

NEGOTIATING A JOB OFFER

Congratulations! You have a job offer! Make sure you thank the employer and ask for some time to consider the offer. Don't forget to ask about benefits as these can and should play an important role in your decision making. Having said that, do not negotiate just for the sake of negotiating. If the job offer is good (and you have considered the benefits, potential expenses, and other factors), and it is a job you want, then, by all means, accept the offer. On the other hand, if you are going forward with negotiating the offer, here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Gather information.** This is especially true if you are transitioning to a different type of work or a new part of the country. Websites like [LinkedIn Salary](#), [Payscale](#), and [Glassdoor](#) are helpful as are discussions with other people in the field with whom you feel comfortable speaking. Do not undervalue yourself. Knowing the range of salaries earned by others in your field and/or location will give you a place to start your negotiations.
- **Work out a budget.** It is important to know what you need to earn to meet your financial obligations. You should also think about expected and current expenses, including taxes and differences in cost of living (if you will be moving). Build in a cushion for the sake of your negotiations, but remain realistic about what the organization may be able to offer.
- **Be confident and gracious.** This is not a time to be strident and argumentative. Remember they want to hire you, and presumably you want to work there.
- **If possible, avoid being the one to throw out the first number.** If you are in the position where you must provide a figure, give a range based on your research and budget rather than a specific number. You might add that it may depend on the benefits being offered.
- **Understand that the employer may have constraints.** As a result of your interactions with the potential employer, you may be able to determine if there are salary caps or budget constraints. If so, keep them in mind as you negotiate. The employer may also have a standard new hire package that is non-negotiable.
- **Ask what benefits are offered and if any of them are negotiable.** Consider the monetary value of perks, benefits, and bonuses. Medical insurance, professional development, paid vacation and leave, retirement contributions, travel subsidies, and other perks are all important considerations and may be negotiable areas.
- **Ask about the long-term opportunities for salary increases and promotions.** It may not be reasonable to ask a potential employer to immediately agree to all of your requests, but they might be in a position to review your compensation and benefits package six or twelve months down the road after they are sure you are a good hire.
- **Be ready to walk away if taking the position puts you in a difficult financial situation or if the job does not interest you enough to endure significant hardship.** This is often the most difficult part of negotiating a job offer. There are many considerations to weigh: financial, professional, personal, and emotional. You have to walk the line between trusting that there might be other opportunities that are better suited for your needs versus missing out on a sure thing that may not check all the boxes. Feel free to reach out to a career counselor at VLS

to talk through the pros and cons of a job offer so you are able to put your best foot forward in a professional and effective manner.