

What To Do With A Job Offer

You've gotten through the interviews and guess what – you just got the call that you got the job. Well, sort of. HR says that this is a conditional offer of employment and that you will be receiving an offer letter. If you've not been in the civilian market for a while, this language is probably Greek. So, let's chat about the process.

The next step to the process is to go through the various steps prior to an official offer. From the employer's point of view, that means background and financial checks as well as, most likely, a drug screening. To accomplish these, you will complete the various forms that start this process. This should take anywhere from a couple of days to a couple of weeks.

This is also your chance to negotiate the salary and benefits package offered. Salary negotiation is an art unto itself. Again, your conversations with the hiring manager and especially HR will give you an idea of how open they are to changes. The best word of advice is to be realistic with the request. Understand that this is a give and take discussion. Use the relationships that you have built with the folks to know when and how far to press.

The next area of negotiations is the benefits. There is usually a greater opportunity for latitude here. Some of the benefits may be locked in due to ERISA, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, that regulates how these programs are managed. These benefits include among others the medical, dental, and retirement plans.

Other programs offered may be voluntary. These include life insurance as well as short and long-term disabilities. These disability plans are valuable if, for medical reasons, you cannot work. The same goes with life insurance. Parental leave is usually covered by the federal program Family and Medical Leave Act and may be paid or unpaid.

Other benefit options that employers choose to offer include stocks and profit-sharing, Health Savings Accounts (HSA), leave benefits such as sick, vacation or paid-time-off (PTO), and/or bereavement. To add on to this list, there can be phones or phone-reimbursement, internet coverage, wellness benefits such as gym membership. This is the list of things that can keep growing. While working in hotels, I had drycleaning and parking included. This was a real benefit that I missed when I left them.

Working for the military or in government as a civilian, there weren't many opportunities to negotiate. Don't be afraid to flex and negotiate. Again, it's important to understand the business and the employer to understand the amount of flexibility that they have to negotiate. Best of luck.

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