



Negotiating Your Salary

Do Your Research

Review salary websites. The National Association of Colleges and Employers is one resource that offers a salary calculator. You can enter your geographic location, job title, years of experience, and education level to get tailored salary information.

- National Association of Colleges and Employers Salary Calculator: <http://www.jobsearchintelligence.com/NACE/jobseekers/salary-calculator.php>
- Salary Expert: <http://www.salaryexpert.com/>
- Speak to networking contacts in the field. Often those “on the inside” know the range for an entry level salary in the industry you are pursuing.
- Consult professional associations in the field. These organizations often publish salary survey data on their website.

Consider Your Expenses

Create a budget. It is important to develop a realistic accounting of your living expenses so you know how much you need to earn to pay your bills. Expenses like student loan payments and transportation to and from work are sometimes overlooked. And of course don't forget the taxes that will be withheld which will reduce your actual take-home pay.

Number vs. Salary Range

Some job applications or hiring managers may ask you to provide your salary requirements. Try to avoid providing a number. If you are asked, "What kind of salary are you looking to make?" try to use broad answers such as, "Right now I'm interested in learning about the job and how I can contribute to your organization. If I were offered the job, I would consider any reasonable offer." If they continue to ask for a number, try to provide a range rather than a specific amount. The bottom of your range should be the minimum you desire to make based on your industry research and your budgeted expenses, with the top of the range being a bit higher than your ideal number. You can also ask the employer what their pay range is for this specific position.

Look at the Big Picture

- *Take into account financial benefits beyond salary.* Along with a job offer comes a benefits package including things like health/dental/life insurance, paid time off, contributions to a retirement account, and sometimes tuition reimbursement toward future coursework or an advanced degree.
- *Consider career goals.* You should think carefully about the benefit of the job to your long-term career goals. Perhaps the organization offers opportunities for growth and advancement or the chance to make valuable connections within the field. Sometimes the position with the lower salary will allow for other advantages in the long run.

In the end, it's important to remember that future raises are usually based on a percentage of your initial salary, so the effort involved in negotiating the highest possible initial salary is worthwhile.

Questions? For further assistance, please contact Career Services at cservices@clarku.edu.

