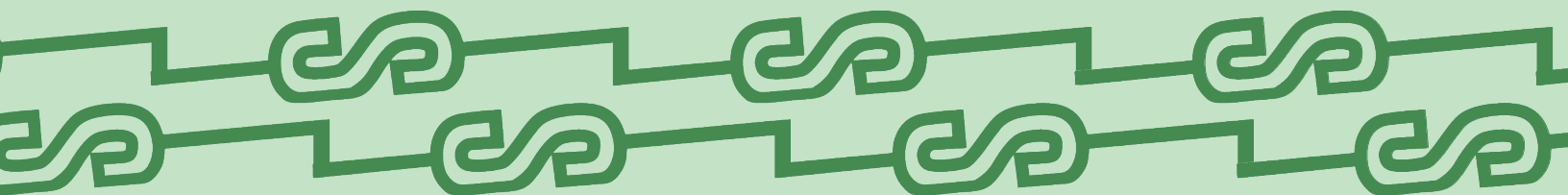


PRESENTS

# THE SALARY NEGOTIATION GUIDE

Your framework for understanding  
how to comfortably and competently  
negotiate your salary so you can earn  
what you're worth.



# ABOUT SALARY TRANSPARENT STREET:

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This Salary Negotiation Guide was created by Salary Transparent Street, a media brand working to help you learn and earn your market value to get paid what you deserve.

Salary Transparent Street™ creates educational videos (follow us on [TikTok](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [Facebook](#)), collects salaries ([explore thousands here](#)), writes weekly newsletters ([hit subscribe here](#)), and creates resources (just like this one!) to help you make more money, shrink pay gaps, and remove the taboo around talking about money.



STS was founded by Hannah Williams and her husband, James Daniels. Former government contractors in the DC metro area, they encourage strangers to share what they do and how much they make to normalize pay transparency and close unequal pay gaps.

Hannah was inspired to create the viral series after finding out she was underpaid and learning how pay secrecy marginalizes multiple groups of workers and presents unnecessary barriers to career (and salary) growth. She used the exact tips she shares in resources like this one to find a new role paying her a fair market rate of \$115,000/year as a Senior Data Analyst.



# SALARY NEGOTIATION, EXPLAINED

## Why should you negotiate your salary?

Because you deserve to be **compensated fairly** for what you bring to the table—which is a ton! But often, employers do their best to lowball you on salary. They don't want to spend more than they have to, even if they have room in the budget to offer you a dreamy compensation package.

Knowing what you're worth and asking the right questions early in the process, whether you're starting a new job or asking for a new salary in your current role, will ensure that you snag the best possible chance at getting the compensation you want and deserve.

**We know it's easier said than done.** You know you should negotiate. For many of us, though, those conversations about money can feel awkward. But they don't have to be! All it takes

is a little preparation and the right mindset to remove the taboo.

**Because at the end of the day, negotiation is important.** It's one of the ways we can [break down barriers](#) around compensation, ultimately helping to shrink pay gaps. In fact...

**42%** of women say they don't feel comfortable asking for higher pay vs. only 33% of men, according to [Pew Research Center](#).

Making negotiation the norm—no matter who you are, what you do, or where you're from—can not only get you more money and benefits...it can also do the world a favor. So let's jump in and learn how to negotiate salary like the experts we are. 💪

## How does this salary negotiation guide work?

This Salary Negotiation Guide is meant to serve as your roadmap, getting you from where you are now to the ultimate destination: your ideal compensation package that rewards you fairly for the hard work you do.

We'll give you the 411 on all things salary negotiation, total compensation, and more, plus simple templates and scripts that will help you communicate effectively.

*Important side note: While we'll spend a good chunk of this guide talking about how to negotiate*

*your salary, it's worth remembering that total compensation isn't just the dollar amount on your paystub. It also includes your bonus, employee benefits like health insurance and 401(k) matching, education and tech stipends, and more.*

*So keep an open mind—even if you can't get that six-figure number you were hoping for, there are [other benefits you can negotiate for](#).*

**Now let's get to the good stuff—learning how to get what you deserve.**



# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

Salary negotiation can happen at any time, really—we'll cover negotiation tactics for both people seeking new jobs and people looking to make more in their current roles.

You can get a feel for where you are in your salary negotiation journey with this question map ➡



# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

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## I'm on the job hunt. When should I think about negotiating?

You have a few options:

- You can filter the jobs you apply for by the salary range they list in the job description.
- You can filter the jobs you apply for by the salary range they list in the job description. One great place to do just this? Our [STS Job Board](#)!

It's best to talk about compensation as soon as possible and before you sign an offer letter, not after.



# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

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## How should I prepare for negotiating my salary?

So glad you asked. This is the most important step—to ask for what you want, you have to know what you want.

So let's say you've found a job you really like and the interviews went well (we knew they would!). You feel an offer coming, and you're planning to negotiate (as you should 🙌).

### *Here's what to do:*

1. **Pick a number.** Figure out what the going market rate is for compensation for someone in your field with your experience so you have some reference points for your target salary. Check out our [Market Research Guide](#) here to learn how to do just that!
2. **Write it down.** Make a list of your skills, specialties, and accomplishments that might enable you to go above and beyond in your future role. You want a clear, detailed list of what makes you special and demonstrates your unique value. And get specific! Tailor your list to the specific points in the description of the job you want to make your case even stronger.
3. **Set some boundaries.** It's a smart idea to go into a negotiation knowing the lowest salary you're willing to accept—that'll give you a clear idea of when it might be time to walk away. You could also jot down some “must-haves” in salary, benefits, responsibilities, etc.
4. **Practice makes perfect.** Once you know what you want to say (keep reading for scripts and templates!) practice saying it to yourself in the mirror. You'll be a pro once it comes time to talk the talk!



# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

## I got the offer! Now...what should I say when I want to negotiate my salary?

Congrats! The next step is where all that preparation comes in handy. Time to negotiate.

**First, remember that you can ask for time after you're given an offer.** Need 24 hours to think about it and mentally prepare to ask for more? No sweat! Tell the hiring manager you'd like to take a beat—they should be understanding.

And worth noting: Sometimes asking for a little time can do more than give you a breather to think—it can give you a negotiation play. If you ask for a day to think things over and a company is super pressed to fill a role, they might even offer you a salary bump if you accept soon—it happened to our very own Hannah!

**Next, choose your medium of communication**—written in an email or spoken in a phone call or IRL meeting—and let the hiring manager know in advance that you'd like to talk about compensation (you did your homework, it's best to let them do the same!).

**If you're an email fanatic...**try something like this to start the compensation conversation.

Hi [insert name here],

Thank you so much for your willingness to speak with me about compensation. I'm very excited to join the team and I'm looking forward to thriving in this role.

Based on my market research of this role in my area and with my experience, my expected salary is \$[insert your goal salary here—and maybe bump it up just a hair since the employer might negotiate down].

Given my specialties [include a few relevant, brief examples of skills and accomplishments here], I hope you and the team are willing to consider how we can collaborate on a mutually agreeable compensation package.

I'm happy to speak more about this at your convenience. Again, thank you for your consideration and I'm looking forward to working together.

—[insert your name here]





# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

**And if an IRL conversation is more your speed...**try saying something like this after the hiring manager agreed to a conversation about compensation.

“Thank you so much for meeting with me to talk about compensation! I’m very excited to join the team and feel grateful for the opportunity.

Based on my market research of this role in my area and with my experience, my expected salary is \$[insert your goal salary here—and maybe bump it up just a hair since the employer might negotiate down].

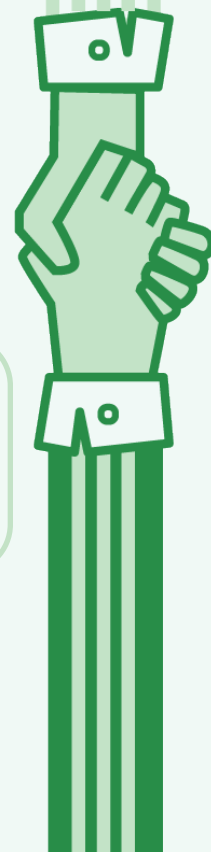
Given my specialties [include a few relevant, brief examples of skills and accomplishments here], I’d like to be paid a competitive rate compared to my peers.

I’d be thrilled to work for your company, and hope we can collaborate on a mutually agreeable compensation package.”

**Important side note:** Maybe you’ve received another offer from a different employer and you’re hoping to use that as leverage in your salary negotiations. If that’s the case, we recommend bringing it up only if you’re not making traction otherwise—consider it a tool to employ if the other tools aren’t doing the job. And if you do bring up another offer, be sure to practice discretion—no need to name names or overshare.

You could say something like this:

“I’m considering another offer with a different company that will pay me a competitive rate compared to my peers. I’m still very interested in working with you and your team, but I’d only be able to consider accepting your offer instead of theirs when we land on a mutually agreeable compensation package.”





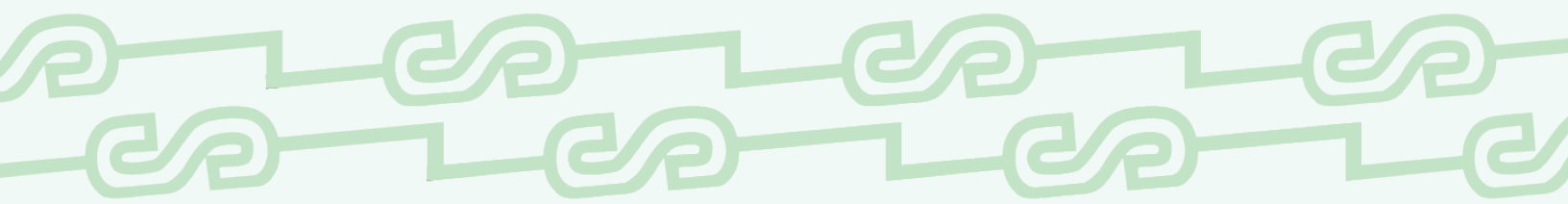
# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

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## From there, the conversation will go one of three ways

- 1. You'll get what you're hoping for.** The hiring manager will be willing to meet you at or near your goal salary and you'll sign the offer letter with a better compensation package in hand. Say thank you and proceed, business as usual.
- 2. You won't get what you're hoping for.** The hiring manager says they can't budge on salary. Based on those boundaries you set earlier, you can either walk away (and find another stellar job!) or you can ask the hiring manager what other elements of compensation might be negotiable if salary is not. Maybe you can get more PTO, a heartier incentive-based bonus, or a WFH stipend.
- 3. You have to counter.** The hiring manager comes back with an offer, but it's not quite the number you were expecting. If it's close, you can counter the hiring manager's offer with a slightly higher salary number, or you can ask for other incentives (see above!). But be careful not to drag this out too long splitting hairs over the \$\$\$\$. Most experts suggest two times as the max for countering an employer's offer.

No matter the outcome, you've done the right thing in fighting to get paid fairly for all the work you'll be doing in a new role. And we bet the hiring managers will respect you for it!



## Now what about negotiating your salary at your current job?

Many of the same rules apply—do your homework ([don't forget that market research](#)) and ask for a conversation with your manager about your compensation.



# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

*Here's a step-by-step guide to doing that:*

1. Do that aforementioned market research to figure out what you should be asking for in terms of compensation.
2. Put together a (short) 2–3 page document that includes a list of all of your relevant accomplishments and special skills, any words of positive affirmation from your team or clients, a description of major successes you've been instrumental in, and your market research.
3. Schedule a call with your manager to talk about compensation, and include that document when you send the invite so your boss can do their homework ahead of time (and so there's a paper trail for HR!). You could write something like this in the email: "Hi there! I'd like to meet at your earliest convenience to talk about my compensation. Please see the attached document for reference, and let me know if [suggest a time] works for you. Thank you."
4. Bring a copy of that document you created to your meeting to review with your manager. Provide additional details and context as needed, and be prepared to vocalize what it is you're hoping to get.

**Worth noting:** If you're negotiating your salary at a current job, it's especially important to know your boundaries. If you aren't successful in negotiating for better compensation, are you willing to walk away from your job? Or will you be happy sticking around with your current pay? Thinking about those things in advance will help you navigate the conversation with a manager you already know well.

**And on timing:** Mid-year or year-end reviews are a great opportunity to

negotiate your salary—you and your manager will have already talked about your accomplishments and growth, meaning all that potential is front of mind.

During a period of major change for your company (for example, right after layoffs) might be a slightly more difficult time to bring up a raise. But don't consider it a total deterrent—just wait until the dust settles to make the ask.

**Good luck negotiating, and let us know how it goes!**



## Want more resources to help you gain insights on what fair pay is for you and how to get it? We've got you covered

Take a look at...

**Our Salary Database**, where thousands of professionals have shared their salaries with super helpful context. It's a great way to get more info on compensation and learn about new career paths they definitely didn't feature at Career Day in middle school. [Check it out here](#).

**Our weekly newsletter**, which delivers all the relevant news and information about career trends, fair compensation, professional growth, and more to your inbox for free every Tuesday. [Sign up here](#).

[Our STS Job Board](#), which is the ultimate resource for finding entirely transparent jobs. You can also join our referral network, where we'll consider you for internal roles sent exclusively to us by transparent-first recruiters.

Do you wish there were a super simple way to get a “yes” or “no” to the complicated question of whether you're underpaid?

[Check out our quiz to get just that!](#)

Just a few simple questions and you'll be on your way to fair pay in no time.

