

Hedge fund manager

Run investors' money, betting on markets rising or falling, and keep the job only while you make money.

TYPICAL PAY

\$400,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$100k to \$1.0M

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

10 to 14 years

after high school

DEMAND

Good

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Hedge funds, multi-manager firms, asset managers, mostly in New York, Connecticut, Chicago and Miami

How you get there

- 1 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Finance, economics, math, computer science or engineering.
- 2 First job** 2 to 3 years
Investment banking, equity research or a junior analyst seat at a fund. Quant funds hire straight from math and coding degrees.
- 3 Hedge fund analyst** 3 to 5 years
You research companies or markets and pitch trades to a portfolio manager.
- 4 Senior analyst** 2 to 4 years
You own a sector and some of the decisions. Your track record is now visible.
- 5 Portfolio manager** Ongoing, as long as you perform
You get your own pool of money and your own risk limits, usually in your 30s.

Pros and cons

- + Some of the highest pay in finance for those who succeed
- + Your results are measured clearly, every day
- + Intellectually demanding work
- Very few people ever get to manage money
- One bad stretch can end your job quickly
- Pay swings hard from year to year

Good to know

Lose 5%, lose half

At Millennium, one of the largest multi-manager funds, a manager who loses 5% of their money usually has it cut in half. Lose 7.5% and they are usually let go, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Thousands of people, one rule

Millennium has about 2,600 traders, analysts and portfolio managers working in separate teams. The rule for all of them is simple: make money and stay, or lose money and probably leave.

Optional boosts

CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) charter. Python and data skills. A sector specialty. A personal track record.

Where these numbers come from

Bureau of Labor Statistics: Financial analysts, including portfolio managers (May 2025 pay)

My Next Move: Financial and Investment Analysts (13-2051.00)

Mergers and Inquisitions: hedge fund career path and pay by level

Mergers and Inquisitions: multi-manager hedge funds, payouts and turnover

Numbers checked October 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/hedge-fund-manager>



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