

How to Negotiate My Salary

Should you negotiate your salary? Salary negotiation is perfectly normal and expected for most full-time job offers. Research what someone of your qualifications typically makes, and prepare to make a case for what you believe you should be paid. Don't be afraid to ask—as long as you are polite and not demanding, an offer is seldom rescinded. But before you ask, study up on salary negotiation techniques.

Avoiding negotiation hurts—big time!

For instance, if an employee received an average annual pay increase of 5% and their starting salary was \$55,000 rather than \$50,000, they would earn an additional \$600,000+ over the course of a 40-year career.

Source: *The Journal of Organizational Behavior*

Negotiation Conversation

_____, I am so appreciative and excited to receive this offer for the _____ position with your company. I am specifically pleased with the _____ feature that we discussed last time we met.

After researching my position in the market I discovered that the average starting salary, with my level of education and experience, is between \$65,000 and \$70,000, which is \$5,000 higher than the salary offered.

I'd like to counter your offer with this range. Is there an opportunity to negotiate to align with the value I will bring to this position?

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Seven Steps of Salary Negotiation

1. Thank the employer for the offer. Request time to think about it. Be enthusiastic and appreciative. Ask about benefits (health, dental, retirement), vacation time, advancement opportunities, additional clauses (non-compete, non-disclosure) and a start date. Do not accept the offer on the spot, even if you want to take it.

2. Research your fair market value. Use tools like Glassdoor, PayScale and Salary.com to determine what people in similar positions with similar experience make. Federal government salary ranges are listed in the General Schedule Pay Scale, and most state and university salaries can be found online.

Factor in your geographic location (expensive or low cost of living), the type of employer (nonprofit, large company, small start-up, etc.), special skills/certifications/degrees you offer that make you more qualified, and your previous experience/number of years in the field.

3. Determine your number. Based on your research, determine your desired salary range. Most employers will expect you to negotiate.

A negotiation method recommended by the AAWU (American Association of University Women) is to use a range. Set the bottom number as the lowest you can accept and the top number no more than 20% higher. That way, whatever the employer offers, you will be happy with the result.

4. Make your case. Lay out your position confidently using evidence about your experience and qualifications and explain why you believe a higher salary is appropriate. This is not about what you want, but what you are worth to the company.

If possible, don't be the first person to give a salary number. If the employer asks you what you'd like to make, ask what is typical for the position. If you're pressed further, give your salary range. The risk of giving a number first is undercutting or overshooting what is appropriate.

5. Get ready for the negotiation dance. Employers will rarely accept your counter offer on the spot. They will typically go back to their manager and check budget numbers and then either accept your offer or counter lower. At this point, it's up to you to accept or decline or ask for something different.

6. Remember non-monetary negotiation options. If the organization can't budge on the salary, or even if it can, it may be worthwhile to negotiate other aspects such as flexible work hours, vacation time or education opportunities.

7. Get the offer in writing. Make sure to get a formal offer letter laying out the salary, start date, benefits, location and required acceptance date. Review the offer for accuracy before accepting it.