity professional who is primarily a learner participating in a formal development program to gain technical expertise
Typical Experience	0–2 years of work experience—exclusive of internships
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$67,200 - \$87,000

DEVELOPMENTAL TRACK

Career Level	Associate Cybersecurity Specialist
Description	A cybersecurity professional with some experience who applies still-burgeoning technical expertise to perform routine work with significant supervision and clear guidance
Typical Experience	3+ years of cybersecurity work experience
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$82,000 - \$107,000

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TECHNICAL TRACK

Career Level	Senior Cybersecurity Specialist
Description	An experienced cybersecurity professional who applies technical expertise and independent judgement to perform a range of work
Typical Experience	5+ years of cybersecurity work experience
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$105,600 - \$134,000
Career Level	Staff Cybersecurity Specialist
Description	A resident cybersecurity expert who applies significant technical expertise to develop strategic and tactical solutions for critical, non-routine challenges impacting one or more programs
Typical Experience	8+ years of cybersecurity work experience
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$128,400 - \$161,500
Career Level	Principal Cybersecurity Specialist
Description	A leading cybersecurity technical authority who performs work of unusual difficulty to develop complex solutions impacting multi-layered DHS or federal cybersecurity programs
Typical Experience	12+ years of cybersecurity work experience
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$153,100 - \$194,500
Career Level	Senior Principal Cybersecurity Specialist
Description	A recognized federal cybersecurity technical authority with uncommon technical expertise who advises on cybersecurity challenges impacting DHS and the Nation
Typical Experience	15+ years of cybersecurity work experience
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$168,900 - \$212,500

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LEADERSHIP TRACK

Career Level	Lead Cybersecurity Specialist
Description	An experienced cybersecurity professional who applies technical expertise, leads and/or supervises, and delegates work to a team – and reviews the work of lower-level cybersecurity professionals
Typical Experience	5+ years of cybersecurity work experience
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$122,400 - \$154,000
Career Level	Cybersecurity Manager
Description	An experienced cybersecurity professional who oversees the work of subordinate employees—is responsible for their technical and administrative supervision and supports their professional growth
Typical Experience	8+ years of cybersecurity work experience; 0–3 years of leadership experience—to include leading the technical work of lower-level employees
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$141,900 - \$182,000
Career Level	Senior Cybersecurity Manager
Description	A seasoned cybersecurity manager who oversees multiple DHS or federal cybersecurity programs or DHS organizations, including employees and contract resources, through subordinate managers
Typical Experience	12+ years of cybersecurity work experience; 5+ years of leadership experience
Typical Starting Salary Range	\$166,100 - \$201,500

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EXECUTIVE TRACK

Career Level Cybersecurity Executive

Description An executive-level cybersecurity manager who serves as Component senior functional authority—or DHS-wide leader—and oversees multiple, highly-visible Component or DHS cybersecurity programs

Typical Experience 15+ years of cybersecurity work experience;
5+ years of leadership experience

Typical Starting Salary Range \$174,300 - \$219,500

Career Level Senior Cybersecurity Executive

Description A seasoned cybersecurity executive who serves as a DHS-wide cybersecurity leader and oversees expansive, National cybersecurity programs and multiple multi-level organizations as a direct report to a presidential appointee

Typical Experience 15+ years of cybersecurity work experience;
5+ years of leadership experience

Typical Starting Salary Range \$188,400 - \$237,500

Note: In limited circumstances, DHS may hire widely recognized cybersecurity technical experts and industry leaders at salaries higher than those typically provided in the Technical Track and Executive Track.