

Securities trader

Buy and sell stocks, bonds and other securities for a bank or trading firm, using its money and its rules.

TYPICAL PAY

\$200,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$110k to \$450k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

4 to 5 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

Yes

regulated job

WHERE YOU WORK

Investment banks, trading firms, market makers, asset managers

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grade 12
Math, statistics and economics. Mental arithmetic practice really helps.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Finance, economics, math, computer science or engineering.
- 3 Internship** 1 to 2 summers
Banks and trading firms hire most graduates from their summer interns.
- 4 Licences** First few months
The SIE (Securities Industry Essentials) exam plus the Series 57, sponsored by your firm.
- 5 Trading on your own book** 1 to 3 years
After training and supervision, you get your own risk limits.

Pros and cons

- + Salary and bonus, using the firm's money
- + Fast, intense days that end at the close
- + Licence exams are cheap and paid by the firm
- Jobs are shrinking as software takes over
- Bonuses swing hard with the market
- Early starts and high stress

Good to know

600 traders became 2

In 2000, Goldman Sachs had 600 cash equity traders at its New York headquarters. By 2017 it had 2, backed by about 200 computer engineers running automated trading.

Barely growing

The BLS (Bureau of Labor Statistics) expects jobs in this group to grow about 1% from 2025 to 2035, and says automated trading has reduced the need for traders.

Optional boosts

Fast mental math. Probability and betting games. Coding. The SIE (Securities Industry Essentials) exam passed early.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Securities, Commodities and Financial Services Sales Agents (41-3031.00)

Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupational Outlook Handbook, securities sales agents

Financial Industry Regulatory Authority: Series 57 exam

Financial Industry Regulatory Authority: Securities Industry Essentials exam

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/securities-trader>



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