Email asking candidate salary expectations

Ask before or right after the first phone screen, never after the final interview. Finding a compensation gap after three rounds wastes everyone's time and puts pressure on the offer.

RANGE FIRST

Subject: Pay range for [Job Title] and your expectations

Hi [First Name],

Thanks for your interest in [Job Title]. Before we set up a call, I want to be upfront about pay so we don't waste your time.

The base salary range for this role is $[Range Min] to $[Range Max], depending on experience, plus [bonus / benefits summary]. Most people join [in the lower half / around the midpoint] of the range.

Does that work for you? If you have a target number in mind, feel free to share it. It helps me make the case for the right offer later.

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]

AFTER THE PHONE SCREEN

Subject: Following up on our call: compensation

Hi [First Name],

Thanks for the conversation today. I'm moving you forward to [Next Step] with [Hiring Manager Name].

One thing we didn't cover: what base salary are you looking for? For reference, the range for this role is $[Range Min] to $[Range Max]. A range or a number is fine, and it's useful to know about anything else that matters to you, like bonus, schedule or start date.

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]

EXPECTATIONS ABOVE THE RANGE

Subject: Your [Job Title] application and pay

Hi [First Name],

Thanks for sharing that you're targeting around $[Candidate Number]. I want to be honest: the top of our range for [Job Title] is $[Range Max], and we don't have room to go above it for this role.

If that still works for you, I'd be glad to keep going. If not, I completely understand. I'd also like to keep you in mind for [more senior role / future openings], where the range is closer to what you're looking for.

Either way, let me know by [Date].

[Your Name]
[Title], [Company]

SUBJECT LINE IDEAS

- Pay range for [Job Title] and your expectations
- Quick question about compensation
- Following up on our call: compensation
- Before we schedule: salary range for [Job Title]
- Your salary expectations for [Job Title]
- Checking we're aligned on pay

SMS / WHATSAPP VERSION

Hi [First Name], it's [Your Name] at [Company]. The [Job Title] role pays $[Range Min] to $[Range Max]. Does that work for you? If you have a target, reply with it and I'll set up next steps.

Placeholders to replace: [First Name], [Job Title], [Range Min], [Range Max], [Candidate Number], [Next Step], [Hiring Manager Name], [Date], [Your Name], [Title], [Company]