

SPECIAL
REPORT

TRAINING INDUSTRY'S **L&D CAREER AND SALARY STUDY**

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LEARNING PROFESSIONALS WANT TO DEVELOP THEMSELVES, AND THEY PREFER ORGANIZATIONS THAT WILL SUPPORT THEIR GROWTH.

The demand for learning and development (L&D) professionals is [on the rise](#). Many factors have led to this increased need for L&D expertise, including advancements in technology and a shifting perspective on the strategic role of L&D in addressing business challenges. However, navigating your career as a learning professional is challenging. The pathway to landing a job in L&D is not linear — and the skills, knowledge and experience that L&D professionals need to grow in their careers are evolving.

Training Industry, Inc. is dedicated to supporting the career advancement of L&D professionals, which is the inspiration behind our [L&D Careers and Salary Survey](#). This research effort investigates the career needs and salary benchmarks of training professionals across organizations and industries. This report will share the survey results from more than 530 learning professionals to help you understand the factors you should consider as you navigate your career and compensation as a training professional.

WHAT ARE L&D PROFESSIONALS CURRENTLY DOING?

Our survey asked L&D professionals a variety of questions to better understand how L&D is structured within their organizations, including job titles, size of the training team and where the responsibilities for training reside within the business. The results revealed the following:

- **Job Titles:** The most common job titles represented in the sample were training managers, directors of training, content developers and instructional designers.
- **Training Structure:** The majority of the sample was housed either in their organization's HR department or within a centralized L&D department.
- **Work Arrangements:** L&D professionals have not seen much change to their work schedules in terms of in-person, hybrid and remote work between 2022 and 2025. This suggests that hybrid work has persisted as the norm for most professionals in L&D, several years after restrictions from COVID-19 have been lifted. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Work Arrangements

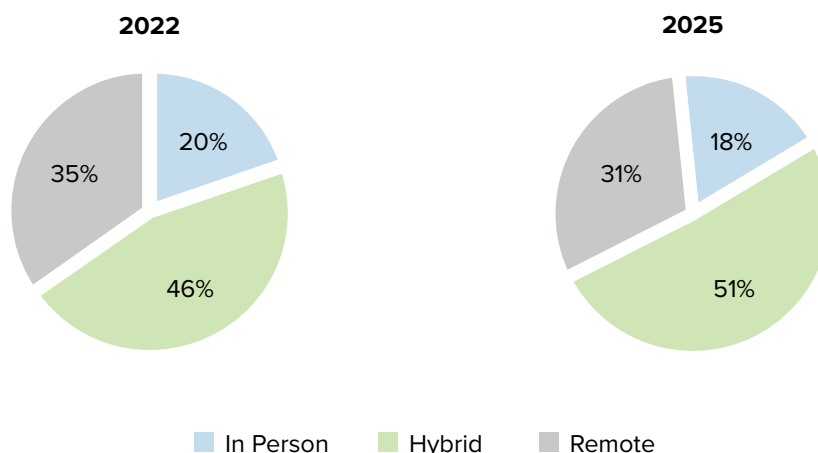
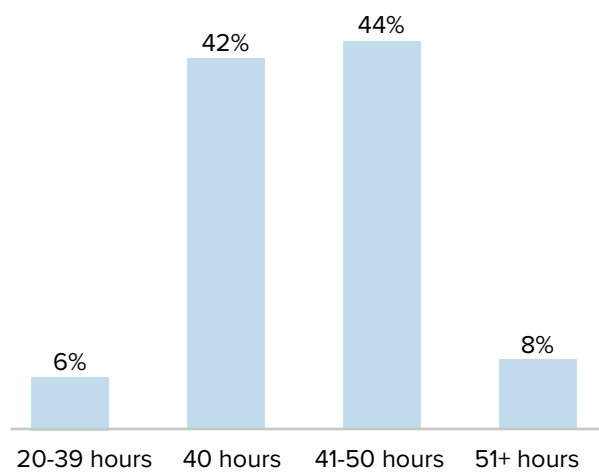


Figure 2. Estimated Work Hours



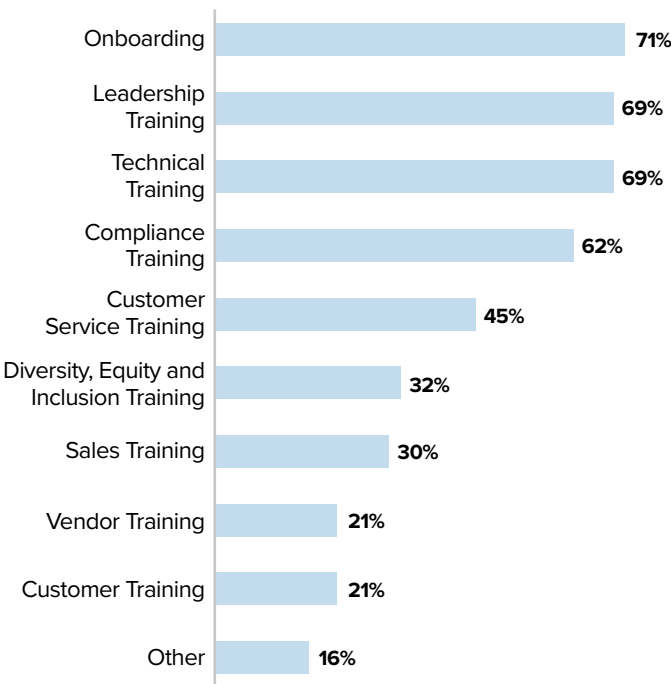
- **Work Hours:** The learning professionals surveyed tended to work between 40 and 50 hours a week and were slightly more likely to work greater than 40 hours than they were to work 40 hours or less. (See Figure 2.)
- **Size of Training Team:** The size of a learning professional's team depended on the size of their organization. Nearly 1 in 3 small organizations (less than 100 employees) employed just one training professional, whereas 1 in 5 moderately sized organizations (between 100 and 1,000 employees) employed only one training professional. Once organizations reach 10,000 employees or more, their training teams tend to grow, often exceeding 20+ training professionals. (See Figure 3.)

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

Learning professionals in this sample were most likely to have responsibility over onboarding, leadership, technical and compliance training, with more than one-half of the sample reporting responsibility over these training types. Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), sales, vendor and customer training

were the least common training types to be responsible for (See Figure 4). Interestingly, professionals responsible for sales and vendor training showed higher salaries than other training professionals.

Figure 4. Training Responsibilities
Which of the following types of training are you involved in?



HOW DO LEARNING PROFESSIONALS FEEL ABOUT THEIR WORK?

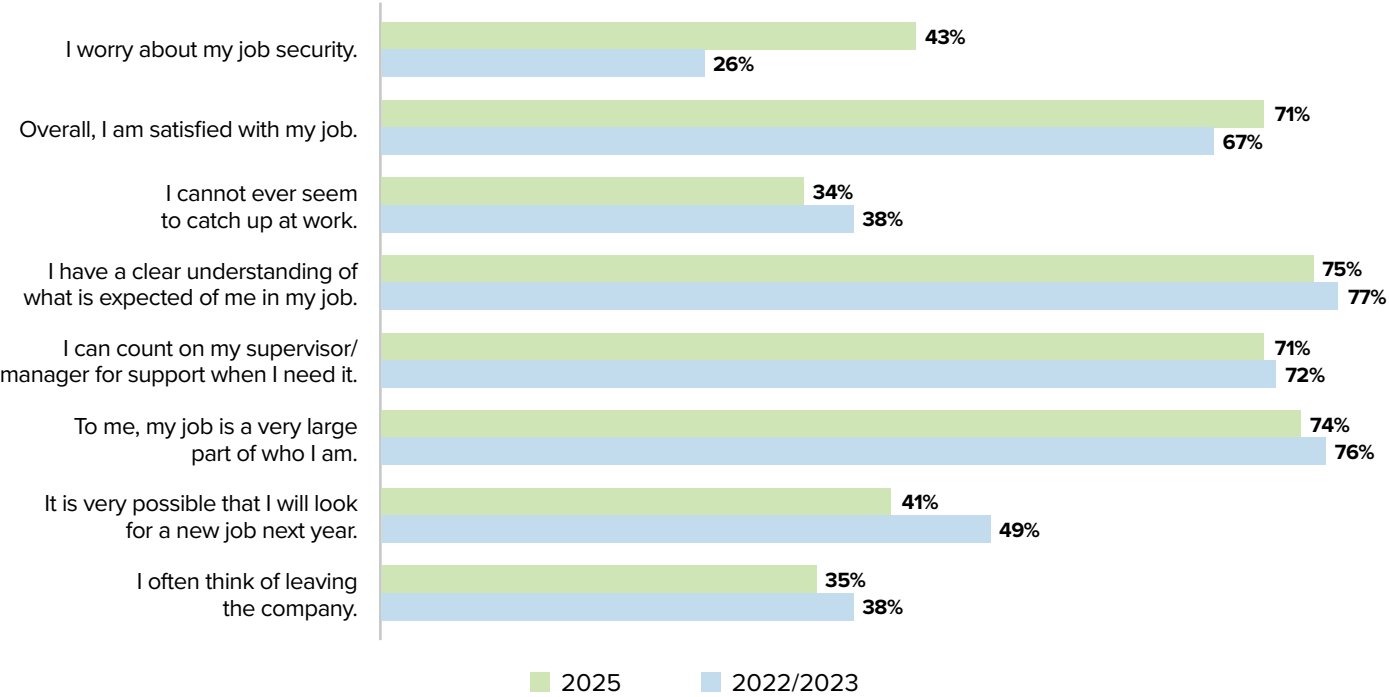
Throughout the years, learning professionals reported a sense of identity and satisfaction with their work, agreeing that their job was a big part of who they are. Unfortunately, professionals in 2025 show higher rates of concern for their job security than professionals only two years prior. (See Figure 5.) Interestingly, among each of the questions related to their feelings toward

Figure 3. Size of Training Team

	Less than 100	101 - 1,000	1,001 - 10,000	More than 10,000
Just 1	30	21	9	2
2-5	27	53	29	7
6-10	15	16	24	10
11-20	9	3	15	11
More than 20	18	7	23	70

(Columns represent number of employees at the organization, rows represent number of training professionals employed.)

Figure 5. Feelings Toward Work: Then and Now



work, only “I can never seem to catch up at work” showed any relation to salary; professionals who struggled to keep up with their workload also earned the highest salaries. Unsurprisingly (and perhaps unfortunately), those with higher salaries generally tend to feel more overwhelmed with their work. Similarly, higher salaried L&D professionals also tended to work longer hours per week.

CATEGORIZING FACTORS THAT IMPACT L&D SALARIES

Our study strived to better understand compensation for L&D professionals. The results revealed that the overall median salary for a training professional is \$100K. Figure 5 details the breakdown of salaries across a variety of factors, including job title, industry and size of company. While we found that salary did not impact job satisfaction — L&D professionals tended to demonstrate high levels of job satisfaction regardless of salary — we noted that personal professional development budget was related to satisfaction, with those working for companies that invest in their professional development reporting higher satisfaction. This suggests that learning professionals want to develop themselves, and they prefer organizations that will support their growth.

THE SKILLS, ATTRIBUTES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH-SALARY LEARNING PROFESSIONALS

The highest-salaried learning professionals had a few key aspects in common:

- Mastery of the [Training Manager Competency Model™](#), particularly strategic alignment, optimizing processes and selecting and managing resources.

LEARNING PROFESSIONALS WERE MORE LIKELY TO EXPRESS CONCERNS ABOUT JOB SECURITY IN 2025 THAN IN 2022 AND 2023.

- Participating in professional development, including internal training programs as well as external training programs and conferences (both virtual and in person).
- Completing a professional certification program.
- Holding a master’s or doctoral degree.
- Maintaining a leadership position with direct reports.
- Experience — years in the workforce was positively related to salary.
- Working more than 40 hours per week.

Figure 6 provides more detail.

Figure 6. Career Attributes by Salary

Median Salary	Lower Salary Positions	CAREER-RELATED ATTRIBUTES	Higher Salary Positions	Median Salary
\$75-85K	- Facilitators - Content Developers	JOB TITLE	- Directors of Training - Training Managers - Chief Learning Officers	\$99-124K
\$74-79K	- Banking - Nonprofit	INDUSTRY	- Health Care - Technology	\$98-117K
\$96-98K	- Human Resources - Centralized L&D	DEPARTMENT	- Customer Service - Sales	\$102-104K
\$89K	<1,000 employees	COMPANY SIZE	>1,000 employees	\$112K
\$85-95K	1-5 people	L&D TEAM SIZE	5 or more people	\$105-115K
\$89K	Company doesn't invest in their training staff.	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Company provides personal professional development budgets.	\$110K



\$100K

was the overall median salary.



SALARY did not impact job satisfaction.
PERSONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BUDGET did.

L&D PROFESSIONALS ARE USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

AI Use

Learning professionals show high rates of AI use, with over one-half the sample utilizing AI to at least a small extent across all seven core responsibilities of training management. They are particularly likely to utilize AI for developing and delivering solutions, managing technology and optimizing processes.

AI Use and Performance

Professionals who reported using AI also reported stronger performance across five of the seven core responsibilities. All responsibilities except strategic alignment and selecting and managing resources appeared to benefit from the use of AI. This highlights the essential human component in understanding strategy and selecting the best resources.

AI Use and Salary

In terms of salary, those who did not use AI at all (16% of the sample) showed a slightly lower salary than those who used AI to at least a moderate extent across at least one responsibility (with a median salary of \$105,000 versus \$117,000 respectively). This suggests that professionals using AI are seeing their reported performance boosts reflected in their salaries.

CERTIFICATION PAYS: SALARY DIFFERENCES BY CREDENTIAL

Professionals with a **Certified Professional in Training Management (CPTM™)** credential report higher average compensation levels than their peers: **over \$17K more** than peers without certification and a **\$15K+ edge** over non-certified professionals.

HOLDING A CPTM
CERTIFICATION WAS
ASSOCIATED WITH
HIGHER SALARY, EVEN
WHEN COMPARED TO
HOLDERS OF OTHER
PROFESSIONAL
CERTIFICATIONS.

In addition to earning higher pay, professionals with their CPTM credential reported greater job security. Those without the credential were nearly 40% more likely to say they worry about their job security — 53% expressed concern, compared to just 33% of credential holders.

**CAREER GOALS AND DEVELOPMENT:
PATH TO THE C-SUITE**

Our survey also considered the career aspirations of L&D professionals, as well as the skills and development that they believe they need to grow in their careers. Becoming a director of training or chief learning officer (CLO) was the most common career goal for training professionals. About 50% aspire to the CLO level, yet fewer than 1% achieve that goal, according to Training Industry research. In addition, nearly 20% of the sample indicated that they do not feel like they have the skills necessary to reach their professional development goals.

Given these career goals, L&D professionals seemed to have a realistic picture of the types of skills that would best prepare them to achieve those goals, focusing on development needs in areas like business acumen and strategic alignment. The topics that were most commonly called out as professional development needs were:

- Strategic alignment
- Change management
- Process optimization
- Stakeholder communication
- Competency model development
- Business acumen

When it comes to dedicating time to professional development, our survey respondents are prioritizing their learning. Over 90% of learning professionals indicated that they engaged in some form of professional development over the past year but found [professional certifications](#) to be the most beneficial form of development.

We hope you can use these insights to better benchmark and navigate your career and salary as an L&D professional.

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Figure 7. Impact of Certification on Salary

	Average	Median
CPTM Certification	Salary: \$124,461	Salary: \$117,650
Non-CPTM Certification	Salary: \$112,716	Salary: \$100,000
No Certification	Salary: \$106,476	Salary: \$102,000

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Developing your skills as a learning leader is essential to have the expertise needed to manage the business of learning. Here are some resources to help you navigate your career journey:

- [L&D Career Pathways Hub](#)
- [Charting Your L&D Career Path: Strategies and Insights](#)
- [Training Manager Competency Assessment](#)
- [AI Essentials for Training Managers Certificate](#)
- [10 Best Practices for Leading a Great Training Organization](#)
- [The Certified Professional in Training Management \(CPTM™\) Program](#)
- [Training Industry Senior Leaders Program: Your Pathway to the C-Suite](#)