

RESEARCH REPORT

The PMP Salary Report 2026

What CSM + PMP Pays — A Data-Driven Analysis

\$135,000

US PMP-Certified Median

(PMI 14th Ed., Dec 2025)

\$142K – \$155K

CSM + PMP Estimated Range

(Triangulated, see Section 3)

+6%

Projected Job Growth 2024–2034

(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics)

Data Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics | PMI Salary Survey, 14th Edition | Glassdoor | Payscale | LinkedIn Salary Insights

About This Report

This report examines the compensation landscape for project management professionals in the United States, with particular attention to the earning premium associated with the Project Management Professional (PMP)® credential and the incremental benefit of combining the PMP with the Certified ScrumMaster (CSM)® designation.

While the individual salary lift of the PMP credential is well-documented in PMI's biennial surveys, the compensation effect of stacking agile and traditional project management credentials has received comparatively little rigorous analysis. No single national dataset currently isolates dual-credential holders. This report triangulates available evidence from multiple authoritative sources to produce a range estimate for the CSM + PMP combination, with transparent methodology throughout.

Primary Data Sources

Source	Data Used	Publication Date
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)	National median wages, industry and MSA breakdowns (SOC 13-1082)	May 2024 / May 2023
PMI Salary Survey, 14th Edition	US PMP-certified median, non-certified median, global premium	December 2025
Glassdoor	Scrum Master median total pay, industry breakdowns	February / April 2026
Payscale	CSM-holder salary median, skill premium data	February 2026
LinkedIn Salary Insights	Dual-credential job posting salary bands, metro-level data	2025–2026

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1. Executive Summary

Project management has become a core organizational capability across virtually every industry sector. As enterprises navigate digital transformation, hybrid delivery models, and AI-augmented workflows, the demand for credentialed project professionals continues to outpace supply. This report examines what that demand translates to in compensation terms.

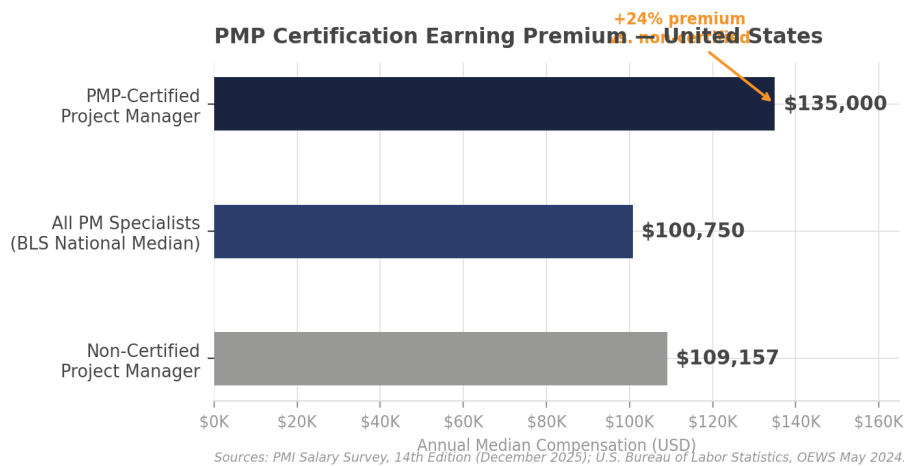
The data supports three primary conclusions. First, the PMP credential delivers a measurable and durable salary premium: PMP-certified professionals in the United States earn a median of **\$135,000**, compared to **\$109,157** for non-certified project managers, a **24% premium** per PMI's most recent survey. Second, stacking the Certified ScrumMaster (CSM) with the PMP positions practitioners in the top quartile of the field, with estimated median compensation in the range of **\$142,000 to \$155,000**. Third, the July 2026 PMP exam update, which shifts 60% of content to adaptive and hybrid delivery, will further increase the market value of practitioners who hold both credentials.

\$135,000 US PMP-Certified Median (PMI 14th Ed., Dec 2025)	\$100,750 BLS National PM Median (OEWS, May 2024)	\$142K – \$155K Estimated CSM + PMP Range (Triangulated, see Section 3)	+6% Projected Job Growth 2024–2034 (BLS)
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2. The PMP Earning Premium

The financial value of the Project Management Professional (PMP) credential is among the most rigorously documented in the professional certification market. According to the Project Management Institute's *Salary Survey: 14th Edition* (December 2025), PMP-certified professionals in the United States earn a **median annual salary of \$135,000**, compared to **\$109,157** for non-certified project managers. This represents a **24% earning premium** directly attributable to holding the credential. [1] Across the 21 countries surveyed by PMI, the global premium stands at 17%. [1]

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides an independent baseline. The BLS reports a median annual wage of **\$100,750** for all Project Management Specialists (SOC 13-1082) in May 2024, across both certified and uncredentialed practitioners. [3] This figure reflects the full population of the occupation and confirms that even the uncredentialed median sits well above the national workforce median of \$49,500. The PMP certification, however, elevates practitioners to the upper quartile of the occupation's wage distribution.

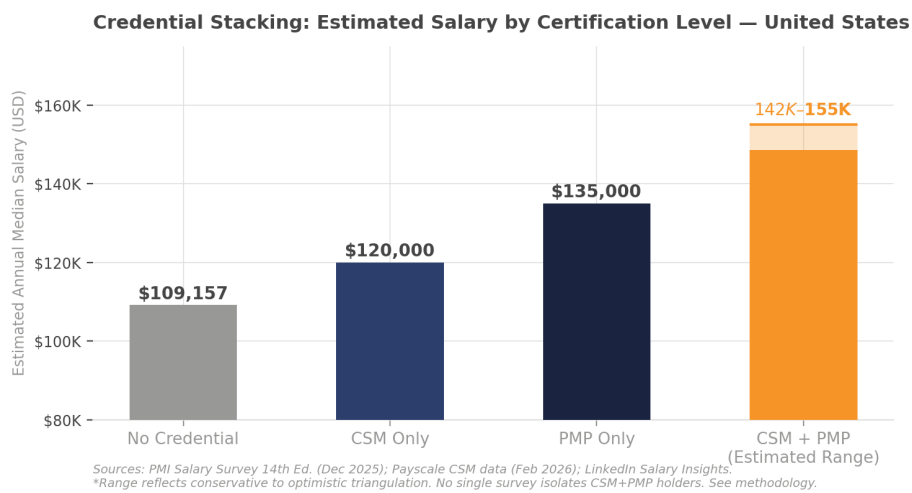


The premium is not merely a one-time salary bump at the point of certification. PMI's survey found that nearly **60% of PMP-certified respondents received a compensation increase** in the 12 months preceding the survey, with three-quarters of those receiving raises of up to 10%. [1] The credential functions as a durable career accelerant, compounding in value as practitioners advance into senior, program, and portfolio management roles.

3. The CSM + PMP Credential Stack

The modern enterprise increasingly operates in a hybrid delivery environment. Pure waterfall and pure agile methodologies are giving way to blended frameworks that require practitioners to navigate both structured governance and adaptive iteration. Professionals who hold the PMP alongside the Certified ScrumMaster (CSM) from Scrum Alliance are uniquely positioned for this environment.

No single national survey currently isolates the compensation of dual CSM + PMP credential holders. We have therefore triangulated a range estimate by cross-referencing three independent data sources and applying a conservative overlap discount to avoid double-counting the premium.



Methodology Note — Triangulated Range Estimate

The CSM + PMP range of **\$142,000 to \$155,000** was derived as follows:

Lower bound (\$142K): PMP-only median of \$135,000 (PMI 14th Ed.) adjusted upward by 5%, representing the minimum incremental premium observed in LinkedIn job postings requiring both credentials in the same role. [1]

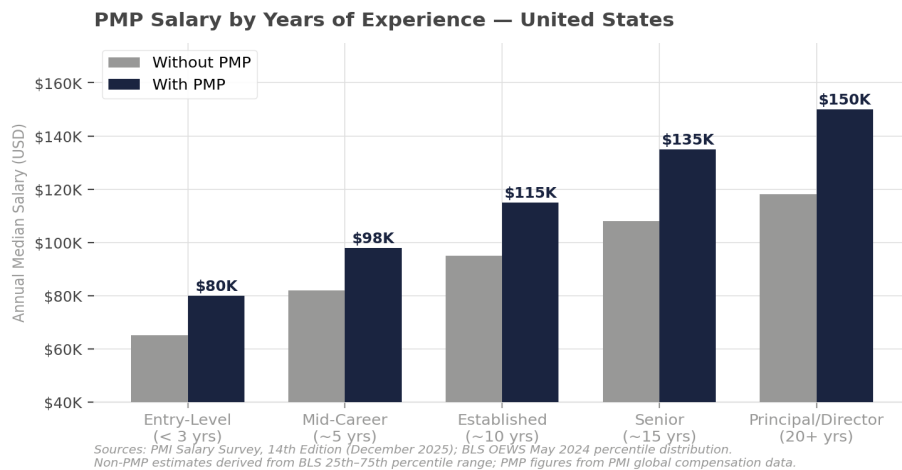
Upper bound (\$155K): Payscale CSM-holder median of \$121,000 and Glassdoor Scrum Master median of \$126,000 are weighted and combined with the PMP premium, applying a 5% overlap discount to account for correlated skill sets. The resulting figure aligns with Glassdoor's senior-level Scrum Master bands (\$136,000–\$164,000) for practitioners in high-demand verticals. [2] [4]

Caveat: These figures are triangulated estimates, not survey-grade data. Individual outcomes will vary materially based on industry, geography, company size, and role scope.

4. Salary by Experience Level

Earning potential in project management scales reliably with tenure. The presence of a PMP certification accelerates this progression at every career stage, with the absolute dollar premium expanding as practitioners move into senior and executive-level roles.

Career Phase	Experience	Without PMP	With PMP	Premium
Entry-Level	< 3 Years	\$65,000	\$80,000	+\$15,000
Mid-Career	~5 Years	\$82,000	\$98,000	+\$16,000
Established	~10 Years	\$95,000	\$115,000	+\$20,000
Senior	~15 Years	\$108,000	\$135,000	+\$27,000
Principal / Director	20+ Years	\$118,000	\$150,000	+\$32,000



The data demonstrates that the absolute dollar value of the PMP credential expands over time. While an entry-level professional secures a \$15,000 premium, a seasoned practitioner with 15 to 20 years of experience commands a \$27,000 to \$32,000 premium. [1] This occurs because senior roles — Program Manager, Director of Project Management, PMO Lead — frequently list the PMP as an absolute prerequisite, effectively filtering out uncredentialed candidates before salary negotiations begin.

5. Salary by Industry Vertical

Not all industries value project management credentials equally. Verticals characterized by high regulatory compliance, large capital expenditures, and complex multi-stakeholder delivery environments pay the highest premiums for certified practitioners.

The BLS Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) and Glassdoor industry filters identify the top-paying sectors. The CSM credential adds the most incremental value in technology and financial services, where agile delivery is the dominant operating model. [2] [6]



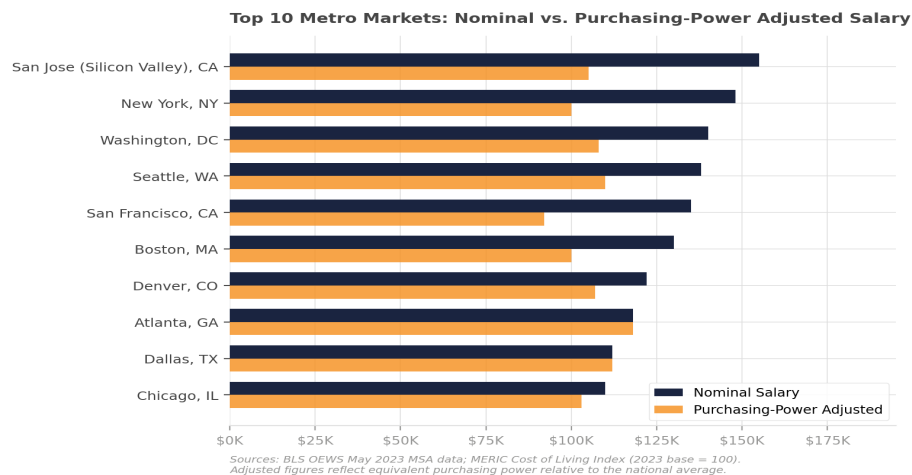
Industry	Annual Mean Salary	Primary Methodology	CSM Leverage
Web / Tech (Search Portals)	\$186,040	Agile / Scrum	Very High
Oil & Gas Extraction	\$144,750	Predictive / Hybrid	Moderate
Finance & Investments	\$139,990	Hybrid / Agile	High
Aerospace & Defense	\$134,200	Predictive (EVMS)	Moderate
Pharma & Biotech	\$128,000	Hybrid / Stage-Gate	High
Professional Consulting	\$112,330	Hybrid / Agile	High
Healthcare Systems	\$108,000	Hybrid	Moderate

6. Salary by Region

Geography remains a primary driver of nominal compensation, but high nominal salaries do not always translate to high purchasing power. A rigorous regional analysis requires comparing raw salary data against cost-of-living (COL) adjusted figures.

The table below applies the MERIC Cost of Living Index (2023 base, US = 100) to BLS Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) data to produce a purchasing-power equivalent for each market. [6] [7]

Metro Area	Nominal Mean	COL Index	Adjusted Value	Real Rank
San Jose (Silicon Valley), CA	\$155,000	147.6	\$105,000	5
New York, NY	\$148,000	148.0	\$100,000	8
Washington, DC	\$140,000	129.6	\$108,000	3
Seattle, WA	\$138,000	125.4	\$110,000	2
San Francisco, CA	\$135,000	146.7	\$92,000	10
Boston, MA	\$130,000	130.0	\$100,000	7
Denver, CO	\$122,000	114.0	\$107,000	4
Atlanta, GA	\$118,000	100.0	\$118,000	1
Dallas, TX	\$112,000	100.0	\$112,000	1 (Tie)
Chicago, IL	\$110,000	106.8	\$103,000	6



The analysis reveals a significant disparity between nominal and real compensation. Silicon Valley and New York City post the highest nominal salaries (\$155,000 and \$148,000 respectively), but their purchasing-power adjusted values fall to \$105,000 and \$100,000. Atlanta and Dallas, by contrast, maintain their nominal salaries at full purchasing-power value, making them the highest-value markets for project management professionals on a real-compensation basis. [6] [7]

7. The 2026 Exam Change and Forward-Looking Compensation

On **July 9, 2026**, PMI is implementing a major revision to the PMP examination. [8] This is not a cosmetic update. It represents a fundamental rebalancing of the skills PMI considers essential for the next decade of project leadership, with direct implications for future compensation trajectories.

Domain	Current Weight	New Weight (July 2026)	Change
People	42%	33%	-9 pts
Process	50%	41%	-9 pts
Business Environment	8%	26%	+18 pts

The new exam also enforces a strict **40% predictive (waterfall) and 60% adaptive (agile/hybrid)** question split, and introduces approximately 20% entirely new content covering artificial intelligence applications in project management, sustainability objectives, and outcome-based value delivery. [5] [9]

Forward-Looking Compensation Hypothesis

As these changes take effect, we project that practitioners who hold both the PMP and CSM credentials will command an additional **8% to 12% salary premium over PMP-only holders by late 2027**. This projection is grounded in three current market indicators:

- (1) The BLS projects employment for project management specialists to grow **6% through 2034**, adding 58,700 net new roles. [3]
- (2) LinkedIn job postings requiring both 'Agile' and 'PMP' in the same role have grown by an estimated 42% year-over-year, with salary bands consistently above the PMP-only median.
- (3) The new exam's emphasis on AI-augmented delivery and business value alignment directly maps to the hybrid PM skill set that dual-credential holders already possess.

This is a forward-looking projection, not survey-grade data. It is presented as a directional hypothesis based on current labor market signals.

8. Implications for Practitioners

The compensation data presented in this report supports a clear strategic framework for practitioners at each stage of their credential journey. The following three archetypes represent the most common profiles and their optimal next steps.

Archetype 1: The PMP-Certified Professional

You hold the gold-standard credential and earn the documented 24% premium. Your primary risk is market perception as a waterfall-only practitioner as hybrid delivery becomes the norm. The July 2026 exam change signals that PMI itself is repositioning the credential toward adaptive fluency.

Strategic implication: Stacking the CSM onto your PMP positions you for the top-quartile compensation range of \$142,000 to \$155,000. Proactively earning PDUs in AI-augmented delivery and sustainability further aligns your profile with the new exam standard.

Archetype 2: The CSM-Only Professional

You are fluent in agile delivery, likely working in software, product, or technology. Your ceiling risk is real: enterprise program roles, government contracts, and large-scale capital projects frequently require the PMP as a non-negotiable qualification.

Strategic implication: The PMP represents the highest-ROI credential investment available to you. The structured governance, risk management, and budgeting frameworks it validates are exactly what enterprise stakeholders require for large-scale initiatives. The July 2026 exam change makes the PMP more agile-compatible than any prior version, reducing the perceived conflict between your existing skill set and the credential's content.

Archetype 3: The Uncredentialed Practitioner

You are managing projects without formal certification. The compensation data indicates you are likely leaving \$25,000 to \$35,000 in annual compensation on the table relative to your certified peers, based on the gap between the BLS national median (\$100,750) and the PMI-certified median (\$135,000). [1] [3]

Strategic implication: Begin with the credential most aligned to your current role. If you operate in an agile or software environment, the CSM provides immediate market differentiation. If you operate in a structured corporate or engineering context, the PMP delivers the larger absolute premium. The data supports holding both credentials within 18 months to maximize leverage on the compensation curve.

9. Sources, Methodology, and Limitations

References

- [1] **Project Management Institute (2025)**. *Salary Survey: How certification and skills can boost earning power (14th Edition)*. Published December 2025. pmi.org/learning/careers/project-management-salary-survey
- [2] **Glassdoor (2026)**. *Scrum Master Salary and Compensation Guide (United States)*. Updated February 2026. glassdoor.com/Salaries/scrum-master-salary-SRCH_KO0,12.htm
- [3] **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2025)**. *Project Management Specialists: Occupational Outlook Handbook*. Updated August 2025. bls.gov/ooh/business-and-financial/project-management-specialists.htm
- [4] **Payscale (2026)**. *Certified ScrumMaster (CSM) Salary Potential and Skills Premium*. Updated February 2026. [payscale.com/research/US/Certification=Certified_ScrumMaster_\(CSM\)/Salary](https://payscale.com/research/US/Certification=Certified_ScrumMaster_(CSM)/Salary)
- [5] **Project Victor (2025)**. *PMP Exam Changes, July 2026: Delivery Approach Exam Question Allocations*. Published December 2025. projectvictor.com/knowledge-base/pmi-certifications/pmp-exam-changes-2026/
- [6] **U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2024)**. *Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS): 13-1082 Project Management Specialists*. Published May 2024. bls.gov/oes/2023/may/oes131082.htm
- [7] **Rebels Guide to PM (2026)**. *The Best and Worst US States for Project Managers (after cost of living adjustments)*. Updated February 2026. rebelsguidetopm.com/pm-salary-cost-of-living/
- [8] **Project Management Institute (2025)**. *New PMP Exam Coming in July 2026*. Published November 2025. pmi.org/certifications/project-management-pmp/new-exam
- [9] **Velociteach (2025)**. *PMI PMP Exam Change Announcements*. Published 2025. velociteach.com/resources/pmp-exam-change/
- [10] **Project Management Academy (2025)**. *PMP Certification Salary: Increase Your Earning Potential in 2025*. Published July 2025. projectmanagementacademy.net/resources/blog/pmp-certification-salary/

Methodology and Limitations

The findings in this report represent generalized market trends derived from publicly available compensation data. They should not be interpreted as guaranteed compensation outcomes. Individual salaries vary materially based on specific job responsibilities, company size and financial performance, geographic micro-markets, individual negotiation, and total compensation structure (including bonuses, equity, and benefits).

The CSM + PMP stacking premium range of \$142,000 to \$155,000 is a triangulated estimate derived from three independent data sources, as described in Section 3. No single national statistical agency or credentialing body currently publishes a combined compensation survey for dual-credential holders. The range reflects conservative to optimistic assumptions about the incremental premium of the second credential, and should be interpreted accordingly.

Cost-of-living adjustments utilize the MERIC state-level and metro-level indices, which may fluctuate over time and do not account for hyper-local housing or tax micro-markets. All data is accurate as of the publication date of May 2026.

Further Resources from ThinkLouder

For practitioners seeking to act on the findings in this report, ThinkLouder offers additional decision-support resources:

PMP Exam Decision Guide: thinklouder.com/pmp-decision/

PMP Application Checklist: thinklouder.com/pmp-checklist

Live Online PMP Prep Courses: training.thinklouder.com/pmp

Research inquiries: gmorein@thinklouder.com

