

# GIS SPECIALIST

## GREEN JOB FACT SHEET



A geographic information system (GIS) is a set of digital mapping tools that helps to organize, communicate, and understand information about our world. GIS specialists use scientific research, spatial data, and expert opinions to help develop plans and management strategies. In forestry, they analyze forestry patterns and trends, map natural disasters, track wildlife, measure logging rates, and more.

### THE BIG PICTURE

GIS specialists compile a wide variety of data and prepare maps and reports to help monitor the environment and ensure sustainability. Their work involves:

- Managing forests and natural resources.
- Monitoring and analyzing climate patterns.
- Contributing to land-use planning.

### IS THIS CAREER RIGHT FOR YOU?

Although some GIS specialists do field work, most work at a desk. GIS specialists are good at focusing on details when managing, analyzing, and mapping data. They can also see connections between spatial data and real-world conditions. To succeed in this job, you need computer experience, statistical and analytical abilities, and problem-solving skills.

### MOVING FORWARD



Here's a path of study that could lead to a career as a GIS specialist. You'll likely need a four-year college or even a graduate degree.

**HIGH SCHOOL:** Try to take geography, computer science, and physics classes.

**COLLEGE:** Earn a bachelor's degree in GIS, geomatics, geography, computer science, or environmental sciences. Gain hands-on experience in a real-world setting through a one-year GIS graduate certificate or an internship, or by volunteering for a nonprofit organization.

For more about green jobs, visit [www.plt.org/workingforforests](http://www.plt.org/workingforforests)

Are you a **VISUAL** thinker?  
Do you like using **MAPS** and  
graphs to make sense of the  
world? If so, this might be the  
perfect career for you!

### SALARY

U.S. salaries range from about \$50,000 to \$92,000 per year and average about \$80,000.

### WHERE CAN YOU GROW?

A career in GIS can include work as a cartographer, geographer, remote sensing technician, environmental scientist, or landscape planner. Some possible employers:

- Federal, state, or local government agencies
- Private companies
- Colleges or universities

