snipebridge

Talent Drives Success

UNITED STATES · LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE TALENT MARKET

Landscape talent is in demand. Hiring it takes a strategy.

Where landscape architects and designers work, who is competing for them, what the market pays, and how firms can hire licensed and senior talent in a market where engineering firms and public agencies recruit from the same bench.

27,448

Landscape architects and designers in the US, up 0.5% in a year

1 in 31

Job posts per Senior Landscape Architect, vs. 1 in 75 across the pool

1.9 yrs

Median tenure, the point when professionals are most likely to move

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A deep bench on paper, a thin one in practice

The US has **27,448 landscape professionals** across five core titles, and the pool grew just **0.5%** last year. More than half are designers. Licensed and senior talent is a fraction of that, and it is spread across hundreds of firms, agencies and contractors.

Top 5 insights

01 **The pool is barely growing.** 27,448 professionals, up 0.5% in a year. Firms are competing for the same people, not new ones.

02 **Senior talent is the pressure point.** Senior, Associate and Principal Landscape Architects are 10% of the pool (2,691 professionals) but carry 55 of 368 open posts. That's one post for every 49 senior professionals.

03 **Talent moves more than it posts.** 2,007 professionals changed jobs last year, more than five times the 368 open posts. Median tenure is 1.9 years.

04 **Civil engineering is pulling from design firms.** Architecture and planning firms lost 54 professionals to civil engineering last year and gained 35 back, a net loss of 19.

05 **Experience carries a 64% premium.** The base-pay median runs from $72K at the designer level to $118K at the Senior/Principal level.

Strategic imperatives

Go to passive talent, don't wait for applicants. 2,007 professionals changed jobs last year against 368 open posts. **Price senior roles to the current market,** not last year's internal bands. **Build a visible path** from designer to licensed Landscape Architect to principal. **Sell the work,** because typology, design authorship and site impact are what engineering firms and agencies can't always offer.

The message is clear: landscape hiring is won before the job is posted.

THE TALENT POOL

Ten metros, 38% of the talent

The ten largest metros hold **10,314 professionals, 38% of the US pool**. Supply and demand don't line up market to market: Chicago has a Very high demand rating with 718 professionals and 6 open posts, while New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco are flagged as hidden-gem markets with more supply than demand.

75
Professionals for every open post (27,448 / 368)

2,007
Changed jobs in the past year (7.3% of the pool)

+0.5%
1-year pool growth

Top 10 metros

METRO	PROFESSIONALS	1-YR CHANGE	JOB POSTS	HIRING DEMAND
New York City Metro	1,808	+2%	21	Moderate
Los Angeles Metro	1,597	+1%	35	Low
San Francisco Bay Area	1,338	0%	12	Low
Washington DC-Baltimore	**1,049**	**+2%**	**16**	**High**
Greater Boston	1,003	0%	7	Moderate
Greater Seattle	730	0%	2	Low
Greater Chicago	**718**	**0%**	**6**	**Very high**
Greater Philadelphia	702	+3%	9	Low
Atlanta Metro	687	-1%	15	Moderate
Denver Metro	**682**	**-1%**	**9**	**High**

Talent migration: professionals relocating in or out, past 12 months

METRO	GAINED	LOST	NET	BIGGEST FLOW
San Francisco Bay Area	34	18	+16	+4 from Boston, +3 from Sacramento
New York City Metro	43	32	+11	+6 from Boston
Los Angeles Metro	34	24	+10	+4 from Philadelphia, +3 from Boston
Greater Chicago	19	11	+8	Midwest metros (Indianapolis, Lansing, Madison)
Washington DC-Baltimore	25	22	+3	Spread across 34 markets
Greater Boston	**24**	**30**	**-6**	**Lost 15 to New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles**

CRITICAL FINDING

2,007 professionals changed jobs last year against 368 open posts, more than five moves for every post. Boston is the one top metro losing talent, and most of it went to New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

A posting reaches only the professionals who are actively looking. Most of this market moves without one.

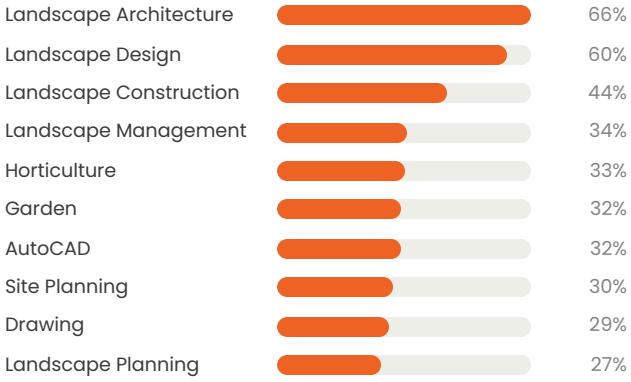
ROLES AND SKILLS

Designers fill the pool, seniors carry the demand

Landscape Designers make up **53% of the pool**, with 114 professionals per open post. At the Senior Landscape Architect level, it's **31 professionals per post**, the most competitive ratio of any title.

TITLE	PROFESSIONALS	% OF POOL	1-YR GROWTH	JOB POSTS	PROFESSIONALS PER POST
Landscape Designer	14,481	53%	+1%	127	114
Landscape Architect	10,333	38%	0%	186	56
Senior Landscape Architect	**1,438**	**5%**	**+2%**	**46**	**31**
Principal Landscape Architect	810	3%	0%	7	116
Associate Landscape Architect	443	2%	-3%	2	222
Landscape Architecture Intern	277	1%	+19%	0	–

Top skills (% of pool)



Fastest-growing skills (1-yr)

SKILL	GROWTH	PROFESSIONALS
Planning & Scheduling	+57%	3,265
Spatial Planning	+50%	5,230
Land Management	+25%	3,981
Landscape Management	+21%	9,390
Site Analysis	+21%	1,579
Data Collection	+20%	1,898
Sustainability Consulting	+16%	1,905

WHAT FIRMS SHOULD DO

Planning and scheduling (+57%) and spatial planning (+50%) are the fastest-growing skills in the pool. Landscape professionals are building toward project leadership. Show candidates the path to running projects and leading teams, and make the work itself the reason to join.

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

No one owns this market, everyone competes for it

The 20 largest employers hold just **1,653 professionals, 6% of the pool**. The largest, Kimley-Horn, employs 262, less than 1%. Five public agencies are on the list, and self-employment grew 57% in a year.

Top 20 employers

EMPLOYER	PROF.	1-YR
Kimley-Horn	262	+1%
Self Employed	159	+57%
SWA	117	+26%
National Park Service	112	+1%
Stantec	101	-3%
Caltrans	85	0%
Design Workshop	81	+8%
AECOM	77	+4%
NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation	74	+6%
USDA Forest Service	71	-1%

EMPLOYER	PROF.	1-YR
SmithGroup	63	-17%
Sasaki	60	+5%
NYS Dept. of Transportation	56	+4%
Langan	**55**	**+72%**
BrightView Landscapes	55	+6%
Moon Valley Nurseries	50	+2%
OLIN	45	0%
HDR	**44**	**+19%**
Bolton & Menk	44	-4%
Walt Disney Imagineering	42	+20%

Top industries

INDUSTRY	PROFESSIONALS	1-YR	JOB POSTS	HIRING DEMAND
Architecture and Planning	8,497	0%	115	Very high
Design Services	3,474	0%	12	Moderate
Construction	2,481	-1%	18	High
Civil Engineering	**2,292**	**+2%**	**81**	**Very high**
Environmental Services	1,880	0%	10	Very high
Facilities Services	1,595	+1%	13	High
Government Administration	658	+1%	6	High

CRITICAL FINDING

Civil engineering employs 2,292 landscape professionals but posts 81 jobs, one for every 28 professionals, against one for every 74 in architecture and planning. Engineering firms like Langan (+72%) and HDR (+19%) are growing their landscape teams fast, and design firms lost a net 19 professionals to the sector last year.

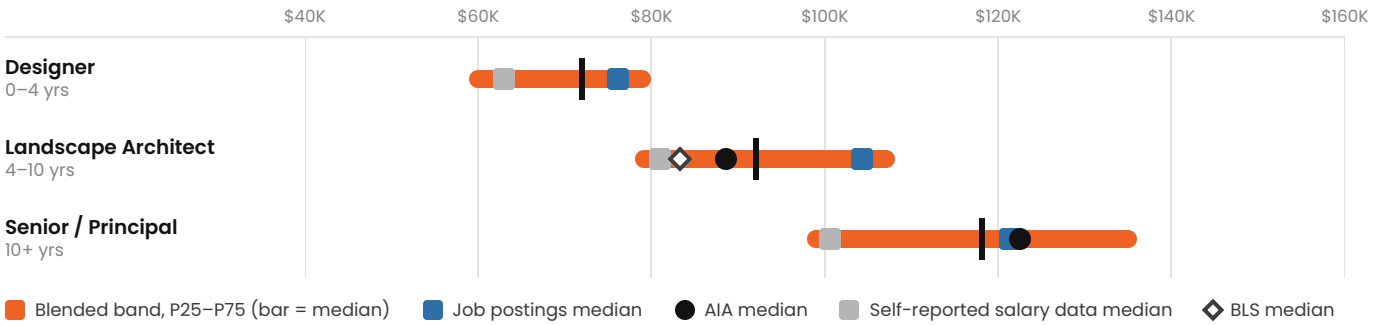
Your competition for a Landscape Architect is as likely to be an engineering firm as another studio.

COMPENSATION BENCHMARK

What landscape talent costs

The US base-pay median for a Senior or Principal Landscape Architect is **$118,000**, a **64% premium** over the $72,000 designer median. Licensed Landscape Architects sit between them at $92,000.

Blended base-pay bands by level



LEVEL	TYPICAL TITLES	EXPERIENCE	P25	MEDIAN	P75	HOURLY AT MEDIAN
Designer	Landscape Designer I/II, Entry-Level Designer	0–4 yrs	$59,000	**$72,000**	$80,000	$34.62
Landscape Architect	Landscape Architect, Licensed LA, Project LA	4–10 yrs	$78,000	**$92,000**	$108,000	$44.23
Senior / Principal	**Senior LA, Associate, Principal LA**	**10+ yrs**	**$98,000**	**$118,000**	**$136,000**	**$56.73**

Base pay for a 40-hour week. Excludes overtime and bonus. Hourly = annual ÷ 2,080. Ranges vary widely by metro.

Senior Landscape Architect median base by region

REGION	MEDIAN	VS. US
Pacific	$145,000	+19%
Mountain	$130,000	+6%
East North Central	$124,000	+1%
West North Central	$120,000	-2%
South Atlantic	$114,000	-7%
Middle Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA)	$112,000	-8%

AIA regional medians for licensed Senior Landscape Architects, adjusted to 2026. US median $123,000. Regions with fewer than five firms are not reported.

CRITICAL FINDING

At the senior level, employers are posting a $121,000 median and AIA firm data puts it at $123,000. Professionals report earning $101,000. Posted ranges reset the market, and every candidate is comparing to them.

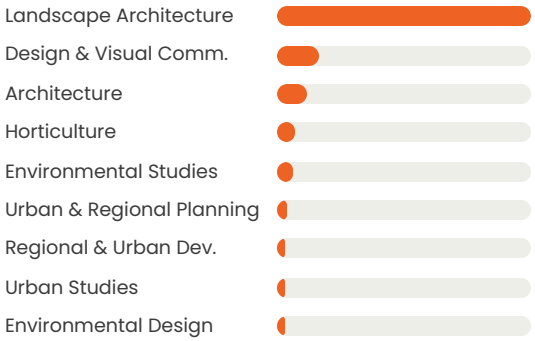
A senior band built on what your team earns today will lose the offer before it's made.

EDUCATION AND BACKGROUND

A credentialed workforce, and getting more so

34% of landscape professionals hold a master's degree, and among recent graduates that rises to **46%**. Landscape Architecture is the dominant field of study, with architecture, horticulture and planning feeding the pool alongside it.

Top fields of study



Highest degree

DEGREE	ALL PROFESSIONALS	RECENT GRADS
Bachelor's	60%	51%
Master's	**34%**	**46%**
Associate's	3%	2%
MBA	2%	1%

Gender



41% Female **59%** Male

Top schools

SCHOOL	PROFESSIONALS	RECENT GRADS	SCHOOL	PROFESSIONALS	RECENT GRADS
University of Georgia	479	80	SUNY ESF	368	40
Cal Poly Pomona	468	82	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	362	46
Penn State	442	64	Iowa State	362	39
Ohio State	405	49	Louisiana State	342	46
Texas A&M	371	72	UC Berkeley	322	53

WHAT FIRMS SHOULD DO

Nearly half of recent graduates hold a master's. They arrive expecting a clear path to licensure and design responsibility. Build relationships with the programs that feed your region, and show early-career professionals how they grow from designer to licensed Landscape Architect to project lead.

RECOMMENDATIONS

How to win landscape talent in 2027

Here's the paradox. The US has 27,448 landscape professionals, yet the senior talent firms need most is under 10% of the pool, and engineering firms and public agencies are recruiting from the same bench.

01 **Reach passive talent, don't wait for applicants**

2,007 professionals changed jobs last year, more than five times the 368 open posts. **What to do:**

- Work with a specialist recruiting partner who knows the landscape community and talks to passive licensed and senior professionals every day.
- Lead every approach with the projects, the clients and the path to leadership, not the job description.

02 **Price to a landscape-specific benchmark**

Senior postings run a $121,000 median and AIA firms report $123,000, while senior professionals report earning $101,000. **What to do:**

- Budget Landscape Architects at $92K–$108K and Senior/Principal roles at $118K–$136K, the median to P75, and adjust for your metro.
- Benchmark each role against today's market before it goes live.

03 **Sell the career path, not the seat**

Designers are 53% of the pool, Senior and Principal titles are 8%, and median tenure is 1.9 years. **What to do:** map a visible path from designer to licensed Landscape Architect to principal-track, with licensure support and real project leadership.

04 **Compete with engineering firms and agencies**

Civil engineering posts one job for every 28 landscape professionals and pulled a net 19 from design firms last year. **What to do:** sell design authorship, project typology and the quality of the work, the things an engineering firm's landscape group can't always match.

05 **Recruit along the migration corridors**

San Francisco, New York and Los Angeles gained a net 37 professionals last year, while Boston lost 15 to those three metros. **What to do:** firms outside the coastal hubs should target talent in Boston and other exporting markets, and coastal firms should hold growth conversations before a competing offer arrives.

The question isn't whether there's landscape talent in the US. It's whether you can reach the licensed professional who will lead your next project.

About Snipebridge

SNIPEBRIDGE is not a staffing company. We are an exclusive talent partner to clients and manage their hiring program through an extended team model. We work as an extension of your team, combining access to passive AEC talent, real market intelligence and predictable, subscription-based spend.

Hiring Landscape Architects?

Book a complimentary 30-minute Talent Strategy Review. We'll benchmark your open landscape roles against this data and map the passive talent you can reach.

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