

Survey: Only 39% of new hires tried to negotiate pay

Many job postings close with a statement indicating salary is negotiable, but how often do job seekers speak up to secure a better package? According to a survey from global staffing firm Robert Half, 39% of 2,700 workers surveyed said they tried to negotiate a higher salary with their last job offer.

In only three cities did at least half of new hires try to negotiate higher starting pay: New York (55%), Dallas (51%) and San Francisco (50%).

In terms of gender, 46% of men negotiated salary compared to 34% of women. Workers ages 18-34 (45%) are more likely to negotiate salary than those ages 35-54 (40%) and 55 or older (30%).

A number of states—including California, Delaware, Massachusetts and Oregon—and numerous municipalities have made it unlawful to request applicants' salary histories. The theory is that knowing how much someone currently earns may perpetuate gender-based pay disparities.

This development has removed a long-standing question from the start of the hiring process and forced employers and job seekers to shift their approach to determining compensation.

“Starting salary should be a factor of the job skills required and current market demand for those skills,” said Paul McDonald, senior executive director at Robert Half. “That’s why it’s more important than ever for both parties to research market conditions thoroughly to pave the way for realistic, productive discussions.”

Sixty-five percent of executives surveyed last year by Korn Ferry believe their companies will stop asking job applicants about their salary histories, even in locations that haven’t outlawed it.