



Oregon Mom Matches Salary While Working Less in Switch to Freelancing

Motherhood or career? It's a question that women everywhere ask themselves.

When faced with this daunting choice, Bonnie Fanning decided not to choose at all. Instead, she traded the security of full-time employment for the flexibility of a freelance copywriting career.

With nearly 15 years of successful writing for various branches of the American Writers and Artists Institute (AWAI) behind her, Bonnie found herself at a crossroads when motherhood reshaped her priorities.

"I had a baby, and that changed everything," Bonnie says. "Working full-time, spending time with my daughter, and keeping everything together was incredibly tough."

However, her experience and training with AWAI made stepping away from being a full-time employee much easier.

From Passion to Profession

Bonnie always knew she wanted to do something creative with her life. With a degree in French under her belt, she found herself traveling the world.

To earn a living while on the road, she signed up for a travel writing workshop by what was then the travel division of AWAI. Unexpectedly, the division itself soon hired her to write editorial content.

Bonnie discovered she still had much to learn. Fortunately, within her first week on the job, she had the opportunity to attend AWAI's *FastTrack to Copywriting and Success*

CASE STUDY:

Bonnie Fanning

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MEMBER:

Bonnie Fanning

LOCATION:

Bend, Oregon

FORMER CAREERS:

Travel blogger, photographer, and full-time writer

HOW SHE GOT HER FIRST CLIENT:

Bonnie's former employer, AWAI, became her first freelancing client.

TOP AWAI PROGRAMS:

- *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting* (now *The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting*)
- *The FastTrack to Copywriting Success Bootcamp*
- *Writer's Launch Party*

Bootcamp. It's an annual, intensive event where writers learn from industry leaders, explore the latest trends, discover top writing opportunities, and network with key marketing professionals.

"I'd never heard of copywriting before then," Bonnie says. "I was going to be a travel writer, but this was so different and so cool."

Part of the onboarding for her job was taking *The Accelerated Program for Six-Figure Copywriting* (now *The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting*). With the knowledge from this program, she began writing promos, helped develop a photography branch for the company, and created a newsletter called *The Breakfast Stock Club* about stock photography. Soon, she started teaching others about photography and travel writing as she stayed on the move.

"I traveled to at least 25 countries for work. It was a crazy, incredible experience," Bonnie says.

Working Behind the Scenes

When AWAI sold its travel division, Bonnie's career changed along with it. She transitioned to working directly for AWAI and spent the next few years teaching copywriting and writing content.

She had a role in developing the Writer's Launch Party which helps people get started as freelance copywriters in five days.

"I got to see people from different backgrounds succeed at starting their freelance writing careers," says Bonnie. "All these people were doing it, and seeing their success was a huge motivator for me."

It was so influential that when she eventually branched out on her own, she chose to go back through the Writer's Launch Party as a student.

It served as a blueprint for what she should do to succeed and gave her the confidence she needed.

Balancing Family Life and Career

Even though Bonnie witnessed countless people finding their success as freelancers, she had doubts about doing it herself. She had always wanted to freelance, but fearing the unknown kept her from leaping sooner.

When she experienced the difficulty of balancing full-time employment with motherhood, she knew she needed to make a change. Bonnie wanted the freedom and flexibility to spend time with her husband and daughter without losing her income.

Then a nudge came from Bonnie's boss, AWAI president Rebecca Matter.

"My boss encouraged me to quit my job to freelance, and if it didn't work out, I could have my job back," Bonnie says. "That sense of security was ultimately what I needed, and here we are."

As a freelancer, Bonnie has created a work schedule that allows her to spend time with her family. Her daughter is in preschool Monday through Thursday, so she chooses not to work on Fridays.

"My daughter is 3, and as a freelancer, I get to be around her and have long weekends with her," she says. "That means so much to me right now."

Her husband also works an inconsistent schedule as a firefighter, so she enjoys having the freedom to spend an afternoon with him when he's off work. It's an added benefit of the writer's life.



Mastering the Freelance Life

Working independently comes with several challenges, including managing her schedule, handling invoicing, and contending with self-doubt.

Her experience with AWAI as a student and teacher has equipped her with the tools and techniques to overcome doubts. The programs that AWAI offers evolve as new copywriting needs emerge to help writers stay up to date with changes in the market.

“The Accelerated Program gave me the foundation for everything I do. It’s a pillar of persuasive writing,” Bonnie says. *“It has been updated over time, but the principles remain the same.”*

Bonnie remains active in the AWAI community by talking with people who went to Bootcamp with her, and she’ll be taking part in a Writer’s Launch Party soon. She finds it encouraging

to be in the same boat with other writers, hear what they’re do, and see their success.

“AWAI is amazing at putting together solid, high-quality programs with high-quality experts, so there’s always something new to learn,” she says.

These days, you can find Bonnie writing emails, newsletters, blogs, and video scripts for her clients. The wide variety of projects keeps things interesting. She’s been able to set her boundaries and choose the kinds of clients she wants to work with.

She especially enjoys working with thought leaders like entrepreneurs and small businesses who create programs to help creatives.

“My biggest win was making my previous salary as a freelancer in the first year while working part time,” Bonnie says. *“Once I became a freelancer, I thought, Why didn’t I do this 10 years ago?”*

Bonnie’s Tips for Copywriters

- **Start with who you know** — “Tell your existing contacts and even former employers you’re writing, and they may become your clients,” she says.
- **Get on LinkedIn** — “Put that you’re a writer in your profile and publish content as often as possible,” she says.
- **Build relationships with your clients** — When you keep your clients happy and let them know you’re open to more work, they are more likely to refer you.

Ready to pursue the *writer’s life*?

Learn more about the program that helped launch Bonnie’s career,
[***The Accelerated Program for Seven-Figure Copywriting.***](#)

