

How to ask for a raise

Moderate · 12 min to read; 1 hour to prepare · Free

Bring proof, not need: a list of what you've delivered (with numbers) and the typical pay for your job where you live from CareerOneStop's Salary Finder. Ask your manager for a short meeting, name a specific number in the typical range, then stop and listen. If it's no, ask what it would take and when to revisit, or ask for an early pay review, and get any promise in writing. You have a legal right to talk about pay with coworkers.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ A list of your results from the last 6 to 12 months
- ☐ Your last review or job description
- ☐ Typical pay for your job and area

DO IT LIKE THIS

- 1 **Write down what you got done, with numbers where you can: sales, tickets closed, hours saved, shifts covered, people trained, new tasks you took on.**
- 2 **Look up what your job pays where you live.** CareerOneStop's Salary Finder shows typical wages by occupation and location, and the Occupational Outlook Handbook shows pay by field.
- 3 **Know what coworkers make, if they're willing to share.** If you're covered by the National Labor Relations Act, you have the right to discuss wages with coworkers, in person, by phone or in writing, union or not. It's unlawful for an employer to punish you for it or have a rule against it.
- 4 **Ask your manager for 20 minutes to talk about pay, not a hallway ambush.** Good timing: after a strong review, a big win, or when budgets are set.
- 5 **Make your case on the value you bring, your skills and your experience, and aim for the typical range.** Too high may signal you won't accept; too low undersells you.
- 6 **Name a specific number, then stop talking and let them respond.**
- 7 **If the answer is no, ask what it would take and when you can talk again, or ask for an early pay review.** Get any promise in writing.

Watch out Keep it about your work and the market, not your bills. CareerOneStop advises against using your need for more income as your argument. Stay positive and don't take it personally.

DAD NOTE *Asking for a raise isn't rude. Being underpaid quietly for three years is a mistake.*

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/work/raises-promotions-and-networking/how-to-ask-for-a-raise/

Checked October 2, 2026. Sources: CareerOneStop, U.S. Department of Labor; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; National Labor Relations Board; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.