

Database Administrator

Keep a company's data fast, backed up and locked down, so nobody ever notices it.

TYPICAL PAY

\$104,620

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$60k to \$163k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Banks, hospitals, insurers,
government agencies, software c...**

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
 Take computing if it is offered. Install a free database at home and break it on purpose.
- 2 Two or four year degree** 2 to 4 years
 Computer science, information systems or information technology. A two year associate degree is enough for many employers.
- 3 First technology job** 1 to 3 years
 Help desk, junior developer or systems support. You need to have seen a production system before anyone hands you one.
- 4 Certification** A few months of study
 A vendor certificate from Microsoft, Oracle or Amazon Web Services proves a specific platform on paper.
- 5 Database administrator** Ongoing
 Junior first, with someone senior reviewing your changes, then on your own.

Pros and cons

- + Six figure pay without a four year degree in many cases
- + Almost entirely remote-capable work
- + Every large organization has data, so employers are everywhere
- The federal outlook is below average and the role is shrinking
- On-call nights and weekends come with the territory
- Cloud tools are eating the routine parts of the job

Good to know

A backup you have never restored is not a backup

The rule every database administrator learns, usually the hard way, is that a backup only counts once you have restored it somewhere and checked the data is really there. Plenty of companies have discovered...

The language is over fifty years old

SQL (Structured Query Language) grew out of research at IBM in the early 1970s and became a national standard in 1986. The core of what you type into a database today would be readable by someone from...

Optional boosts

Microsoft Azure Database Administrator Associate. Oracle Database certification. Amazon Web Services Database Specialty. CompTIA Security Plus.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Database Administrators (15-1242.00)
 Microsoft Learn: professional and technical credentials
 CompTIA: information technology certifications
 USAJOBS: the federal government's official hiring site

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/database-administrator>



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