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How Pay Transparency Is Reshaping Job Ads

By: Aly J. Yale
Editor: Kristen Bahler
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Key Takeaways

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Pay transparency helps employers reach candidates who are a better fit from the start.

Detailed job descriptions and quick responses can also help employers compete for talent.

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Salary ranges are becoming a standard feature of job ads, even in states where companies aren't obligated to disclose them.

As of this writing, 14 states and Washington, D.C., have enacted laws requiring employers to disclose expected salary ranges in job postings. Connecticut, Maine and Virginia are slated to join them by the end of 2026.

But legal requirements are only part of the story. As employers recruit across broader geographic areas, many have embraced pay transparency not just to simplify compliance, but because clear salary information helps attract stronger candidates.

Pay transparency is becoming standard practice, according to Kyle Elliott, a San Francisco-based career coach. He says many companies are adopting it before they're legally required to because "they recognize they get better talent this way."

It's a shift that's changing how employers advertise open roles, and how quickly and efficiently they can fill them.

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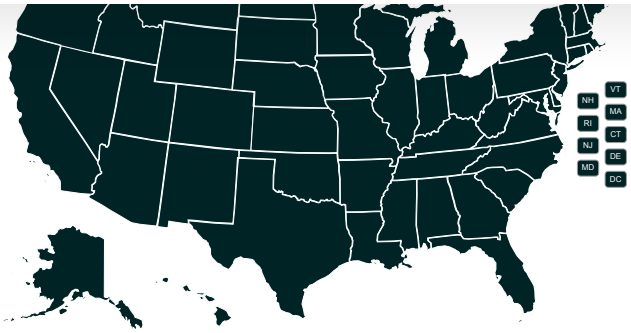
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Why clear pay helps job ads perform better

For employers, the business case for salary transparency is becoming increasingly clear.

One of the biggest advantages is that publishing pay ranges can help attract stronger candidates from the outset. **According to ZipRecruiter**, 67% of employers believe including salary information helps them find higher-quality applicants.

Companies appear to be taking note: The same ZipRecruiter research shows that 53% of job listings on its platform now include salary information. Payscale's 2026 **Compensation Best Practices Report** points to a similar shift: 57% of organizations say they publish salary ranges in job postings, up from 45% in 2023.

Beyond attracting talent, pay transparency can make the hiring process more efficient by reducing mismatches between employers and candidates.

“Applicants who do apply are better matched to the job, so companies make hiring decisions faster and more accurately,” says Sheldon Arora, CEO of StaffDNA. “Candidates enter the interview process already knowing the role aligns with their compensation needs, removing one more obstacle to making the right hire.”

Pay transparency alone isn't enough

descriptions were more detailed.

The goal is to give candidates enough information to evaluate the opportunity upfront. In practice, that means sharing total compensation — salary, benefits, bonuses, overtime and other perks — and avoiding overly broad pay ranges.

“A range like $60,000 to $180,000 may technically check the box, but it doesn't build trust,” says Neil Dickinson, vice president of compensation services at OutSolve. “The best postings give candidates enough information to understand the opportunity and decide whether it's worth pursuing.”

Employers also need to move quickly once someone applies. Nearly half (49%) of job seekers expect to hear back from an employer within three days of submitting an application, according to ZipRecruiter's latest Job Seeker Confidence Survey. More than two-thirds (67.9%) said they want prompt responses throughout the hiring process — even when the answer is no.

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