

Note

Pay figures are approximate US averages from industry salary surveys — actual pay varies by market, experience, and role. Exam prices are current public list prices.

Disclaimer note block for salary sheet

The Heavy Hitters

CISSP	approx \$130K-\$160K, exam \$749. Best for senior security roles, management track; needs 5 yrs experience
Google Cloud Professional Architect	approx \$140K-\$160K, exam \$200. Best for cloud architects going all-in on GCP
AWS Solutions Architect Associate	approx \$130K-\$155K, exam \$150. Best for the most broadly demanded cloud cert
CKA (Kubernetes Admin)	approx \$125K-\$150K, exam \$395. Best for DevOps and platform engineers

Heavy Hitters block for salary sheet

Best ROI for Beginners

Security+ (SY0-701)	approx \$95K-\$115K, exam \$404. The entry ticket to cybersecurity, DoD 8570 approved
CCNA (200-301)	approx \$85K-\$100K, exam \$300. Still the most respected associate-level cert
Network+ (N10-009)	approx \$75K-\$90K, exam \$404. Networking fundamentals before the CCNA
Linux+ (XK0-006)	approx \$80K-\$100K, exam \$404. The underrated one; Linux runs the cloud

Best ROI block for salary sheet

The Math That Matters

Exam cost vs first-year pay	a \$404 Security+ exam against a ~\$100K salary is 0.4% of year one
Experience multiplies	certs open the door; 2-3 years of experience moves you up the ranges
Stack, don't collect	Security+ to CySA+ to CISSP is a ladder; random certs are a pile
Cheapest entry	a \$5 study guide plus a \$404 exam is the lowest-cost career change in tech

Math block for salary sheet

More from ByteBar

Security+ (SY0-701) Study Guide — \$5	Start with the best ROI in IT: get it at bytebarhq.com
ByteBar on YouTube	Watch the money lane: "From Cert to Paycheck" playlist at youtube.com/@bytebarexamprep

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