

THE WP COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE

OPEN SOURCE CONTRIBUTOR COMPENSATION STANDARD

A BASELINE PAY FRAMEWORK FOR OPEN SOURCE CONTRIBUTION
VERSION 1.0 · PUBLISHED MARCH 2026

COMPENSATION RATES

Rates apply to hourly employees and independent contractors. Contractor rates include a standard 22% overhead factor above employee rates to account for self-employment tax, benefits, and business expenses. All figures denominated in USD.

Level	Employee Rate	Contractor Rate	Example Roles
Level 1 Entry / Foundation	\$50/hr	\$61/hr	Instructor/Trainer, Technical Writer, Content Writer, QA Tester, Junior Developer
Level 2 Professional / Mid-Level	\$70/hr	\$85/hr	Web Developer, Front-End Developer, Back-End Developer, Project Coordinator, UX Designer
Level 3 Senior / Advanced	\$80/hr	\$98/hr	Senior Developer, Full-Stack Developer, IT Project Manager, UX/UI Designer, Security Engineer
Level 4 Specialist / Leadership	\$95/hr	\$116/hr	DevOps Engineer, Data Engineer, Data Scientist, Engineering Manager, Product Manager
Level 5 Architect / Executive	\$115/hr	\$140/hr	Solutions Architect, Data Architect, AI/ML Engineer, Principal Engineer, C-Suite

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ABOUT THIS STANDARD

The WPCC Contributor Compensation Standard

establishes a baseline pay framework for individuals contributing to open source projects. These rates reflect fair market compensation for technical and community work in the open source ecosystem, informed by industry benchmarks and The WPCC's direct experience as an organization, and The WPCC membership.

This Standard is intended as a public resource. Organizations, foundations, and sponsors are encouraged to use it as a reference when budgeting for contributor time, structuring fellowships, or evaluating compensation equity.

ANNUAL REVIEW

This Standard is intended for annual review by The WPCC and to be updated to reflect changes in market rates, cost of living, and community input. Individuals and organizations relying on this Standard for budgeting are encouraged to check for updated versions each calendar year.

Version history and changelogs are maintained in The WPCC's public GitHub repository:
<https://github.com/thewpcommunitycollective>

USAGE & ATTRIBUTION

This Standard is published as an open resource under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC 4.0. If your organization adopts this Standard or a derivative, The WPCC welcomes you to share that with us and publicly; adoption helps establish ecosystem-wide norms for contributor compensation.

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GLOBAL PAY PARITY

Open source contribution is a global activity. The WPCC recognizes that fair pay means locally equivalent pay, not a flat global rate that advantages some contributors and disadvantages others.

The rates compensation rates in this Standard are anchored to Los Angeles, CA (USA) as the baseline location. For contributors working outside of Los Angeles, whether elsewhere in the United States or internationally, we use a standardized formula, [Equivalent Salary Calculator By City](https://neilkakkar.com/salary-calculator-by-city.html) (<https://neilkakkar.com/salary-calculator-by-city.html>), to determine conversion to that rate to the local equivalent for the term of the Fellowship.

The formula is reviewed as part of the annual Standard revision cycle. The current conversion methodology remains in effect until formally revised.