EMPLOYER TOOLKIT

PAY Transparency

PRACTICAL TOOLS TO HELP COLUMBUS EMPLOYERS PREPARE WITH CONFIDENCE

WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW

Beginning Jan. 1, 2027, employers with 15 or more employees working in Columbus must include a reasonable salary range in job postings. Employers also may not ask candidates about salary history, though they may discuss salary expectations.

WHY PAY TRANSPARENCY CAN BENEFIT EMPLOYERS

Posting pay ranges can help:

- Attract candidates aligned with the role and compensation
- Reduce mismatches in the hiring process
- Improve efficiency in recruiting
- Support trust and transparency with applicants

JAN 1

This Employer Toolkit contains practical activities, worksheets and employer resources designed to help organizations prepare for implementation ahead of Jan. 1, 2027.

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ACTIVITY:
DEFINE YOUR SALARY RANGE

When developing a salary range, there are many factors you need to consider.

1 EXPERIENCE LEVEL NEEDED

WHAT IT MEANS: The typical combination of years, depth of experience, and demonstrated competencies (technical skills, leadership, complexity of work) expected for the role (e.g., Entry, Mid, Senior, Principal).

HOW TO EVALUATE:

- Define clear competency levels (what someone at each level can do independently).
- Map required skills and typical years of experience to those competency levels.
- Use your organization's existing job descriptions, role expectations, career paths or promotion standards, along with external job ads for roles with similar responsibilities.
- Consider proficiency in role-specific software, equipment, certifications or industry tools. Advanced knowledge of a required tool may increase the value someone brings to the role.

WORKSHOP IT:

List 3–5 core competencies and indicators for this level:

State typical years of relevant experience (if used) and explain exceptions (e.g., skills over years):

List any software, tools, equipment, certifications or industry knowledge needed for this role. Note the expected proficiency level.

Provide examples of typical responsibilities at this level:

2 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT IT MEANS: The primary duties, decision-making authority, expected outputs, size/impact of work (team size, budget owned, geographic scope).

HOW TO EVALUATE:

- Break role into activities and assign complexity/impact ratings (low/medium/high).
- Compare against internal roles with known scopes (who manages what, reporting lines).
- Identify measurable deliverables and authority (hiring, budget, vendor decisions).

WORKSHOP IT:
Provide top 5 responsibilities using clear verbs and outcomes.
Example: Manage monthly inventory reporting to identify supply gaps and recommend ordering adjustments before month-end.

1. ______

2. ______

3. ______

4. ______

5. ______

Does this position manage or supervise employees, contractors, vendors or volunteers?
If yes, list who or what the role supervises.

State decision authority and who reviews or approves work. Note typical team size, budget accountability and key stakeholders.

3 INTERNAL COMPARABLE ROLES

WHAT IT MEANS: Jobs inside the organization that are similar in responsibilities, skills, scope or impact. These comparisons help support internal equity, meaning pay is fair and consistent for employees doing similar work or work of similar value.

Important Note: Do not compare job titles alone. Titles can vary widely across organizations and may not reflect the actual responsibilities, outputs or decision-making authority of a role. Focus on what the role does, what skills it requires and what outcomes it is expected to deliver.

HOW TO EVALUATE:

- Define comparison criteria, such as scope, complexity, skills, impact and decision-making authority.
- Compare actual responsibilities and outputs, not titles alone.
- Use job descriptions, role expectations or pay ranges to identify similar internal roles.
- Review current pay for employees in similar roles when available.

WORKSHOP IT:

List 2–4 internal roles used as comparators and why.

If your organization uses bands, grades or pay ranges, note them here.

- **Band/grade:** The internal pay level or salary range assigned to similar roles.
- **Median pay:** The middle pay point for employees or market data in that role or band.
- **Compa-ratio,** also called comp-ratio: An employee's pay compared with the midpoint of the range.
  Example: $48,000 salary compared with a $50,000 midpoint = 96%.

Note any adjustments for unique skills, hard-to-fill roles or market conditions.

4 BUDGET RANGE

WHAT IT MEANS: The total budget for the position, including compensation and benefits, to set candidate expectations and guide offers.

HOW TO EVALUATE:

- Start with the salary or hourly wage amount, then account for benefits and other compensation elements.
- Consider internal equity, meaning whether pay is fair and consistent for employees with similar responsibilities, scope, skills and impact.
- Use market data, role requirements and budget constraints to set a minimum and maximum range you can support.
- Decide whether the posted range is annual salary or hourly wage and whether the role is full-time or part-time.

WORKSHOP IT:
Provide the base pay range and indicate whether it is annual salary or hourly wage.

Indicate whether the role is full-time or part-time.

Indicate if other pay elements, such as bonus, commission or sign-on pay, are typical and describe the range.

Note who approves exceptions and what documentation is required.

5 MARKET BENCHMARKS USED

WHAT IT MEANS: The external data sources and peer benchmarks used to set the budget range and validate pay decisions (e.g., specific surveys, competitor data, public postings).

HOW TO EVALUATE:

- Select relevant benchmarks by industry, company size, geography and role function.
- Use multiple sources when possible, such as wage surveys, public labor data, job boards, trade associations, peer conversations or industry groups.
- Be cautious with job board listings and informal peer comparisons. These numbers can be subjective because titles, responsibilities, benefits, location and company size may differ.
- Adjust for size, industry differences and local cost of living.

WORKSHOP IT:
List primary data sources used and date of the data.

Indicate whether each source was a wage survey, public data source, job board, trade association, peer conversation or other source.

Explain methodology/adjustments (location factors, company size, job-matching rules).

TRANSPARENT PAY AND FAIR SALARIES GO HAND IN HAND. *A data-driven approach ensures you remain competitive in attracting talent and meet both your and their compensation expectations.*

ACTIVITY: PRESENT YOUR VALUE BEYOND SALARY

HOW TO: CRAFT AN EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION & STRENGTHEN YOUR EMPLOYER BRAND

If your salary range is lower than competitors or market leaders, use your posting to better communicate the additional value your organization offers candidates. Use this worksheet to identify benefits, workplace strengths and cultural qualities that may help candidates better understand the full value of the opportunity.

What benefits currently make your workplace competitive?

What workplace strengths should be highlighted more clearly in job postings?

What makes your organization a place candidates would want to work?

Which employee benefits or workplace perks are most valued by your team today?

Check which benefits you currently promote in postings:

- [ ] PTO and paid holidays
- [ ] Flexible or hybrid work options
- [ ] Health, dental and vision benefits
- [ ] Retirement or savings plans
- [ ] Professional development or tuition support
- [ ] Career growth and advancement opportunities
- [ ] Team culture and work environment
- [ ] Recognition programs or bonuses
- [ ] Wellness programs or employee support
- [ ] Unique perks, such as meals, events, stipends or outings
- [ ] Other:

TALKING TO CURRENT EMPLOYEES ABOUT POSTED PAY RANGES

Posted salary ranges may raise questions from current employees. Before posting new roles, prepare clear, consistent talking points about how pay ranges are developed and how current employee pay is reviewed.

Questions to Prepare For:

How does this posted range relate to current employee pay?

How are tenure, performance, responsibilities and market changes considered?

What is the process for reviewing pay concerns?

Who should employees contact with questions?

If your review identifies gaps, consider whether pay adjustments, staged increases or clearer growth paths may be appropriate and financially sustainable.

What message should managers use if current employees ask about posted pay ranges?

Use your job posting to tell a clear, honest story about why someone would want to work for your organization.

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT
DELIVERING THE MESSAGE

HOW TO INTRODUCE PAY-POSTING TO YOUR ORGANIZATION WITH CLARITY AND CONFIDENCE

This toolkit provides ready-to-use messaging, manager guidance and operational scripts to help leaders and HR communicate pay-posting changes clearly and consistently. Use these materials to reduce confusion, maintain trust and ensure compliant, data-driven conversations with employees and candidates.

WHY THIS MATTERS:

- **Builds trust:** Clear, consistent messaging reduces rumors and shows commitment to fairness.
- **Protects managers:** Standard scripts and escalation paths help leaders respond confidently.
- **Supports hiring:** Transparent ranges improve candidate fit and speed time-to-hire.

You will need to edit the answers based on the worksheets you completed about your salary range and employer brand, but these templates will give you a head start!

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Collaborate with your hiring managers and recruiters to build consistent, defensible responses to candidate questions. Don't answer these now — use them to draft short, approved scripts together.

CANDIDATE QUESTION PROMPTS TO PREPARE ANSWERS FOR

Range basics

- "What does this salary range represent?": Agree on language describing market + scope + internal alignment.
- "Is that range the base salary or total compensation?": Decide what to disclose and how to label it.

Range Width & Variability

- "Why is the range so broad?": Explain factors that create variation: experience, specialization, location.
- "How often are ranges reviewed or updated?": Set a standard refresh period to state.

Placement & Progression

- "How will you decide where I fall in the range?": Define criteria: skills, experience, scope, comp-ratio rules.
- "How does pay typically grow in this role?": Agree on career path and typical timing/benchmarks for increases.

Comparators & Fairness

- "How does this compare to others here doing similar work?": Establish approved language about internal comparators and privacy limits.
- "What if I think the range is unfair?": Set the escalation path: recruiter → hiring manager → HR review.

Bonus/Equity & Total Rewards

- “Are bonuses, equity, or other pay included?”: Decide what to disclose and typical ranges/eligibility language.
- “What benefits or perks offset a lower base?”: Prepare a short seller’s list of key benefits and development opportunities.

Negotiation & Exceptions

- “Can you be flexible on salary?”: Define negotiable levers and the documented approval process for exceptions.
- “What evidence would justify an above-range offer?”: Agree on acceptable market data and approval thresholds.

Process & Confidentiality

- “Will my current salary be asked or used?”: Rehearse the compliant refusal and redirect to expectations.
- “Who can I talk to about pay concerns after an offer?”: Specify HR contacts and confidential review steps.

Timeline & Transparency

- “When will I hear about an offer and its justification?”: Standardize timelines and how much rationale to provide.
- “Will you share how you evaluated me against the range?”: Decide on level of feedback to offer and consistent phrasing.

CURRENT EMPLOYEE QUESTION PROMPTS TO PREPARE ANSWERS FOR

Use these prompts to prepare consistent, approved responses for current employees.

- “Why is the posted range different from what I make now?”: Agree on language that explains market changes, role scope, tenure, performance and internal review processes.
- “Does this mean my pay will change?”: Decide how to explain the organization’s review process and timing.
- “How are current employees being considered?”: Prepare language about internal alignment, role responsibilities and pay review practices.
- “Who should I talk to if I have a concern about my pay?”: Identify the appropriate manager, HR contact or review process.

After the discussion, draft a one-page candidate Q&A with the approved 1–2 sentence responses for recruiters and hiring managers to use.

MINI-CASE EXAMPLE

Fictional example for illustration only.

Role:
Administrative Coordinator

Experience level needed:
2–4 years of administrative experience, with intermediate Excel skills and experience using scheduling or project management tools.

Scope of responsibilities:
Coordinates calendars, prepares monthly reports, tracks vendor invoices and supports internal meeting logistics. This role does not supervise employees.

Internal comparable roles:
Similar in scope to an Office Coordinator or Program Assistant, depending on responsibilities and decision-making authority.

Budget range:
$48,000–$56,000 annually, based on role scope, internal alignment and available budget.

Market benchmarks used:
O*NET Online, local job postings, trade association input and comparable administrative roles.

Sample posting language:
This role offers a salary range of $48,000–$56,000 annually based on administrative experience, Excel proficiency and vendor coordination experience. Final compensation will be determined by relevant skills, role fit and internal alignment.

TERMS TO KNOW

Salary range: The minimum and maximum pay an employer expects to offer for a role.

Internal equity: The practice of reviewing pay to help ensure employees with similar responsibilities, skills, scope and impact are paid fairly and consistently.

Market benchmark: External compensation information used to compare pay for similar roles.

Band/grade: An internal pay level or salary range assigned to similar roles.

Median pay: The middle pay point in a set of compensation data.

Compa-ratio, also called comp-ratio: A comparison of an employee's pay to the midpoint of a salary range.

Total compensation: The full value of pay and benefits, including salary or wages, bonuses, health benefits, retirement contributions and other rewards.

Employer value proposition: The full set of benefits, culture, growth opportunities and workplace strengths that help explain why someone would want to work for an organization.

OTHER RESOURCES

These resources can help employers benchmark roles, strengthen hiring practices and better understand compensation trends:

SHRM: shrm.org
Human resources guidance and compliance resources

HRACO: hraco.org
Central Ohio HR education and professional resources

O*NET ONLINE: onetonline.org
Occupational information, role descriptions, skills, tasks and labor market data to help employers better understand positions and compensation context.

WORLDATWORK: worldatwork.org
Total rewards, compensation and pay equity resources for HR and business leaders.