

Venture capitalist

Invest other people's money in young startups, knowing most will fail and a rare few pay for everything.

TYPICAL PAY

\$170,000

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$90k to \$440k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

6 to 12 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

Venture capital firms, corporate venture arms, startup accelerators, family offices

How you get there

- 1 High school** Grade 12
Math, economics and writing. Build something: a club, an app, a small business.
- 2 Bachelor's degree** 4 years
Any field works. Engineering, computer science, economics and the sciences are common.
- 3 A first career** 2 to 5 years
Investment banking, consulting, a software or science job, or working at a startup. This is what you will be hired for.
- 4 Get into venture** 1 to 3 years of trying
As an associate after banking or consulting, after a master of business administration, or as an operator or former founder.
- 5 Climb, or leave** 8 to 12 years
Associate to principal to partner takes about 8 to 12 years, and most associates leave before partner.

Pros and cons

- + Work with founders building new things
- + Small teams and a lot of responsibility
- + Partners can earn huge sums from carry
- Very few jobs, and hard to get in young
- Most of the big pay comes late, if at all
- You say no to almost everyone

Good to know

200 looks, 4 investments

In a survey of 889 venture investors, the average firm screened about 200 companies in a year and invested in about 4 of them.

Even a big investor lost to the market

The Kauffman Foundation studied about 100 venture funds it had backed over 20 years. 62 of them did not beat the public stock market after fees.

Optional boosts

Deep knowledge of one sector. A network of founders. Public writing. A track record.

Where these numbers come from

Venture5: 2025 Venture Capital Salary Survey (700+ respondents)

Gompers, Gornall, Kaplan and Strebulaev: How Do Venture Capitalists Make Decisions? (National Bureau of Economic Research)

Kauffman Foundation: We Have Met the Enemy... and He Is Us (venture fund returns)

National Venture Capital Association: Yearbook

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/venture-capitalist>



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