

OFFICE OF CAREER SERVICES

NEGOTIATING OFFERS FOR UNPAID INTERNSHIPS

Outlined below are forms of support that you can consider negotiating before accepting an unpaid internship offer:

Housing

Some internship employers offer housing accommodations and/or housing search assistance to help support their unpaid interns. Ask your internship employer whether they have designated housing for interns, offer a housing stipend, or provide resources or services to aid in your search. If your internship employer doesn't provide housing, they may be aware of host families or accommodations that offer short-term housing for internship purposes.

Travel

If your internship is located abroad, it is not uncommon for internship employers to cover airfare expenses. If your internship involves significant local travel, some organizations cover the expense through reimbursement, a stipend, or offering a public transportation card (e.g. MTA Metrocard in New York). When negotiating, ask your employer if they would consider any of these options to help subsidize your internship expenses.

Flexible Work Schedule

If it makes sense given the nature and location of your internship, you could propose a flexible work schedule whereby you work remotely one or more times per week to reduce your travel expenses. Additionally, you could discuss flexible work hours that either accommodate your class schedule or a paying position that offsets your living expenses.

Meals

Meal expenses are other non-monetary forms of internship support that you can negotiate. Ask your internship employer whether they typically offer daily or monthly meal per diems. Be ready to quote an expected daily meal cost in case you are asked - be reasonable and do not incorporate fine dining expenses in that figure.

Get Creative!

Although these are the most common types of support that internship employers provide for unpaid internships, think about other negotiables that would make the offer more attractive to you. Most importantly, don't be afraid to ask – the worst the employer can say is "No". You may be surprised at what you can negotiate!

If you have specific questions about how to negotiate your unpaid internship offer, be sure to speak with an OCS adviser.

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