

US vs South Africa VA Salary Report 2026

VirtuHire US

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US vs South Africa Virtual Assistant Salary Report (2026)

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A 2026 comparison of what 8 common remote roles cost in the US versus South Africa. South African talent runs 65 to 82 percent below US base salary across these roles, before US benefits and overhead are added.

The topline

We took 8 of the most common remote roles US companies hire for, pulled the 2026 US salary ranges from national compensation sources, and set them against the South African market salary for the same role, converted to US dollars.

The headline result: South African talent runs **65 to 82 percent below US base salary** across these roles. Executive assistants sit at the lower end of the savings range, where the US market is high. Sales development, customer support, and data entry sit at the higher end, where the US base is lower and South African talent is deep and widely available.

Every savings figure below compares against US **base salary**. A US hire does not cost base salary alone. It costs base plus benefits, overhead, the cost of hiring, and the cost of turnover. The savings shown here are the floor, not the ceiling.

The salary table: US vs South Africa, 8 roles, 2026

FX note: South African figures are converted at roughly 16.3 ZAR per USD, June 2026. Rows marked "VirtuHire estimate" are shown as ranges where clean public South African salary data was not available.

Role	US salary (2026)	US midpoint	South Africa (USD)	Savings	Source
Virtual / Admin Assistant	\$42,500 to \$66,531	~\$50,749	~\$11,500 to \$13,800 (Virtu-Hire estimate)	~73 to 77%	ZipRecruiter, Glassdoor
Executive Assistant	\$68,558 to \$104,717	\$84,258	\$29,583	~65%	Glassdoor
Bookkeeper	\$43,000 to \$57,653	\$50,573	~\$13,100	~74%	ZipRecruiter, PayScale ZA
Sales Development Rep	base \$55,000 to \$60,000 (OTE ~\$84k)	\$57,500	~\$10,100	~82% (vs base)	Glassdoor, PayScale ZA
Customer Support Rep	\$38,093 to \$56,357	\$46,108	~\$9,400	~80%	Glassdoor, PayScale ZA
Social Media / Marketing Assistant	\$38,927 to \$60,796	\$48,558	~\$10,000 to \$12,000 (Virtu-Hire estimate)	~75 to 79%	Glassdoor; SA estimate
Operations / Project Coordinator	\$56,786 to \$87,820	\$70,168	~\$14,000 to \$18,000 (Virtu-Hire estimate)	~74 to 80%	Glassdoor; SA estimate
Data Entry / Back-office Admin	\$34,000 to \$45,500	\$40,504	~\$10,000	~75%	ZipRecruiter, PayScale ZA

Three rows (virtual or admin assistant, social media or marketing assistant, operations or project coordinator) are labeled VirtuHire estimate and shown as ranges, derived from comparable roles and our own placement data rather than a single sourced number.

The real US cost is higher than base salary

The savings above compare against base salary. That understates the gap, because a US hire never costs only base:

- A US hire costs roughly **1.25 to 1.4 times base salary** once fully loaded, with benefits alone making up about **33 percent** of total compensation (Vena Solutions; BLS Employer Costs for Employee Compensation).
- The average US **cost-per-hire is around \$4,700** before the new employee does a single day of work (SHRM).
- **Turnover costs 50 to 200 percent of annual salary** when you account for lost productivity, rehiring, and ramp time (SHRM; Gallup).
- The BLS projects roughly **358,300 administrative assistant openings per year**, most of them replacement churn (BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook).

Add the benefits load, the cost to hire, and the cost of turnover, and the effective gap between a US hire and a South African VA is wider than the 65 to 82 percent shown.

Why South Africa specifically

- **English proficiency.** The EF English Proficiency Index 2025 ranks South Africa number 13 globally and number 1 in Africa, in the very high proficiency band. Correspondence reaches US recipients in clear, professional English without a translation layer.
 - **Time zone overlap.** South African business hours give roughly 6 to 7 hours of overlap with US Eastern, covering the morning client window.
 - **Structural cost advantage.** The savings come from a lower cost of living plus a weak rand, not a temporary discount. The advantage is durable.
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Methodology and sources

- **US figures** are 2026 national salary ranges from public compensation sources (Zip-Recruiter, Glassdoor, Salary.com). Where a role is quoted as base plus on-target earnings, we used the base figure and noted OTE separately.
- **South African figures** are local market salaries for the same role, converted to USD at roughly 16.3 ZAR per USD as of June 2026 (PayScale ZA, plus Glassdoor South Africa where available).
- **Three roles are VirtuHire estimates**, shown as ranges where clean public South African salary data was not available.
- **US cost-of-employment context** is drawn from Vena Solutions, the BLS Employer Costs for Employee Compensation, SHRM, Gallup, and the BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook.
- **English proficiency** is from the EF English Proficiency Index 2025.

Salaries move, and currency moves. The FX rate is a June 2026 snapshot. Treat every figure as a point-in-time benchmark, not a fixed quote.

About VirtuHire US

VirtuHire US places pre-vetted South African virtual assistants, executive assistants, sales development reps, bookkeepers, customer support, and operations staff with US companies, full-time and dedicated, with full Employer of Record handled. Pricing is a one-month deposit plus a monthly retainer with no recruitment fees, typically \$1,200 to \$2,800 per month all-in. You get a top-3 shortlist with video introductions in about 5 business days and a 30-day no-cost replacement guarantee.

Track record: 272 clients, 750+ placements, 93 percent retention (internal data, August 2025).

Want these numbers for your specific role? Book a 15-minute call at virtuhireusa.com or email aden@virtuhireusa.com, and we will map the US versus South Africa cost for the exact seat you are hiring.