

Legal Salaries Are Increasing! How Can I Get in on the Action?

Q: I'm a midlevel paralegal who's interested in how to leverage the trend I've seen of rising salaries in the legal field. Any advice to share on how to negotiate a pay hike of my own?

A: Research conducted for the [2017 Robert Half Legal Salary Guide](#) reveals that legal professionals can expect average starting compensation to increase by 3.6 percent overall in 2017. Indeed, now is a great time to start a salary negotiation and ask for more money.

In law as well as in life, doing your homework leads to better results than just winging it. Here's some legal career advice on how to negotiate a higher salary.

1. Know your value. Prepare for your salary negotiation by researching what you should be earning. The [2017 Robert Half Legal Salary Guide](#) reports that overall, salary increases of 3.5 percent are expected for law firm paralegals in 2017. At small-to-midsize law firms, paralegals with four to six years' experience should see average starting salaries rise by **5.2 percent**, to the range of \$55,750 to \$70,000 annually.

Use the [Salary Calculator](#) to customize the data for your city.

2. Make your case. No matter your experience or area of specialization, you need to convince your boss that you're worth the extra money. Enter your meeting with a list of tangible accomplishments, such as trial successes, number of hours spent on legal matters, and client satisfaction levels or feedback. Also include any special projects you've taken on, like mentoring new team members or pro bono work that has raised your firm's profile. It's good career advice to end your pitch on an up note — how much you look forward to building the firm's future.

3. Be flexible. Be creative with salary negotiation. Even though the salary ranges are rising, each firm's situation is different. With demand for specialized legal talent increasing, firms recognize that they must consider negotiation of nonfinancial perks as well as base salary. If yours doesn't have the budget to give you a pay hike right away, see if you can get your organization to offer non-wage benefits such as flextime, extra vacation days and remote work arrangements — all options that can help you balance work and family.

Smart managing partners know that their firm is only as good as its staff, and they are willing to pay for quality. The best legal career advice is for you to remind your supervisor how valuable your skills and expertise are, and then proceed to negotiate not only more money in a higher paralegal salary but also additional benefits that are important to you.

For the latest career and management trends in the legal field,
connect with Robert Half Legal:

