



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ASKING FOR A RAISE

From GEMM, the Gender Equity in Museums
Movement

Use the **5 Things You Need to Know** for information on building and sustaining your career, dealing with gender bias in your workplace, and making change. Share this resource with colleagues and friends.

If you're thinking about asking for a raise, know that money may be just one option to pursue. A bonus, additional leave, comp time or more flexible scheduling may be benefits that could be substituted if money is not available.

- 1. Know the best time to ask.** If your job description has changed, it could be the moment to seek a raise. If you're actually underpaid and/or you consistently over perform, it's time to have a conversation about the value of your work. If you've received a solid performance evaluation, use it to support your case for a raise. For many of you, timing your ask to when your organization's budget for the coming year is being put together might also be a useful—and thoughtful—strategy. Lastly, and literally, the best time to ask for a raise is Friday morning (avoid Mondays at all costs!).
- 2. Know what others in your role/experience level earn.** Take the time to research comparable salaries and benefits in similar institutions and locations, using available salary surveys. This information can bolster your case or help you to think about what you most need, for example is a better benefits package more important than a salary increase? Also be sure to have your [BATNA](#) in mind, or Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement. This is your “best walk away” or the best alternative that you are willing to accept during a negotiation.
- 3. Know how much it will cost to live where you work.** Many museum and cultural nonprofit jobs simply don't pay enough to allow you to live close to where you work. That's why the Massachusetts Institute of Technology created the [Living Wage Calculator](#) to help folks assess the cost of living in their community or region. What you learn by using it could be ammunition for a raise or to think about a job change.
- 4. Know your value.** This is not about “I deserve a raise because I've been here three years.” Before entering into a salary negotiation, take stock of yourself and your work so that you are able to articulate how you've moved your program or department forward. Consider the skills and attributes you bring to work every day. Make a list of successful projects you initiated or saw through to completion. Does your work result in greater efficiencies or economies for your organization? Does it raise awareness and help the organization meet its mission? Cultivate workplace allies who independently promote your value—their good words will balance your self-promotion.
- 5. Practice your ask and your gratitude.** Write and rehearse what you're going to say so that you're confident and convincing. If you get the raise or benefits you're seeking, say thank you. Just like we thank our donors, thank the supervisors who go to bat for you and get results.

Bonus Tip: Follow up, especially if you are turned down or put off until a later date. It's likely that you won't get everything you ask for, but you may come away with more than you could have imagined. The point here is not to be discouraged. If turned down, tell your employer you'll follow up in a month or six months and note on your calendar to reconnect then.

