



# AI Career Salary Report 2025 – 2026

Roles · Salaries · Growth Trends

United States Edition

**35,445+**

Open AI Roles  
Q1 2025

**\$206K**

Avg AI Engineer  
Salary 2025

**+25.2%**

YoY AI Role  
Growth USA

AgileFever Learning — [agilefever.com](https://agilefever.com)

Data: BLS · Glassdoor · Levels.fyi · NASSCOM · Naukri · LinkedIn 2025 | Educational Resource

OVERVIEW

## U.S. AI Job Market — 2025 Snapshot

In Q1 2025, the United States posted **35,445 open AI roles** — a **25.2% year-over-year jump**. AI Engineers now earn an average of **\$206,000**, up \$50,000 from the prior year. The median across all AI roles reached **\$156,998** in Q1 2025. California accounts for 33% of all AI engineering roles, though New York has surpassed California as the top location for data scientist positions.

<b>\$206K</b>	<b>\$156,998</b>	<b>35,445</b>	<b>+25.2%</b>
Avg AI Engineer Salary 2025	Median All AI Roles Q1 2025	Open AI Roles Q1 2025 USA	YoY Job Growth

Table 1 — USA AI Role Salary Benchmarks 2025–2026

Role	Entry Level	Mid Level	Senior Level	Top Total Comp	YoY Growth
AI Engineer	\$90K–\$130K	\$150K–\$180K	\$200K–\$260K	~\$375K	+24%
ML Engineer	\$100K–\$140K	\$160K–\$200K	\$220K–\$300K	~\$451K	+22%
AI Research Scientist	\$110K–\$150K	\$175K–\$220K	\$250K–\$350K	~\$489K	+18%
Data Scientist (AI)	\$95K–\$120K	\$140K–\$175K	\$200K–\$280K	~\$471K	+10%
LLM / GenAI Engineer	\$120K–\$160K	\$180K–\$230K	\$260K–\$400K	\$400K+	+35%
NLP Engineer	\$100K–\$135K	\$155K–\$195K	\$210K–\$290K	~\$350K	+20%
Computer Vision Scientist	\$105K–\$140K	\$160K–\$200K	\$220K–\$300K	~\$380K	+19%
AI / ML Architect	\$140K–\$180K	\$200K–\$260K	\$280K–\$400K	\$450K+	+15%
MLOps Engineer	\$100K–\$130K	\$150K–\$185K	\$200K–\$270K	~\$320K	+28%
AI Product Manager	\$110K–\$145K	\$160K–\$200K	\$220K–\$300K	~\$350K	+16%
Chief AI Officer (CAIO)	\$200K–\$280K	\$300K–\$420K	\$420K–\$643K	\$643K+	+30%
Big Data Engineer	\$95K–\$120K	\$135K–\$165K	\$180K–\$230K	~\$280K	+8.5%
Prompt Engineer	\$80K–\$110K	\$120K–\$155K	\$160K–\$210K	~\$240K	+40%
AI Ethics Specialist	\$90K–\$120K	\$130K–\$165K	\$170K–\$220K	~\$260K	+25%
Quant / Finance AI	\$150K–\$200K	\$250K–\$400K	\$500K–\$1M+	\$1M+	+12%

Sources: BLS, Glassdoor, Levels.fyi, 365DataScience, Mason Alexander, Final Round AI, Veritone Q1 2025

Table 2 — Salary by Experience Level (AI Engineer)



Level	Years	Base Salary / yr	Monthly Equiv.	Add. Cash	Total Comp
Entry	0–2 yrs	\$90K–\$115K	\$7,500–\$9,583	\$8K–\$15K	\$98K–\$130K
Mid	3–5 yrs	\$120K–\$160K	\$10,000–\$13,333	\$20K–\$35K	\$140K–\$195K
Senior	6–9 yrs	\$160K–\$210K	\$13,333–\$17,500	\$35K–\$60K	\$195K–\$270K
Staff / Lead	10+ yrs	\$210K–\$300K	\$17,500–\$25,000	\$50K–\$100K	\$260K–\$400K
Principal/VP	15+ yrs	\$300K–\$500K+	\$25,000–\$41,667	\$100K–\$200K	\$400K–\$700K+

Source: RemotelyTalents Global Salary Report, Mason Alexander AI Salary Guide 2025

COMPANY BENCHMARKS

Salary by Company Tier & Top Employers

Table 3 — USA Salaries by Company Tier (2025 Benchmarks)

Company / Tier	Example Role	Base Salary	Total Comp	Key Notes
OpenAI	Software Engineer	\$300K–\$500K+	~\$875K median	Aggressive equity; median L5 \$875K
Meta	AI Research Scientist	\$200K–\$350K	~\$489K	Up to \$300M/4yr for top researchers
Google DeepMind	Senior ML Researcher	\$250K–\$400K	~\$893K	Highest reported in field
Amazon	Applied Scientist	\$180K–\$391K	~\$391K	Strong RSU vesting component
Microsoft	ML Engineer	\$175K–\$280K	~\$350K	Azure AI integration premium
FAANG avg	ML Engineer (avg)	\$175K–\$260K	\$300K–\$500K	Includes full FAANG tier
Mid-size Tech	AI Engineer	\$130K–\$200K	\$180K–\$280K	Startups may offer equity upside
Finance / Quant	AI Quant Analyst	\$200K–\$350K	\$500K–\$1M+	Jane Street, Citadel, Two Sigma
Gov / Academia	AI Researcher / Prof	\$80K–\$200K	\$120K–\$350K	Lower cash; higher security

Source: Levels.fyi, ts2.tech AI Salary Report 2024–2025, Final Round AI 2025

Table 4 — Top AI Job Locations in the USA (2025)

City / Region	AI Job Share	Avg AI Salary	Top Industries	Key Notes
San Francisco / Bay Area	33% of AI roles	\$220K–\$300K+	Big Tech, Startups	Highest pay; highest cost of living
New York, NY	#1 for Data Science	\$190K–\$260K	Finance, Media, Health	Now leads in data scientist openings
Seattle, WA	8% of AI roles	\$185K–\$255K	Amazon, Microsoft	Strong cloud AI presence
Austin, TX	Growing hub	\$155K–\$210K	Tech, Gaming, EV	Lower CoL than SF / NYC
Boston, MA	Growing hub	\$165K–\$225K	Biotech, Academia	MIT / Harvard talent pipeline
Atlanta, GA	Emerging	\$140K–\$190K	FinTech, Logistics	Closing gap with top cities
Remote (US-based)	~30% of postings	\$160K–\$490K	Cross-industry	OpenAI remote median: \$285K base

Source: 365DataScience AI Engineer Job Outlook 2025, Veritone Q1 2025 Labor Market Report

GROWTH & CAREER PATH

## Job Growth Projections & Career Progression

Table 5 — Job Growth Projections by Role (USA — BLS Data)

Role Category	Projected Growth	Period	Outlook
LLM / GenAI Engineers	35–40% YoY	2024–2025	Exceptional
AI / ML Engineers	41.8% YoY	2024–2025	Exceptional
MLOps Engineers	~28% YoY	2024–2025	Very Strong
Data Scientists	32% overall	2023–2032	Very Strong
Computer / Info Research Sci	26% overall	2023–2033	Strong
AI Research Scientists	~20% YoY	2024–2025	Strong
AI Ethics / Governance	~25% YoY	2024–2025	Growing
Big Data Engineers	+8.5% YoY	2024–2025	Moderate

Source: BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook 2025, Veritone Q1 2025 AI Labor Market Report

Table 6 — AI Engineer Career Progression Path

Stage	Title	Exp.	Base Salary	Total Comp	Key Skills
1	Junior AI / ML Engineer	0–2 yrs	\$90K–\$115K	\$98K–\$130K	Python, ML basics, SQL, cloud intro
2	AI Engineer / DS	2–4 yrs	\$140K–\$175K	\$160K–\$210K	Deep learning, cloud, MLOps
3	Senior AI Engineer	5–8 yrs	\$190K–\$260K	\$220K–\$320K	System design, LLMs, GenAI
4	Staff / Principal	8–12 yrs	\$260K–\$400K	\$320K–\$550K	Architecture, team leadership
5	AI Architect / Director	12+ yrs	\$350K–\$600K	\$450K–\$750K	Strategy, org-wide AI vision
6	Chief AI Officer (CAIO)	15+ yrs	\$420K–\$643K+	\$600K–\$1M+	C-suite, P&L, board strategy

Source: Final Round AI 2025, Syracuse iSchool Highest Paying AI Jobs Report

Table 7 — Top Skills & Certifications (USA Salary Impact)

Skill / Certification	USA Demand	Salary Lift	Best Applied In
Python	71% of postings	+15–20%	All AI/ML roles
LLM / GenAI (GPT, Claude API)	Fastest growing	+30–40%	LLM Eng, AI Product



Skill / Certification	USA Demand	Salary Lift	Best Applied In
PyTorch / TensorFlow	High demand	+15%	Deep Learning, CV, NLP
AWS SageMaker	33% of postings	+20%	Cloud AI, MLOps
Azure ML (AI-102 Cert)	26% of postings	+18%	Enterprise AI solutions
RAG & LangChain	Rapidly emerging	+25–35%	LLM Engineering
MLOps / Kubernetes	High demand	+20–25%	ML deployment, ops
Deep Learning Specialization	Coursera/Andrew Ng	+\$10–18K	Research, DS, Engineering
AWS ML Specialty Cert	Amazon AWS	+\$15–25K	Cloud-based AI roles
Stanford MLOps (CS329S)	Stanford Online	+\$15–25K	Senior deployment roles

Source: 365DataScience AI Engineer Report, Refonte Learning Salary Guide 2025, AWS Certification Data

**Key Takeaway:** The U.S. AI job market in 2025–2026 rewards deep specialization above all else. LLM/GenAI engineers, MLOps specialists, and AI architects command the sharpest premiums. Entry-level salaries start strong (\$90K+) and senior professionals at FAANG-tier companies regularly exceed \$500,000 in total compensation. Upskilling in cloud AI platforms (AWS, Azure) and GenAI frameworks (LangChain, RAG) provides the fastest route to the next salary bracket — negotiate with data and confidence.

*Disclaimer: All salary data compiled from publicly available sources including BLS, Glassdoor, Levels.fyi, Veritone, and published industry guides as of 2025. Figures represent ranges and medians; actual compensation varies by employer, location, and individual qualifications. This report is intended for educational and career guidance purposes only. AgileFever — agilefever.com*