FDE SALARY REPORT

November 2026

Compensation benchmarks for Forward Deployed Engineers: base, total compensation and equity by level, company type and location in North America.

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Not financial, legal or employment advice. Every figure is sourced.

About this edition

Field	Value
Edition	November 2026. Volume 1, Issue 2.
Data cut-off	November 6, 2026. Sources were re-read on this date unless a row says otherwise.
Previous edition	October 2026, revised October 23, 2026 (2026-10). That file is unchanged.
Next edition	December 2026 (2026-12), in the third week of the month.
Companion dataset	fde-salary-data-2026-11.csv (69 rows; one row per sourced figure).
Scope	Forward Deployed Engineer, Forward Deployed Software Engineer and close title variants in North America. This edition contains US figures only. No Canada-specific FDE pay data was found in the cited sources, and Mexico data is not available yet.

How to read the numbers

Posted ranges come from employer job postings, mostly under state pay-transparency laws. They show base salary at hire unless the posting says otherwise. They are not actual pay.

Self-reported data (Levels.fyi, Glassdoor) is pay employees chose to submit. Levels.fyi total compensation is base plus annualized stock plus bonus. It skews toward larger, better-paying employers.

Posting studies aggregate many postings. Sample sizes are shown where the source discloses them. Source tags such as [S1] point to the Sources list. Every figure is also in the companion CSV.

What changed since October

Compared with fde-salary-data-2026-10.csv:

- **US median total compensation rose from $220,000 to $225,000.** Levels.fyi, n=157, was n=160. The middle half is unchanged at $172,000 to $292,000. The 90th percentile is $353,640, displayed on the page as $354,000. The same page now shows a median base salary of $175,000. [S1]
- **FDE Pulse rebuilt its posting study on November 6.** The posted-base midpoint moved from $186,000 (188 of 962 postings; typical range $151,000 to $221,000) to $176,000 (192 of 1,187; typical range $144,000 to $214,000). Mid-level fell from $186,000 to $160,000. Senior / staff rose from $191,000 to $204,000. [S34]
- **Google's self-reported median rose from $404,030 to $465,750** (page displays $466,000; submissions tracked rose from 17 to 19). The page states L4 at $350,000 and L5 at $562,000. L5 was $516,000 in October. L6, $629,000 in October, is not in this page's description. [S8]
- **Palantir's median is unchanged at $232,500** (page displays $233,000). Submissions rose from 227 to 230. The stated range is now $220,000 to $620,000, from $201,000 to $590,000. The October Software Engineer average of $351,000 was not on the page. [S7]
- **New York City total compensation is still a $225,000 median.** The middle half is now $190,000 to $277,000, and the page schema shows n=58. Posted base in New York fell from a $200,000 midpoint (n=67) to $190,000 (n=51). The Bay Area posted midpoint rose from $200,000 (n=43) to $213,000 (n=41). [S3, S34]

- **Indeed was read directly.** Average posted base is $178,208 (low $114,612, high $277,091, about 2,000 posting salaries, page updated November 2). The October figure, $178,457, was an unverified snapshot. [S16]
- **OpenAI's tracked IC band is still $185,000 to $300,000.** The Ashby board lists 23 US roles with a USD range whose titles include Forward Deployed or FDE. Two manager roles list $302,000 to $385,000. [S17 to S19, S44 to S46]
- **Unchanged on re-read:** Recruiting from Scratch ($200,000 midpoint, article October 9), Aced ($190,000 median, last verified September 2), Lightcast demand counts, Fortune's "more than $188,000", and the Business Insider Indeed index. [S36 to S40]

1. Headline benchmarks

Source	What it measures	Figure	Sample	Source date
Levels.fyi [S1]	US median total comp (p25 to p75)	$225,000 ($172K to $292K)	157	Nov 6, 2026
FDE Pulse [S34]	US posted base midpoint	$176,000 ($144K to $214K)	192 of 1,187	Nov 6, 2026
Recruiting from Scratch [S36]	Startup posted base midpoint	$200,000 ($175K to $225K)	75	Oct 9, 2026
Aced [S37]	US median posted base	about $190,000 ($160K to $220K)	135	Sep 2, 2026
Lightcast via Fortune [S39]	US median advertised salary	more than $188,000	not stated	Sep 3, 2026
Indeed [S16]	US average posted base	$178,208 ($114,612 to $277,091)	about 2,000 / 36 months	Nov 2, 2026
Glassdoor [S14]	US median total pay	$157,000 ($125K to $199K)*	about 652 to 679*	Oct 2026

* Glassdoor still returned HTTP 403. The Glassdoor row is the October search-index snapshot and was not re-verified. Indeed was verified directly this edition. Its figure is an average, not a median.

> The same Levels.fyi page puts the median base salary at $175,000 (middle half $140,000 to $200,000). Read posted base as the floor. Equity and bonus explain most of the gap to the $225,000 total-compensation median.

2. Posted ranges at selected employers

Each range is one posting, or one pay tier of one posting, read on November 6, 2026 unless noted. Ranges often span several internal levels.

Employer / role	Location	Posted range	Status	Src
Anthropic, Staff FDE	NYC / SF / Seattle	$280,000 to $320,000 annual	Live	S20
Anthropic, Manager, FDE	New York	$320,000 to $405,000	Aggregator; band unchanged	S42
OpenAI, FDE	San Francisco, Seattle, NYC	$185,000 to $300,000	Live, same band as October	S17 to S19
OpenAI, Manager, FDE	New York	$302,000 to $385,000	Live. New to this edition.	S44, S45
OpenAI, FDSE	San Francisco	$185,000 to $325,000	Live on the Ashby board	S46
OpenAI, FDSE	New York and Seattle	$153,000 to $325,000	Live on the Ashby board	S46
Scale AI, FDSE, Public Sector	SF / NY / Seattle	$184,000 to $292,560	Still on the LandEarly mirror	S24
Databricks, Sr. FDE	US, all listed zones	$182,000 to $250,208	Live	S26
Palantir, FDSE (1+ yrs)	New York	$135,000 to $200,000	Live, plus RSUs	S23
Ramp, Forward Deployed AI Solutions	New York	$189,000 to $330,000	Live	S30
Ramp, Forward Deployed	New York / San Francisco	$168,000 to $285,000	Live. New to this edition.	S47
Replit, FDE	Hybrid, two locations	$180,000 to $300,000	Still listed	S33
Salesforce, Agentforce FDE	US tiers	$88,970 to $287,910 and $97,860 to $316,750	Not re-confirmed. October figures.	S27
Deloitte, FDE and Senior FDE	39 US locations	$134,500 to $265,100 and $155,600 to $306,800	Treated as closed. Recruiting end date was Oct 30.	S28, S29

On November 6 the OpenAI Ashby board listed 23 US roles with a published USD base range whose titles include Forward Deployed or FDE. That count excludes one Forward Deployed Security Engineer role at $266,000 to $445,000 in Washington, DC. The most common individual-contributor band is still $185,000 to $300,000. [S46]

Seed to Series B startups are unchanged: median posted range $175,000 to $225,000, midpoint $200,000, across 75 paid postings. Series A midpoint $200,000 (n=38). Series B midpoint $190,000 (n=25). [S36]

3. Self-reported total compensation

Company	Figure	Sample / updated	Change from October	Src
US, all companies	Median $225,000. Middle half $172K to $292K. p90 $353,640.	157 / Nov 6	Median was $220,000, n=160. Middle half unchanged.	S1
Palantir	Median $232,500. Page range $220K to $620K.	230 submissions / Oct 23	Median unchanged. Was n=227 and $201K to $590K.	S7
Google	Median $465,750 (displayed $466K). L4 $350K. L5 $562K.	19 submissions / Nov 1	Median was $404,030, n=17. L5 was $516K. L6 not restated.	S8
Salesforce	Median $233,200. Lead MTS $323K.	Count not shown / Oct 1	Median and Lead MTS unchanged. Component split not restated.	S11
OpenAI	No public median.	2 / Nov 6	October's one visible $640K record was not on the page.	S9
Scale AI	Median $361,000. Range $277K to $402K.	Not shown / Jun 1	Not re-read. Page blocked. Still the June 1 figure.	S10
Databricks	Page range $354K to $437K. No median.	Not shown / Oct 22	Not re-read. Page blocked.	S12
Anthropic	No FDE submissions displayed in October.	0 displayed	Not re-read. Page blocked.	S13

Equity is why self-reported totals sit above posted base. On the pages that state it, Palantir's median equity is $70,000 a year and Google's is $190,000. [S7, S8]

How often postings mention equity still depends on the sample. FDE Pulse's research report now says 22% of 1,187 postings, down from 25% of 962. Its salary hub, re-fetched the same day, still says 0%. Recruiting from Scratch says 55% of 141 startup descriptions, and Aced says about 70%. Treat the rate as unresolved. [S34, S35, S36, S37]

Commission remains rare in the startup sample: 6% of descriptions, against a bonus in 27%. [S36]

4. Pay by level

No source publishes one cross-company FDE level ladder. Posted base below is FDE Pulse, from titles. Self-reported examples are company pages.

Level	Posted base (FDE Pulse)	Self-reported examples
Entry / junior	$121,000 midpoint, n=5. Too small to benchmark. [S34]	Palantir FDSE (1+ years) still posts $135,000 to $200,000. [S23]
Mid	$160,000 midpoint, n=121. Was $186,000, n=119. [S34]	Google L4 still stated at $350,000. [S8]
Senior / staff	$204,000 midpoint, n=37. Was $191,000, n=32. [S34]	Google L5 now stated at $562,000, was $516,000. Anthropic Staff posts $280,000 to $320,000. [S8, S20]
Lead / manager	$202,000 midpoint, n=29. Was $198,000, n=34. [S34]	OpenAI manager posts $302,000 to $385,000. Salesforce Lead MTS remains $323,000. [S44, S11]

Posted base and self-reported total compensation are different measures and different employers. A higher posted base at senior level does not, by itself, explain Google's L4 to L5 jump.

5. Pay by location

Location	Self-reported total comp	Posted base	Confidence
New York City	Median $225,000. Middle half $190K to $277K. n=58. [S3]	FDE Pulse midpoint $190,000, n=51. Startups $180K to $220K, n=28. [S34, S36]	Medium
SF Bay Area	Not re-read. October edition: median $230,000, middle half $190K to $322K. [S2]	FDE Pulse midpoint $213,000, n=41. Startups $160K to $245K, n=28. [S34, S36]	Medium for posted base. Low for total comp this month.
Seattle	Not re-read. October edition: median $321,000, no percentiles, small sample. [S4]	FDE Pulse midpoint $179,000, n=3. [S34]	Low
Washington, DC	No Levels.fyi figure in this edition.	FDE Pulse midpoint $176,000, n=8. [S34]	Low
Boston	No Levels.fyi figure in this edition.	FDE Pulse midpoint $155,000, n=8. [S34]	Low
Chicago	No Levels.fyi figure in this edition.	FDE Pulse midpoint $159,000, n=7. [S34]	Low
Austin	No Levels.fyi metro page in the October edition, and none was opened this month.	FDE Pulse midpoint $145,000, n=12. Was $194,000, n=6. [S34]	Low
Remote (US)	No data.	Not refreshed. The salary hub disagrees with the research report. October snapshot: median $180,000, n=50. [S35]	Low
Canada and Mexico	No FDE-specific pay data in this edition's sources. Mexico data is not available yet.		None

6. Pay by industry

FDE Council is industry-neutral. None of the sources cited here reports FDE pay by employer industry, and the individual postings are too few for an industry comparison. No pay-by-industry figures are published. For pay by employer type, see section 2.

7. Demand

Metric	Figure	Source date	Src
US FDE postings, 2024 / 2025 / Jan to Jul 2026	about 200 / about 1,200 / more than 5,200	Sep 15, 2026	S38
Posting growth, Jan to Aug 2026 vs the same months of 2025	more than 1,000% (vs 2023: more than 4,600%). All tech postings +13%.	Sep 3, 2026	S39
Indeed US FDE posting index, April 2026	5,230% above a January 2025 baseline; about 729% year over year. These are index values, not a count of posts.	May 16, 2026	S40
Pay disclosure in postings	16% (192 of 1,187) in the FDE Pulse research report. 43% of startup postings hide pay.	Nov 6 and Oct 9, 2026	S34, S36

These demand figures are unchanged from October. No newer Lightcast or Indeed demand release was found. LinkedIn counts were not retrieved. LinkedIn requires sign-in.

8. Data gaps

- Levels.fyi pages for the San Francisco Bay Area, Greater Seattle, Scale AI, Databricks and Anthropic returned a block on November 6. Those rows are carried from October 22 or left blank, and they are marked in the CSV.
- Glassdoor is still blocked. Its figures remain an unverified October snapshot.
- OpenAI has two Levels.fyi submissions and no public median. Private-company equity still cannot be valued from public data.
- Google L6 and the Palantir level-average split from October were not on the pages read this month, so they are blank rather than repeated.
- The Salesforce Agentforce posting (JR357427) did not appear in the HTML returned on November 6. The October ranges are carried and marked not re-confirmed.
- Deloitte's two Frontier GenAI postings could not be fetched (TLS error). Their stated recruiting end date was October 30, 2026, so they are treated as closed.
- FDE Pulse's research report and salary hub disagree. The hub's methodology still says April 30, 2026, and its metro, seniority and equity tables do not match the research report updated November 6. This edition uses the research report. Hub rows are the October snapshot.
- Entry level is thin (n=5 in the research report). Austin, Seattle, Boston, Chicago and DC samples are small.
- Canada and Mexico: no FDE-specific pay data was found. No industry breakout was found.

9. Methodology

Sources were read on November 6, 2026 from public web pages. No paid datasets, logins or private data were used. Where a page blocked access, the October figure is carried and labeled, or the cell is blank. Figures are not estimated, interpolated or averaged across sources by FDE Council.

Posted ranges were taken from employer boards (Greenhouse, Lever, Ashby and employer career sites) where the page returned the range. Ashby compensation was read from Ashby's public posting API. Mirrors (Built In, LandEarly, Stripes) are labeled. Levels.fyi figures come from the rendered US page and from page

text and schema.org markup on the company and New York pages that returned. FDE Pulse, Recruiting from Scratch, Aced, Lightcast, Fortune and Business Insider are reported with each source's own sample and method.

Posted and self-reported data stay in separate tables and in separate CSV data_type values. All figures in this edition are in USD.

10. Sources

Levels.fyi data used with attribution: "Data source: Levels.fyi (https://www.levels.fyi)". FDE Pulse data used under CC BY 4.0. Source IDs continue from the October edition. New IDs this edition are S44, S45, S46 and S47. Retired October IDs stay retired.

- [S1] Levels.fyi, Forward Deployed Engineer, United States. n=157. Updated Nov 6, 2026. https://www.levels.fyi/t/software-engineer/title/forward-deployed-engineer
- [S2] Levels.fyi, San Francisco Bay Area. Not re-read Nov 6. Last read Oct 22, 2026.
- [S3] Levels.fyi, New York City Area. Schema sampleSize 58. Updated Nov 6, 2026.
- [S4] Levels.fyi, Greater Seattle Area. Not re-read Nov 6. Last read Oct 22, 2026.
- [S7] Levels.fyi, Palantir. 230 submissions. Page last reviewed Oct 23, 2026. Read Nov 6, 2026.
- [S8] Levels.fyi, Google. 19 submissions. Page last reviewed Nov 1, 2026. Read Nov 6, 2026.
- [S9] Levels.fyi, OpenAI. sampleSize 2. No public median. Updated Nov 6, 2026.
- [S10] Levels.fyi, Scale AI. Not re-read Nov 6. October reading, page updated Jun 1, 2026.
- [S11] Levels.fyi, Salesforce. Median unchanged. Page last reviewed Oct 1, 2026. Read Nov 6, 2026.
- [S12] Levels.fyi, Databricks. Not re-read Nov 6. Last read Oct 22, 2026.
- [S13] Levels.fyi, Anthropic. Not re-read Nov 6. October reading found no FDE data.
- [S14] [S15] Glassdoor, US FDE and Palantir FDE. Still HTTP 403. October unverified snapshots.
- [S16] Indeed, Forward deployed engineer salary, United States. Updated Nov 2, 2026. Read Nov 6, 2026. https://www.indeed.com/career/forward-deployed-engineer/salaries
- [S17] [S18] [S19] OpenAI FDE postings, San Francisco, Seattle and Legal. Still $185,000 to $300,000. Ashby board, read Nov 6, 2026.
- [S20] Anthropic, Staff Forward Deployed Engineer. Still $280,000 to $320,000. https://job-boards.greenhouse.io/anthropic/jobs/5449229008
- [S21] Anthropic, FDE, Applied AI. Still redirected to the job board. Treated as closed.
- [S23] Palantir, Forward Deployed Software Engineer, New York. Still $135,000 to $200,000. Lever.
- [S24] Scale AI, FDSE, Public Sector. LandEarly mirror. Ranges unchanged. Posted Aug 20, 2026.
- [S25] Scale AI, FDE, GenAI. Closed. Built In SF. Removed Sep 22, 2026.
- [S26] Databricks, Sr. Forward Deployed Engineer. Still $182,000 to $250,208. Stripes mirror. Posted Aug 22, 2026.
- [S27] Salesforce, FDE, Agentforce Orchestration, JR357427. Not re-confirmed Nov 6. October ranges carried.
- [S28] [S29] Deloitte, FDE and Senior FDE, Frontier GenAI. Not re-read (TLS error). Recruiting end date Oct 30, 2026. Treated as closed.

- [S30] Ramp, Software Engineer, Forward Deployed AI Solutions. Still $189,000 to $330,000.
- [S33] Replit, Forward Deployed Engineer. Built In. Still $180,000 to $300,000. datePosted Aug 25, 2026.
- [S34] FDE Pulse, The Forward Deployed Engineer Salary Report 2026. 1,187 postings, 192 with pay. Updated Nov 6, 2026. CC BY 4.0. https://fdepulse.com/research/forward-deployed-engineer-salary-report-2026/
- [S35] FDE Pulse salary hub. Re-fetched Nov 6 and not used for new figures, because it still disagrees with S34. https://fdepulse.com/salaries/
- [S36] Recruiting from Scratch, FDE salary at startups, Oct 9, 2026. Re-read Nov 6. Unchanged. 75 paid postings, 82 candidates.
- [S37] Aced (formerly Exponent), FDE salary 2026. Last verified Sep 2, 2026. Re-read Nov 6. Unchanged. https://www.aced.io/jobs/fde/salary
- [S38] Lightcast, Elena Magrini, Sep 15, 2026. Re-read Nov 6. Unchanged. https://lightcast.io/resources/blog/forward-deployed-engineer-ai-job
- [S39] Fortune, Preston Fore, Sep 3, 2026, citing Lightcast. Re-read Nov 6. Unchanged.
- [S40] Business Insider, May 16, 2026, Indeed index. Re-read Nov 6. Unchanged.
- [S42] Nextmove, Anthropic posted ranges. Updated Nov 6, 2026. Manager band unchanged. Page median mixes titles and is not used. https://nextmove.md/fde/salary/anthropic
- [S43] Levels.fyi single Palantir offer, New York, Feb 1, 2026. Not re-read. October figure carried.
- [S44] OpenAI, Manager, Forward Deployed Engineering, New York. $302,000 to $385,000. Published Sep 23, 2026. https://jobs.ashbyhq.com/openai/5bbc43df-558a-4e4b-a0cf-83f185c664d7
- [S45] OpenAI, Forward Deployed Engineering Manager, Financial Services, New York. $302,000 to $385,000. Published Nov 5, 2026. https://jobs.ashbyhq.com/openai/8e7ba2dd-d632-4a8b-b95b-e2592f77a679
- [S46] OpenAI Ashby posting API, US title count. Read Nov 6, 2026. https://api.ashbyhq.com/posting-api/job-board/openai?includeCompensation=true
- [S47] Ramp, Software Engineer, Forward Deployed. $168,000 to $285,000. Published Oct 22, 2026. https://jobs.ashbyhq.com/ramp/29a5da77-37f0-402a-92bc-072778e77ed8

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