



# SALARY NEGOTIATION

Negotiating for your salary can be intimidating. While the ability to negotiate salary is often minimal for entry-level job offers, you will want to do your research and determine a fair market value for your new position or job promotion based on your qualifications and experience. Here are a few tips for how to start the process if you are considering negotiating a salary in your current position or when accepting a new position:

- Determine the average pay at other companies in their industry
- Prepare a budget to determine your financial needs
- Before the interview, decide what salary you want to earn, what you need to live on, and your bottom line
- Be realistic— entry level salaries are less negotiable than salaries for mid-level or executive positions
- Practice your salary negotiation skills during a mock interview with a staff member in Career Development
- Document your skills and accomplishments and be prepared to talk about them. Know why you are worth what you are asking them to pay you!
- Remain respectful, firm, and reasonable as you advocate for yourself
- Never be the first to mention salary during the interview. Don't say "I need at least \_\_\_\_ dollars."
- Don't worry about what your friends are making in their jobs, the employer certainly isn't
- Once you have accepted a job offer and salary level, be sure to ask for it in writing

## How can I find the market rate salary range?

- [NACE Salary Calculator](#)
- [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com)
- [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com)
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics Wage Data](#)
- [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com)
- [Homefair Salary Calculator](#)
- [Salary and Benefits Survey Reports](#)
- Talk with friends, network contacts, professionals in the field, and other job seekers
- Talk with recruiters. They know what professionals with your experience and expertise are worth
- Make an appointment with a staff member in the Center for Career Development

## Are salaries really negotiable?

Most employers who are interested in great talent will be in the upper quartile of their market when it comes to pay. However, employers have also figured out that paying significantly more than their competitors actually doesn't motivate employees to stay over the long term. So, don't expect to be able to negotiate for significantly higher pay than the norm – no matter how qualified you are. The degree to which a salary is negotiable depends on the position, the manager, the organization, your perceived value, and the current state of the job market. Most entry level positions have set salaries that are subject to very little if any negotiation, perhaps a few hundred dollars of negotiating room.

Mid-level positions typically have salary ranges between 10 and 20 percent. For example, a job paying \$45,000 a year may have a salary range between \$41,000 and \$48,500. Employers will negotiate within the range, but will rarely exceed it unless you are an exceptional candidate. Most state and federal government jobs have rigid, non-negotiable salary scales based on education and experience. In general, higher level management and executive positions offer the greatest opportunities for negotiation.

## **Make sure to consider the entire package.**

Any discussion about salary should be about your total compensation. If the recruiter isn't familiar with the dollar value of the benefits package the company offers, you might want to talk with their benefits specialist. Remember to negotiate for non-cash perks that might bridge the gap between your asking price and the employer's offer.

If you are not happy with the salary offer, and the employer admits that they do not have more to offer, ask if they would be open to discussing a performance based bonus down the road. Get any incentive pay agreements in writing during the hiring stage so your employer is committed to following through.

## **Making the decision.**

Once a salary has been offered to you, take time to think about it. Express your strong interest and let your interviewer know that you need some time to think over the decision. Consider the salary offer separately from the benefits package and also consider them together as a complete package to finalize your decision.

When considering your numbers, you should also come up with final number that is so low that you have to turn it down. *Be willing to walk away.* This will not be easy, but it is important to know when to do it and to have the confidence to be able to say "no".

## **Negotiating in your current position.**

Before you ask for a raise, you want to ask yourself a few questions:

- Have you been at your job for a year?
- Have you taken on new responsibilities since you have been hired?
- Have you been exceeding expectations?

Plan the right timing to ask. Most people wait until performance reviews to ask for a salary increase, but by that time, your boss has probably already finalized decision about the budget for that fiscal year. Start talking with your boss about three to four months in advance because that is when they finalize the budget.

Prepare a one page "brag sheet" which demonstrates how great you are as an employee, your accomplishments, extra projects/tasks/work that you have taken on, and examples of when you went "above and beyond" your position requirements. Before you start talking about the numbers, talk about what you have done and what you plan to do.

### **Here are some other tips to consider:**

- Ask for more than what you want
- Don't use a range, instead use a specific number
- Focus on market value
- Do not mention personal needs
- After you made your request, ask for their recommendations or suggestions for next steps
- Be sure to listen to your boss as the reasons for/against a raise are discussed
- Being rejected doesn't have to be a statement on how you are performing– don't take it personal!

### **Need more information? Want help with organizing your thoughts?**

Contact the Center for Career Development to schedule an appointment to discuss your salary negotiation plan and practice your side of the conversation to ensure that you are well prepared to speak with the employer.