

# Tips for Salary Negotiation

Career Development Center, Ventura College



Salary negotiation can be an intimidating process, but it is an important strategy for your career growth. Review the key steps to salary negotiation below, and consider practicing your salary negotiation approach with a career advisor or mentor.

**Time negotiation appropriately.** Do not initiate a salary negotiation conversation before you get a job offer. An initial phone or in-person interview is not the appropriate time to ask about salary or benefits. For a new job offer, your salary expectations should be brought up only when prompted by an employer or after they have made an initial offer. If you are attempting to negotiate your salary at your current place of employment, it is appropriate to introduce the topic during a performance review.

**Review FAQs about California's salary history ban.** As of January 2018, California employers are prohibited from asking applicants about salary histories. However, applicants may still "voluntarily and without prompting" disclose salary history to a prospective employer. Learn more: <https://www.shrm.org/>

**Focus on a win-win negotiation and be prepared to talk about your value.** A win-win negotiation means a shared benefit. Be sure to mention your desire to achieve a mutually beneficial agreement and to establish a long-term relationship. Think about how you have or will contribute to a company. Consider keeping a list of accomplishments in order to be assertive and confident. Your communication approach and ability to show mutual respect during a salary negotiation is essential to your success.

**Do market research.** What is the market paying for someone with your level of experience? It is ideal to consider multiple sources of information to determine what the market is paying someone with your experience for the given position. Use one of the following websites for occupational market research: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/> or [www.salary.com](http://www.salary.com). Then, conduct a salary report using <http://www.payscale.com> to determine your expected salary for the position you have selected.

**Give a specific number for your salary expectations.** Identify two numbers based on your research:

- 1) *Your target or ideal salary number.* This is the number you will give to the hiring manager. This number should be slightly higher than your expectation; Consider asking for up to 20% over your target.
- 2) *Your bottom-line number or the salary you would be willing to settle for.* This number should be aligned with your market value based on your research, and you will internally know this as your bottom-line.

**Go into the negotiation with leverage.** If you are negotiating a new job offer and you currently have other offers on the table, consider mentioning this to the hiring manager. If you are currently employed with a company and seeking a raise, explain your value and achievements in a clear and concise way to support your market research.

**Ask for time to consider an offer.** If you feel you need time to consider an offer, ask for time! If an employer wants to hire you, they will likely be willing to wait for a response as long as the turn-around time is reasonable.

**Document all agreements.** Ask for job offers in writing to ensure any negotiations are reflected in the agreement.