

AICN Newsletter

The Quarterly Publication of the Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks

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RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION: YOU STILL HAVE TIME



Although, the new year has started, you still have time to renew your subscription for the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder. In the fall of 2018, IEEE-USA introduced the [IEEE-USA Consultant Finder](#), powered by IEEE Collabratec, to IEEE members. This redesigned service's key features include:

- Simple and advanced search features
- An assignment placement portal
- A full consultant profile for paid subscribers

In addition, the [IEEE-USA Consultant Finder's](#) visual design makes it easy to use. In addition, it has web crawlers, so even more potential clients will be able to find this new website—and the individual consultant profiles. Lastly, the Finder has opened this service fully to international independent consultants (those outside of North America) to post their profiles and market their services. Since Collaboratec powers this service, all 400,000 IEEE members have access to

the Finder. Moreover, clients, project managers and HR professionals can search for consultants to hire – free!

All IEEE members considering, or jumping, into the world of the gig economy should check out the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder for marketing their services. The IEEE membership renewal period is the best and easiest time to get started. When you renew your IEEE membership, just add the [IEEE Consultants Network Membership Premium](#) into your cart. This step allows your IEEE Collabratec profile to be listed in the [IEEE-USA Consultant Finder](#).

The visual upgrade makes the Finder easier to use; and it will attract even more clients, project managers and HR professionals to search for a consultant, or post a consulting or contract assignment. IEEE-USA is also actively trying to promote this service to professionals through Google ad words, as well as constantly updating Search Engine Optimization (SEO) tags.

We look forward to your continued support of this product with your renewed subscription. IEEE-USA knows this service will benefit all IEEE independent consultant members and their consultant practices.

Please note: Current “Membership Premium” subscribers—it is now a great time to review your consultant profile. Log in via IEEE Collabratec (or the IEEE Collabratec App)—and consider adding, or updating, your photo; reviewing your biography; and updating your desired salary, or hourly rate.

You can also review the IEEE-USA webinar “[All You Ever Wanted to Know about the New IEEE-USA Consultant Finder.](#)” This new webinar outlines the new features of this service.

Again, welcome to the IEEE-USA Consultant Finder. And thank you to those that have already subscribed to this great service. We hope you like the new look and upgrades. For IEEE members who have not yet subscribed, be sure to take a closer look—don't miss this great opportunity! ■

AICNCC WELCOMES A NEW CONSULTANTS NETWORK IN NIGERIA

The Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks Coordinating Committee (AICNCC) congratulates Kennedy Chinedu Okafor, with the [IEEE Nigeria Section Consultants Network Affinity Group](#); on the formation of their consultants network. This newest Consultants Network became official on 3 December 2019.



If fellow consultants would like to give a personal welcome to any new networks, check out the consultants page on [IEEE-USA's website](#) for contact information. If other IEEE members would like to form a consultant network, IEEE-USA offers [step-by-step instructions](#) about how to start a formal network.

We encourage new consultants networks to register as Affinity Groups. After a group forms a network, it can take advantage of IEEE's branding and resources, and qualify for funding through IEEE Section rebates. If you don't see your consultants network's contact information listed on the IEEE-USA website, contact Daryll Griffin at

d.r.griffin@ieee.org. ■

For questions, comments or submissions please contact Daryll Griffin at +1 202 530 8337 or d.r.griffin@ieee.org.

<https://ieeeusa.org/careers/consultants/>

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IEEE-USA CONSULTANTS FEE SURVEY REPORT 2019 EDITION

2019 IEEE-USA CONSULTANTS FEE SURVEY: *Average Age Continues to Rise, Consultants Experience Declines*

BY HELEN HORWITZ

This article was originally published in IEEE-USA Insight

Growing numbers of mid- to late-career engineering professionals are continuing to move into consulting. According to the [2019 IEEE-USA Consultants Fee Survey](#), this year's respondents have an average of 17 years of consulting experience. The [2018 report also observed this trend](#).

Although the mean (average) age and years of overall engineering experience both increased sharply this year, compared to the past few survey findings — the mean age is now 61 and 26 years of engineering experience. The years of consulting experience declined slightly. Nearly half (49.8%) had 14 years or fewer, with 17.6% having five or fewer years of experience. Some 22.5% have been consulting for 25 years, or more.

Elsewhere, the report notes that, as with IEEE membership in general, the vast majority of consultants is male (92.6%), and identifies as non-Hispanic White (77.6%). The largest minority group among consultants remains Asian or Pacific Islander, with 4.3%. In addition, men have almost a decade more overall

professional experience than women, with female consultants reporting 17.3 years.

Conducted this past spring, the Survey drew a large percentage (25.1%) of respondents over the age of 70, down only slightly from 25.6% in last year's report. Another 36.1% reported being ages 60-69; the 45-59 age range drew 27.6%.

Almost 86% (85.8%) are United States citizens by birth. Another 11.3% are naturalized citizens; while (and consistent with last year), 2.0% are permanent resident aliens.

The median hourly rate consultants charged this year is \$160, reflecting a \$10 increase over last year's report. The typical consultant, who has been in the profession for less than 15 years, reported this hourly rate. Those respondents with 25-34 years of experience reported \$175 — the highest median hourly rate. However, the rate for those with 35 or more years declined to \$154 an hour.

Education level remains a significant factor in how much consultants charge. This year, those with a Ph.D. have a \$40 advantage, with a median hourly rate of \$200. Consistent with last year's report, there is virtually no difference between the hourly rates of consultants with a Bachelor's or Master's degree.

Nearly two in 10 (19%) of the consultants in the survey have a Ph.D. Just over four in 10 (41%) consultants' highest degrees are Master's — the largest group being MSEE/MSCE (20%). About three in 10 consultants' highest degrees (30%) are Bachelor's, with most holding a BSEE or BSCE.

Although professional registration is required to practice as an engineer in many countries, it is not essential for most EEs in the United States. In this year's survey, 32.4% reported they are licensed Professional Engineers (PEs); and they enjoyed a \$10 hourly advantage over those without.

When looking at which parts of the United States offer the highest compensation rates in terms of Census regions, consultants in the Middle Atlantic region (New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey) enjoy the highest median at \$195. West South Central (Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana) trails slightly at \$188. East North Central (Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio) has the lowest at \$171. The survey analyzes responses using United States Census Bureau regions, not IEEE Region designations.

To understand their areas of expertise, the survey asked consultants to select all the specialties, of 96 listed, in which they offer consulting services. The top five areas for consulting services are: Systems Engineering (33.9%); Electrical Power Systems (28.9%); Project Management (26.5%); Expert Witness (25%); and Electrical Power Generation, Transmissions and Distributions (24%).

The five technical specialties with the greatest increases since 2015 are: Instrumentation and Controls (+4.3%); Electronic Components (+3.8%); CAD (+3.6%); Expert Witness (+3.4%); and Troubleshooting (+3.3%). Those showing the greatest declines since 2015 are: Diagnostic Software (-3.2%); Databases and Data Management (-3.8%); Project Management (-5%); Networks – LAN/WAN, Other (-5.2%); and Software Development, Application and Management (-7.7%).

As in other recent surveys, most consultants (79.5%) had a home office for their work setting. A noticeable change from last year is that only about four in 10 (40.6%) carried professional liability

insurance, in case of errors or omissions. In 2018, almost half (49.9%) reported having it.

Respondents who worked solely as an independent consultant in 2018 remained high. After peaking at 48.6% in 2018 (up from 31% in 2017), sole independent consultants dipped slightly this year to 44.3%. Similarly, almost four in 10 (39.1%) worked with partners, as contract employees, as employees of another company, or were incorporated.

The majority of the average consultant's business (55.6%) came from repeat clients; however, outside connections remain important, as earnings also came from client and friend referrals (13%), and client contacts made by networking (10.2%). Several new categories introduced this year — but scarcely used by respondents — included social media networking (1.1%) and Internet/Google ads (0.9%).

Most consultants (59.1%) work with private, non-defense companies; when defense and utilities-related firms are included, the private industry share rises to more than eight in 10 respondents.

On average, the typical consultant billed 25 hours per week; and consistent with last year, continued the decline from 2017, when an average of 29 hours per week was reported. Hourly rates remain the most common billing method; more than seven in 10 (72.4%) use it. Fixed price is the next most common, with 20.3% (up from 15.8% in 2018) reporting that.

Consistent with past surveys, an average 12.5% are having trouble collecting their fees.

IEEE-USA has conducted surveys about the compensation and fringe benefits of its members since 1972. A separate consultants' survey began in 1998. This past spring, 13,288 members identified as consultants in the IEEE membership database were invited by email to complete the 2019 IEEE-USA Consultants Fee Survey. Of this number, 1,133 participated. All findings in this report represent only those identified as self-employed consultants — the 751 individuals who reported that at least half of their consulting hours came from fee-based consulting. IEEE Strategic Research conducted the survey and prepared the report. ■

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THE DATE FAST APPROACHES FOR CALIFORNIA'S AB 5 TO BECOME LAW

As the date for California's new AB 5 law goes into effect, Californians are starting to learn the direct effects it is having on certain industries in the state. IEEE-USA is following these trending issues through the news media, as reports come about the effect it is having on some industries. See the news articles below detailing what industry is doing to adhere to the law--and the push back from other industries wanting to repeal it.

- [Did Vox Just Fire the Entire Golden State of Mind Staff Via Twitter?](#)
- [Assemblywoman Gonzalez, Other Lawmakers Begin to Rethink Certain Parts of AB 5](#)
- [Uber, Postmates and Two Drivers Sue California over Law that Would Reclassify Contractors as Employees](#)
- [Uber, Lyft, Postmates Refuse To Comply with California Gig Economy Law](#)

IEEE-USA will continue to follow the developments on this new law, and its implementation, as they arise. ■

ANOTHER CONSULTANT'S BLOG

In organizing and gathering information for this quarterly newsletter, IEEE-USA staff browse the internet looking for pertinent stories to include for the benefit of consultants. Often, we come across interesting blogs and posts that we want to share with IEEE consultants, and would-be consultants. The following blog discusses how a service bureau can supplement a consultant's team with a trained designer, or an engineer who can bring needed skills and experience to the team. This blog post, "[Consultant's Corner: Time for a Service Bureau Consult](#)," is another good entry for those consultants that confront issues outside of their areas of expertise.. ■

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