

COST OF LIVING INDEX

This Guide will help you to analyze the worth of your salary offer(s) in relation to the city and state where you would be making that salary. Two jobs with similar responsibilities, titles, and salaries may not be similar at all if one is located in a cost city that has a higher cost of living while the other is based in an inexpensive city. To compare salary offers, you may want to access several of the websites below.

Keep in mind that these websites use different sources and methodologies for their calculators and so the results may vary. To supplement the information from these websites, you may also want to talk with Carnegie Mellon alumni (or other people whom you know) who live in the city to which you are possibly moving. Ask them the average monthly cost to rent an apartment or how much more costly it is to live there than to live in Pittsburgh. Also, you may want to discuss the cost of living index and salaries with your Carnegie Mellon Career Consultant.

The calculators at the websites below will ask you to enter a salary in one city and then ask you to enter another city. Since you will be comparing two possible job offers in two different cities, here is how you would use the Salary Calculator:

1. Enter the city and state from Offer A and then enter the dollar amount from Offer A.
2. Enter the city and state from Offer B. The calculator will then produce for you the equivalent salary for Offer B's city and state.
3. Here is an example:

Enter in the calculator – Offer A: Austin, Texas; your job offer is \$50,000

Enter in the calculator – Offer B (city and state only): San Jose, California

The calculator will return the dollar amount of \$83,482 (we used the calculator at bankrate.com for this example).

Details:

The cost of living in San Jose, California is 67% higher than that of Austin, Texas. A salary of \$50,000 in Austin, Texas has the same buying power that a salary of \$83,482 has in San Jose, California.

In addition, if you currently have only one offer that you want to analyze, then you can still use these calculators. In the first city/state fields, enter Pittsburgh, PA or your hometown city/state and then your one salary offer. Then in the second city/state, enter your offer's city/state. This will help you to analyze your offer for a city with which you are already familiar.

Salary Calculator Web Sites:

CNNMoney.com - <http://cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/costofliving/costofliving.html>

Bankrate.com - <http://www.bankrate.com/brm/movecalc.asp>

Salary.com - http://swz.salary.com/CostOfLivingWizard/layoutscripts/coll_start.asp

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