

Mobile App Developer

Build the software people carry in their pocket, ship it to an app store, then keep fixing it on devices you have never held.

TYPICAL PAY

\$135,980

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$82k to \$215k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

1 to 4 years

after high school

DEMAND

Very high

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Tech companies, agencies, banks and retailers, startups, freelance...

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grades 10 to 12
Any computer course, plus math. Start building now: a free Apple developer account or Android Studio and a laptop is the whole setup.
- 2 Pick a platform and learn it properly** 6 to 12 months
Swift for iPhone, Kotlin for Android, or a cross-platform tool like React Native or Flutter. Learn one deeply before you spread out.
- 3 Degree, bootcamp or self-taught** 0 to 4 years
A four year computer science degree opens the most doors and is still the safest route. Bootcamps are faster and riskier. Self-taught works but you have to be relentless about it.
- 4 Ship real apps** Alongside everything else
Two or three finished apps in a store, with real users and real reviews, beat any certificate. Contribute to an open source project too.
- 5 Internship, then first job** 3 to 12 months of applying
Internships are how most large employers hire. Expect technical interviews with live coding problems, and practice those specifically.

Pros and cons

- + High pay without needing a license or a graduate degree
- + Genuinely remote friendly
- + You can show people the thing you made on their own phone
- The junior market is crowded and interviews are brutal
- Platforms change every year and you never stop relearning
- Sitting still for hours, and on-call weeks at many companies

Good to know

One store charges once, the other charges every year

A Google Play developer account is a one-time \$25 registration fee. The Apple Developer Program is \$99 a year, every year, and your apps come down if you stop paying.

You can build an iPhone app for free

A free Apple developer account gets you the tools and lets you install your own app on your own devices. You only need the paid membership when you want other people to download it from the st...

Optional boosts

Both platforms. Backend work. Performance and battery work. Accessibility.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Software Developers

Apple Developer Program

Google Play: developer registration fee

University of Washington, Paul G. Allen School of Computer Science and Engineering: undergraduate program

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/mobile-app-developer>



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