

Closing the wage gap: **PAY EQUITY**



Equal pay for work of equal value: it's a basic principle recognized all over the world. However, a wage gap between men and women persists, and for workers with disabilities, or racialized, Aboriginal and LGBTTI workers, it can be worse. For example, women working full-time, full-year in Canada bring home 20 per cent less on average than their male peers, and racialized women earned 55.6 cents for every dollar non-racialized men earned in 2005.

Unions work to increase wage fairness and to eliminate income inequalities. We challenge discrimination in all its forms. Wage gaps are often the result of systemic discrimination—when policies, practices or social norms affect the way employers value jobs where women and other equity-seeking groups are concentrated. Systemic discrimination is often unconscious or unintentional, and can go unnoticed, except by the people it disadvantages.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

We can look for wage discrimination in our workplaces. Where we find it, we can implement job evaluation plans and pay equity to resolve the problem.

Here are some questions you can ask to help identify wage discrimination in your workplace:

- Are the jobs done by women or other equity-seeking workers different from those done by other workers?
- Are the jobs done by women or other equity-seeking groups paid less than other jobs?
- Are women or other equity-seeking groups clustered in lower-paid jobs?
- Are the entry-level wage rates for the jobs done by women or other equity-seeking workers less than those for jobs done by non-marginalized workers?

- Do the jobs in question have more incremental wage steps than other jobs?
- Do part-time workers get lower pay rates and benefits than full-time workers doing the same job?

Unions can increase wage equality at the **bargaining table**. We can negotiate equal base rates for entry-level jobs, or wage rates and benefits for part-time and casual workers that are equal to full-time rates and benefits. We can bargain wage parity for jobs in different workplaces. For example, we can ensure long-term health care workers doing the same job as acute care hospital workers are paid the same.

Job evaluation helps ensure salaries are based on the objective value of jobs. Jobs are evaluated by neutral criteria that allow us to measure the wage gap created by systemic discrimination. Based on these results, a workplace pay equity plan can realign wages and eliminate discriminatory gaps.

CUPE offers workshops on job evaluation and pay equity. For more information, visit cupe.ca/job-evaluation or contact your National Representative.