

A photograph of the Chicago skyline under a clear blue sky. The Willis Tower is the central focus, with other skyscrapers and lower buildings visible. A semi-transparent blue rectangular area is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

The Most In-Demand Programming Jobs in Chicagoland

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The computer programming industry continues to grow exponentially, and so has the demand for highly trained and experienced programmers. In fact, the demand is so great, companies are finding it increasingly difficult to fill many of the open positions available today. People entering the attractive world of computer programming will not only be entering a profession that will pay them handsomely (the average salary of a computer programmer is much higher than you may think), but it can also guarantee them a lifetime career that will provide job security. Although programmers are in a unique position to capitalize on the demand, the hiring businesses are put into a position of having to be competitively strategic in the way they hire, in order to maintain the level of productivity necessary to keep their business profitable.

CultureFit IT Staffing constantly monitors trends to provide our clients with the most current planning information available. We have compiled a list of the 6 most in-demand programming jobs available in the Chicagoland area based on our staffing requests over the past 12 month; giving hiring business the information and insight necessary to successfully hire new or vacant IT programming positions. Ranked in order of demand, the languages are as follows:

1. Java

Java is, without a doubt, the first preferred language for most IT firms and companies because of its portability and numerous features, as well as a true Object Oriented Language used extensively in software development. Java is at the top of the list, and there are numerous openings for Java developers in the region. Java Developers are also one of the highest paid programmers in the IT sector.

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2. JavaScript

JavaScript is also in high demand by companies in our Chicagoland market, as well as the rest of the country. JavaScript is used to develop dynamic websites, and is the most mandatory programming language for web development, including HTML and CSS. It is also simple to use, because it uses plain text to create code. Based on our staffing requests, this skill set will continue to see consistent year-over-year growth in demand.

3. SQL

SQL stands for Structural Query Language, and is a specialized programming language. It became a standard back in the mid-1980's, and continues to be deemed a core programming competency for editing and querying data residing in relational database management systems. Most websites and businesses have databases that work behind the scene. Most of these databases rely on SQL. It is most commonly used as a Query function which searches information databases for specific results.

4. Python

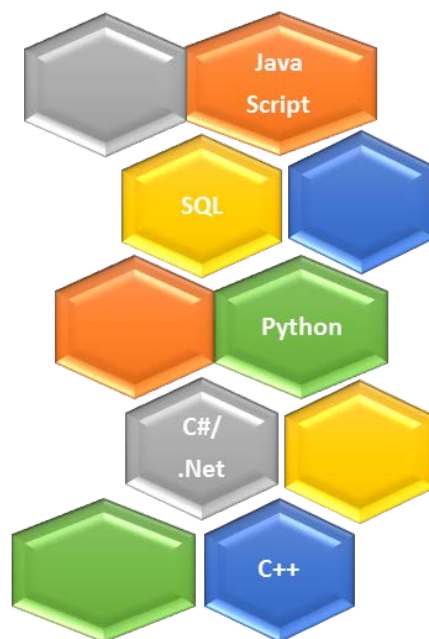
Python is a general purpose high level programming language also developed in the 1980s. It is also an Object Oriented Language. Python allows programmers to express a concept in just few lines of code compared to other languages that are used. It's in great demand today because there are so few Python developers out there, and the pay is therefore extremely good! A great example of low supply and high demand driving the compensation scale.

5. C#/.NET

C# is relatively new to the programming language spectrum, with its first release in 2000 – an Object Oriented Language developed by Microsoft as part of its .NET initiative, and combines the features of Visual Basic and C++. It's primarily used for iOS Application Development, but it's also used to support Android operating systems. Considering the growth of the applications market, many software companies are looking to hire more and more app developers to further grow their business.

6. C++

Consider this programming another one of the greats coming out of the 1980's boom – C++ is also a general purpose and Object Oriented Programming Language. It aids in developing high performance client-server applications, system software, application software, as well as many of the video games in the marketplace today! C++ has also powered major software like Adobe programs and Firefox.



How do your benefits and compensation measure up?

No different than your Econ 101 class – high demand, and low availability of qualified IT talent has a cost. Understanding what the market will bear is critical in filling these critical positions. But it's complicated. Compensation is only a part of the negotiations. Benefits – traditional and non-traditional, are also a part of a successful hiring equation. These are the positions where guessing and rough estimating could result in significant frustration. CultureFit's unique niche in the IT staffing category for the greater Chicagoland area allows us to actively monitor the hiring and compensation trends based exclusively on our local business market. Based on the past 12 months of placements, we've gathered the following trends:

Compensation

Java, JavaScript, SQL, and Python

There's very little variance in average compensation for the top 4 programming positions – Java, JavaScript, SQL, and Python. Like any position the years of experience does matter, and breakdown as follows:

Programming Seniority Level	Average Years of Experience	Average Compensation Per Year
Junior	0-2	\$55-70K
Mid-Level	2-4	\$75-95K
Senior	5+	\$100-140K

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Another key take-away from the chart above, is the difference in the definition of seniority level vs. most other positions outside of the IT industry. This talented and skilled group rise through the ranks at an accelerated rate and reap the compensation reward as a result of the small number of people who have followed this lucrative career path.

C#/.Net

The compensation for the programmers who specialize in C# is driven not only by demand, but also the power of Microsoft – **expect to pay an average of \$135K or even greater.**

C++

These programmers tend to be more specialized in the Financial vertical. As a result, their compensation averages are slightly higher, especially as they gain more senior level experience.

Programming Seniority Level	Average Years of Experience	Average Compensation Per Year
Junior	0-2	\$55-80K
Mid-Level	2-4	\$80-110K
Senior	5+	\$115-180K

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Benefits

These highly sought after programmers also have the advantage of significantly influencing their benefits which expand beyond the traditional benefits that a non-IT professional would consider or even be offered. The following will provide valuable planning guidance based on our 1st quarter survey results:

1. Healthcare Factors

For many, healthcare is a table-stake to the compensation and benefits plan in order to be positioned as competitive. However, healthcare as a benefit has become an increasing challenge for companies of all sizes. A few facts to consider:

- According to the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), only 48% of all privately owned businesses offer Healthcare Insurance in Illinois (approximately 1% less than the nation average).



Key Learning - This opens the door as a potentially competitive opportunity when it comes to securing the hire of a high demand programmer.

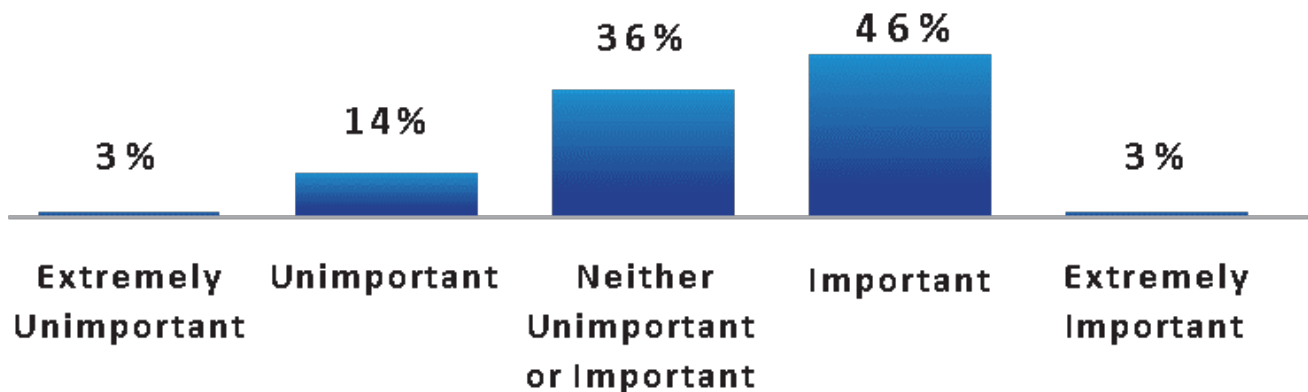
- An overly attractive plan may add an added tax burden on the employee. This Cadillac tax could dilute the overall value of the compensation package.

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Key learning - to obtain one of the top 6 highest demand programmers the hiring company should consider providing healthcare options that empower the IT professional to select which plan best fits their individual needs.

Healthcare



Although healthcare insurance ranks as the second highest priority, nearly 50% of the respondents ranked this benefit as having no importance or unimportant in their decision to make a job change.

This leaves the door open for businesses to create offer packages with other attractive components in it, such as the flexibility to work on and off premise, which ranked 3rd in preferences.

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2. Job Flexibility Basis

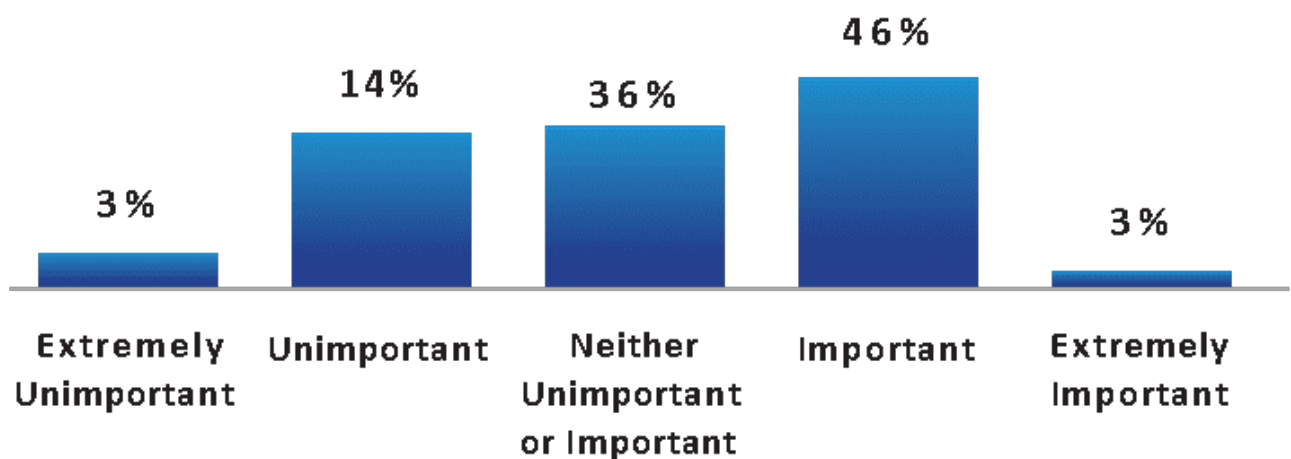
13.5% of the respondents from the CultureFit survey actually left their previous position to obtain this benefit. According to Adam Kooperman, President of CultureFit:

“In the Chicagoland area, commutes can exceed 2 hours. This is becoming a recurring preference for job seekers, which can cause a company to lose their ideal candidate to a competitor who offers either a shorter commute, or the flexibility to work on and off premise built in.”

Similar to our [2014 Benchmarking report](#), this trend is a recurring priority when reviewing the 49% of respondents that indicated Job Flexibility was either important or extremely important when selecting a new company to work for in the future.

The trend isn't native to the Chicagoland area, or other major metro areas, as a recent [2016 Computerworld survey](#) found a similar nationwide response of 31% of IT professionals expressed Job Flexibility as a priority preference.

Job Flexibility to Work On & Off Premise



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Just as important as an attractive offer package is having a high-level understanding of how an IT candidate is managing their career. This highly talented group of professionals are also highly motivated, and career advancement matters. Companies that take a position of supporting these career development goals by covering the costs of continuing education will not only reap the benefit of internal business advantage but also, a good hiring and retention advantage.

- Over 30% of our survey respondents indicated they made a recent move due to the opportunity to develop their skill sets, experience, or a promotion.

The most successful businesses develop a workforce plan designed to balance both the needs of the business as well as the candidates. Dorie Isaacson, CultureFit's Director of Recruitment, adds:

"It's a short and long-term strategy to help reduce hiring costs, attract the highest quality talent with the best culture fit, and retain the employees who make the greatest impact."

As previously reported in our 2014 CultureFit Benchmarking study, the average IT candidate who is actively interviewing, will do so with 3-4 companies at the same time. Tracking hiring trends from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective is essential to a successful recruitment plan.

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CultureFit and Advance Search bring a combination of over 10 years of IT Recruitment; entrusted to hire and place IT professionals throughout the Greater Chicagoland and Milwaukee area. Each year, they're charged to recruit, negotiate, and place 100's of open positions with quality talent that meet skill set requirements as well as compliment an organization's culture. Their unique position has afforded them the opportunity to identify hiring trends from both the organization and the talent's perspective.



If your business is searching for one of these highly sought after programmers the [CultureFit](#) team has access to over 150K professionals. CultureFit is a full service Technology Staffing and recruitment firm for IT Professionals that value organizational fit, job satisfaction, and an extremely high level of technical IT skills.

Call a CultureFit Staffing Consultant Today! 1-847-945-7600

- **We're Unique. Really Unique.** – IT Professionals are matched for skills and culture fit to Your Business
- **We Speak IT.** - Over 15 years dedicated to IT Staffing throughout the Chicagoland Area
- **Access Isn't a Barrier.** - an IT Talent pool of more than 150,000 professionals
- **Customer Service.** – it's more than a noun – it's a verb we back up every day

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