Quick Tips: Cost of Living Comparison

This guide will help you to analyze job offers in relation to the city/state where you would be earning those salaries. You may have received offers with similar responsibilities, job titles, salaries and benefits. But depending on the location of your offers, one may be ‘worth’ more than the other. Below are websites that have calculators that take into account the location of the offers and will help you to compare.

Utilizing the calculators

The calculators ask you to enter your current location and salary and then ask you to enter the location you are considering moving to. You can use one offer as your current location/salary and then use your second offer as the location you are moving to. Salary calculators:

- CNN Money
- Bankrate

Since you will be comparing two possible job offers, in two different cities, here is an example of how to use the calculators:

- Enter the city and state from Offer A (as your current location) and then enter the job offer salary dollar amount from Offer A (as your current salary).
- Enter the city and state from Offer B (as the city you are moving to).
- The calculator will produce for you the equivalent salary for Offer B’s city and state. Now you can compare your two offers as if they are in the same location.

Here is an example:

- Enter in the calculator – Offer A: Pittsburgh, PA and the salary is $50,000
- Enter in the calculator – Offer B: San Francisco, CA (this is where you second offer is located)
- The calculator returns a dollar amount of $88,322 (using the CNN Calculator)
  This means that a salary of $50,000 in Pittsburgh, PA has the same buying power as a salary of $88,322 has in San Francisco, CA.
- These websites also list the differences in housing, transportation, groceries, utilities and healthcare costs. [Keep in mind that these websites use different sources for their calculators and so results may vary.]

Conduct additional research on the cities

You may also want to conduct additional research on the cities you are considering moving to. You could contact CMU alumni who live in those cities and ask them questions regarding the cost of living there such as entertainment, restaurants, transportation and other items that are important to you personally. Alumni can be reached on LinkedIn and on the CMU alumni directory.

Analyze each job offer

If you currently have one offer that you would like to analyze, then you can still use these calculators. Since you are familiar what is like to live in Pittsburgh, you can use Pittsburgh, PA (or your hometown) as the location you are moving to. Enter your offer’s city, state and salary into your current city/state/salary fields. This will help you to see what your salary would worth if you were living in Pittsburgh and then you can evaluate if that salary would fit with your needs.

Need additional help?

If you would like to discuss your job offers further, then make an appointment with your career consultant for additional support and resources.