

Civil Engineer

Design the roads, bridges, water systems and buildings everyone uses without thinking about them.

TYPICAL PAY

\$100,840

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$68k to \$163k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 8 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

**Design offices, construction sites,
city and state agencies, consultin...**

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Calculus and physics are the two that matter. Take both as far as your school goes.
- 2 Bachelor's degree in civil engineering** 4 years
 It must be from a program accredited by ABET (the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology), or your state board will not count it toward a license.
- 3 Fundamentals of Engineering exam** Senior year
 110 questions in a testing center, a bit over five hours of test time. Most people take it in their final year of college while the math is fresh.
- 4 Work under a licensed engineer** About 4 years
 Usually four years of progressive experience. You are called an engineer in training or engineer intern during this stretch.
- 5 Principles and Practice of Engineering exam and license** After your experience
 Choose a civil module: construction, geotechnical, structural, transportation, or water resources and environmental. Pass it and your state board issues the license.

Pros and cons

- + Strong pay from the first year with only a four-year degree
- + Work that physically exists and lasts 50 years
- + Demand nearly everywhere, including small cities
- Four more years of supervised work before the license
- Heavy responsibility: your signature means people's safety
- Deadline crunches around bids and permits

Optional boosts

Structural. Geotechnical. Transportation. Water resources.

Good to know

American infrastructure gets a report card

Every four years the American Society of Civil Engineers grades the country's roads, bridges, dams, water systems and more. The 2025 edition found federal investment had improved several categories, a...

Accreditation is bigger than you think

ABET (the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology), which accredits the engineering degree you need for a license, has approved 4,863 programs at 950 colleges across 42 countries.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Civil Engineers (17-2051.00)

NCEES: Fundamentals of Engineering exam

NCEES: Principles and Practice of Engineering exam

ABET: accreditation

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/civil-engineer>



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