• Determine the market rate salary range for the position type and industry.
• Prepare a budget to determine your financial needs.
• Before you go into the interview, decide what salary you want to earn, what you need to live on, and what you will be willing to settle for. Be realistic: entry-level salaries are less negotiable than salaries for mid level or executive positions.
• Practice your salary negotiation skills with a friend or during a mock interview with a career counselor.
• Document your skills and accomplishments and be prepared to talk about them. Know why you are worth whatever you expect to be paid!
• Don’t be the first to mention salary during the interview, but use the negotiating tips listed below when the topic does come up. Never say, “I need at least ______ dollars.”
• Don’t worry about what your friends are making; the employer certainly isn’t.
• Once you have accepted a job offer and salary level, be sure to get it in writing.

**How can I find out the market rate salary range?**
- Visit the following websites:
  - www.payscale.com
  - www.jobstar.org – Jobstar Salary Surveys
  - www.salary.com
  - http://www.youngmoney.com – budgeting advice and more
- Talk with professionals, friends, networking contacts, and other job seekers
- Call employment agencies or executive search firms
- Talk with a career advisor in the Office of Career Services

**Are salaries really negotiable?**
The degree to which a salary is negotiable depends on the position, the manager, the organization, your perceived value, and the state of the job market. Most entry level positions have set salaries that are subject to very little if any negotiation, perhaps a few hundred dollars of negotiating room. Mid-level positions typically have salary ranges between 10 and 20 percent. For example, a job paying $35,000 a year may have a salary range between $31,500 and $38,500. Employers will negotiate within the range, but will rarely exceed it unless you are an exceptional candidate. Most state and federal government jobs have rigid, no-negotiable salary scaled based on education and experience. In general, higher level management and executive position offer the greatest opportunities for negotiation. Once a salary has been offered to you, take time to think about it. Express your strong interest and let your interviewer know that you need some time to think over a decision of this magnitude.

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Be mentally prepared for the negotiation.
The company has invested a great deal in you as a potential employee. In addition, you are seriously considering the offer. Therefore, it is essential that negotiations be handled professionally and confidently. Listed below are some pointers.

- Be prepared to support your assertion, using the results of your salary research and/or your assessment of your unique qualifications for the position.
- Be willing to listen to the employer’s issues and to negotiate.
- Be prepared to accept an offer if the issue can be settled.

How to start this process?

- Convey your enthusiasm and interest in the offer.
- Contact the company representative who extended the offer.
- Express your concern about the salary, and provide a rationale for your request for a higher starting salary.

Be prepared for possible responses, including:

- *What salary are you willing to work for?*
  Respond by providing a salary range with your ideal salary as a mid-point.

- *That figure is beyond our salary range for this position.*
  You have the opportunity to make another counteroffer if you are willing to consider a salary lower than your targeted range. Even if the base salary cannot be negotiated further, you could try the strategy described below:

- *The salary we offered was at the top of the range for your position. OR We are offering all of our new hires the same, non-negotiable salary.*
  You may wish to talk about alternate methods of achieving your financial goals. Alternate methods may include a signing bonus, a 60-, 90- or 120-day performance and salary review, or bonuses during the year.

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