

Should companies have to post salary ranges on job listings?

'It's still quite taboo to talk about how much you're making,' says HR specialist

By Maryse Zeidler, [CBC News](#) Posted: Nov 26, 2017 7:00 AM PT Last Updated: Nov 26, 2017 7:00 AM PT

Ian Wardle rarely applies for jobs anymore if they don't include a salary range.

Wardle works in various positions in Vancouver's arts scene, including as a stage manager, tour manager and event producer.

He usually looks for work on the B.C. Alliance for Arts and Culture's website, which primarily lists jobs in the non-profit sector.

"I was discouraged to see a fair number of postings on the alliance job board that didn't include any information about salary or pay," Wardle said.

"To me ... the imbalance of information struck me as something that's just truly unfair."

Wardle took his complaint to the alliance, prompting the organization to change its policy and [only allow postings that include a salary range](#).

Many greeted the new policy with much enthusiasm, saying it will help close the wage gap for women and people of colour — and save time for employers and employees alike.

But some human resources specialists warn that including salary details can be as detrimental for job seekers as it can be for companies.

'We should just do this'

Wardle says if companies are going to include detailed and long lists of job requirements, it's only fair for them to also post how much they can pay.

"Part of, for me, a respectful workplace is salary transparency," he said.

Wardle says he doesn't want to waste hours of time applying for a job that's not within a salary range he finds acceptable.

🙌 I'm sure some job posters won't like this, but huge thank you for making this decision!

— [@LyndseyBarton](#)

The alliance's executive director, Brenda Leadlay, says her organization has received hundreds of letters of support since it put the policy in place.

"It was the catalyst that forced me to say yeah, he's right, we should just do this," she said.

Perpetuating the wage gap

Leadlay suspects that organizations and companies in the non-profit sector don't post a salary range either because they're ashamed of how little they can pay, or because they want to see how little they can get away with paying an employee.

She also believes that posting a salary range supports pay equity for women and people of colour, because men are more likely to negotiate their salaries at a higher rate.

A posted pay ceiling suggests the salary is more fixed.

Big shout out to [#VanFringe](#) Bar Manager Ian Wardle, who influenced [@AllianceArts](#)'s new salary transparency policy <https://t.co/ZjaCSaB3Os>

— [@VancouverFringe](#)

That view is supported by the Women's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Labor, which points out that women only earned \$0.77 for every dollar their male counterparts make. Statistics Canada says the ratio is \$0.87 north of the border.

"Pay secrecy policies serve to perpetuate these disparities," said the U.S. labour department [in a fact sheet on the subject](#).

Flexibility for employers

But not everyone is in favour of salary disclosure policies — and not for the reasons one might think.

Cissy Pau, principal consultant at Clear HR Consulting, says posting a salary range can deter candidates who might not fit within those parameters but may still be a good fit.

"The advantage for some employers is it gives you a bit more flexibility," Pau said.

More people [#TalkPay](#) more will be able to get pay that reflects ability, and work done, instead of conscious or unconscious flawed bias.

— [@jstevh](#)

"What if somebody comes in with no experience, isn't considered competent or qualified for the job, but has a great attitude?"

Similarly, Pau says companies may find a way to hire a qualified applicant with higher salary expectations than what the company was originally intending to pay.

Meanwhile, other companies may offer a more extensive benefits package or more vacation time to compensate for a lower base salary.

Taboo subject

Pau says another reason why companies often want to avoid posting a salary range is to keep that information from competitors.

Lastly, employees themselves may not want their colleagues to know how much they make.

"In North American culture it's still quite taboo to talk about how much you're making," Pau said.

Hey, I have a [#talkpay](#) question for a friend. Does anyone know how much a paid intern in software engineering can expect to make? (SF area.)

— [@esqgoodman](#)

Explore CBC			
CBC Home	Music	Documentaries	Digital Archives
TV	Life	Comedy	Games
Radio	Arts	Books	Contests
News	Kids	Parents	Site Map
Sports	Local	Indigenous	
Stay Connected			
Apps	RSS	Podcasts	Newsletters & Alerts
Services and Information			
Corporate Info	Reuse & Permission	CBC Shop	Jobs
Public Appearances	Terms of Use	Help	Doing Business with Us
Commercial Services	Privacy Policy	Contact Us	Renting Facilities
		©2017 CBC/Radio-Canada. All rights reserved	Visitez Radio-Canada.ca