

Negotiating an Offer

Step 1: Receiving the offer

Offers can be made either via phone or email. If by phone, thank the employer and express your interest in this position and that you would like to take some time to think it over and get back to them with your decision. If via email, please respond IMMEDIATELY! It is okay to want/need time to consider the offer before making a decision. Communicate that to employers. By not responding in a timely and efficient manner, you risk the employer potentially rescinding the offer because they think you are not interested.

If it is not provided during the initial offer conversation or email, make sure to request the following information in writing before making your decision:

- Employer-provided benefits (vacation/sick, health, vision, dental) and out of pocket costs
- Retirement - employee and employer contributions
- Salary
- The opportunity to work remotely and support for this (If remote, do they provide necessary "at home" equipment)
- Relocation and moving expenses
- Additional employee health and wellness resources.
- Timeline as to when they need an answer by



SAMPLE SCRIPT

Employer: Hello Miriam! We enjoyed meeting you, think you'd be a great fit for our organization and would like to make you an offer for an editorial assistant position at an annual salary of \$35,000.

(Note: employers will want your decision ASAP but it is entirely reasonable for you to stall for time while you are concluding your search – the next step, of course, is to call/email all the other employers you have applied to, tell them you have an offer and ask where you are in their application process.)

Miriam Response #1: Wonderful! I'm very interested in the position. I'd like some time to review the offer prior to making a decision and I do have a few questions – is now a good time to talk or should we schedule a time within the next few days?

OR

Miriam Response #2: This is exciting news! I am very interested. I am in the process of interviewing with a few other firms and need some time to communicate with them prior to making a decision – can I get back to you with my decision in two weeks?

Step 2: Researching

There is more that goes into your evaluation process than just salary. It is also important to take into consideration the cost of living in particular **town/city**. The **cost of living**, and thus average salary, may look different in Fort Wayne, Indiana than it does in New York City, New York.

Places to help you research salary calculators, cost of living, and salary message boards:

[Glassdoor](#)

[Salary List](#)

[The Balance](#)

[The Budgetnista](#)

[Educate to Career](#)

[Cost of Living Calculator](#)

Other factors of compensation to take into consideration: Does the company offer a signing bonus or tuition reimbursement? While these are not always offered, they are great benefits that could have a significant impact on your decision.

You may also be considering multiple offers at a time. This could also be a helpful tactic when it comes to negotiation. If there are multiple offers that you are considering, it may be incentive for an employer to bring up their offer to match or exceed, if they are able.

SAMPLE SCRIPT

Miriam: Hello, this is Miriam from Swarthmore College. Is now a good time to talk? Again, I'm very interested in the offer you extended for an editorial assistant position with your organization and I have a few questions I was hoping we could discuss.

Employer: Of course! It's good to hear from you.

Miriam: In reviewing salary and cost of living data for similar positions in the NYC area, I found the salary you're offering -- \$35,000 -- is a bit below the average. Is the salary negotiable?

Employer: I'm surprised you found our salary was below average -- how so?

Miriam: My research showed the range for editorial positions in NY is \$38,000-\$42,000. For example, XYZ publishing pays \$40,000. Please understand I am very interested in your organization -- but I'm not from NYC, I'll be living independently and I'm concerned about how I'll manage rent and student loan payments on a limited budget. I feel confident that my work will have a positive impact in the firm as we talked about in the interview. Note: Employees earn money because they add value to an organization. So, in addition to your salary research, you should respectfully reiterate how you will benefit the company and not just that you need the money.

CONTINUE CONVERSATION ON NEXT PAGE

Employer: I understand. Have you reviewed our benefits package though? We are very competitive in this area and our benefits tend to make up for any slight salary differential.

Miriam: Your benefits package is excellent – thank you for forwarding that information. Robert in HR was very helpful in explaining the details about the 401(k) and health plan. Of course I understand if the salary is fixed, but I am hoping you are willing to consider an increase.

Employer Response #1: This is unusual, but let me take this back to my manager and see what I can do. I'll be back in touch by the end of the week. Note: at that stage, be aware that the employer will typically expect you to accept their offer if they meet your negotiation request.

Miriam: Thank you very much for understanding my concerns and being willing to consider this option. I look forward to hearing from you.

OR

Employer Response #2: Actually we've established a fixed salary for our editorial assistant positions to ensure equity among our entry-level hires. The cost of living in NYC is very high and I want to be responsive to your concerns. You should know that we evaluate all of our entry-level employees after their three-month probationary period and again after six months, at which time you are eligible for a merit-based increase. One area where we do have some flexibility is in relocation assistance – we can offer up to \$1,000 to help you relocate to NYC, which can be used to pay for moving and apartment rental expenses. Would this be helpful to you?

Miriam: Absolutely! I understand and respect your concerns about equity. As a new resident of NYC the relocation assistance would be very helpful. Are there other areas within my offer package that are negotiable?

Employer: We also offer tuition reimbursement after one year of employment, but if this is of interest, we could explore offering it upon hire?

Miriam: I'm very interested in this option as I know the skills I develop will benefit me in this role. Thank you for our conversation – could you email me an overview of what we've discussed? I'd like some time to think this over. When do you need my decision?

Step 3: Evaluating and Making a Decision

By this point, you have gathered all the possible information that you could either through your own research or conversations with the prospective employer. In addition to everything already discussed, the final pieces of the puzzle to evaluate when deciding whether a position is the right fit for you:

- Does the organization's mission and values align with your own?
- Organization's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and how it is put into practice
- Day to day tasks involved with the position, and what skills it will help you develop
- Your prospective supervisor, co-workers, and upper management
- Working environment and work-life balance
- Possibility for advancement

Once the deadline has arrived, you need to communicate with the employer – by phone is best. If you still need time, you can ask, but understand that most employers are looking to move the process along in the event that they need to make another offer. Typically 1-2 weeks for a decision is standard.

If you are accepting the offer...

- Indicate your enthusiasm, establish your start date, and inquire about next steps to the process (follow up with HR, paperwork, etc.)
- Once you verbally accept an offer, do not go back on your word. Negotiate and accept with integrity. You never know who in the industry the employer will know, and you would not want this to be a poor reflection on your candidacy.

If you are declining the offer...

Thank them for their interest. It is possible that they may ask for feedback about the process, your experience, and even where you accepted a position. This is not to be intrusive, it may be part of their benchmarking process. Feel free to share or not depending on your level of comfort.