



2024 IFT Compensation and Career Path Report: Executive Summary

The median salary for science of food professionals in the United States decreased slightly in 2024, to \$107,300, from \$110,000 in 2022, the *2024 IFT Compensation and Career Path Report* research shows. The median salary of \$107,300 reflects the earnings of the vast majority of respondents, who are full-time employees.-

The survey on which the report was based was conducted in November 2023 when IFT, working with a private research firm, sent email surveys to 35,899 U.S.-based professionals working in the science of food discipline. With 3,561 responses, the survey had a response rate of about 10%. Results have a margin of error of +/-1.56% at a 95% level of significance.

Although median pay dipped since the last survey, changes to the survey and the pool of respondents contributed to this decrease. First, this year's survey drew a larger number of respondents, with a greater percentage of younger, less experienced respondents, who typically have lower salaries than their more experienced counterparts.

In addition, IFT recently changed the way it categorizes professional positions, which may have also contributed to the drop in average salary. Rather than categorizing positions by title, IFT now classifies positions based on primary job functions. This new approach better fits modern ways of working, in which many professionals have multiple job functions that may not be accurately captured by a general title.

Despite a slight decrease in median pay, science of food professionals report largely positive trends in their career lives, including compensation. The majority received pay raises during the past year, and while discrepancies in pay persist between men and women, and professionals of majority and minority racial groups, some of the gaps are smaller than in the past.

Many full-time employees receive additional compensation beyond their salary. For example, 67% report receiving a cash bonus, with a median value of \$10,321. Total compensation among full-time employees and self-employed, including the total dollar amount of cash bonuses received, total value of stocks received as part of professional income, and overtime earnings was a median of \$115,500.

Overall, professionals in the science of food industry reflect larger workplace trends, including an increasingly diverse workforce, increased interest in changing jobs, more flexibility at work, and working a full-time job as well as a side hustle. While earning extra income is one of the main reasons for working on the side, they also report a number of other driving factors, including building a network and pursuing a passion.

Results of this survey reveal the science of food industry to be a continually growing field with opportunities for building a long-term career while both making a difference in the world and creating a desired personal life.

More Facts, Figures, and Findings

- Survey respondents reported a mean of 16.2 years of professional food-related work experience, three years less than the 19.2 years of experience reported in 2022.
- 71% of this year's respondents reported receiving a pay increase during the past year; the average increase was 10%.
- Professionals in the C-suite earn the highest salaries with median pay at \$200,000, and those working in laboratory roles have the lowest median pay, at \$74,000.
- Those whose highest degree is a bachelor's represented the largest group of survey respondents, earning a median salary of \$96,500. Salaries for those with advanced degrees are higher.
- In this year's survey, 12% of respondents reported that they earn income from side jobs.
- Asked about their feelings regarding salary transparency, the majority of survey respondents (58%) said they would feel comfortable if all salaries were shared openly in their organizations. Opinions about salary transparency diverged widely according to generational breakouts, with younger professionals much more comfortable sharing salary information than older ones.
- Compensation and benefits headed the list of factors influencing job satisfaction, according to the survey, followed by supportive management and work/life balance.

Comprehensive data and insights from the research is available in the full report, which is priced at \$179, and is available free to IFT premier and student members and discounted for other membership levels. To purchase the full report, visit <https://www.ift.org/career-development/ift-salary-surveys/>. To learn more about IFT membership, visit ift.org/membership.