

GIS Analyst

Turn location data into maps and answers. GIS (geographic information systems) work sits behind 911 calls, utility crews and city plans.

TYPICAL PAY

\$81,390

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$54k to \$127k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

2 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

City and county offices, utilities, consulting firms, remote

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 11 and 12
Geography, statistics and any computer class. Start making maps of things you care about, because that becomes your portfolio.
- 2 Certificate or degree** 2 to 4 years
A one to two year community college certificate in GIS (geographic information systems), or a four-year degree in geography, environmental science, planning or computer science.
- 3 Internship**
City and county offices take student interns constantly. This is how most people get their first real job.
- 4 First job as a technician**
Digitizing, editing data, fixing addresses, making map products to order. Unglamorous and the fastest way to learn.
- 5 Analyst, then certification** 4 years in
After about four years of experience you can apply for the GISP (the certified geographic information systems professional credential) through the GIS Certification Institute.

Pros and cons

- + You can start with a one-year certificate
- + Genuinely remote-friendly work
- + Every industry needs it, so you can change field without retraining
- Technician pay is modest until you add coding skills
- A lot of the daily work is cleaning other people's messy data
- Government hiring is slow and the pay ceiling there is real

Good to know

Your emergency call is a map query

When you dial 911 the dispatch system matches your location against address and road layers to decide which station gets sent. Somebody maintains those layers, and when a new street is missing the ambula...

The federal mapping agency is 140 years old

The United States Geological Survey was founded in 1879 and has been making maps of the country ever since. Its topographic map archive is free to download and is still the base layer for a huge amou...

Optional boosts

Python. SQL (structured query language) and spatial databases. Web mapping. Remote sensing.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Cartographers and Photogrammetrists (17-1021.00)
O*NET OnLine: Cartographers and Photogrammetrists, employment and outlook
GIS Certification Institute
American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing

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/gis-analyst>



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