SEPTEMBER 2026

DISMANTLING GENDER PAY DISCRIMINATION IN CANADA

Current trends and policy responses

Katherine Scott

CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
CENTRE CANADIEN
de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES

Dismantling gender pay discrimination in Canada

Current trends and policy responses

Summary 3

Canada's gender pay gap **3**

Swimming upstream: The evolution of pay equity in Canada **4**

Learning the lessons of pay equity **5**

Closing the gender pay gap requires a comprehensive strategy **6**

Looking forward **6**

Introduction 7

Part 1: Canada's gender wage gap 10

1.1 The challenge **10**

1.2 Current trends **11**

Gender wage gaps in the north **19**

Wage trends in public administration **29**

Part 2: Effective pay equity policies 32

2.1 Introduction **32**

2.2 Factors behind the gender pay gap **33**

The low value attached to care **34**

2.3 Legal mechanisms that promote gender pay equality **38**

2.4 Evolution of pay equity policy in Canada **41**

2.5 Evaluating pay equity: Successes and failures **46**

2.6 The Canadian experience **49**

2.7 Lessons for federal government **59**

Discussion and conclusions 66

Uneven progress in closing the gender pay gap **66**

Pay equity: Where we've been and where we need to go **68**

Appendix 1 72

Appendix 2 77

Appendix 3 101

Appendix 4 112

Appendix 5 116

Appendix 6 119

Notes 122

Summary

Fifty years after Canada ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) resolution 100 on equal pay for work of equal value, women are still waiting for economic justice.

Canada's gender pay gap

While the gender pay gap has narrowed over the decades, notably in the last few years, it remains unacceptably wide: a woman needed to work an additional 73 days—until the middle of April—to catch up to what the average man earned in 2025. This works out to an overall gender gap in annual earnings of 28 per cent.

In dollar terms, women are making more than $19,000 less a year, on average, than men—an astronomical $200 billion collectively in lost wages.

The unequal division of care labour continues to constrain women's employment opportunities and lifetime earnings. One recent Canadian study found mothers' earnings fall by an average of 49 per cent after the birth of the first child.

The gender pay gap is wider as well for women confronting intersecting sources of discrimination. Black and Indigenous women workers, for example, make close to 40 per cent less than non-racialized, non-Indigenous male workers per year.

Canada's glacial progress in reducing gender wage disparities speaks to the scale of the challenge involved in rooting out intersectional gender discrimination within a context of increasing income and wealth polarization.

The robust employment recovery in 2021 and 2022 boosted women's wages, including those from historically marginalized groups, but it did not fundamentally change the bifurcated character of Canada's labour market. Women and marginalized workers have found themselves on both sides of Canada's two-track recovery complicating efforts to close the gender pay gap.

These challenges are made more difficult in the context of the attack on workers' rights, the growing precarity of work arrangements, privatization of public services and public sector cutbacks, and the growing number of vulnerable migrant and undocumented workers subject to exploitation and abuse.

Swimming upstream: The evolution of pay equity in Canada

Continued progress in closing the gender pay gap is far from assured. Attention must be paid to protecting hard-won gains as well as to finding new opportunities for progress. Expanding and enforcing proactive pay equity legislation that directly targets the devaluation of women's work and the standing of low-waged workers in female-dominated occupations and industries is one essential tool in this task.

Canada was an early leader in introducing pay equity laws. Proactive pay equity regimes now vary substantially among Canadian jurisdictions in the degree to which they have embraced best practices and prioritized pay equity.

There is much still to do to strengthen existing legislation and policy, starting with expanding access to best-in-class proactive pay equity in the provinces and territories that do not have any system in place, namely Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and the three territories.

Another group of jurisdictions—Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador—need to take immediate action to expand and enhance their existing provisions to cover a broader range of workers in the para-public and private sectors.

And all governments—including Quebec, Ontario and the federal government with the most developed systems—need to take steps to strengthen provisions for accountability, transparency and enforcement and to explore avenues for expanding access to casual, part-time and temporary workers and incorporating methods that can assess and respond to intersectional gender discrimination.

Learning the lessons of pay equity

Economist Marie-Thérèse Chicha makes the point that "Pay equity policies are as much a matter of process—removal of discriminatory obstacles, e.g. gender biased job evaluation and remuneration systems—as of the final results: achieving equal pay for work of equal value." In other words, effective pay equity is all about the details.

To this end:

- Pay equity legislation should clearly establish the obligation of employers to achieve and maintain pay equity through the development of proactive pay equity plans, setting out clear objectives and definitions.
- It must require rigorous gender-neutral job evaluation methods that ensure women's work is assessed on the same basis as their male peers. Where no male comparators exist within an organization or firm, access to a proxy method or comparable process must be established.
- It should also promote collaboration between all stakeholders, guaranteeing that employees and their representatives have meaningful roles in decision-making
- It should likewise set strong standards of accountability and transparency via regular public and workplace reporting and mandatory equal pay audits such as exists in Quebec designed to root out gender-biased pay practices.
- The success of these efforts rests with well-resourced oversight bodies, providing needed education and support to stakeholders, and serving as the avenue for investigating complaints, settling disputes, and issuing compliance orders. As the history of pay equity and all employment law illustrates, the absence of deterrence incentivizes non-compliance.

Closing the gender pay gap requires a comprehensive strategy

All the literature on proactive pay equity stresses that comprehensive pay equity laws are essential in the fight to reduce the gender wage gap and the impact of historical discrimination, but there are limits to what it can achieve.

Policies to reduce gender pay equality need to be developed in tandem with policies to reduce wage inequality overall, as well as those that address the other forms of gendered discrimination in the labour market and penalties attached to motherhood and caregiving.

Likewise, access to high-quality community supports such as child care and attendant care—tailored to the diverse realities of women and their families—is also a fundamental plank in the multi-pronged strategy needed to close the gender wage gap. Improving the wages and the working conditions of the workers in these jobs, in turn, is another assured strategy to the same end.

So, too, is the presence of unions. Trade unions not only play a pivotal role in the development and implementation of proactive pay equity plans, but also through the negotiation of collective agreements that deliver, for example, fair scheduling, pro-rated benefits, professional development and strong protections against discrimination and harassment

Initiatives to expand union coverage, especially in the private sector, where the unionization rate hovers near 15 per cent and an even lower 12 per cent among women, are one of the most important strategies for expanding the reach and impact of pay equity across the country.

Looking forward

It's been 75 years since the ILO resolution 100 on equal pay for work of equal value was adopted, and more than 50 years since it was ratified in Canada. Yet there's still a long way to go to realize economic justice for women and others fighting for decent wages and good jobs. The fight for pay equity offers many lessons for advancing women's rights and gender equality. The imperative now is to apply these lessons in service of a more resilient and inclusive labour market and gender-just future.

Introduction

The large-scale entry of women into the paid labour force since the 1960s has transformed the economy and society. Over this time, there has been *a narrowing* between women and men in terms of their levels of education, hours of paid work, occupation and industry, and life-time labour force experiences. Nobel winner Claudia Goldin has called these developments "a grand gender convergence",[1] bolstered by investments in education, access to effective birth control, the expansion of the employment standards such as job-protected leave and legislation addressing unfair treatment in the labour market including pay equity.

These trends are also associated with a reduction in gender differences in pay, but significant disparities persist across virtually all occupational fields, age groups, levels of education and along the earnings ladder. That is certainly true in Canada, which continues to have one of the largest pay gaps in the OECD—and for Indigenous women, women with disabilities and racialized women, the gap is much larger still. Many of these same challenges are even more significant at the provincial and territorial levels.

Unequal pay is one of the most visible indicators of the systemic gender discrimination that characterizes the Canadian economy, where women find themselves concentrated in lower-paying sectors and occupations, deemed consistent with women's "natural" abilities and inclinations, jobs that are, in turn, undervalued and underpaid precisely because of the large presence of women. These factors work together, creating the foundation of systemic bias in the labour market, reflected in gender-biased compensation and employment practices, insufficient employment and training supports, and lack of affordable child care and accommodation of care responsibilities, to name a few.[2]

Entrenched gender income and wage gaps impose huge economic costs on women, not only in terms of lost income and economic vulnerability but also in terms of their health and wellbeing, access to critical resources such as housing, and connection to family and friends.[3] Over a lifetime, the pay gap adds up to astonishing financial losses for women. According to U.S. research, the gender pay gap, on average, costs women more than half a million dollars in lost earnings over the course of 40 years and upwards of $1 million among Black, Hispanic and Native American women.[4]

Gendered wage gaps also cost the Canadian economy as well. If women's wages were equal to men's in comparable jobs, according to a 2022 RBC report, household incomes would have been $18 billion higher (an even more today), generating new revenues and savings for both orders of government.[5, 6] Achieving gender parity in employment and pay globally could unlock as much as a 20 per cent increase in GDP per capita.[7] In short, pay equity delivers benefits to women, their families and the economy.

It has been 75 years since the adoption of the International Labour Organization Convention No. 100 on equal remuneration, and 54 years since it was brought into force in Canada. Since that time, various legislative and policy provisions have been introduced across the countries establishing "equal pay for equal work" and "equal pay for equal value" (pay equity), as well as anti-discrimination prohibitions in federal and provincial human rights codes. Employment standards provide the foundation for a labour market that not only delivers fair wages, but also decent work and robust protections for all workers. Proactive pay equity legislation is a key building block of such a labour market—one that justly values women's paid labour, confronts sources of systemic discrimination, and fosters vibrant local, regional and national economies.

The persistence of the gender pay gap, however, speaks to the significant weaknesses and gaps in Canada's current legal framework and high levels of non-compliance among employers. The new federal pay equity regime is struggling to get off the ground. By 2026, only 12 per cent of employers had completed pay equity reviews. The *Pay Equity Act* was passed in 2018, but the fight for an effective pay equity regime that delivers on the promise of economic equality for women isn't over. Bold action is needed to end pay discrimination against women and other marginalized workers—to move closer to a world in which equal pay is the norm, not the exception.

This report examines Canada's progress in reducing the gender pay gap and the evolution of its policy response in different jurisdictions across the country. Section 1 examines women's wages and the gender pay gap over time, unpacking the aggregate trends, as well as the experiences of different groups of female workers by age, presence of children, population group and geography. Detailed gender pay gap profiles are provided for each province in Appendix 2.

Section 2 turns to the question of pay equity policy and what is known about effective policy design and how the Canadian experience measures up. It provides a detailed look at Ontario and Quebec, the two provinces with the most comprehensive pay equity regimes in place, and the evolution of the federal pay equity regime introduced in 2018. The report concludes with a discussion of what we've learned about closing the gender policy gap in Canada and what's needed to advance gender equality in a context of growing labour market polarization.

The gender pay gap has slowly narrowed over time, but it will take decades more to close completely at Canada's glacial rate of progress.[8] The current period of economic uncertainty and high living costs provides even stronger reasons for eliminating gender discrimination in pay. Pay equity legislation is a fundamental tool to this end, upholding women's right to equal pay for work of equal value and to non-discrimination in employment as mandated in Canadian and international human rights law. As Kathleen Lahey writes: "Pay equity adjustments on their own cannot eliminate all the causes of women's income inequalities. But the opposite is also true: without robust pay equity mechanisms, [Canada] cannot fully eliminate all gendered economic inequalities."[9]

Part 1: Canada's gender wage gap

1.1 The challenge

Over the last 50 years, women's equality movements have had many important breakthrough moments, but economic gender inequalities have been very slow to change. Closing the wage gap has proved particularly challenging, even as women flooded into the labour market from the 1960s on and governments took action to support women's employment through improved access to education and training, employment equity and pay equity legislation, and the introduction of paid and unpaid leave for caregiving.

Today, Canada has one of the largest wage gaps in the OECD, ranking 26 among 31 peer countries.[10] Income disparities are even larger among women facing intersecting sources of discrimination in the labour market. Research has repeatedly shown that Indigenous women, racialized women, new immigrants, and women with disabilities, on average, have worse labour market outcomes, including lower earnings, compared to their non-Indigenous, Canadian-born, non-racialized, non-disabled peers.[11]

Progress has been made in narrowing the wage gap in the aggregate, but it remains hugely uneven, within a context of growing wage and earning inequality. The recent pandemic brought this reality home, with its devastating economic fallout having been shouldered by the most vulnerable workers and families, shining a light on deeply entrenched gender biases in Canada's labour market. The subsequent surge in the cost of living has been devastating for low-waged workers and many others engaged in public services and the care economy who have watched their wages stagnate year after year. Meanwhile, the incomes of men in senior management and finance have surged.

Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn coined the term "swimming upstream" to characterize women's pursuit of pay equality in the face of growing earning inequality.[12] These authors were talking about the evolution in the gender pay gap during the 1980s, but the metaphor captures the present moment as well.

1.2 Current trends

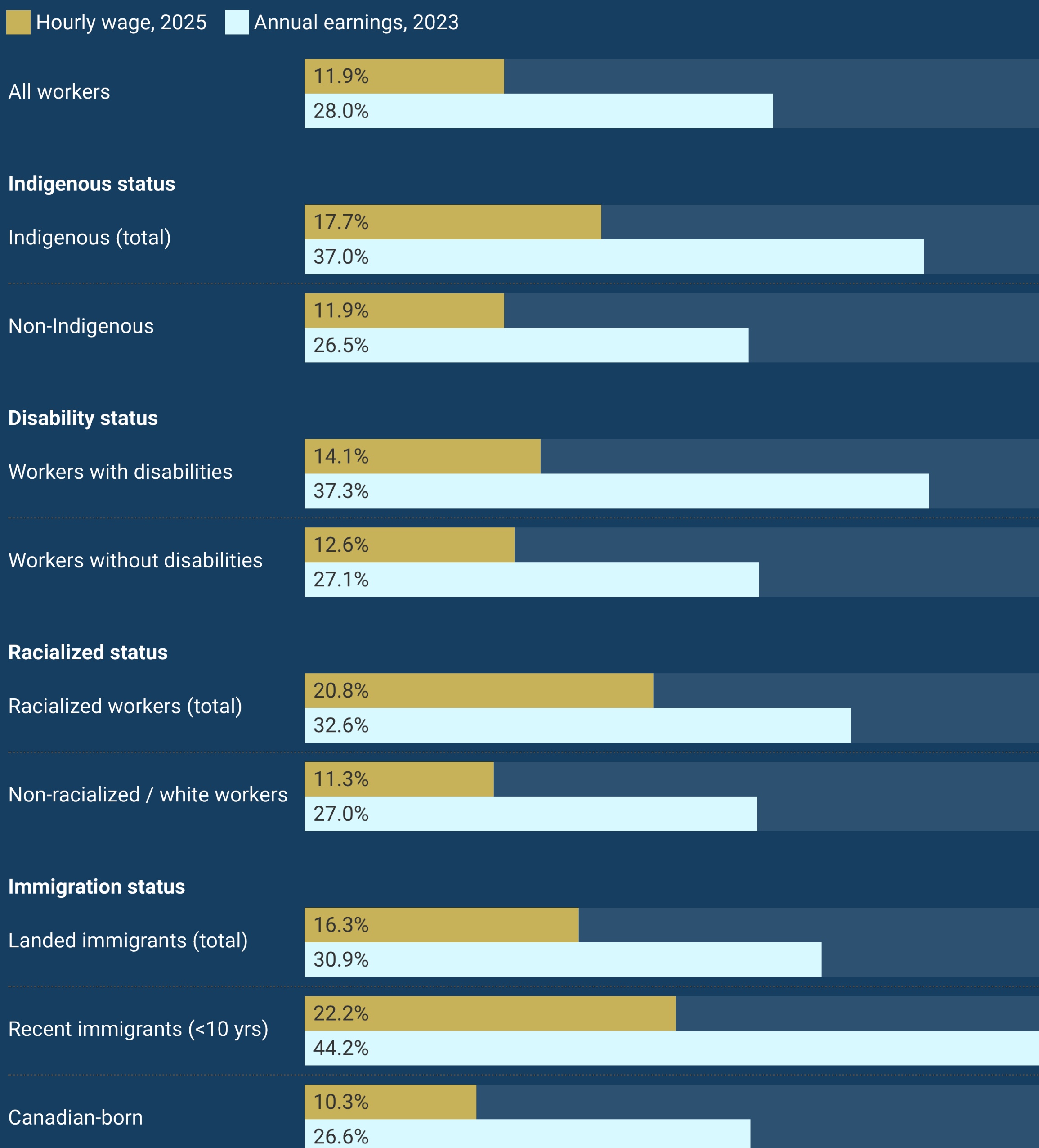
On average, women earn about 88 cents per hour for each dollar earned by men in Canada. The gender disparity in annual earnings is even more pronounced, with women earning 72 cents on the dollar. The gender pay gap has narrowed by 20 percentage points since 1977, when the federal government introduced Canada's first pay equity provision in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* following the ratification of ILO Convention 100 on Equal Renumeration, but the gap still remains unacceptably wide.

Women in Canada are paying a high price for this wage discrimination. In dollar terms, women are on average making over $19,000 less per year than their male colleagues, the same among full-time workers too. This amounts to $200 billion in lost wages. Even modest pay equity adjustments could close those gaps and significantly boost Canada's GDP.[13]

The following discussion presents an analysis of the gender pay gap in the self-reported **hourly wages**[14] and the **annual earnings**[15] of employees, by age and region and for several key demographic groups.[16] In this report, the gender wage gap is defined as the difference in average hourly and annual earnings between men and women expressed as a proportion of men's average earnings, as represented by the **gender pay ratio** or the **gender pay gap**. Unless otherwise stated, hourly wages (Labour Force Survey) and annual earnings (Canadian Income Survey) are adjusted for the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and expressed in 2025 and 2023 constant dollars, respectively. (See Appendix 1 for a discussion of data sources, key concepts and methods for measuring wage disparities. Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of the gender pay gap in Canada by province and population group).

Gender gap in average hourly wage and annual earnings relative to majority male group

Workers 15 years and older



Note Annual wages and earnings for all workers, aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed and Indigenous peoples living on reserve and in the north. Annual earnings data for people with disabilies for 2022.
Source Statistics Canada. Centre for Income and Socioeconomic Well-being Statistics, Labour Force Survey and Canadian Income Survey, custom tabulations. Also: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0418-01 - Average hourly and weekly wages and average usual weekly hours by Indigenous group living off reserve; Table 14-10-0477-01 - Labour market indicators for persons with and without disabilities, annual.

Canada's gender pay gap

The average hourly and annual earnings of men and women have generally followed an upward trend over the last 20 years, increasing modestly most years. Up until the pandemic, women's earnings grew at a faster pace than men's earnings as women's average job tenure and educational attainment increased and their numbers in higher-paying professional occupations edged up. At the same time, the continuing loss of well-paid, unionized manufacturing jobs weighed on male wages, even after taking into account the economic boom in oil-producing provinces through the aughts.[17]

As a result, the gender wage gap among workers aged 15 years and over has narrowed. As shown in Figure 1, the gender wage gap in **hourly wages** fell by 3.9 percentage points between 2006 and 2019, from 16.5 per cent to 13.3 per cent, while gender gap in **annual earnings** declined by six percentage points, from 34.6 per cent to a still sizeable 28.6 per cent.[18]

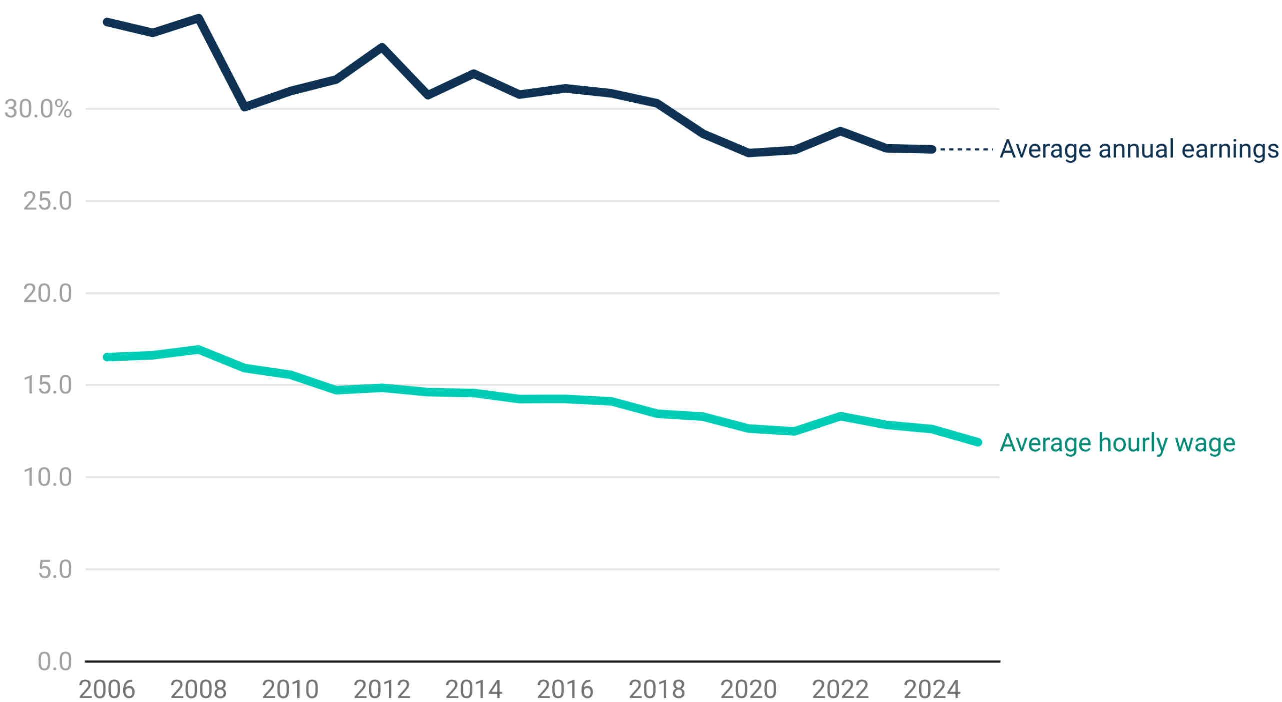
Then the pandemic hit, triggering very large job losses and equally large employment gains, all in a comparatively short period of time. One of the most notable changes was the sharp reduction in low-waged service sector employment and the simultaneous increase in several higher-paying industries, such as professional services, finance, educational services and public administration.

A sizable group of female workers, including those from historically marginalized groups, moved up the wage grid in the aftermath of the pandemic, as women took advantage of the surge of job vacancies in higher-paying industries in the tightest labour market in decades. While the average hourly wage among female employees increased substantially between 2019 and 2022, reaching $29.66 an hour, the surge in inflation was such that the real increase was a scant 8 cents. The annual CPI index jumped by 3.4 per cent in 2021 and by another 6.8 per cent in 2022, significantly outpacing earnings growth among both women and men, hammering low-waged workers and modest income households.

As the rate of inflation eased after 2022, wage growth picked up. In 2025, women's average hourly wage reached $34.04 per hour, an increase of 6.8 per cent over 2022, after taking inflation into account. Men's average wages also rose in lockstep, reaching $38.64 per hour. With all the ups and downs of the 2019-25 period, however, the gender wage gap moved little. In 2019, women earned 87 cents for each dollar men earned, and the same again in 2024.

Figure 1 / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings, 2006-25

Employees 15 years and older



Source Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0239-01 Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces; Table 14-10-0064-01 Employee wages by industry, annual. Annual earnings for all workers based on wages, salaries and commissions of employees. Excludes self-employed.

There was progress last year. Women's hourly wages rose at twice the pace of men's between 2024 and 2025 (1.6 per cent versus 0.8 per cent), the gender gap narrowing as a result, falling to **11.9 per cent**. Women's higher rate of unionization was a factor here.[19] Unionized workers achieved significant wage gains in 2024 and 2025, the result of important labour wins after the pandemic.[20]

The changes in women's real annual earnings were equally volatile, initially rising in 2020 as hundreds of thousands of low-waged workers were laid off, and continuing to rise as the employment recovery took off in 2021, only to fall back again in 2022 with the spike in inflation. In 2023, women's annual earnings reached $48,800, 72 per cent of men's average earnings (at $67,800), for a gender wage gap of **28 percent**, slightly smaller than the gap posted in 2019: 28.6 per cent.

New data for 2024, released in April 2026, shows that women's annual income increased by 2.3 per cent over 2023, as did men's. As a result, the gender gap in annual earnings was **unchanged** in 2024.

Age and the pay gap

The discussion above highlights the aggregate trend for the country. But, as research has repeatedly shown, there is tremendous variation in labour market outcomes, including in hourly and annual earnings, within and between different groups.

There are differences, for example, between younger and older women workers. Women are paid less than men through all stages of their lives, but the gap in wages is smallest among young workers aged 15 to 24 years, many of whom work at similar rates of pay in industries such as retail and accommodation and food services. In 2025, young women aged 15 to 24 years earned **93 cents per hour** for every dollar their male peers earned, and **82 cents** for every dollar of young men's annual earnings—a reflection of, among other things, women's higher rates of part-time work and over-representation in low-paying occupations.[21]

From this point, the gender wage gap starts to widen, a pattern that has remained remarkably consistent over time. In 2025, core-aged women aged 25 to 54 earned 89 cents per hour for every dollar men earned, a wage gap of **11.3 per cent**, much larger than the gender wage gap experienced by younger workers. The gap in annual earnings is even larger still, at **27.8 per cent**, reflecting significant differences in the number of hours and weeks worked by women and men,[22] typically coinciding with the arrival of the first child for many.[23]

One recent Canadian study found mothers' earnings fall by an average of 49 per cent after the birth of the first child. Ten years later, the average motherhood penalty is still 34.3 per cent. The impact is most pronounced for mothers with more than one child and those with lower levels of education.[24,25] In the face of limited employment alternatives and absent caregiving supports and strong employment standards, women fall back to part-time work, seek out "flexible" employers, and turn down training, transfers or promotion—all to accommodate the demands of care, at steep economic cost to themselves. Fathers, by contrast, do not appear to be adversely affected by children in terms of earnings or employment—such is the gendered division of unpaid labour and imperatives of family finance, which typically prioritize the highest (male) income earner.[26]

The gender wage gap continues to increase as women age. In 2025, women aged 55 years and older earned 84 cents per hour for every dollar men earned, a gender wage gap of **16 per cent**. The gap in annual

Table 1 / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings by age group, 2006, 2019, 2024, and 2025

Employees 15 years and older

	Average hourly wage				Average annual earnings		
	2006	2019	2024	2025	2006	2019	2023
15+ years	16.5%	13.3%	12.6%	11.9%	34.6%	28.6%	28.0%
15 to 24 years	9.2%	6.8%	5.9%	6.9%	25.8%	20.2%	18.0%
25 to 54 years	16.4%	13.0%	12.2%	11.3%	33.8%	27.9%	27.8%
55 years and over	20.7%	16.7%	16.6%	16.0%	43.7%	36.6%	33.3%

Source Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0239-01 - Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces; Table 14-10-0064-01 Employee wages by industry, annual. Annual earnings for all workers based on wages, salaries and commissions of employees. Excludes self-employed.

earnings was **33.3 per cent**, almost twice as high as the gender gap among young workers aged 15 to 24 years.

The pay gap among older workers has narrowed since 2006 as the level of employment among older workers has risen, notably among older women.[27] Yet older women continue to face barriers and discrimination in the labour market: their earnings tend to peak earlier men and then stagnate or decline more rapidly with age as they exit the labour market, reduce their hours of employment, or run into roadblocks at work.[28] Of those still in the workforce, almost half are there by necessity, not choice.[29]

Caregiving responsibilities are, again, an important factor shaping women's labour market participation. Over one-third of women aged 55 to 64 years provide unpaid care to an adult in their lives, while one in five is involved in child care.[30] Many are likewise stuck in low-waged work with limited opportunities for training and advancement—especially those confronting intersecting sources of discrimination, such as disability or immigration status—another key contributor to the large gender pay gap among workers over age 55.[31]

Geography and the pay gap

The post-pandemic employment recovery held out the promise of enhanced economic security for women after a difficult two years. It also held out the hope of greater income equality across the country.

Nationally, the gender gap in hourly wages of workers aged 15 years and older was **11.9 per cent** in 2025, but this figure hides a good deal of variation between provinces. Prince Edward Island consistently reports the smallest wage gap among the provinces. In 2025, the average hourly wage of women aged 15 years and older was higher than the average wage posted by men. However, given the very small sample size in Prince Edward Island, it is important to interpret these findings with caution.[32]

Suffice to say that the gender wage gap in Prince Edward Island is comparatively small, along with other provinces, including New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Quebec and Manitoba straddle the middle of the provincial group, while Alberta has historically recorded the largest gender wage gaps. In 2025, the spread between the top and the bottom province was **21 percentage points**.

The spread between the provinces with the smallest and largest gender gaps in annual earning is also large: **16 percentage points**. In 2023, the gender wage gap ranged from a low of 20.1 per cent in New Brunswick to a high of 36.3 per cent in Alberta. The maritime region (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island) and Quebec typically report the smallest gender gaps in earnings while the provinces with highly gender-segregated resource economies report the highest.

The experience of Alberta women stands out. For years, Alberta women have reported both the largest gap in hourly wages and the largest gap in annual earnings, lagging far behind their peers in other provinces. The huge wage differential between male-dominated resource jobs and female-dominated service work, in combination with high levels of part-time work among women and weak employment standards, place women at a considerable economic disadvantage.

It is important to note the variation in women's wages and earnings between provinces as well. Historically, women in Eastern Canada have earned lower wages than women in other parts of the country—a reflection of lower wage rates and lower rates of employment. In 2025, women's average hourly wages were more than $2.50 below the national benchmark ($34.04) in each of the four Atlantic provinces.

While the growth in women's wages and earnings initially lagged men's in 2021 and 2022, stronger growth—notably last year—has narrowed the wage with men in all provinces, with the exception of Alberta, where it increased by 0.7 percentage points between 2019 and 2025.

In British Columbia, women experienced the largest gains between 2019 and 2025, their hourly wage rate rising to $35.28 per hour, sharing the top spot with Ontario ($35.35). (Likewise, men in British Columbia, along with Nova Scotia, also recorded the largest wage gains compared to their peers).

Table 2 / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings, 2006, 2019, 2024 and 2025

Employees 15 years and older

	Average hourly wage				Average annual earnings		
	2006	2019	2024	2025	2006	2019	2023
Canada	**16.5%**	**13.3%**	**12.6%**	**11.9%**	**34.6%**	**28.6%**	**28.0%**
NL	22.0%	15.6%	15.8%	10.4%	41.9%	34.3%	28.1%
PEI	6.9%	0.2%	1.0%	-3.6%	25.3%	18.9%	20.3%
NS	15.7%	10.8%	9.4%	6.5%	30.5%	28.1%	23.6%
NB	13.1%	9.6%	7.3%	4.9%	31.4%	22.5%	20.1%
QC	13.8%	10.8%	9.0%	9.9%	27.1%	22.5%	21.7%
ON	15.6%	12.1%	13.2%	11.6%	34.7%	28.1%	27.6%
MB	11.6%	11.3%	8.5%	9.7%	34.7%	28.5%	28.4%
SK	15.6%	14.8%	12.1%	12.7%	37.9%	33.0%	30.9%
AB	23.6%	17.4%	18.3%	18.1%	45.3%	33.0%	36.3%
BC	17.9%	16.8%	13.5%	12.8%	33.8%	32.9%	31.3%

Note Annual earnings for all workers based on wages, salaries and commissions of employees, aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed.
Source Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0239-01 Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces; Table 14-10-0064-01 Employee wages by industry, annual.

By contrast, the gender gap in hourly wages and annual earnings widened in Alberta, part of a decade-long slide in wages among both women and men. By 2022, Alberta had lost the title of highest-wage province for women workers to neighbouring B.C., after years of poor wage growth. By 2024, Alberta had fallen another spot; women's average earnings now trailing British Columbia and Ontario.

Fluctuations in global energy prices and inflation have played an important role, but so did the deliberate policies of the Alberta government to suppress workers' wages, which fell most heavily on women. The minimum wage has been frozen in Alberta since 2018 during a period of high inflation. In addition, restrictive limits on trade unions and collective bargaining and painful austerity in wages for provincial public sector workers across health care, education, and public administration have significantly undercut women's wages.[33] The experience in Alberta reinforces the need for complementary measures to boost and sustain workers women's wages over time, especially among those facing multiple barriers in the labour market.

Gender wage gaps in the north

The gender gap in earnings is smaller in Canada's territories—Yukon, Northwest Territories (NWT), and Nunavut—compared to the Canadian average and the other provinces because of relatively high rates of employment[34] and the high concentration of women in largely unionized, public and para-public workplaces.[35]

In Yukon, for example, the gender gap in hourly wages was only 2.7 per cent in 2021—an improvement over 15.1 per cent in 1997, but a step back from wage parity reported through the late 2010s.[36,37] Likewise, the gap in annual earnings is roughly two-and-a-half times smaller in the territories than among the provinces, according to the 2024 Canadian Income Survey. Given the small population in the Northern territories, these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Earnings data also needs to be understood within the larger economic context. Canada's northern resource economies remain highly segregated by gender and racialized status, resulting in lower incomes for women and higher rates of underemployment compared to urban centres.[38] Women workers also experience acute challenges with respect to workplace violence and harassment and the over-representation in part-time work, all of which is compounded by lack of access to community supports like child care, notably for Indigenous women.[39]

Table 3 / Gender pay gap in average annual earnings, 2019-24

Employees 15 years and older

	2019	2022	2023	2024
Canada	**28.6%**	**28.8%**	**27.8%**	**27.8%**
Yukon	4.7%	12.1%	16.3%	11.0%
Northwest Territories	19.7%	23.0%	12.4%	11.0%
Nanuvut	18.5%	6.4%	10.9%	10.7%

Note Annual earnings for all workers based on wages, salaries and commissions of employees, aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed.
Source Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0239-01 Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces.

Indigenous status and the pay gap

The Indigenous population has grown significantly over the past two decades,[40] reaching 1.8 million people in 2021, five per cent of Canada's total population.[41] Increasing numbers of young Indigenous Peoples are swelling the ranks of Canada's labour force, highlighting the imperative to improve the wellbeing and financial security of the Indigenous communities.

Yet large disparities persist in educational attainment, employment, income, housing and access to services such as reliable transportation and quality health care—especially for those living on reserve and in north.[42] The wage gap is also significant between Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers, despite notable increases in educational attainment among Indigenous Peoples over the last 15 years, especially among Indigenous women.[43]

There has generally been steady improvement in the hourly wage of Indigenous workers over the last decade, rising by 8.3 per cent between 2015 to 2024, from $31.08 to $33.66 (in constant 2025 dollars), compared a slightly smaller increase of 7.9 per cent among non-Indigenous workers.[44] The wage gap held steady at roughly 10 per cent over this period. However, a large jump in the wages of Indigenous workers in 2025 to $33.66 (+4.5 per cent) helped to reduce the gap further to 7.5 per cent.

Because the Labour Force Survey does not survey First Nations people living on reserve, these figures overestimate the scale of change and level of earnings. First Nations people living on reserve consistently report the lowest earnings of all Indigenous groups, just $29,400 in median employment income in 2020 compared to $47,600 among non-Indigenous people according to the last census. The respective figures among First Nations women living on reserve and non-Indigenous women were $31,400 and $40,800, respectively.[45]

In recent years, employment gains among Indigenous workers in public sector industries such as educational services and health care and social assistance helped to offset steep employment losses in accommodation and food services, administrative and support services, and transportation and warehousing triggered by the pandemic. But the surge of inflation was such that Indigenous workers lost financial ground between 2019 and 2022, hourly wages down by -0.7 per cent: -1.0 per cent among men and -0.2 per cent among women.

Wages recovered between 2022 and 2024, rising sharply among men (+5.3 per cent) and, more modestly, among women (+1.6 per cent)—even as employment rates among Indigenous workers fell from post-pandemic highs and large numbers of Indigenous Peoples exited the labour market.[46] These gains, however, weren't enough to quite keep pace with those of non-Indigenous workers, whose wages increased by 4.8 per cent in total, by 4.3 per cent among men and 5.3 per cent among women.

Indigenous women were especially hard hit during the pandemic and their recovery much delayed, their average hourly wage growth trailing the wage gains of Indigenous men as well as non-Indigenous workers (both men and women). As a result, the gender wage gap with Indigenous men and with non-Indigenous men widened between 2022 and 2024 by 2.5 percentage points and two percentage points, respectively, as shown in Tables 4a and 4b.

The gender gap in hourly wages between Indigenous women and Indigenous men is much smaller than the gap between Indigenous women relative to non-Indigenous men, 11.9 per cent versus 21.2 per cent in 2024. The difference in annual earnings is particularly large, at **37 per cent**. In 2023, Indigenous women living off reserve earned less than two-thirds (63 per cent) of what non-Indigenous men earned, a difference of $28,300, and a difference of more than $30,000 among First Nations women.

There was a notable increase, as noted above, in the average wage of Indigenous workers in 2025—increasing by 3.6 per cent among Indigenous male workers and 5.3 per cent among Indigenous female workers. This late rally of women's wages helped to arrest the widening gap in hourly wages with Indigenous men that had opened after the pandemic and it helped to reduce the even larger wage gap with non-Indigenous men (falling to **10.5 per cent** and **17.7 per cent** in 2025, respectively).

Table 4A / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings, within groups, by Indigenous status, 2019-25

	Average hourly wage				Average annual earnings		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Indigenous peoples (off reserve)	**9.4%**	**8.7%**	**11.9%**	**10.5%**	**34.1%**	**23.3%**	**26.7%**
First Nations (off reserve)	3.6%	5.2%	8.2%	7.0%	24.3%	26.2%	23.2%
Métis	13.7%	11.9%	15.3%	13.9%	42.6%	20.9%	30.4%
Non-Indigenous people	**13.4%**	**13.5%**	**12.6%**	**11.9%**	**27.9%**	**27.5%**	**26.5%**

Note Annual wages and earnings for all workers, aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed and Indigenous peoples living on reserve and in the north.
Source Statistics Canada. Centre for Income and Socioeconomic Well-being Statistics, Canadian Income Survey, custom tabulations; Table 14-10-0418-01 - Average hourly and weekly wages and average usual weekly hours by Indigenous group living off reserve.

Table 4B / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings, relative to non-Indigenous male workers, by Indigenous status, 2019-25

	Average hourly wage				Average annual earnings		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Indigenous peoples (off reserve)	**19.2%**	**19.1%**	**21.2%**	**17.7%**	**40.6%**	**37.0%**	**37.0%**
First Nations (off reserve)	19.7%	19.9%	21.2%	19.0%	40.2%	43.1%	39.3%
Métis	18.9%	18.4%	21.0%	16.6%	40.9%	30.6%	34.9%
Non-Indigenous people	**13.4%**	**13.5%**	**12.6%**	**11.9%**	**27.9%**	**27.5%**	**26.5%**

Note Annual earnings for all workers based on wages, salaries and commissions of employees, aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed.
Source Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0239-01 Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces; Table 14-10-0064-01 Employee wages by industry, annual.

Disability status and the pay gap

Women with disabilities are one of the most economically vulnerable groups in Canada. They are twice as likely than those without disabilities to live in poverty and they make up a larger share of the poor than disabled men.[47] Those who are single, shouldering significant care responsibilities, Indigenous, racialized and/or newcomers live in the deepest poverty.

The sources of their economic marginalization are complex and overlapping.[48] These include unequal access to resources and opportunities, like education and employment, lack of access to crucial services, supports and accommodations that would allow for their full participation in community life, and deep-seated discrimination.[49]

Rising rates of education and the expansion of "work from home" arrangements over the last decade have helped to boost employment rates and, in turn, earnings among people with disabilities,[50] but significant barriers to employment remain.[51] In 2025, for example, less than half of women with disabilities aged 15 years and older (45.3 per cent) were engaged in the paid labour market compared to 62 per cent of women without disabilities and 70.4 per cent of men without disabilities. The respective rates among those aged 25 to 64 years were 64.5 per cent compared to 78.2 per cent and 87.2 per cent.[52]

Among those who are employed, people with disabilities are disproportionately represented in undervalued jobs deemed suitable "for disabled people," while disabled women are channelled into undervalued jobs "for women", as reflected in the gender pay gap.[53]

In 2024, the gap between the annual earnings of all workers with and without disabilities aged 15 years and older was $11,600 ($52,900 versus $64,500), reflecting, among other factors, higher rates of part-time, lower average usual hours worked per week (34.6 versus 35.6) and lower average hourly earnings ($33.46 versus $35.68) among employees with a disability.[54]

These income gaps, however, were larger among women with disabilities. According to the 2025 Labour Force Survey, women with disabilities earned an average of **eight per cent** less per hour than men with disabilities and **14.1 per cent** less than men without disabilities. The differences in 2023 annual earnings were larger still, at **24.9 per cent** and **37.3 per cent**, respectively.[55]

Looking back to 2019, we have seen a significant increase in the average annual employment income of people with disabilities, associated with changes in the labour market in 2020 and the post-pandemic recovery. Men with disabilities aged 15 years and older experienced the largest income gains over the 2019-23 period, followed by employment income gains among women with disabilities.[56]

By contrast, income growth among workers without disabilities was more modest. As a result, the gender gap in annual earnings among women with disabilities vis-à-vis men with disabilities widened by 6.3 percentage points while the gender gap with men without disabilities declined by 2.4 percentage points.

Growth in public sector employment has fuelled rising income among women with disabilities, accounting for three-quarters (73.4 per cent) of employment growth between 2022 and 2024. Women with disabilities found work in health care and social assistance and public administration even as their numbers fell in areas like retail and manufacturing.

At the same time, there is clear evidence that this window is closing. Unemployment is rising among people with disabilities (and those without disabilities), notably among women with disabilities, and there has been an increase in people with disabilities leaving the labour market.

In this context, the attacks on diversity, equity and inclusion programming[57] and new programs of public austerity and staffing cuts threaten the hard-won progress of recent years.[58] The situation of women with disabilities and other marginalized workers is set to get a lot worse. Newly released annual income data for 2024 suggests that earning gap for women with disabilities has widened further.[59]

Table 5A / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings, within groups, by disability status, 2019-25

	Average hourly wage			Average annual earnings		
	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Workers with disabilities	10.7%	11.7%	8.0%	18.6%	25.5%	24.9%
Workers without disabilities	14.1%	13.1%	12.6%	28.1%	29.0%	27.1%

Note Annual wages and earnings for all employees aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed and full-time students.
Source Statistics Canada, Centre for Income and Socioeconomic Well-being Statistics, Canadian Income Survey, custom tabulations; Table 14-10-0477-01 Labour market indicators for persons with and without disabilities, annual.

Table 5B / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings, relative to non-disabled male workers, by disability status, 2019-25

	Average hourly wage			Average annual earnings		
	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Workers with disabilities	16.3%	16.7%	14.1%	39.7%	38.4%	37.3%
Workers without disabilities	14.1%	13.1%	12.6%	28.1%	29.0%	27.1%

Note Annual wages and earnings for all employees, aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed and full-time students.
Source Statistics Canada, Centre for Income and Socioeconomic Well-being Statistics, Canadian Income Survey, custom tabulations; Table 14-10-0477-01 Labour market indicators for persons with and without disabilities, annual.

Racialized status and the pay gap

For several decades, Canada's labour force has been changing because of population growth through immigration and the inexorable march of population aging. Large numbers of racialized workers (a population that already skews younger) are entering the labour market and older, non-racialized or white workers are exiting. New information on racialized workers in the Labour Force Survey, starting in 2022, sheds light on changing dynamics in the labour market—including the status of racialized women workers and the challenges they currently confront.[60]

The period between 2022 and 2024 is particularly noteworthy. The post-pandemic surge in employment brought many racialized workers into the labour market at a time of rapid population growth. The number of racialized workers aged 15 years and over grew by 17.6 per cent over this period, whereas there was a -0.4 per cent decline in the number of non-racialized workers.

The employment rate among all racialized people now exceeds the employment rate among non-racialized people aged 15 years and older by a substantial margin: 65.5 per cent vs. 59.1 per cent. Looking at the core working age group aged 25 to 54 years, however, we see a flip in the figures. In 2024, the employment rate among core-aged, racialized workers was 80.4 per cent, compared to 85.5 per cent among non-racialized workers, representing an employment gap of six percentage points. This gap was almost wholly accounted for by lower rates of employment among racialized women (75 per cent versus 85.7 per cent among racialized men).

Racialized workers increased their share of workers in every industry between 2022 and 2024, with many new entrants finding employment in "high growth" industries such as professional services and public administration, as well as filling vacancies in the care economy and low-waged sectors like accommodation and food services.

A sizable group of racialized workers have moved up the wage grid but the number of racialized workers working in lower-paid employment also increased at the same time, offsetting aggregate wage gains of the total group.

Looking at the period 2022 to 2025, the average hourly wage of racialized workers aged 15 years and older increased by 2.1 per cent, reaching $34.59 per hour.[61] But the gains were somewhat higher among non-racialized workers at 3.5 per cent, thus widening the wage gap by 1.2 percentage points, from 9.4 per cent to 10.6 per cent.

The average wage of racialized women increased over this period by 4.2 per cent, helping to narrow the gender wage gap with racialized and non-racialized men. The pay gap, however, remains high. In 2025, racialized women earned an average of $32.39 per hour, **11.6 per cent** less than racialized male workers and **20.8 per cent** less than non-racialized male workers earned, a difference here of more than $8.50 per hour.

In 2025, South Asian women confronted the largest “within group” gender gap in hourly wages (13.2 per cent), while Black women experienced the smallest (5.7 per cent). But Filipino women reported the largest gender pay gap relative to non-racialized men, at 29.6 per cent, and an even larger one (32.6 per cent) with Chinese men, who earn the highest average hourly wage among male workers.

The same pattern is evident in the data on annual earnings. In 2023, the within-group gender earnings gap ranged from a high of 42.6 per cent among Arab women to a low of 12.4 per cent among Black women, a reflection, in part, of the very average high earnings of Arab men ($82,700) and the very low average earnings of Black men ($55,000).

The within-group earnings gap of Chinese women was also comparatively low, at 12.8 per cent, because of the comparatively high earnings of Chinese women ($67,400). The average gender gap of all racialized women compared to non-racialized men was **32.6 per cent**.

Since 2022, as noted, there has been a decline in the gap in hourly wages between racialized women and racialized men, and between racialized women and non-racialized men. But there has been little change in the gender gap in annual earnings. While the gap narrowed for Chinese and Arab women, it widened for Southeast Asian, Black, Filipino and South Asian women due to the decline in their annual earnings.

The robust employment recovery in 2021 and 2022 boosted the employment and wages of racialized workers between 2022 and 2025,[62] but it did not fundamentally change the bifurcated character of Canada’s labour market. Racialized workers have found themselves on both sides of Canada’s two-track recovery. While many racialized women now work in higher-paying jobs, many others are trapped in low-waged, precarious employment. Indeed, the proportion of low-waged racialized women—those earning less than two-thirds of the median hourly wage—grew over this period.[63]

Table 6A / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings, within groups, by racialized status, 2022-25

	Average hourly wage			Average annual earnings	
	2022	2024	2025	2022	2023
Racialized workers	**15.0%**	**12.2%**	**11.6%**	**26.3%**	**25.0%**
South Asian	18.0%	14.4%	5.7%	31.7%	33.6%
Chinese	14.3%	11.5%	13.2%	26.5%	12.8%
Black	8.2%	5.0%	12.8%	18.5%	12.4%
Filipino	4.3%	6.6%	6.8%	13.4%	20.3%
Arab	-	-	-	35.6%	42.6%
Latin American	-	-	-	20.2%	26.2%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	31.1%	24.3%
Other racialized groups	17.7%	14.4%	13.1%	31.3%	28.4%
Non-racialized/white workers	**12.0%**	**12.5%**	**11.3%**	**27.6%**	**27.0%**

Note Annual wages and earnings for all employees, aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed and full-time students.
Source Statistics Canada. Centre for Income and Socioeconomic Well-being Statistics, Labour Force Survey and Canadian Income Survey, custom tabulations.

Table 6B / Gender pay gap in average hourly wage and average annual earnings, relative to non-racialized male workers, by racialized status, 2022-25

	Average hourly wage			Average annual earnings	
	2022	2024	2025	2022	2023
Racialized workers	**21.6%**	**21.2%**	**20.8%**	**32.7%**	**32.6%**
South Asian	21.7%	21.1%	25.1%	34.2%	35.7%
Chinese	10.6%	8.0%	20.4%	20.9%	14.1%
Black	24.4%	25.6%	8.9%	35.8%	38.6%
Filipino	29.7%	30.3%	29.6%	33.7%	36.1%
Arab	-	-	-	42.4%	39.5%
Latin American	-	-	-	36.6%	37.5%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	32.6%	35.5%
Other racialized groups	22.4%	21.8%	21.0%	34.9%	32.6%
Non-racialized/white workers	**12.0%**	**12.5%**	**11.3%**	**27.6%**	**27.0%**

Note Annual wages and earnings for all employees, aged 15+ years. Excludes self-employed and full-time students.
Source Statistics Canada. Centre for Income and Socioeconomic Well-being Statistics, Labour Force Survey and Canadian Income Survey, custom tabulations.

Wage trends in public administration

A strong public sector is essential to closing the gender wage gap

Public administration and good public sector jobs have played a key role in advancing gender equality and sustaining Canadian communities.[64] This reality was brought home forcefully in 2020 with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic wiped out 35 years of women's economic gains in two short months. Women's employment started to rebound in late 2020, buoyed by a surge in consumer demand and high levels of immigration, even as large numbers of older workers left the labour market. As the employment recovery peaked in 2022, the percentage of employed women aged 25 to 54 years reached an all-time high of 81.4 per cent.[65]

A sizable group of women—including many from marginalized communities—were able to pivot from hard-hit industries such as retail into professional service jobs, public administration and the care economy.[66] The number of women working in professional services in areas like computer systems design and accounting increased by 28.1 per cent between 2019 and 2022, followed by public administration (17.8 per cent), and finance and insurance (12.6 per cent). Among these high-growth sectors, the federal government stood out: thousands of women found employment with the government over this period as it staffed up to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between 2022 and 2024, public administration continued to serve as an important source of employment for women, along with health care and social assistance and educational services, increasing by 9.8 per cent, 7.5 per cent and five per cent, respectively. By 2024, almost 635,000 women worked in public administration, accounting for one-fifth (18.1 per cent) of women's total employment gains between 2019 and 2024. The number of men working in public administration expanded at the same time reaching 595,000, representing 10 per cent of men's job growth over 2019-24 period.

At the same time, on the key metric of pay, public administration workers lost ground—like their colleagues in health care and social assistance and educational services—as they were locked into contracts that offered little to no protection from skyrocketing inflation.

While women benefitted from real wage gains in the professional, scientific and technical services and finance and insurance,[67] women's average hourly wage in public administration fell by 0.3 per cent between 2019 and 2024; positive wage gains between 2022 and 2024 were not enough to catch up with the losses posted between 2019 and 2022. It wasn't until 2025 that women's wages in public administration surpassed 2019 levels, finally rising by 2.4 per cent in a single year. Male workers also recorded a modest boost in their hourly wage between 2024 and 2025 of 1.8 per cent.

Table 1 looks at wage trends in public administration, drawing on custom Labour Force Survey data for all employees aged 15 years and older (excluding full-time students). The

Table 7 / Percentage change (%) in hourly wage by gender, selected industries, 2019-25

	2019-22		2022-24		2024-25	
	Men+	Women+	Men+	Women+	Men+	Women+
Total, all industries	**3.7%**	**3.9%**	**0.7%**	**1.3%**	**0.9%**	**2.0%**
Public administration	**-2.0%**	**-1.7%**	**-0.6%**	**1.8%**	**1.9%**	**2.2%**
Federal government	-1.8%	-2.3%	0.4%	3.2%	1.7%	3.1%
Provincial & territorial government	-4.1%	-0.4%	-1.1%	1.8%	3.8%	0.0%
Local, municipal & regional	-1.1%	-2.9%	-1.4%	-0.5%	1.1%	4.2%
Other industries	**4.1%**	**4.2%**	**0.9%**	**1.1%**	**0.7%**	**2.0%**

Source Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom tabulations.

value of the average hourly wage at all levels of government fell between 2019 and 2022 as inflation ratcheted up. Among federal employees, average wages fell by 2.3 per cent among women and 1.8 per cent among men. Wages rebounded after 2022 as labour unions fought for higher wage settlements to close the widening cost-of-living gap, including the PSAC strike in spring 2023.[68,69] Women captured almost all of the growth, their wages rising by an average of $1.40 (or 3.2 per cent) between 2022 and 2024, after taking inflation into account. Men's wages recovered as well, but barely; their average hourly wage increased by 0.4 per cent over this period. By 2024, men's wages were still lower, in real terms, than before the pandemic.

Among public administration employees, initial hourly wage losses among men and women were roughly equivalent. While the gender hourly wage gap bounced around during the pandemic period, it started at 10.2 per cent in 2019 and ended at 10 per cent in 2022. More recently, the gap has narrowed, dropping to 7.5 per cent in 2025, reflecting recent wage improvements, notably among female workers. The trend was the same among federal workers; the gender wage gap rose slightly between 2019 and 2022 (9.3 per cent to 9.8 per cent) before declining to 6.1 per cent in 2025, as male wage growth lagged behind women's, in particular, last year.

These gains are now at risk as governments across Canada announce austerity measures. Job losses are already showing up in the 2025 labour force data: growth in public administration effectively ground to a halt in 2025. The annual growth rate fell in half between 2024 and 2025, from 3.5 per cent to 1.7 per cent, much reduced from the eight per cent recorded in 2021. The drop in employment was wholly driven by cuts in federal government employment of roughly 10,000 workers (or -2 per cent). Women workers absorbed all these cuts and then some. Between 2024 and 2025, the number of female federal government workers fell by 15,300 (or -5.6 per cent) while the number of their male colleagues increased by 5,500 (2.5 per cent).

Job cuts were first announced by the Trudeau government in budgets 2022 and 2023.[70] The Carney government has now expanded these efforts, targeting $57 billion in programs cuts and the elimination of an additional 30,000 positions by 2028.[71] Initially, the government maintained that workforce cuts would be managed through attrition and retirements but has since acknowledged that lay-offs will proceed. Federal workers are already receiving workforce-adjustment notices.[72] Planned federal spending cuts will hit female workers and other equity groups hard,[73] reducing the stock of “good jobs” in the economy and potentially rolling back the gains that have helped narrow the gender wage gap.

Part 2: Effective pay equity policies

2.1 Introduction

Much must be done to strengthen the foundations of Canada's labour market to provide equitable opportunities and compensation for women workers and others who confront systemic inequities—including decent wages and robust labour standards. Legislative and regulatory reform is a key part of this agenda. Governments that have generated the highest and most durable levels of economic gender equality are those that have introduced and maintained effective equality-promoting practices—including pay equity provisions—and the complementary measures needed to eliminate sources of systemic discrimination.

Canada was an early leader in the introduction of proactive pay equity laws aimed at eliminating the cumulative effects of occupational segregation and the undervaluation of "women's work." The first such legislation was introduced in Manitoba, followed by Ontario, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Quebec over a 10-year period. Yet the gender pay gap persists, as revealed in the analysis above—a reflection of the intersecting and complex sources of gender discrimination in the labour market and the significant weaknesses and gaps in Canada's current legal frameworks and social safety net.

This section looks at the key drivers of the gender pay gap and the history of efforts in Canada to guarantee women the right to equal pay for work of equal value. What are the sources of gender discrimination in the labour market today? What do we know about successful strategies for reducing the gender pay gap? What is the Canadian record on pay equity? What does the evaluation literature reveal? And what is the status of the federal government's efforts to introduce pay equity to the federal public service and federally regulated private industries?

Canada's laborious progress in reducing the gender pay gap reflects the complexity of the challenge—as described below—and the institutional constraints all governments confront. But it is also the result of policy choices freely made that, this analysis shows, could not have hoped to deliver on their stated goals. The limited reach and scope of pay equity legislation in provinces such as Manitoba and Nova Scotia has reduced pay equity's potential impact in those jurisdictions while implementation problems and employer resistance have hobbled delivery in Ontario and Quebec, the two provinces with more comprehensive approaches. The influence of employer interests in the development and roll-out of federal legislation has played an equally significant role in undermining the potential impact of pay equity in the federal sector.

Having progressive policies in place isn't a guarantee of progress. As the following discussion illustrates, much rests on policy design and implementation. Reducing gender wage disparities demands a comprehensive approach, including well-crafted pay equity legislation, and the political will to carry it through.

2.2 Factors behind the gender pay gap

Over the last 50 years, the gap in employment rates between men and women has narrowed substantially as women moved into the labour market in large numbers. Over this same period, women's income from employment increased, helping to reduce the gender gap in earnings. Several factors help explain women's economic progress, including growth in full-time employment, longer job tenure, and higher levels of educational attainment. Many more women now work in higher-paid professional occupations, such as in law and social, community and government services, and in unionized (typically public sector) workplaces, which offer decent wages, employment benefits and job security.[74]

Yet disparities in earnings endure—particularly among mothers with young children and other caregivers, women with fewer years of formal education, and women confronting overlapping sources of discrimination. It is the product of entrenched systemic biases, the unequal burden of

The low value attached to care

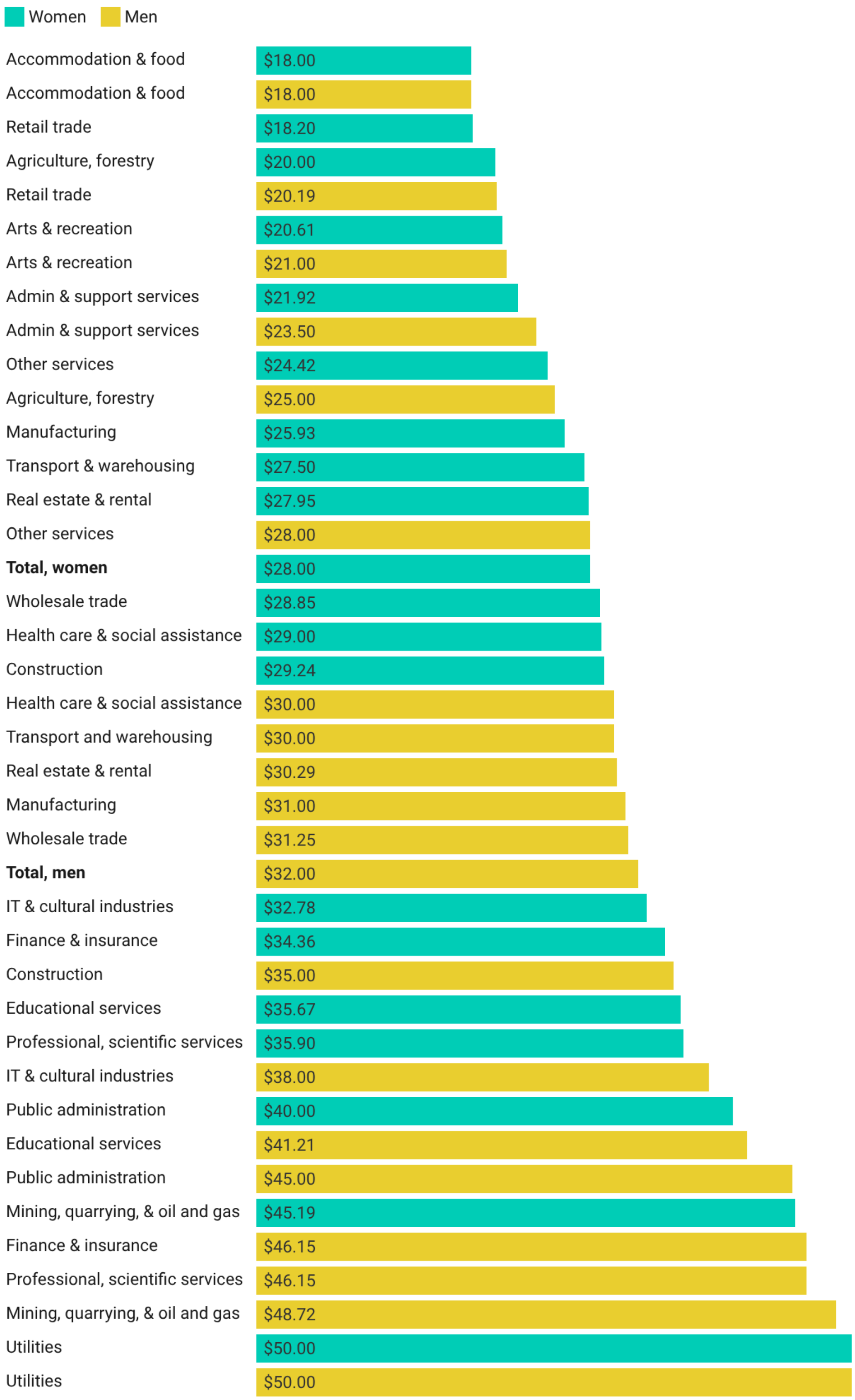
Globally, caregiving remains highly gendered and undervalued: the ILO estimates that 16.4 billion hours of unpaid care work are performed daily, the equivalent to US$11 trillion, or nine per cent, of global GDP, as measured in 2018.[81] In Canada, estimates are much higher. In 2019, the monetary value of unpaid household work was pegged at approximately 25.2 per cent to 37.2 per cent of GDP—or $581.7 billion to $860.2 billion,[82] depending on the method used.[83] Women account for the bulk of unpaid hours (at 60.1 per cent). (The monetary value of those unpaid hours represents only 56.7 per cent and 57.9 per cent of the total because of women's lower rates of pay.)

care, and outright discrimination. According to recent time use data, for example, women aged 15 and older spend an average of 3.7 hours per day on unpaid care work compared to 2.6 hours among men—including almost twice as much time caring for children[75]—daily realities that lead to reduced levels of employment,[76] career interruptions, and higher levels of work-life conflict.[77] The result is a gender employment gap that contributes, year after year, to the gender wage gap and reinforces broader economic vulnerabilities for women. These disparities are heightened in communities with poor access to supports, such as affordable child care and home care.

The **unequal division of care** not only impacts women's average hours of employment,[78] but their career trajectories and level of earnings too. Those with children and other significant responsibilities are overlooked for promotions and leadership roles due to assumptions about their availability, commitment, or capacity to work long hours. Employers may consciously or unconsciously discriminate against caregivers because they don't fit the mold of an ideal worker available for work 24/7. Called the "motherhood penalty", this set of conditions translates into lower average wages and lifetime earnings. The "greediness of work", as Claudia Goldin calls it, diverts women with care responsibilities into lower-paying, more flexible work opportunities to accommodate family needs.[79] Men, by contrast, aren't subject to these penalties. Indeed, fathers typically record higher earnings on the birth of a child, the so-called "fatherhood bonus".[80]

Figure 2 / How much do men and women earn by industry?

Median hourly wage of workers by industry and gender, 15 and older, 2024



Source Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, Custom data.

The gendered division of labour within and across **occupations and industries** is another manifest source of economic disparity.[84] Despite almost equal rates of labour force participation, women (and other marginalized groups) continue to be concentrated in lower-paying occupations and sectors of the economy, work presumed to align with their "natural" or "traditional" abilities and interests.[85] The comparatively few women who work in "non-traditional" jobs earn more than other women, but they, too, generally earn less than their male peers.[86] In Canada, only five women made the top 100 CEO list in 2024, a record high.[87] Indeed, even as women increased their numbers in higher-paid professional services such as law from 2021 onward, the gender wage gap grew as women were channelled into lower-paid occupations within this industry,[88] moving up the down staircase as it's been called.[89] Growing wage disparities at the top of the earning ladder is now a major contributor to Canada's gender pay gap.[90]

The segregated character of Canada's labour market has been markedly resistant to change. In 2021, the majority of women (54 per cent) were employed in just 20 occupations, all involving the "5 Cs": caring, clerical, catering, cashiering and cleaning. This is only a slightly smaller share than in 1987, when 59 per cent of women were employed in these same occupations. By contrast, just 19 per cent of men were employed in "female" occupations in 2021, compared to a similarly low 16 per cent in 1987—a three percentage point increase over 34 years.[91] While women have a strong economic incentive to move into higher-paid "male" occupations, the reverse isn't the case among men. Men's limited movement into female-dominated occupations remains a key barrier to any future progress.[92]

Progress in reducing high levels of gender occupational segregation stalled 25 years ago and there's been only modest improvement since. Linda Kaida and Monica Boyd, in their study of women's work, for example, found that there were small movements of women out of low-paid, highly female-concentrated occupations, such as clerical work, into higher-paid positions in more gender-integrated professional and managerial roles during the 1991-2016 period—a much slower rate of improvement compared to the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. At the same time, women's representation in heavily male-dominated occupations, in areas such as repair, construction, or transportation, was virtually unchanged.[93] Emma Quinn and her colleagues likewise conclude that there was little change in the segregated character of Canada's labour market between 1991 and 2016: half of 500 detailed occupational categories were dominated by either men or women (with representation of 75 per cent or greater) at the time of each census over this period of time.[94]

These findings are particularly troubling in light of the continuing importance of industry and occupation (and related job characteristics) on the size of the gender pay gap relative to men and other measures of women's economic security, such as the prevalence of low-waged work. While human capital variables, such as education and job tenure, explained a portion of the gender pay gap historically, they are far less important now.[95] Drolet and Amini (2023) estimate that the combined effect of industry and occupation accounted for over one-third (36.6 per cent) of the gender wage gap in 2022, and an even larger share among Indigenous women (42.8 per cent).[96,97]

This study, and others, highlight the additional challenge in making further progress in reducing gender inequality against a backdrop of ongoing **labour market polarization**, entrenched financial/business interests, lax state oversight and regulation of labour markets across the country,[98] and Canada's porous welfare state as so graphically revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Growing inequality and reduced regulation and transparency are turning the pursuit of greater gender equality into a much more difficult task. While both men and women experienced significant growth in management, professional and technical occupations over the past five years—pushing up women's average wage—women continue to be over-represented in the lowest-paying occupations compared to male workers.[99] Indeed, the gap between women in high-paying occupations and women in the lowest-paying occupations appears to be growing as top-wage earners pull away from the rest. The same dynamic is evident among male workers, as well as with the continuing erosion of manufacturing and resource jobs in Canada, once a large source of well-paid "male" employment.

When looking at the gender pay gap, it is important to remember that it can narrow over time either by "levelling up" or "levelling down." Levelling up is when women's earnings increase, while men's earnings remain stagnant or rise at a lower rate than women's. The gender pay gap levels down when women's and men's earnings decline or where men's earnings decline faster than women's. In the last few years, the erosion of average male earnings has contributed to the narrowing of the gender wage gap, even as many women were treading water economically. In the face of continuing American economic aggression and the assault on male majority industries, we can expect these trends to continue. Had workers' wages kept pace with the growth in the economy, and not been undercut by growing wage inequality, higher inflation and a drop in labour's share of total income, both men and women would be earning much more today.[100]

In a time of growing labour market polarization, **a combination of measures** is necessary to combat earnings inequality.[101] As Jill Rubery writes: "The action of women themselves is not sufficient to bring about equality and it is the institutional context in which women are pursuing their careers that needs to change."[102] Exhortations to "lean in" reinforce the idea that individuals drive their own economic destiny, obscuring the reality that the choices of individual workers are constrained by their circumstances and the structure of the labour market itself—a labour market that is continually changing as new forms of inequality emerge, such as the proliferation of gig work and emergence of generative AI. For these reasons, it is critical to highlight the structural conditions necessary to combat gender inequality in all forms, including public policy and legislation governing labour markets and the social safety net.

Labour markets that are **conducive to gender pay equality** are those that are **inclusive**, where all workers are covered by employment standards, regardless of sector, job tenure or status; where there are high minimum wages and limits on top earnings' where the freedom of association and related labour rights are protected. Gender-equal labour markets are also those that are **transparent**, where information on the wage structure is publicly available for companies and sectors, and where **targeted measures** are in place to address existing gender pay gaps and the undervaluation of women's work. These institutions and practices are complemented by **social and economic policies** that facilitate women's continuous employment, promote the sharing of care, encourage unionization, and help reduce the penalties currently attached to workers with care responsibilities, including paid leave, universal child care, and flexible workplace policies.[103] It is the **absence** of these measures and institutional guardrails that allows discriminatory pay practices to remain invisible and the gender pay gap to persist.

2.3 Legal mechanisms that promote gender pay equality

Governments have a crucial role to play in establishing the foundations of a gender-just labour market. Legal mechanisms are key tools in this regard, setting standards at the international, regional and national levels on issues such as pay, paid leave and working conditions. ILO *Convention*

100 on Equal Renumeration of Men and Women for Work of Equal Value has been the most influential in the fight for equal pay. Introduced in 1951, it went beyond the concept of 'equal pay for equal work' recognized in human rights covenants and introduced the idea of 'equal pay for work of equal value', setting a new bar for governments in the pursuit of gender justice.[104]

Since that time, countries and regional bodies such as the European Union have incorporated the core principles of gender equality and non-discrimination in equality and human rights legislation as well as in national labour codes. Selected trade agreements also contain labour principles designed to improve working conditions and promote fairness, with a specific focus on wage equality, gender-based discrimination, and the elimination of violence in the workplace. A much smaller group of countries—just over half of ILO member states (98 of 187)[105]—have passed laws establishing a positive duty to ensure equal pay for work of equal value.

Across Canada and internationally, governments and policy-makers have used a variety of legislative tools and other measures to reduce pay disparities and to promote pay equality, each targeting different sources of gender discrimination, from programs encouraging girls to enter Science, Engineering, Trades, and Technology (SETT) subject areas[106] and the expansion of paid care leave[107] to efforts to boost the representation of women in management and governance[108] and the expansion of collective and sectoral bargaining.[109] Legislative mechanisms, for their part, have been introduced to help eliminate gender-based discrimination in the structures and processes that govern wage setting. These include **guarantees of equal pay for equal work** found in human rights law and employment standards, such as the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which prohibits discriminatory hiring, firing, promotion, scheduling, hours, benefits, harassment, and unequal rates of pay for the same or similar jobs, as well as **pay equity laws** designed to counter the impact of occupational segregation and the undervaluation of "women's work" by mandating employers to ensure that women receive equal pay for work of equal or comparable value.[110]

Gender-specific legal mechanisms have proven to be a crucial part of the tool kit, but they are insufficient, in their current form, to deliver on the promise of gender pay equality.[111] The first generation of **anti-discrimination laws** was part of a significant push to codify labour rights after the Second World War, guaranteeing the protection of fundamental human rights and providing recourse for citizens to hold governments to account. Currently, human rights acts and labour codes in Canada prohibit pay discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity or gender expression.[112] At the same time, these same laws have been shown to have limited impact in reducing the gender pay gap. For one, these mechanisms are usually complaint-based, placing the burden on individuals to prove discrimination, which is difficult, time-consuming, and very costly. Anti-discrimination laws also tend to be narrow in scope—in this instance, focusing on cases of discrimination between men and women *within* a specific job or occupation. As such, they do not provide assistance for women working in low-paid, female-majority occupations or industries (e.g., child care workers or clerical occupations) or attend to the structural causes of the gender pay gap, such the devaluation of "women's work".[113]

The acknowledged limitations and gaps in complaint-based human rights legislation spurred the pursuit of new legal mechanisms to combat gender pay disparities, focusing on the value attached to women's labour and not to the job itself. **Pay equity laws** of different types emerged to address systematic wage gaps by requiring employers to evaluate and compensate jobs typically held by women and men, and to ensure that compensation practices are free from discrimination. More recently, some governments have introduced **pay transparency** frameworks, setting out reporting obligations for employers to publish standardized information on employee compensation—some calling, in addition, for related action plans to tackle wage disparities. Many countries are also bringing in additional regulations to enhance transparency in the hiring process by, for example, requiring employers to disclose expected salary ranges in public job postings and whether AI is being used in the hiring process.[114]

Pay equity laws, some dating back decades, have taken different forms in Canada and around the world, reflecting significant differences in objectives, scope (e.g., which sectors are covered and which sectors are not), measurement frameworks, reporting obligations and enforcement mechanisms. Some countries, for example, have pursued **voluntary approaches**, whereby employers are encouraged to pursue pay equity through the provision of guidance and resources but not mandated to do so. This highly flexible model, as exists in the United Kingdom, is largely focused on improving compensation practices and not eliminating the wage disparities themselves. **Proactive approaches,** by contrast, put the onus on employers to carry out a review of their compensation practices, identify gender wage disparities, and develop pay equity plans to eliminate gender discrimination over time. The goal of proactive approaches, as exists in Sweden, is to ensure that all workers, including those concentrated in female-dominated occupations and industries, receive equitable compensation for their work.

2.4 Evolution of pay equity policy in Canada

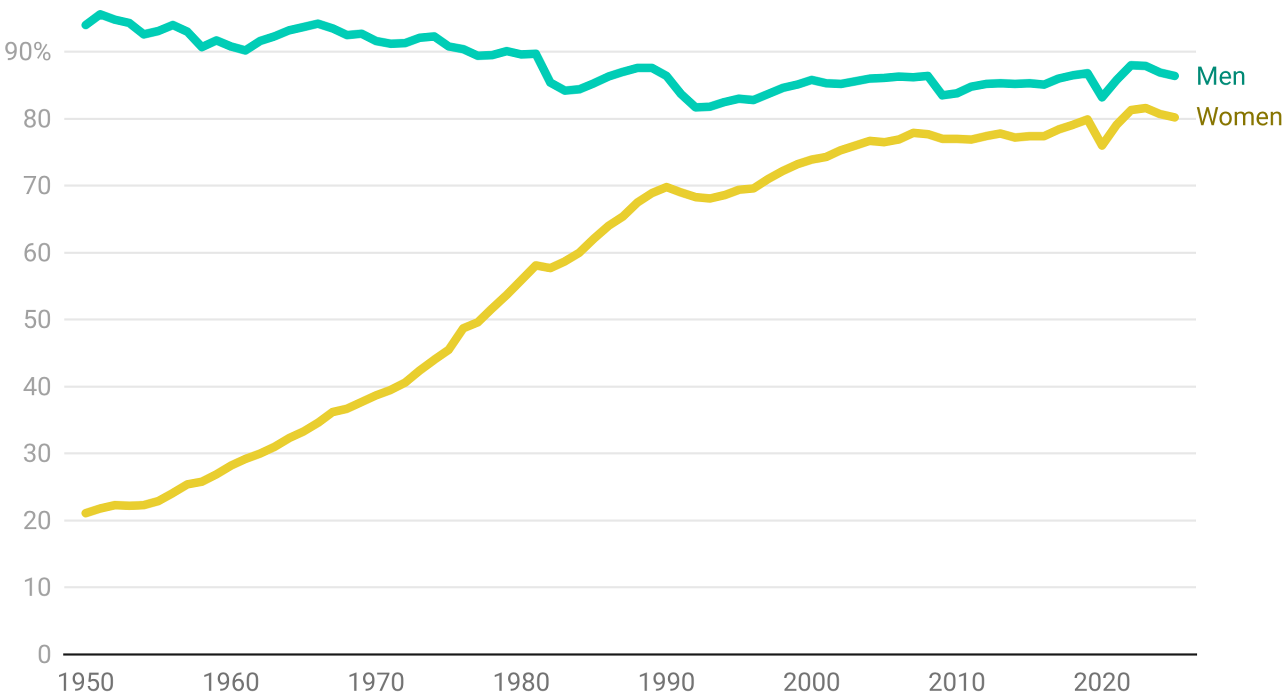
This wide range in pay equity practice helps to explain the variation in approach and impact that we see in different jurisdictions—as highlighted in the evaluation literature discussed below. The Canadian experience is a case in point (see Appendix 3 for a timeline). As the number of women entering the labour market surged in the 1960s and 1970s, blatant employment and wage discrimination was difficult to ignore.[115] Women and labour allies came together to push for economic justice and recognition of the value of women's labour, reflected in the call for equal pay for equal work in the landmark Royal Commission on the Status of Women, reporting in 1970. The commission report was one of the first analyses calling out the failure of all jurisdictions "to ensure that the principle [of equal pay] is universally observed."[116]

Within Canada, legislation dealing with "equal pay for equal work" began to appear on the federal and provincial statute books as early as 1951. But as the commission stated: "Time after time it was made abundantly clear that some employers and unions are evading, if not the letter of the law, at least its intent."[117] The report goes on: "It is apparent that equal pay for equal work will not be a fact in Canada until all employers and unions accept the principle. Nor will it be a fact, human nature being what it is, until there is effective legislation to enforce the principle. By and large, Canadian legislation has failed to do this. Different pay scales do exist and women resent them."[118] It called on the federal government to take immediate action to ratify the 1951 *Convention 100 on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value* (Recommendation 5) and for all jurisdictions to introduce or strengthen existing legislation to reduce gender wage disparities, setting out detailed criteria for doing so (Recommendation 8).

The commission report set the stage for the next phase of policy reform. The federal government finally ratified ILO Convention in 1972 and went on to include the principle of "equal pay for work of equal value" in the 1977 *Canadian Human Rights Act*, a year after Quebec, the first Canadian jurisdiction to do so. The new *Canadian Human Rights Act* was a significant moment, introducing pay equity provisions to the federal public service and federally regulated private-sector industries.

Figure 3 / Employment rate among core-aged workers by gender

Workers 25 to 54, 1950-2025



Source Melissa Moyser (2017); Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0327-01 Labour force characteristics by gender and detailed age group, annual

At the same time, as with existing human rights legislation, individual workers were required to file complaints and undertake to prove gender discrimination, creating an insurmountable barrier for many. With the assistance of unions, a lengthy list of pay equity complaints were filed against the federal Treasury Board and several large employers, such as Bell Canada, Canada Post and Air Canada. These complaints, predictably, took years to resolve, following a tortuous path through the Canadian Human Rights Commission and Tribunal and the federal courts.[119] It took the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) **28 years** (1983-2011) to resolve (and win) a pay equity dispute launched on behalf of clerical workers at Canada Post[120] and **16 years** (1983-1999) to secure a $3.6 billion settlement for over 200,000 former and current federal employees in six female-dominated occupations,[121] just two examples of many.

In 1977, the rate of employment among core-aged women workers (25 to 54 years) was 49.6 per cent, one moment in a steep upward climb that would reach 69.8 per cent by 1990. As women expanded their footprint in all sectors of the economy, issues of equal pay took on greater urgency.[122] Faced with the clear shortcomings of existing legal mechanisms, a group of provinces, led by Manitoba in 1986, followed by Ontario in 1987, Prince Edward Island in 1988, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1989 and Quebec in 1996, moved to replace their complaint-based systems with proactive pay equity regimes. All of these new pay equity laws offered a more substantive approach to addressing gender pay discrimination arising from systemic occupational segregation not easily resolved through individual complaints.

It would be another 22 years before the federal government finally introduced its own proactive pay equity regime. Over these two decades, as pay equity litigation continued in the background, various efforts were made to advance the cause, including the release of several notable reports. In 2001, the Canadian Human Rights Commission tabled *Time for Action*, a special report on pay equity, recommending that a proactive system be established.[123] In the same year, Dr. Beth Bilson was appointed to head an independent Pay Equity Task Force to review the federal pay equity system, resulting in the landmark report, *Pay Equity: A New Approach to a Fundamental Right*.[124] Its core recommendation was also to replace the complaint-based model of pay equity with new stand-alone, proactive legislation similar to the models in place in Quebec and Ontario and to expand pay equity coverage to other marginalized workers as well as to part-time, temporary and casual workers.

In October 2005, the federal government responded to the Bilson Report stating that, although it recognized the contribution of the report, it "[did] not provide an adequate blueprint for the implementation of pay equity in a broad range of federally-regulated workplaces."[125] A few months later, a new Conservative government was elected and the discussion of pay equity was abandoned, only to reappear in 2009 when it introduced the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act*

putting the issue of pay equity into the hands of bargaining units and removing the right of federal employees to file complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Under the proposed legislation, unions were prohibited from encouraging or assisting members in filing pay equity complaints. These same unions immediately challenged the constitutionality of the proposed law in court. The act was never brought into force.

It was not until 2016, with the election of the Liberal Party, that the federal government finally committed to pay equity reform. It quickly struck another special committee to study the issue and provide recommendations for federal action,[126] and, two years later, introduced the *Pay Equity Act*, part of the *Budget Implementation Act, 2018*, *nº2*, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour Canada, Patty Hajdu, stated: "Proactive pay equity is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. The bottom line is that when people are treated fairly and are given an equal opportunity to succeed and to reach their full potential, we all benefit."[127]

Modelled partially on legislation in Ontario and Quebec, federal employers in the public and private sectors with 10 or more employees are now required to develop and post pay equity plans in collaboration with bargaining agents and/or employee representatives and to take action to address systemic gender disparities, phasing in wage adjustments over three to five years. Plans are to be updated and posted every five years to ensure pay equity is sustained over time. A new Pay Equity Commissioner, a full-time member of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, oversees implementation and enforcement. The goal of the legislation, as stated in budget 2018, is to give "more Canadian women fair compensation for their hard work" and to "set the standard for how women's work is valued in the workplace."[128]

In the rest of Canada, after the initial flurry of activity between 1986 and 1996, further expansion ground to a complete halt. It would be another two-plus decades before Newfoundland and Labrador would introduce proactive pay equity legislation, 34 years after the government entered into—and then reneged on—an agreement with the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees (NAPE) to address gender wage disparities in the provincial public service.[129] The new legislation was a huge disappointment to women's groups and the labour movement, applying only to permanent core public sector workers and failing to provide for independent oversight.[130] The act is still not in force at this time; promised pay equity and new pay transparency regulations have not been released. And there have been no efforts to legislate proactive pay equity in Saskatchewan, British Columbia or Alberta.[131]

Territorial governments and local territorial employers, at their request, are currently exempted from the federal proactive legislation and rely on territorial human rights and employment standards legislation[132] (see Appendix 5). The federal government can, at any time, issue an order in council setting out the date on which the *Pay Equity Act* will come into force in the three territories. It has indicated, however, that this would only take place if there was "interest [on the part of the territorial governments] in diverging from the status quo."[133]

For their part, the six existing proactive pay equity regimes continued to evolve (and regress) over this time, with the election of new governments, the outcomes of lengthy court cases, and continued advocacy of labour and gender equality groups (See Appendix 3). New Brunswick, for instance, replaced its *Pay Equity Act* in 2009, expanding coverage from the core public service to health and education and to Crown corporations. In addition, the act now requires that employers take action “to ensure pay equity is maintained” over time. More recently, the new Susan Holt government has announced its intention to expand pay equity coverage again to private sector employers and the care sector.[134]

The scale and scope of change was most marked in Ontario and Quebec—both proactive pay equity trailblazers—as the details of the systems were hammered out through negotiations between employees and employers, often involving complex and fractious legal disputes.[135] In 1992, the Ontario government introduced a new proxy method of comparison, allowing employers in the broader public sector to compare their female job classes’ pay and value to analogous female job classes at “proxy” employers that had already achieved pay equity[136]—a provision that was promptly repealed in 1996 by a new provincial government, then reinstated following a court challenge that deemed the repeal unconstitutional. Likewise, the pay equity law has changed over time in Quebec, for example, as a new reporting requirements were introduced in 2009 to boost low rates of compliance among employers (discussed in further detail below).

The other significant development has been the recent move of several provinces and the federal government to enact **pay transparency regulations**. This is part of a larger international movement to introduce and expand gender pay gap reporting. These laws are designed to shine a light on entrenched gender wage gaps and related discriminatory compensation practices, providing a set of tools that has proven useful in empowering employees during negotiations, fostering fair hiring practices and compelling organizations to address pay disparities. Today, many countries have transparency legislation or policies in place, ranging in impact from periodic pay disclosure to regular gender pay gap reports to more comprehensive pay audits and follow up.[137] Iceland has created an independent body, the first of its kind, to certify that employers of 25 or more employees meet Iceland’s *Equal Pay Standard*, an official certification that verifies they are paying all employees equally for jobs of equal value.

Pay transparency regulations are not new to Canada. Several provinces have public sector salary disclosure laws on the books, which require organizations to publish the names, positions and salaries of employees above a certain threshold. Ontario’s “Sunshine List” is arguably the most famous Canadian example, introduced in 1996 as a tool to generate public support for the new elected Progressive Conservative government's austerity program.[138]

Seven jurisdictions have now introduced (or are in the process of introducing) newer iterations of pay transparency, as described above. As of 2026, three — New Brunswick (2026), British Columbia (2023), and Newfoundland and Labrador (2022, not in force) — have introduced stand-alone pay transparency legislation, and four — Ontario (2024), P.E.I. (2022), Canada (2021), and Nova Scotia (2019) — have amended their employment standards to include various pay transparency provisions. Three other provinces — Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba[139] — have no requirements. While Quebec doesn't have a stand-alone pay transparency law, it does require gender pay audits every five years and many collective agreements, particularly in the public and para-public or broader public sectors, are publicly available. It has also announced it will introduce new requirements for job postings in 2026, including posting salary ranges and AI use notifications (see Appendix 4 for a description of the different pay equity regimes in Canada).

As part of annual reporting requirements under the federal *Employment Equity Act*, the federal government has developed a new website called Equi'Vision that provides comparable data on representation rates and pay gaps in federally regulated private-sector employers with 100 or more employees, including federal crown corporations and other federal organizations.[140] The tool provides information on the four equity groups currently designated in the legislation, including women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and members of visible minorities.[141] Information on pay gaps is available by employer and in the aggregate by location, sector and occupational group.

2.5 Evaluating pay equity: Successes and failures

Much has been learned over the past 50 years as different governments have grappled with the design, process and implementation of pay equity legislation. The research clearly shows, as summarized by Megan Bowers and her colleagues, that "if designed correctly, by a government committed to closing the pay gap, they can be effective. However, such legislation can just as easily merely give the appearance the government is tackling the problem when in reality, accomplishing very little."[142]

Existing research indicates that the effectiveness of any pay equity law or set of regulations hinges on its policy design and institutional support. Each aspect or component affects policy impact and outcome.[143] For example, **proactive laws** that place the burden of initiating and carrying out pay equity reviews and making wage adjustments on employers—in combination with clear accountability and enforcement—have been found to be more effective than **voluntary** or **imprecise** approaches, increasing compliance and reducing government costs.[144] Voluntary approaches, such as those in the UK, can offer a great deal of expertise and support, but leave the door open to widespread employer avoidance and work-arounds, as demonstrated in the United Kingdom.[145]

The **scope** of pay equity programs is another key issue. The first pay equity laws in Manitoba and Atlantic Canada targeted public sector employers, including government departments and related agencies, and sometimes municipalities, hospitals and schools. Ontario broke ranks with its 1987 law, followed by Quebec in 1996, by extending pay equity legislation to public and private sector employees, expanding both reach and potential impact of its law.[146]

Differences in the definition of male or female dominant job classes, the formulas used to determine job "value", for the purposes of comparison, and the processes for determining wage adjustments are all important decision points influencing policy impact. **Clarity and coherence** of pay equity regulations are important in any policy design, but especially so in efforts such as closing the gender pay gap that require a clearly articulated and equitable process as well as gender-neutral methodologies to achieve success. Employers and workers and their bargaining agents come into negotiations with different objectives and substantially different levels of power. In such a context, the lack of direction on, for example, key definitions (e.g., employer or establishment) or on valuation of work process (e.g., what constitutes a gender-neutral job evaluation) can and has led to costly litigation and conflict, as has been the case in Ontario, described in the early years by Judy Fudge as a "litigation nightmare."[147] It creates the space for employers to delay and resist. It leads to the situation where low-waged women wait for decades for economic redress for blatant wage discrimination.

Another distinguishing feature of successful (or more successful) regimes is that they mandate **detailed and regular reporting** and **ongoing monitoring and follow-up**. This is a key weakness in many pay equity laws. It is one thing to prepare initial pay equity plans in a timely manner; it is equally important to require ongoing reports on progress and action taken to sustain pay equity over time. This demands clear expectations and benchmarks, support for meaningful stakeholder engagement, sanctions for non-compliance—and a dedicated, well-resourced government body to oversee the process, track progress, and enforce compliance. When reporting is voluntary, or poorly monitored, compliance falls dramatically.[148]

The primary focus of pay equity legislation is to close the gender pay gap by providing redress for female workers concentrated in lower-paying occupations and industries—lower paying precisely because of the presence of women. This set of policy tools holds out enormous potential as well for addressing the **intersectional nature of discrimination** because marginalized women are more likely to be found in the lowest-waged jobs. Increasingly, there are calls to expand analysis and reporting beyond the gender binary to include differences in pay related to gender identity, age, family status, Indigenous status, racialized status, disability and more, and to develop related policy tools for tackling pay disparities arising from other systems of oppression as Canada's *Employment Equity Act* does. Currently, for example, all federal pay equity plans must be compliant with the Canadian *Human Rights Act*, which requires that all genders be recognized, but much more can, and should, be done.[149] The federal Pay Equity Commissioner has stated that she is interested in further exploring what an intersectional approach to pay equity could achieve." To me, this is the next essential step in closing wage gaps and making a difference in the lives of women who have been left furthest behind."[150]

To summarize: the most effective pay equity systems are those that are compulsory and comprehensive in scope, covering employees in the public and private sectors and female-dominated workplaces without sufficient male comparators. Policy goals, measurement frameworks and reporting requirements and timelines are clear and transparent, and support and resources are available to help employers and workers' representatives effectively work together and to meaningfully engage employees in the process. Sufficient incentives for compliance and penalties for non-compliance are in place (e.g., publicizing gender pay gap reports, filing reports with public bodies, naming non-compliant firms, or issuing fines). An independent oversight body is also essential, with the resourcing needed to support the ongoing maintenance and enforcement of pay equity laws.

Forty years ago, Justice Rosalee Silberman Abella, in her final report for the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, concluded that voluntary measures are "an unsatisfactory response to the pervasiveness of systemic discrimination in Canadian workplaces[151]… The choice for government is between imposing and hoping for equality in employment, between ensuring the right to freedom from discrimination and its mere articulation. In a society committed to equality, the choice is self-evident."[152] Forty years on, the body of evidence examining the design and implementation of pay equity provides further support for Justice Abella's conclusions.

2.6 The Canadian experience

Pay equity legislation can be an effective tool for closing the gender pay gap, but it all depends on the design. Such has been the experience in Canada. As noted above, eight out of 11 jurisdictions have passed pay equity laws, two (Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador) only recently. A comparison of the "unadjusted" gender gap in hourly wages and annual earnings reveals that the jurisdictions **without** provisions for pay equity have larger pay disparities than those that do. As shown in Table 9, Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador have consistently reported larger wage gaps than the six early pay equity adopters starting in the 1990s. This wasn't the case in 1986, when Nova Scotia and New Brunswick sat at the bottom of the league table. While the gender pay gap has narrowed over time among all jurisdictions, improvements have generally been smaller among these four pay equity laggards, depending on the time period—especially with respect to annual earnings. In the hourly wage data, we see that the spread between the province with the smallest gender wage gap (Prince Edward Island) and the province with the largest (Alberta) has grown, rising 9.3 percentage points between 1997 and 2025.

A review of these descriptive statistics is not conclusive, but it does suggest that the provinces with pay equity laws on the books are "better performers" than those that have refused to proactively address gendered wage disparities. The presence of pay equity legislation—and related employment standards and supports such as child care—is certainly an indicator of political willingness to attend to gendered wage discrimination. The chosen design speaks to the political willingness to carry through and deliver results.

The analysis below takes a closer look at the proactive pay equity regimes that have been introduced in Canada, with a focus on Ontario and Quebec. Of the initial group of six pay equity regimes, Ontario and Quebec stand apart as two of the most comprehensive and progressive

Table 8 / Pay equity laws in Canada, March 2026

Jurisdiction	Canada	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	YK	NWT	NT
Human rights legislation, equal pay	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**No**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**No**
Employment standards	**Yes**	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	***	No
Pay equity legislation	**Yes**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**Yes**	**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Proactive	**Yes**	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Public sector covered	**Yes**	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Para public services covered	**Yes**	No	No	No	Some	Yes	Yes	Some	Some	Some	No	No	No	No
Private sector covered	**Yes**	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Female-dominated workplaces focus	**Yes**	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Pay Equity Commissioner	**Yes**	No	No	No	*	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Dedicated Pay Equity Tribunal	**Yes**	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Maintenance required	**Yes**	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Pay equity laws reference gender identity	**Yes**	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Pay transparency legislation	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**No**	**Yes**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Employment standards	**Yes**		No	No	No	Yes	No		Yes	Yes		No	No	No

* A recent study of pay equity in Manitoba notes that while Manitoba's act estalbishes a pay equity bureau and commissioner, the authors could not find any evidence of the existence of either past 1995 Evans-Boudreau, et al. 2023. Tired of waiting. CCPA Manitoba Office.
** Newfoundland pay equity regime has not been brought into force.
*** In NWT, equal pay for work of equal value is established by Section 40 of the Public Service Act and applies to the GNWT public service, the NWT Power Corporation, and teachers.

pieces of pay equity legislation in the world.[153] Ontario and Quebec were the only provinces to mandate coverage of both public and private sector employers with 10 or more employees. They also incorporated many key elements now known to be associated with success, incorporating clear standards and methods of assessment set in legislation including one designed to close the gap of women working in female majority industries, mandated action plans with time-bound and measurable goals, and independent monitoring and enforcement. What has been their experience? What lessons do these jurisdictions offer for the rest of Canada and to the federal government now rolling out its new proactive pay equity regime?

Ontario

Ontario's *Pay Equity Act*, passed in 1987, was the first in Canada to require public and private employers with 10 or more employees to create and maintain pay equity compensation practices.[154] Employers and their workplace partners are directed to use a "gender-neutral" comparison system to compare male and female job classes in each "establishment" to fairly assess whether women are being fairly paid for work of equal value. To this end, the act provides for flexibility, allowing for comparisons across occupations or "job classes" within establishments, and in circumstances where there are no male comparators, across employers or industries—even if the comparison is between seemingly very different types of work.[155] If gaps exist—and are not the result of permissible differences such as merit pay—employers must make annual adjustments of at least one per cent of the previous year's payroll until pay equity is achieved. Specific timetables for achieving pay equity are set out in the act.[156]

Any disputes that arise out of the negotiation or preparation of a pay equity plan or problems with enforcement of the plan can be the subject of complaints to the Pay Equity Commission and final review by the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal. Apart from investigating, mediating and resolving complaints, the commission also provides information and education programs. There are penalties for retaliating against a person for exercising rights under the act, for obstructing justice, or for not complying with an order of the Hearings Tribunal, a maximum of $5,000 (for an individual) or $50,000 (for employers and bargaining agents).

Evidence suggests that women in Ontario have directly benefited from pay equity, notably those working in the public and para-public sectors, receiving wage adjustments that would not have been possible in the absence of the law.[157] The unique "proxy" provisions of the Ontario act provided a way to address the pay gap in predominantly female workplaces such as child care centres. The first wave of public and para-public sector plans introduced through the mid-1990s helped to narrow the pay gap for workers.[158] Over 100,000 women working in low-waged community services, for instance, received hundreds of millions of dollars in pay equity adjustments as a result of two separate court cases to enforce their rights under Ontario's *Pay Equity Act*.[159]

At the same time, evaluations have also consistently noted important limitations with respect to the act's reach, implementation and impact. First, and crucially, a significant number of women working in female-dominated occupations and industries are not covered by Ontario's (or Quebec's) pay equity legislation. Roughly one in five employees in Ontario

Table 9 / Share and number of private firms and all employees by firm size, 2023

	Canada	Quebec	Ontario	Canada	Quebec	Ontario
Private firms						
Less than 5 employees	**75.4%**	70.4%	77.2%	**932,260**	162,210	362,880
5 to less than 20 employees	**16.9%**	19.7%	15.6%	**208,400**	45,290	73,340
20 employees or more	**7.7%**	9.9%	7.3%	**95,680**	22,790	34,110
Employees (excluding Public Admin)						
Less than 5 employees	**6.6%**	6.0%	6.8%	**1,081,924**	222,405	419,156
5 to less than 20 employees	**13.7%**	14.1%	12.6%	**2,252,741**	521,403	789,709
20 employees or more	**79.6%**	79.8%	80.6%	**12,662,810**	2,884,340	5,000,721

Source Statistics Canada. Table 33-10-0088-01 Business Dynamics measures, by firm size, per province or territory; Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0214-01 Employment for all employees by enterprise size, quarterly, unadjusted for seasonality

work for firms that employ fewer 20 employees (excluding core public administration), and about seven per cent (almost 425,000) are employed in firms with less than five employees, a slightly larger share than in Quebec (at six per cent).[160] Likewise, many female workers are self-employed (10.2 per cent), the majority working on their own, while just over one in eight (12.3 per cent) are engaged in temporary employment, a large proportion of whom in low-paid private sector service work (Figure 11).

These are precisely the sectors that could benefit hugely from pay equity or a similar set of tools but derive no benefit. Indeed, even the current law, with its focus on rectifying wage disparities within establishments, is poorly tuned to the realities of low-waged workers confronting intersecting sources of discrimination, working in very small businesses or organizations.[161] The current push towards greater privatization and contracting out in the public sector portends even greater challenges ahead, threatening existing pay equity gains and pushing vulnerable female workers beyond the protection of the law.

Where pay equity legislation has had an impact—notably in large, public sector, unionized workplaces— it has been an extremely difficult and litigious process, a "litigation nightmare", as described above. The Ontario legislation affords employers a lot of discretion and, in many instances, is weighted in their favour.[162] Employers hold the sole legal responsibility, for example, for designing the job evaluation systems to be used, defining "establishment" boundaries, and managing compliance obligations. Employers are wholly responsible for pay equity maintenance and to ensure that new gender gaps in pay don't emerge over time (no procedures are prescribed in law). At the same time, employers remain reluctant to undertake pay equity—sometimes due to ignorance or misunderstanding, sometimes due to concerns about cost and effort, and sometimes due to outright reluctance to pay higher wages on principle.[163] Time and again, over the last 30 years, unions have been forced to take employers—and the government—to court to conclude and honour wage settlements.[164,165] Many non-unionized women missed the boat altogether because their employers ignored their obligations and they did not have a union to fight for them.

Unfortunately, there is no regular government reporting in Ontario on the number of employers who comply with the law or who have undertaken to review and report on their compensation practices. Nor is there a requirement on the part of employers to file their pay equity plans with the Pay Equity Commission unless ordered to do so as part of a complaint or formal investigation.[166] Surveys of employers are conducted sporadically, none in recent years. One 2009 survey of employers found that "many employers have never done any form of pay equity."[167] Another 2011 survey of broader public sector organizations eligible to use the proxy method revealed that just over one-third (35 per cent) had managed to close their wage gaps entirely, while others said it would take decades to do so.[168]

The Pay Equity Commission's own caseload statistics show that the scale of their work—and the workers impacted—is relatively small compared to the size of Ontario's female workforce. Over a six-year period between 2011 and 2016, $27.4 million in pay equity adjustments were paid out to roughly 8,000 employees in female job classes.[169] According to figures in the most recent annual report, $8.8 million was paid out to about 4,400 workers between 2019-20 and 2024-25, a significant decline from the decade earlier.[170]

Given the size of Ontario's pay gap, these figures reveal more about the resourcing available to the commission to do its work than the success of the legislation in reducing wage disparities. Without adequate funding, oversight bodies—and, by extension, any form of pay legislation—will be less effective. In 1992, the Pay Equity Commission and Tribunal employed and appointed 86 people and relied upon 28 review officers for enforcement, with a budget of $6.8 million dollars ($13.5 million in 2026 dollars).[171] Following the election of the Progressive Conservatives 1995, the new government slashed their budget by over 46 per cent and eliminated funding for the Pay Equity Legal Clinic. The cutbacks continued when the Liberal government came to power in 2003, falling to $3.4 million ($5.2 million in 2026 dollars) by 2006, staff levels cut back to 32. Available resourcing has continued to erode. According to the 2024-25 annual report, the commission's budget, including the tribunal, was roughly $3.4 million ($3.55 million in 2026 dollars), with a staff complement of 19 people. That's 31.7 per cent less than in 2006 and 73.7 per cent less than in 1992.

Singh and Peng, in their study of Ontario's *Pay Equity Act*, concluded that the issues that have arisen, including its modest impact, are not so much a fault of the legislation, but rather its implementation—and its very small budget.[172] Judith McDonald and Robert Thornton reach the same conclusion in their 2016 evaluation of the regime, attributing its "negligible effect on [Ontario's] gender pay gap and employment ratio" to shortcomings in its legislative framework, accountability and enforcement mechanisms.[173]

That these shortcomings persist speaks to lack of political will to address gender wage discrimination and settle up with workers in a timely fashion. (The Liberal government in power from 2003 to 2018 waited more than 10 years to strike a committee to study the issue, while the current provincial government promptly abandoned the effort and then suspended implementation of the new pay transparency legislation. In 2024, it introduced a weaker bill focused solely on requirements for job advertisements, disclosure rules on AI use, and prohibitions against requiring Canadian work experience.) Had it not been for the efforts of the tribunal and the courts in the face of recalcitrant employers and the government, women workers would have fallen further behind. Even today, women working in workplaces such as hospitals, school boards and universities have seen their pay gaps widen in situations where employers have not maintained equitable compensation practices over the years.[174] Indeed, the method for maintaining pay equity in sectors where there are no male comparators has been the subject of legal dispute for well over a decade.[175] Absent meaningful monitoring and enforcement, and dedicated funding to close the gaps, pay disparities persist.[176]

Quebec

The pay equity framework in Quebec, passed in 1996, has a very similar design to Ontario's legislation.[177] Like the Ontario statute, the legislation imposes positive obligations on employers with 10 or more employees in the public and private sectors. Likewise, the act sets out a process for identifying gender discrimination in compensation and developing pay equity plans, tailored by firm size—a process that is supported by the Commission de l'équité salariale. Once pay equity plans are complete, employers must post the results in visible and easily accessible locations, including information on the rights and recourses of employees. They are expected to ensure that discrimination in pay does not re-emerge over time. But more recent reforms strengthening the processes for developing plans and introducing mandatory public reporting in 2009 set Quebec's regime apart from Ontario's, boosting employer compliance and in turn its efficacy and impact.

In the years following the passage of Quebec's *Pay Equity Act*, there were problems with compliance, just as in Ontario. A 2002 survey of employers found that less than half of employers had completed a pay equity plan, while one-third hadn't even started on it.[178] Moreover, a loophole in the original law imposing less stringent requirements on government and other employers who had undertaken previous pay equity evaluations effectively reduced the act's reach and impact. Contentious from the start, more than 60 court cases were filed challenging the inclusion of this "preferential" stream in the original legislation, a provision that was ultimately declared unconstitutional by the Superior Court in 2004.[179] In 2006, the Quebec government reached a $825 million agreement with public sector unions to settle pay equity claims in the public and para-public sectors, increasing the wages of 360,000 women workers by 6.5 per cent and paying back wages to 2001.[180,181]

Commission de l'équité salariale (CES), with a larger budget and staff than its Ontario counterpart,[182] was active through this period, publicizing the law[183] and expanding available resources focusing on small- and medium-sized employers.[184] And to boost compliance, the government amended the *Pay Equity Act* in 2009, introducing mandatory annual employer reports (Déclaration de l'employeur en matière d'équité salariale—DEMES) and comprehensive pay equity audits, to be completed every five years to assess and maintain progress over time.[185] Fines for failing to meet obligations under the *Pay Equity Act* were strengthened and now range from $1,000 and $45,000, depending on the infraction and firm size.

According to a 2019 review of Quebec's system, the 2009 amendments significantly increased program compliance among employers subject to the *Pay Equity Act*.[186] In 2017, 92.1 per cent of targeted employers (32,300 enterprises) had completed an initial pay equity exercise,[187] while 69.2 per cent (21,000 enterprises) had completed their first pay equity maintenance audit as well.[188] More than 12,000 employers, however, were still behind schedule, with one or more of their reporting obligations. Of those, 1,200 were behind on two obligations.[189]

Of the many employers who submitted pay equity reports to the government in 2017, relatively few reported wage disparities—only 13 per cent[190] compared to 32 per cent in 2006, a time when compliance rates were much lower.[191] A decline is not unexpected. Over time, as employers undertake regular reviews and adjust wage schedules, the gender pay gap can be expected to shrink. But as the report says, the findings, based on employer self-reports, need to be interpreted with caution. It notes that the proportion of employers undertaking pay adjustment climbs from 13 per cent to 39 per cent among those completing two additional maintenance assessments. Mandatory maintenance audits—and more detailed assessments of compensation patterns—are having an impact.

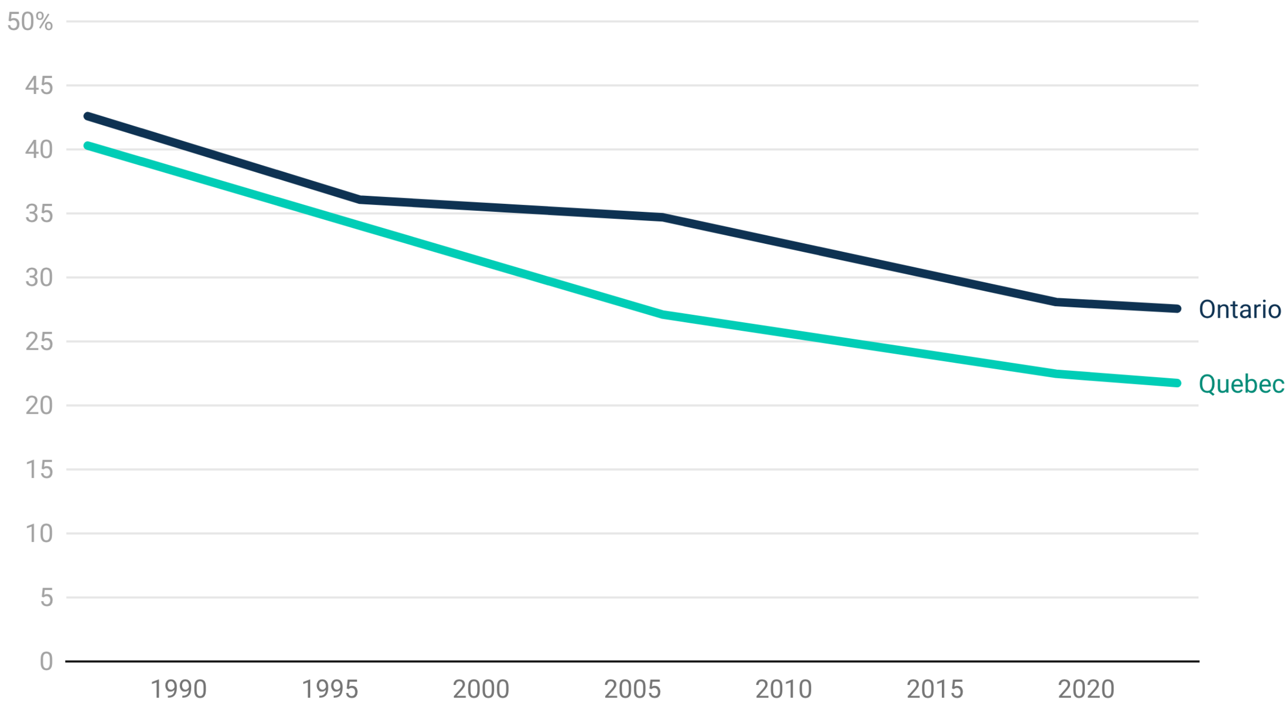
Higher rates of compliance are also delivering results for female workers. Between 2001 and 2017, for instance, nearly 365,000 employees in the public and para-public sectors received salary adjustments following the implementation of pay equity programs, ranging from 2.94 per cent to 13.65 per cent.[192] And more than 280,000 employees received wage adjustments as a result of the new system of pay equity audits introduced in 2009.[193] These adjustments affected all job categories: office staff, technical services, professionals, and management. In total, the Quebec government paid $3.2 billion in pay equity payments to public and para-public sector employees over this time period.[194]

Between 1996 and 2023, Quebec's unadjusted gender pay gap in annual earnings declined by 12.3 percentage points to 21.7 per cent, a still significant gap but lower than the national benchmark (28 per cent) and neighbouring Ontario (27.6 per cent). While there are many factors that influence wage disparities, Quebec's pay equity regime, characterized by mandatory annual reporting and maintenance audits, high compliance rates,[195] targeted supports for employers, and clear timelines for addressing wage disparities, appears to have helped narrow the gender pay gap. McDonald and Thornton found that Ontario's pay equity regime had little impact on gendered wage disparities. By contrast, they conclude that Quebec's gender wage gap in 2011 was approximately **3.8 per cent lower** than it would have been had the 1996 *Pay Equity Act* not been implemented.[196]

All at a comparatively modest cost. In 2006, seven in 10 businesses reported that the financial impact on the payroll of addressing wage disparities was less than **1.5 per cent of total costs**, and roughly the

Figure 4 / Gender gap in annual earnings, Ontario and Quebec

Workers 15 and older, 1987-2023



Note Annual earnings for all workers based on wages, salaries and commissions of employees. Excludes self-employed.
Source Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0239-01 Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces

same (67 per cent) in 2017.[197] These findings are in line with the major ILO evaluation undertaken in 2006 that concluded that employers' administrative compliance costs were not onerous, with public sector wage adjustments amounting to about two per cent of total payroll, and private sector adjustments much less.[198]

The same ILO evaluation identifies employer reluctance as a deep-seated barrier to pay equity efforts in all countries. Employers point to the significant costs associated with undertaking pay equity in terms of human resources and financial cost. Many are also reluctant to equalize wages and pay retroactive awards—including the Quebec government, which attempted in their 2009 amendment to the *Pay Equity Act* to limit the retroactive liability of employers found to be discriminating against their female employees.[199]

According to a 2017 survey of Quebec employers, between 50 to 60 per cent identified several negative effects of pay equity, including the significant investment in time required, the increased workload for staff, the rigid reporting framework, and related costs such consultants' fees.[200]

But an even greater share — between 62 per cent and 78 per cent[201] — felt that there were important positive effects too, such as a better understanding of job roles and labour processes, improved working relationships, higher productivity,[202] and greater fairness within the company. Indeed, the longer an employer had been involved in doing pay equity evaluations, the more likely they were to report positive effects. This is an important lesson for all governments to consider.

Quebec's proactive pay equity model is superior to the models that exist elsewhere in Canada. But it also has its flaws. Certain management positions and workers are explicitly excluded from the mandatory pay equity plan and compensation adjustments and pay equity plans tend to be confined to single bargaining groups, limiting potential comparisons. And, up until 2019, there was limited employee engagement in the evaluation and development process. Employers were required to post the findings of pay equity reviews and solicit employee questions, but they were not required to engage employees in the process itself. Indeed, the overwhelming majority (85 per cent) conducted mandated assessments on their own.[203] Such a situation affords the employer great power to shape the resulting findings and outcomes.[204]

Pay equity legislation holds out tremendous benefits for women workers, and not only financial ones. Done well, workers report that pay equity fosters a greater sense of fairness, recognition and belonging, increased motivation at work and an improved working environment.[205] These positive outcomes, however, hinge on transparency and engagement. Poor processes can easily generate great harm, undermining the wellbeing of workers and the functioning of the workplace. As has been the case in Quebec. In 2016, as the first wave of maintenance audits were being completed, while a constitutional challenge was wending its way through the courts, 11,613 complaints were filed by workers and their unions with the Commission de l'équité salariale.[206]

Amendments to the *Pay Equity Act* in 2019 now require employers to directly engage with employees in the development and review of pay equity assessments and to provide more detailed information on pay equity audit results. A summary of these consultation measures must be included with the first posting of the audit results. The second posting must also list the additional information requested by employees or their representatives, their observations and the means taken by the employer in response.

Just as in Ontario, Quebec's success has been the result of much struggle on the part of workers to create a robust, effective and just system to combat gender pay discrimination. And, as in Ontario, the courts have played a significant role in the evolution of Quebec's regime, helping to preserve pay equity legislation from obstructive employers and governments bent on sidelining or repealing it.[207] Even today, the Quebec government has yet to honour a 2024 agreement to increase the salaries and pay retroactive compensation to more than 30,000 clerical staff working in health and social services, 90 per cent of whom are women.[208] There is little hope of change or economic compensation for wage discrimination without the commitment of governments to gender justice.

2.7 Lessons for federal government

This review of proactive pay equity regimes in Canada confirms these laws (and pay transparency legislation), if designed correctly, by a government committed to closing the pay gap, can make a difference.[209] Canada is unique in that several different jurisdictions have adopted legislation aimed specifically at addressing the systematic undervaluation of many female-dominated occupations in a proactive manner. While the proactive pay equity systems in Canada—most fully developed in Quebec—may not have had their full intended impact, their shortcomings stem largely from design, compliance and implementation problems, evaluations confirm, rather than from any inherent flaw in proactive pay equity regimes themselves and the gender justice goals they pursue.

When the federal government agreed to replace its complaints-driven system in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* with proactive pay equity in 2016, it was in a position to learn from the experiences of the Ontario and Quebec governments, as well as best practices from around the world.[210] There was a robust discussion during the hearings of the parliamentary Special Committee on Pay Equity in 2016, reflected in its final report recommending that the government follow the blueprint (with some exceptions) set out in the comprehensive 2004 Bilson Task Force report.[211] The next year, the government also hosted consultations with 40 employers, employee representatives and civil society organizations. Many of these same groups submitted briefs to parliament when the *Pay Equity Act*[212] was finally tabled in November 2018.[213]

The new act represents a tremendous advance over the complaints-based system that stymied gender justice for years—and continues to do so in other jurisdictions. In 1999, the federal government's job-classification system was found to be discriminatory, its work to create a "Universal Classification System" to ensure, among other goals, equal pay for work of equal value was scrapped as "unworkable" in 2003. The government continued to revamp its job classifications as the number of women working in public administration climbed through the early 2000s, increasing again in the last five years, but there are still female- and male-dominated occupations in the public service and a notable gender wage gap. In 2019, according to the last census, women earned 82 cents for every dollar a man earned in public administration per year and about 86 per cents among workers in the federal government.[214] The gender gap in hourly wages was smaller, roughly 90 cents on the dollar in the same year.[215] Recent data from posted pay equity plans with federally regulated employers reveal some gender pay discrimination, as evidenced by both the large proportion of impacted female jobs classes and some sizeable pay gaps. Some pay equity plans have revealed wage adjustments of up to 18 per cent.[216] The Pay Equity Commissioner's most recent report to parliament notes that the average wage adjustment among employers reporting wage disparities in their annual statements (submitted in June 2025) was $2.37 per hour.[217] The introduction of proactive pay equity stands to benefit hundreds of thousands of workers in the broader public service and in federally regulated private businesses.[218] The Parliamentary Budget Officer estimates that it will cost $385 million, ongoing, to eliminate gender wage discrimination, roughly 0.5 per cent of total payroll costs in 2026.[219,220]

These different figures point to the scale of the problem, yet several key provisions of the new federal regime compromise its own stated goals—in many instances ignoring what's known about effective pay equity systems that deliver results for women workers. The federal regime sets out positive obligations on employers to identify and remove systemic gender discrimination in pay—but it is designed in such a way as to maximize employer flexibility and autonomy, opening the door to future resistance, conflict and litigation, and in turn, delayed justice for women workers. This is consistent with the suite of "feminist" policy measures introduced during the Liberal government's tenure under Justin Trudeau. The excesses of capitalism, patriarchy and other forms of systemic oppression are acknowledged but the solutions on offer do little to disrupt existing relations of power.[221]

The tension between employers, employee representatives and civil society groups over the proposed legislation were clearly captured in the *What we heard report* released by Employment and Social

Development Canada in September 2018. Employers were "generally not supportive of creating new proactive pay equity legislation."[222] While they acknowledged the challenges of the complaints-based system, they argued that the focus should be on improving the current system and not on introducing a new set of legal obligations for employers. Failing that, employers stated, any new system should be narrowly focused and provide maximum employer flexibility and discretion to allow, for example, multiple pay equity plans under one employer and their choice of wage comparison method. Where employee representatives and advocates argued for comprehensive annual reporting to an oversight body, employers favoured simple reporting in the form of a checklist every two to five years, as they felt "annual reporting would be too onerous."[223] Employers petitioned as well for limited employee engagement in the development of pay equity plans, believing that employees should be engaged in the process "in an advisory capacity rather than a decision-making capacity."[224] They did not see the need for a standalone Pay Equity Commission and Tribunal.

As the *Pay Equity Act* reveals, employers' demands substantially shaped its final goals and process. To start, the act's stated purpose contains a qualifying phrase "while taking into account the diverse needs of employers"—a clause that is unprecedented in any other Canadian human rights legislation and actively subverts the legislation's primary intent: to redress "systemic gender-based discrimination in the compensation practices." As ILO expert Marie-Thérèse Chicha argued in her submission to the Finance Committee considering the legislation, "[t]he words "diverse" and "needs" open the floodgates to all sorts of arbitrary grounds employers might raise."[225] The inclusion of this text pits the rights of workers against employer needs, setting the stage for the same confrontational process and costly legal proceedings that characterize complaints-driven human rights adjudication processes.[226]

This, along with other provisions, provide a considerable number of opportunities for employers to avoid or ignore their obligations and drag out the process. The provisions facilitating the active engagement of bargaining agents in the development and maintenance of pay equity plans for medium- and large-sized employers[227] is an advance over Ontario and Quebec, requiring that two-thirds of the membership represent the employees who are covered by the plan, but the section calling on employers to establish pay equity committees is weak, only entreating employers "to make reasonable efforts"—reasonable efforts broadly defined.[228,229] The Pay Equity Commissioner can levy Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) of up to $50,000 for large employers for employers in serious violations of the act or non-compliance with orders from the Commissioner or Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.[230] These types of penalties are rare and only imposed after an extensive process.[231] The Labour Program of Employment and Social Development Canada, which oversees the *Employment Equity Act*, has only issued four monetary penalties to private sector employers in violation of the act since it was brought into force in 1986—the last time, in 1991, for a total of $3,000.[232]

Employers also have the upper hand in the development of the plans. The act states that employers must support the work of pay equity committees, for example, including covering the time of committee members and the sharing information. But the act also places the onus on all employee representatives (including non-unionized employees) to come to a unanimous decision or forfeit the employee-side vote in decision-making, allowing the employer's decision to prevail by default. Unions could choose to file a dispute, but all unions and any non-union representatives would have to agree to proceed. Quebec's law, by contrast, only requires a majority of votes by employee representatives, a much more equitable position.

The complexity of the process for identifying gender discrimination in pay presents its own set of barriers. Current metrics, methodologies and reporting standards don't always surface the structures and processes that create and reproduce the undervaluing of women's labour and can stymie just outcomes. Two different sections, for example, govern the identification of job classes under the federal *Pay Equity Act*. Section 32 directs federally regulated employers or pay equity committees to group together positions with "similar duties and responsibilities", "similar qualifications", and those within "the same range of salary rates" as a job class. This is the process that is followed in Quebec, where committee members work through a process to closely detail individual positions. By contrast, Section 34 foregoes this process and deems that positions in the core public administration comprise a job class if they are "at the same group and level", as unilaterally determined by the federal government. There are challenges as well in defining gender predominance[233] and in creating the bands (or grouping of jobs) necessary for determining the value of work done in "female" job classes as compared to comparable "male" job classes. These choices make a significant difference to the outcome. Creating broad bands of jobs, for example, risks grouping lower-paid female jobs with women who now occupy traditional higher-paying male jobs and/or lower-paid male jobs in the trades, thus masking systemic gender discrimination in pay through the use of average values and reducing pay adjustments owed to women. There are no guardrails in the legislation for navigating these key decision points.

The stakes are high in the struggle to negotiate fair wages for women workers and the timeline for gender justice is a long one. Back in 2018, the proposed timeline between the passage of the act and the day that workers might receive restitution for gender pay discrimination was 10 years. One year for the regulation development. Three years for pay equity plan development. Up to eight years for compensation and remedies to be paid out depending on the size of the workplace.[234] This pre-supposed that the implementation of the act would be smooth but that has not been the case.

Early on, labour organizations warned of the need for clear regulations and direction, as well as sufficient time and resources to tackle the complexity of the task. The federal public service is the country's largest employer and has a highly complex pay regime with 72 job classifications, 80,000 pay rules, 18 unions, and dozens of collective agreements.[235] Today, PSAC and UNIFOR report that negotiations with employers are slow going and difficult, that several employers are not devoting the time nor resources needed to develop equitable and effective pay equity plans.[236] In some instances, union partners are being cut out of the process altogether as employers bring in private sector consultants to complete their pay equity assessments.[237] The Office of the Pay Equity Commissioner has been swamped with requests for information,[238] applications for extensions[239] and dispute settlement.[240] Deadlines for producing pay equity plans for many—including among federal government employers—have now been pushed out to 2027.

In a recent case with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), the CFIA—under pressure from the Treasury Board Secretariat—applied for an extension to force a review of a pay equity plan that had been successfully negotiated and reviewed and was about to deliver an estimated $15.9 million in wage adjustments to workers in a range of positions. Having raised no concerns about the process or chosen methodology during the plan's development, the CFIA is now requesting additional time to explore the feasibility of using a different calculation method—a method that was originally reviewed and rejected by the pay equity committee—presumably in pursuit of a lower cost settlement. Public Service Alliance of Canada, the primary bargaining agent for the majority of CFIA employees, has filed an objection to employer's request for an extension and a complaint for negotiating in bad faith. Women are being asked to wait, again, for compensation they are justly owed by an employer reluctant to pay.[241]

The Office of the Pay Equity Commissioner, for its part, is scrambling to keep up because it has not received sufficient funding to fulfill its long list of statutory obligations. Budget 2018 set aside $5 million per year to finance the start up and ongoing operation of the Pay Equity Commission and its work,[242] a small sum compared to the $13.5 million (2026 dollars) that the Ontario government allocated to the task in 1987. Detailed information about the ongoing spending and staff complement of the Commission is not available because it is combined in the reporting of the Canadian Human Rights Commission that advocates for human rights and provides oversight and dispute resolution under the authority of *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Accessible Canada Act*, the *Employment Equity Act*, the *Pay Equity Act* and the *National Housing Strategy Act*. In total, the CHRC spent $41.5 million in 2024-25, a figure that is set to decline by 13.2 per cent to $36.1 million by 2028-29, the full-time staff complement falling from 283 to 254,[243] as the government moves forward with its austerity plan, further undercutting the commission's capacity to deliver.

The government's original estimates, published in the 2018 budget, suggest that establishing a proactive pay equity system could reduce the gender gap in hourly wages by about 2.7 cents for the core public administration (to 94.1 cents on the dollar), and by about 2.6 cents in the federal private sector (to 90.7 cents on the dollar).[244] The Pay Equity Commissioner has pledged to improve the commission's online services to support workplace parties in the development of their pay equity plans, including updated and expanded guidance tools and outreach activities, and to more quickly process and adjudicate the backlog of requests and disputes, but absent necessary funds to expand and train staff,[245] it is difficult to foresee meaningful improvement in the current situation, or economic recompense for women workers experiencing wage discrimination, any time soon. Data from the first round of annual reports submitted in June 2025 reveal low compliance among federally regulated employers. The Pay Equity Commissioner received 643 annual statements representing only 12 per cent of all employers.[246]

Dr. Adelle Blackett's comprehensive review of the efforts of the tiny group at Labour Canada to support, maintain and police Canada's *Employment Equity Act* provides a cautionary tale.[247] She concludes that the regulatory oversight of the system is "in need of quite fundamental repair", providing little by way of economic incentive to comply or sufficient guidance to employers wanting to do the right thing. Indeed, the employment equity regime's emphasis on persuasion and information sharing—on employer self-management—over more proactive regulatory oversight works to incentivize non-compliance.[248] Similarly, glaring gaps in the regulatory and accountability framework as well as grossly insufficient resourcing fundamentally undermine the system. As Blackett says: “Employment equity is the federal government’s commitment to substantive equality at work. It requires and deserves more than 11 overworked auditors and poorly coordinated, bifurcated regulatory oversight.”[249]

The regulatory framework for pay equity is much more robust than the one provided in Canada’s outdated *Employment Equity Act*. Dr. Blackett highlights the role and responsibilities of the Pay Equity Commissioner as one to emulate. At the same time, the lack of financial resources and institutional capacity is common to both regimes. These are systems designed to fail. To quote Dr. Blackett again: “It is time to break out of the idea that equity work should be done on a nickel and a dime. If we are committed to championing employment equity in this global moment of rising intolerance, if we understand how critical substantive equality is to our workplaces, our economy as a whole, and our identity as Canadians, we must show it. Employment equity [and proactive pay equity as this report argues] requires real change; real support to implementation in workplaces; real auditing and oversight. If any one of the pillars is weak, it will remain highly unstable, and fail to achieve its results. If fortified, it can support societal inclusion and growth.”[250]

Discussion and conclusions

Uneven progress in closing the gender pay gap

Around the world, various countries observe Equal Pay Day to mark the point in the calendar when women's annual earnings "catch up" to men's. This year in Canada, women needed to work until April 14th to catch up to the earnings of the average male worker in 2025.[251]

This works out to an overall gender gap in annual earnings of 28 per cent. In dollar terms, women are making $19,000 less per year on average than their male peers, an astronomical $200 billion collectively in lost wages—the difference between what women would have made had they been paid the average male wage.

The gender pay gap has narrowed over the decades, notably in the last few years as women expanded their presence in the labour market, many moving into higher-paying jobs over time, but it still remains unacceptably wide, especially for those with caregiving responsibilities and among Indigenous and racialized women and women with disabilities.

The gender gap in wages and earnings between women and men of the same group or community is generally smaller and, in some instances, as among Black workers and Indigenous workers, much smaller. These same groups, however, continue to report very large gender pay gaps with non-racialized, non-Indigenous male workers—close to 40 per cent.

These findings also highlight the importance of unpacking headline statistics to identify and understand persistent wage differentials and the systemic forces that sustain them over time. These include, for example, the negative wage penalty attached to motherhood and workers with other care responsibilities; gendered and racialized norms, biases and stereotypes around competence, leadership and likeability; lack of access to attendant care, accessible transportation or other accommodations; and the inequitable treatment of foreign credentials and related work experience.

As research into the intersectional character of the gender wage gap illustrates, there is no single "gender" or "race" or "disability" wage penalty (or wage premium), one added upon another. Rather, identities intersect in complex and nuanced ways, impacting a worker's position in the labour market and the wages they command.[252]

Such an understanding is critical as well to identifying the diversity of interventions needed to improve the financial security and economic well-being of marginalized groups. As legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw stressed more than 30 years ago, bringing an intersectional lens to bear is essential to enacting effective public policy,[253] including the combination of programs and policies, such as pay equity, required to successfully reduce gendered wage disparities and improve the material conditions of disadvantaged workers in Canada's labour market.

Canada's glacial progress in reducing gender wage disparities speaks to the scale of the challenge involved in rooting out gender discrimination within a context of increasing earnings and wealth polarization.

The robust employment recovery in 2021 and 2022 boosted the employment and wages of female workers, including those from historically marginalized groups, but it did not fundamentally change the bifurcated character of Canada's labour market. Women and marginalized workers have found themselves on both sides of Canada's two-track recovery complicating efforts to close the gender pay gap.

These challenges are made more difficult in the context of the attack on workers' rights, the growing precarity of work arrangements, privatization of public services and increased contracting out, and now the growing number of vulnerable migrant and undocumented workers. They underscore the imperative to directly address gender wage discrimination through proactive pay equity and related investments in an equal and inclusive labour market.

Pay equity: Where we've been and where we need to go

Continued progress in closing the gender pay gap is far from assured. Attention must be paid to protecting hard-won gains as well as to finding new opportunities for progress.[254] Expanding and enforcing pay equity legislation is one essential tool in this task, designed to help "equalize" women's wages in large swaths of the economy where there are no groups of male workers against whom to compare. Pay equity laws provide remedies for gender wage differentials for work that is not the *same or similar*, but for work found to be of *equal or comparable value*.[255] The absence of such measures allows discriminatory pay practices to persist, impacting the most precarious and low-waged of women workers.

As this review highlights, well-designed pay equity regimes make a difference in reducing the gender pay gap, as illustrated in Quebec. This is a benefit to all women, but especially important to the women working in undervalued jobs and industries such as the care economy where public and private employers have unjustly profited from their labour. Paying fair wages not only enhances women's individual well-being and financial security but delivers the message that their work matters, that they matter, that fundamental human rights matter in all societies.

Canada was an early leader in introducing pay equity laws, but there is much to do to strengthen existing legislation and policy, starting with expanding access to best-in-class proactive pay equity in the provinces and territories that do not have any system in place. Among those that do, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador should take immediate action to expand coverage to a broader range of workers in the para-public and private sectors. And all jurisdictions should take steps to strengthen provisions for accountability, transparency and enforcement and to explore avenues for expanding access to casual, part-time and temporary workers and incorporating methods for assessing and responding to intersectional gender discrimination.

This includes the federal government. The 2018 *Pay Equity Act* represents a tremendous advance over the complaints-based system that stymied gender justice for years—and continues to do so in other jurisdictions. Yet several key provisions of the new federal regime compromise its own stated goals. The act sets out positive obligations on employers to identify and remove systemic gender discrimination in pay—but it is designed in such a way as to maximize employer flexibility and autonomy, opening the door to resistance, conflict and delay. As of June

2025, only 12 per cent of federally regulated employers had completed a pay equity plan and submitted their first annual report.

Marie-Thérèse Chicha makes the point that “Pay equity policies are as much a matter of process—removal of discriminatory obstacles, e.g. gender biased job evaluation and remuneration systems—as of the final results: achieving equal pay for work of equal value.”[256] In other words, effective pay equity is all about the details.

To this end, for example, pay equity legislation should clearly establish the obligation of employers to achieve and maintain pay equity through the development of proactive pay equity plans, setting out clear objectives and definitions. It must require rigorous gender-neutral job evaluation methods that ensure women’s work is assessed on the same basis as their male peers.[257] Where no male comparators exist within an organization, access to a proxy method or a comparable process must be established. It should also promote collaboration between all stakeholders, ensuring that employees and their representatives have meaningful roles in decision-making, and set strong standards of accountability and transparency via regular public reporting and equal pay audits.

Mandatory equal pay audits, like the system that now operates in Quebec, in combination with pay transparency requirements, have the potential to root out gender-biased job evaluation systems and pay practices. The success of these efforts, in turn, rests with well-resourced oversight bodies, providing needed education and support to stakeholders, and serving as the avenue for investigating complaints, settling disputes, and issuing compliance orders. On this last point, present penalties for non-compliance remain weak or discretionary everywhere, including in Quebec. The absence of deterrence always operates to incentivize non-compliance as the evolution of employment law and standards in Canada clearly demonstrates.

The proactive pay equity regimes in Canada vary substantially in the degree to which they have embraced best practices and prioritized pay equity. Ontario and Quebec have the most developed provincial systems, forged over the last 40 years. Their experiences offer many lessons to those seeking to introduce and/or strengthen pay equity regimes, including the need for clear guidance, strong accountability and effective enforcement to drive outcomes. Indeed, the struggles of an under-resourced federal Office of the Pay Equity Commissioner to build out a new pay equity drives home the importance of these observations.

Building a system that can effectively combat gender discrimination is not an easy task in terms of what’s required, on the one hand, and the conflicting interests of the different parties, including governments as both employer and regulator, on the other. The new federal system affords a great deal of discretion for employers and space for resistance, a situation that constrains its ability to achieve equal pay for work of equal value among federally regulated workers, as we are currently seeing play out in real time.

The new federal legislation also represents a missed opportunity to address the needs of precarious workers[258] and to establish a process by which complaints can be made "concerning violations of the principle of equal pay for equal work on the grounds of gender, membership in a visible minority, Aboriginal ancestry or disability," as recommended in the 2004 Bilson Task Force report.[259] It is a particularly glaring omission in light of the government's own *Gender Budgeting Act*, which requires an assessment of "the impacts in terms of gender and diversity of all new budget measures [and]…existing Government of Canada expenditure programs" that came into effect when the new *Pay Equity Act* passed in 2018.

All the literature on proactive pay equity stresses that comprehensive pay equity laws are essential in the fight to reduce the gender wage gap and the impact of historical discrimination, but there are limits to what it can achieve. Policies to reduce gender pay equality need to be developed in tandem with policies to reduce wage inequality overall, as well as those that address the other forms of gendered discrimination in the labour market and penalties attached to motherhood and caregiving. Low-waged and precarious workers, for example, fare much better in countries where the overall inequality in wages is smaller and strong employment standards, such as access to flexible hours and pro-rated benefits for part-time work, are in place.

Likewise, access to high-quality community supports such as child care and attendant care—tailored to the diverse realities of women and their families—is also a fundamental plank in the multi-pronged strategy needed to close the gender wage gap.[260,261] This has been a key dimension of the experience in Quebec, which introduced low-cost public child care services and an accessible and generous parental leave system at the same time as proactive pay equity in the late 1990s. These programs have been shown to work together to boost women's employment and earnings and enhance the financial well-being of all family members.[262] Improving the wages and the working conditions of the workers in these jobs, in turn, is another assured strategy for reducing Canada's gender wage gap. "A serious pay strategy has to value both the people who need care and the people who provide it."[263]

It is difficult to understate the importance of unions in the fight to eliminate gender discrimination in the labour market.[264] Trade unions not only play a pivotal role in the development and implementation of proactive pay equity plans through all of its stages, but also in the negotiation of gender-just collective agreements that deliver fair scheduling, pro-rated benefits, professional development, and strong protections against discrimination and harassment. Indeed, Nordic countries tend to be less dependent on legal mechanisms, such as pay equity, due to high trade union membership and high voluntary collective bargaining coverage.[265] In Canada, initiatives to expand union coverage, especially in the private sector, where the unionization rate hovers near 15 per cent and an even lower 12 per cent among women,[266] are one of the most important strategies for expanding the reach and impact of pay equity across the country.

It's been 75 years since the ILO resolution 100 on equal pay for work of equal value was adopted, and more than 50 years since it was ratified in Canada. Yet there's still a long way to go to realize economic justice for women and others fighting for decent wages and good jobs. The struggle for pay equity offers many lessons for advancing women's rights and gender equality. The imperative now is to apply these lessons in service of a more resilient and inclusive labour market and gender-just future.

Appendix 1

Defining terms and concepts

A.1.1 Data sources and key variables

The analysis provided in this report is based on Statistic Canada's Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Canadian Income Survey (CIS), which is administered to a sub-sample of the LFS. Both surveys provide estimates of earnings broken down by a common set of personal characteristics, such age, gender, employment equity groups, and family characteristics, as well as by occupation and industry, nature of the job and union status of workers.

Prior to 2022, the LFS collected information on the sex of respondents, as recorded by the interviewer based on presentation. The LFS now complies with Statistics Canada's new sex and gender standards, which distinguish between sex assigned at birth and gender identity or expression. This new suite of questions was used on the 2021 census and is being implemented across Statistics Canada's survey portfolio. Labour market data by the new gender variable were first published in January 2025.

Gender data are now aggregated into two categories: men+ and women+, including individuals who are cisgender, transgender, and non-binary persons distributed across each group. Statistics Canada uses this two-category variable in these surveys to prevent disclosure of identifiable data for lower levels of geography.[267]

Labour market data for "visible minority" population groups—as defined in the 1986 *Employment Equity Act*—have been available since the spring of 2022, including for the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese.[268] The "visible minority standard" is currently under review as part of the federal government's pledge to update the *Employment Equity Act*.[269] Its use has come under sustained challenge from a range of stakeholders, including the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

In its final report, the *Employment Equity Act* Review Task Force, chaired by Adelle Blackett, recommended replacing the term visible minority with racialized worker, noting that "the language of 'visible minority' has been almost universally criticized, and the task force received substantial requests to have it changed."[270] In 2023, the government initially signalled its willingness to replace the term "visible minorities" with "racialized peoples"[271] but no further action has been taken. In this report, the term "racialized peoples" is used.

Labour market data for the Indigenous population have been available since the fall of 2008, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Indigenous Peoples living on reserve and in other provincial Indigenous settlements are excluded from both surveys. Given the high levels of poverty in these communities, their exclusion from the LFS and CIS means that the earnings information must be interpreted with caution—and that the analysis of wages and earnings presented here will be an underestimate.

Information on people with disabilities is now collected on the Labour Force Survey and Canadian Income Survey using a set of Disability Screening Questions (DSQ) based on the social model of disability. The DSQ first measure the degree to which difficulties are experienced across 10 domains of functioning, then ask how often daily activities are limited by these difficulties. Only persons who report a limitation in their day-to-day activities are identified as having a disability.

A.1.2 Measuring wage disparities: The gender pay ratio and the gender pay gap

There are a variety of ways to measure and present the gender pay gap, each of which provides a different lens for tracking and analyzing male and female earnings over time. The gap is typically presented as either the **ratio** of women's earnings expressed as a proportion of men's earnings (e.g., women earn an average of 87 per cent of what men do) or as the size of the **gap** itself (13 per cent in this example).

The size of the pay gap will vary according to the measure chosen (e.g., hourly or annual earnings) as well as the statistic used to represent "typical" earnings (e.g., the average or the median).[272] It will also vary for different groups, such as by age (e.g., all workers vs core-aged workers), job tenure (e.g., full-time vs part-time), industry or occupation, and the like.

The **hourly wage** and **annual earnings** are commonly used in Canada and internationally to measure the gender pay gap. Each provides valuable information and insight on the workings of the Canadian labour market. Each measure also reflects biases that are important to acknowledge in the discussion of public policy, particularly with respect to women's labour.

The average hourly wage, for example, is the standard metric used in multivariate methods of data analysis designed to isolate different factors impacting the wage gap. It is "the most restricted measure" of the gender pay gap, commonly used by economists to capture the per-unit price of labour, irrespective of hours work or other differences in labour supply. These analyses assume that all workers are rational actors pursuing their individual economic interests in the marketplace, and by extension, that women freely choose to work fewer hours than men do in jobs that are poorly paid.

Average annual wages, on the other hand, including those who work on a part-time and/or part-year basis, are a much better measure of the realities of women's and men's lives, reflecting all the ways in which the gendered norms, practices and institutions shape women's labour market participation and rates of pay. This measure is commonly used by feminist researchers and gender equality organizations to provide a more fulsome accounting of women's economic well-being, providing a jumping off point for unpacking the factors that contribute to and sustain the gender pay gap.

Our report uses both measures to provide a comprehensive picture of the gender pay gap in Canada, recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of each measure and the limitations of available data sources.

For an excellent summary of the literature on the gender pay gap, see Anna Evans-Boudreau et. al, 2023. "Appendix F: *The Gender Pay Gap in Canada: A Literature Review*," in Tired of waiting: Rectifying Manitoba's pay gap, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—Manitoba Office.

A.1.3 Key concepts

Equal pay for equal work (or pay equality)—and the prohibition of gender discrimination in employment—are set out in federal and provincial human rights codes and employment standards legislation. These laws guarantee a woman equal pay for equal, or substantially similar, work as a man. These provisions are narrow by definition, only providing recourse to female workers undertaking the same work as their male peers. They apply broadly to all workers. The onus is typically on individual workers, often with the support of a union, to pursue a complaint to secure redress with the relevant tribunal or court.

Equal pay for work of equal value (or pay equity) is a broader concept designed to address and prevent pay disparities between men and women who are performing dissimilar jobs of equal value. These laws guarantee that a woman, or a female "job class", will receive the same pay for work of a comparable value as an identified male comparator. These laws require employers to develop plans or measures to compare male and female work by assessing their skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. Pay equity laws are "proactive" in that they place the onus on employers to establish equitable compensation practices.

Pay equity regimes now exist in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and at the federal level. Saskatchewan and British Columbia have not enacted pay equity laws but have historically used pay equity policy frameworks in collective bargaining with specific public sector employees. Newfoundland and Labrador introduced pay equity and pay transparency legislation in 2022 but the regulations supporting implementation have not been released. Alberta has not passed pay equity legislation, nor does it use a pay equity framework.

Pay transparency policies are another important toolkit that requires employers to disclose information about their compensation practices, such as including salary ranges in job postings, prohibiting them from asking applicants about their pay history, and preventing retaliation against employees who discuss their pay. Some laws also require employers to file pay transparency reports, broken out for selected demographic groups, including women. To date, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, British Columbia and the federal government are the only jurisdictions that have introduced pay transparency requirements.

For a discussion of equal pay and the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for work of equal value, as set out in the *Equal*

Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), see Martin Oelz, Shauna Olney and Manuela Tomei. 2013. Equal Pay: An introductory guide, International Labour Organization.

Appendix 2

Data profile, Canada and the provinces

Table 10 / Gender pay gap in Canada

See page 100 for notes and sources for tables 10-20

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**13.3%**	**13.3%**	**12.6%**	**11.9%**	**28.6%**	**28.9%**	**28.0%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	11.9%	11.4%	11.0%	10.2%	24.1%	23.1%	22.4%
Age							
15 to 24 years	6.8%	5.9%	5.9%	6.9%	20.2%	19.1%	18.0%
25 to 54 years	13.0%	13.0%	12.2%	11.3%	27.9%	29.0%	27.8%
55 years and older	16.7%	16.4%	16.6%	16.0%	36.6%	32.9%	33.3%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**9.4%**	**8.7%**	**11.9%**	**10.5%**	**34.1%**	**23.3%**	**26.7%**
First Nations	3.6%	5.2%	8.2%	7.0%	24.3%	26.2%	23.2%
Métis	13.7%	11.9%	15.3%	13.9%	42.6%	20.9%	30.4%
Non-Indigenous	**13.4%**	**13.5%**	**12.6%**	**11.9%**	**27.9%**	**27.5%**	**26.5%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	10.7%	11.7%	8.0%	18.6%	25.5%	24.9%
Workers without disabilities	-	14.1%	13.1%	12.6%	28.1%	29.0%	27.1%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**15.0%**	**12.2%**	**11.6%**	**-**	**26.3%**	**25.0%**
South Asian	-	18.0%	14.4%	5.7%	-	31.7%	33.6%
Chinese	-	14.3%	11.5%	13.2%	-	26.5%	12.8%
Black	-	8.2%	5.0%	12.8%	-	18.5%	12.4%
Filipino	-	4.3%	6.6%	6.8%	-	13.4%	20.3%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	35.6%	42.6%
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	20.2%	26.2%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	31.1%	24.3%
Other racialized group	-	17.7%	14.4%	13.1%	-	31.3%	28.4%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**12.0%**	**12.5%**	**11.3%**	**-**	**27.6%**	**27.0%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**16.3%**	**17.7%**	**15.7%**	**15.0%**	**31.0%**	**29.8%**	**-**
Ten or less years	17.9%	19.2%	15.7%	15.1%	33.3%	35.1%	-
More than ten years	16.1%	17.4%	16.4%	15.6%	31.0%	28.2%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**16.3%**	**16.5%**	**11.0%**	**10.5%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**11.8%**	**10.9%**	**11.4%**	**10.3%**	**26.8%**	**26.6%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**19.2%**	**19.1%**	**21.2%**	**17.7%**	**40.6%**	**37.0%**	**37.0%**
First Nations	19.7%	19.9%	21.2%	19.0%	40.2%	43.1%	39.3%
Métis	18.9%	18.4%	21.0%	16.6%	40.9%	30.6%	34.9%
Non-Indigenous	**13.4%**	**13.5%**	**12.6%**	**11.9%**	**27.9%**	**27.5%**	**26.5%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	16.3%	16.7%	14.1%	39.7%	38.4%	37.3%
Workers without disabilities	-	14.1%	13.1%	12.6%	28.1%	29.0%	27.1%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**21.6%**	**21.2%**	**20.8%**	**-**	**32.7%**	**32.6%**
South Asian	-	21.7%	21.1%	25.1%	-	34.2%	35.7%
Chinese	-	10.6%	8.0%	20.4%	-	20.9%	14.1%
Black	-	24.4%	25.6%	8.9%	-	35.8%	38.6%
Filipino	-	29.7%	30.3%	29.6%	-	33.7%	36.1%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	42.4%	39.5%
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	36.6%	37.5%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	32.6%	35.5%
Other racialized group	-	22.4%	21.8%	21.0%	-	34.9%	32.6%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**12.0%**	**12.5%**	**11.3%**	**-**	**27.6%**	**27.0%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**18.8%**	**17.5%**	**17.6%**	**16.3%**	**30.6%**	**30.9%**	**-**
Ten or less years	28.6%	24.0%	24.0%	22.2%	42.0%	44.2%	-
More than ten years	14.5%	14.7%	14.4%	13.3%	26.2%	24.4%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**25.6%**	**24.5%**	**31.0%**	**31.7%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**11.8%**	**10.9%**	**11.4%**	**10.3%**	**26.8%**	**26.6%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 11 / Gender pay gap in British Columbia

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**16.8%**	**16.9%**	**13.5%**	**12.8%**	**32.9%**	**32.9%**	**31.3%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	16.7%	15.3%	11.8%	12.0%	26.3%	29.9%	25.2%
Age							
15 to 24 years	7.8%	6.9%	5.9%	5.9%	24.3%	20.5%	24.7%
25 to 54 years	17.1%	16.5%	13.8%	13.7%	29.9%	32.2%	30.8%
55 years and older	19.5%	20.6%	15.4%	14.9%	41.8%	40.1%	33.1%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**13.3%**	**12.8%**	**13.1%**	**13.0%**	**54.4%**	**28.5%**	**19.5%**
First Nations	14.5%	14.8%	9.1%	5.3%	49.8%	24.5%	8.7%
Métis	10.9%	11.0%	18.3%	21.7%	60.8%	33.9%	34.3%
Non-Indigenous	**16.9%**	**17.1%**	**13.4%**	**12.9%**	**31.8%**	**34.4%**	**31.9%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	12.3%	17.4%	9.5%	18.5%	29.5%	31.6%
Workers without disabilities	-	16.9%	15.2%	16.3%	26.7%	34.7%	29.2%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**16.7%**	**11.2%**	**14.1%**	**-**	**30.8%**	**29.3%**
South Asian	-	18.7%	13.8%	13.8%	-	28.3%	38.6%
Chinese	-	13.2%	8.9%	15.8%	-	29.3%	16.6%
Black	-	22.2%	7.0%	15.7%	-	37.9%	18.9%
Filipino	-	8.4%	3.0%	7.4%	-	13.6%	9.6%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	.	.
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	27.9%	41.3%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	31.4%	44.4%
Other racialized group	-	20.2%	13.7%	14.9%	-	42.4%	30.3%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**16.2%**	**14.3%**	**11.7%**	**-**	**35.5%**	**32.3%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**18.6%**	**21.2%**	**16.5%**	**17.4%**	**34.6%**	**37.3%**	**-**
Ten or less years	20.4%	22.5%	19.8%	14.5%	34.8%	39.9%	-
More than ten years	18.2%	20.7%	15.1%	19.4%	34.8%	36.5%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**22.5%**	**20.3%**	**12.5%**	**12.4%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**15.5%**	**13.9%**	**11.9%**	**10.0%**	**27.9%**	**31.2%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**23.4%**	**24.5%**	**21.5%**	**17.4%**	**56.4%**	**46.4%**	**38.1%**
First Nations	26.2%	27.0%	21.3%	16.2%	56.2%	47.2%	35.1%
Métis	19.7%	21.2%	21.7%	18.7%	57.8%	45.4%	41.6%
Non-Indigenous	**16.9%**	**17.1%**	**13.4%**	**12.9%**	**31.8%**	**34.4%**	**31.9%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	18.0%	18.4%	14.2%	36.3%	37.5%	40.6%
Workers without disabilities	-	16.6%	15.5%	16.3%	26.7%	34.7%	29.2%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**25.2%**	**24.4%**	**22.2%**	**-**	**40.2%**	**36.5%**
South Asian	-	26.6%	27.0%	29.4%	-	38.6%	42.6%
Chinese	-	20.1%	16.8%	25.7%	-	37.8%	29.0%
Black	-	29.5%	29.1%	14.6%	-	44.5%	39.3%
Filipino	-	30.6%	31.0%	25.5%	-	38.6%	31.3%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	.	.
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	39.0%	44.2%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	42.7%	42.5%
Other racialized group	-	25.1%	24.1%	22.5%	-	43.8%	34.7%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**16.2%**	**14.3%**	**9.9%**	**-**	**35.5%**	**32.3%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**23.9%**	**19.8%**	**18.2%**	**17.7%**	**30.6%**	**35.3%**	**-**
Ten or less years	32.7%	22.8%	23.5%	22.8%	37.4%	43.4%	-
More than ten years	20.1%	18.3%	15.6%	15.1%	28.0%	32.1%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**30.8%**	**25.7%**	**32.2%**	**33.8%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**15.5%**	**13.9%**	**11.9%**	**10.0%**	**27.9%**	**31.2%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 12 / Gender pay gap in Alberta

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**17.4%**	**17.6%**	**18.3%**	**18.1%**	**33.0%**	**37.8%**	**36.3%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	15.9%	15.1%	16.5%	16.0%	25.8%	30.1%	28.0%
Age							
15 to 24 years	7.4%	7.9%	7.7%	11.7%	33.5%	30.6%	18.4%
25 to 54 years	17.4%	18.5%	17.9%	17.4%	29.6%	38.9%	35.1%
55 years and older	19.8%	15.7%	22.1%	21.8%	43.8%	34.4%	45.9%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**16.2%**	**14.1%**	**26.0%**	**18.8%**	**42.9%**	**42.2%**	**40.0%**
First Nations	13.5%	10.2%	22.2%	13.8%	-	60.3%	44.6%
Métis	18.0%	15.9%	29.2%	21.3%	50.1%	29.6%	36.4%
Non-Indigenous	**17.5%**	**17.8%**	**17.8%**	**18.0%**	**31.6%**	**36.8%**	**34.2%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	11.0%	16.7%	12.2%	12.8%	38.0%	27.3%
Workers without disabilities	-	16.7%	15.4%	16.9%	32.7%	33.6%	30.7%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**17.8%**	**14.8%**	**14.2%**	**-**	**26.3%**	**29.1%**
South Asian	-	20.3%	18.3%	11.9%	-	34.4%	51.3%
Chinese	-	20.5%	17.4%	16.4%	-	20.7%	1.8%
Black	-	13.4%	11.0%	13.0%	-	33.0%	13.9%
Filipino	-	5.5%	7.3%	10.2%	-	17.2%	37.7%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	20.6%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	25.0%
Other racialized group	-	21.2%	15.8%	15.0%	-	33.3%	49.5%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**16.8%**	**19.2%**	**18.4%**	**-**	**39.7%**	**35.5%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**18.1%**	**20.3%**	**16.1%**	**16.6%**	**29.2%**	**29.7%**	**-**
Ten or less years	20.3%	22.5%	17.0%	12.7%	29.7%	47.7%	-
More than ten years	16.8%	20.0%	16.7%	18.8%	30.5%	15.3%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**12.2%**	**18.3%**	**19.1%**	**19.4%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**17.0%**	**16.0%**	**18.7%**	**17.6%**	**31.2%**	**39.4%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**22.8%**	**22.3%**	**26.2%**	**22.2%**	**46.1%**	**41.6%**	**36.7%**
First Nations	21.8%	18.8%	25.6%	20.2%	-	55.6%	38.7%
Métis	23.6%	24.4%	26.5%	23.4%	46.0%	32.6%	34.5%
Non-Indigenous	**17.5%**	**17.8%**	**17.8%**	**18.0%**	**31.6%**	**36.8%**	**34.2%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	17.5%	24.8%	23.1%	37.5%	45.3%	41.2%
Workers without disabilities	-	16.2%	14.9%	16.9%	32.7%	33.6%	30.7%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**29.6%**	**32.2%**	**29.7%**	**-**	**47.4%**	**47.3%**
South Asian	-	30.9%	33.6%	31.6%	-	53.5%	60.9%
Chinese	-	17.8%	15.7%	30.6%	-	29.5%	7.4%
Black	-	30.7%	36.3%	13.9%	-	49.7%	54.1%
Filipino	-	36.5%	38.1%	37.3%	-	48.2%	48.7%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	49.7%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	59.7%	50.7%
Other racialized group	-	26.5%	30.9%	27.6%	-	52.4%	56.1%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**16.8%**	**19.2%**	**16.9%**	**-**	**39.7%**	**35.5%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**28.6%**	**26.8%**	**30.8%**	**28.8%**	**34.4%**	**50.8%**	**-**
Ten or less years	38.7%	36.4%	41.6%	34.2%	43.7%	66.4%	-
More than ten years	21.9%	21.6%	24.8%	26.0%	28.8%	36.3%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**33.1%**	**24.6%**	**42.2%**	**40.4%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**17.0%**	**16.0%**	**18.7%**	**17.6%**	**31.2%**	**39.4%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 13 / Gender pay gap in Saskatchewan

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**14.8%**	**13.2%**	**12.1%**	**12.7%**	**33.0%**	**29.1%**	**30.9%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	13.1%	11.0%	9.7%	10.5%	26.8%	22.9%	23.2%
Age							
15 to 24 years	9.4%	6.8%	8.3%	9.6%	29.2%	24.3%	15.6%
25 to 54 years	15.4%	12.3%	11.0%	11.5%	29.9%	30.3%	31.4%
55 years and older	15.3%	18.4%	17.1%	19.7%	43.6%	27.0%	34.2%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**12.6%**	**10.5%**	**7.7%**	**13.1%**	**32.6%**	**10.3%**	**35.5%**
First Nations	7.5%	0.1%	6.0%	9.2%	23.5%	-8.7%	38.5%
Métis	16.0%	18.4%	9.5%	15.3%	36.5%	23.5%	36.1%
Non-Indigenous	**14.9%**	**13.4%**	**12.6%**	**12.3%**	**32.7%**	**30.5%**	**27.3%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	.	9.4%	7.7%	7.9%	18.6%	21.7%	9.9%
Workers without disabilities	.	10.8%	10.6%	11.8%	24.8%	33.9%	31.3%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**.**	**16.5%**	**13.4%**	**9.0%**	**.**	**26.9%**	**21.5%**
South Asian	.	23.7%	15.2%	6.7%	.	44.2%	49.5%
Chinese	.	9.2%	12.1%	6.6%	.	.	.
Black	.	16.0%	11.4%	4.5%	.	.	26.7%
Filipino	.	10.7%	11.3%	12.5%	.	19.1%	9.0%
Arab	.	-	-	-	.	.	.
Latin American	.	-	-	-	.	.	.
Southeast Asian	.	-	-	-	.	.	.
Other racialized group	.	19.8%	16.7%	11.4%	.	.	.
Non-racialized / white workers	**.**	**12.5%**	**11.7%**	**13.3%**	**.**	**30.2%**	**29.6%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**16.8%**	**16.7%**	**15.8%**	**12.3%**	**29.9%**	**21.2%**	**.**
Ten or less years	17.7%	15.5%	13.7%	13.1%	37.3%	34.7%	.
More than ten years	17.8%	18.3%	18.4%	12.3%	8.9%	0.3%	.
Non-landed immigrants**	**15.4%**	**13.9%**	**0.6%**	**14.8%**	**.**	**.**	**.**
Canadian-born	**14.5%**	**12.4%**	**11.5%**	**12.7%**	**31.7%**	**29.3%**	**.**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**21.4%**	**17.0%**	**12.7%**	**13.6%**	**40.2%**	**32.2%**	**36.6%**
First Nations	25.0%	17.2%	16.0%	17.0%	48.6%	29.7%	41.7%
Métis	18.9%	17.0%	9.5%	10.0%	34.3%	34.6%	32.1%
Non-Indigenous	**14.9%**	**13.4%**	**12.6%**	**12.3%**	**32.7%**	**30.5%**	**27.3%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	15.6%	11.3%	12.0%	38.3%	38.4%	33.0%
Workers without disabilities	-	11.4%	11.0%	11.8%	24.8%	33.9%	31.3%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**33.3%**	**35.9%**	**32.1%**	**-**	**45.8%**	**39.6%**
South Asian	-	39.3%	39.0%	27.7%	-	58.4%	58.8%
Chinese	-	21.3%	17.7%	32.7%	-	-	-
Black	-	27.4%	33.9%	21.0%	-		43.3%
Filipino	-	36.1%	38.2%	35.7%	-	41.9%	33.2%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	31.5%	33.5%	31.4%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**12.5%**	**11.7%**	**10.2%**	**-**	**30.2%**	**29.6%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**32.2%**	**31.1%**	**33.0%**	**32.4%**	**49.5%**	**42.8%**	**-**
Ten or less years	39.2%	36.1%	37.0%	38.2%	56.3%	53.7%	-
More than ten years	21.1%	25.2%	28.6%	26.3%	27.6%	24.8%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**37.7%**	**36.9%**	**37.9%**	**43.9%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**14.5%**	**12.4%**	**11.5%**	**12.7%**	**31.7%**	**29.3%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 14 / Gender pay gap in Manitoba

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**11.3%**	**10.5%**	**8.5%**	**9.7%**	**28.5%**	**26.4%**	**28.4%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	10.2%	8.7%	7.5%	8.1%	20.7%	18.9%	22.9%
Age							
15 to 24 years	9.2%	5.8%	5.0%	7.8%	14.9%	18.4%	20.3%
25 to 54 years	10.7%	10.7%	9.4%	9.7%	25.7%	28.5%	29.1%
55 years and older	13.9%	12.2%	7.9%	10.1%	41.7%	25.3%	33.0%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**7.6%**	**7.9%**	**8.2%**	**11.3%**	**33.4%**	**19.8%**	**21.5%**
First Nations	0.4%	-1.3%	-1.2%	9.9%	39.7%	-27.9%	18.7%
Métis	10.5%	13.2%	13.1%	12.5%	32.0%	32.7%	21.3%
Non-Indigenous	**11.6%**	**10.6%**	**8.4%**	**9.2%**	**27.1%**	**22.2%**	**27.8%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	9.4%	7.7%	7.9%	26.5%	24.1%	30.2%
Workers without disabilities	-	10.8%	10.6%	11.8%	25.2%	23.3%	26.6%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**8.5%**	**4.9%**	**7.6%**	**-**	**18.6%**	**14.1%**
South Asian	-	12.9%	6.9%	8.2%	-	40.5%	28.7%
Chinese	-	-2.0%	-7.8%	11.4%	-	-	-
Black	-	12.1%	8.5%	3.7%	-	14.1%	3.1%
Filipino	-	3.6%	1.7%	5.3%	-	16.9%	4.4%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	14.3%	9.4%	7.2%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**10.7%**	**9.4%**	**9.5%**	**-**	**22.7%**	**30.7%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**13.5%**	**11.7%**	**7.9%**	**9.0%**	**23.3%**	**22.2%**	**-**
Ten or less years	11.5%	14.1%	11.9%	12.4%	23.6%	32.3%	-
More than ten years	15.7%	10.1%	5.8%	7.9%	22.5%	17.4%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**11.0%**	**7.0%**	**7.7%**	**12.6%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**10.3%**	**9.9%**	**8.8%**	**8.6%**	**26.4%**	**20.5%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**18.0%**	**13.1%**	**11.1%**	**10.3%**	**39.1%**	**29.2%**	**28.7%**
First Nations	20.8%	10.4%	10.7%	16.0%	44.7%	25.2%	32.9%
Métis	15.9%	14.4%	11.3%	6.8%	37.9%	29.7%	24.9%
Non-Indigenous	**11.6%**	**10.6%**	**8.4%**	**9.2%**	**27.1%**	**22.2%**	**27.8%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	15.6%	11.3%	12.0%	33.9%	36.7%	33.7%
Workers without disabilities	-	11.4%	11.0%	11.8%	25.2%	23.3%	26.6%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**27.3%**	**25.7%**	**24.4%**	**-**	**31.4%**	**36.8%**
South Asian	-	33.8%	30.6%	25.8%	-	38.1%	47.2%
Chinese	-	16.8%	8.2%	29.8%	-	-	26.3%
Black	-	28.2%	29.3%	12.5%	-	37.8%	34.8%
Filipino	-	27.5%	24.2%	22.1%	-	28.8%	29.9%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	21.9%	23.3%	22.7%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**10.7%**	**9.4%**	**5.1%**	**-**	**22.7%**	**30.7%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**29.0%**	**25.4%**	**25.0%**	**25.7%**	**43.5%**	**31.0%**	**-**
Ten or less years	36.4%	32.6%	33.7%	35.6%	53.8%	50.6%	-
More than ten years	23.0%	20.2%	18.5%	18.6%	34.9%	16.2%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**33.2%**	**34.8%**	**37.2%**	**37.7%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**10.3%**	**9.9%**	**8.8%**	**8.6%**	**26.4%**	**20.5%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 15 / Gender pay gap in Ontario

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**12.1%**	**13.1%**	**13.2%**	**11.6%**	**28.1%**	**28.4%**	**27.6%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	10.3%	11.1%	11.4%	9.9%	24.8%	24.1%	22.6%
Age							
15 to 24 years	6.3%	5.1%	5.8%	6.1%	19.5%	18.0%	19.4%
25 to 54 years	11.8%	12.9%	12.8%	10.9%	28.7%	28.6%	27.2%
55 years and older	16.3%	16.7%	17.6%	16.9%	35.6%	32.3%	33.5%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**1.2%**	**2.5%**	**7.4%**	**4.5%**	**13.7%**	**6.7%**	**10.8%**
First Nations	-8.9%	1.6%	6.6%	6.1%	3.2%	22.2%	19.7%
Métis	12.0%	4.0%	8.5%	1.8%	23.8%	-12.9%	7.3%
Non-Indigenous	**12.3%**	**13.4%**	**13.3%**	**11.7%**	**28.2%**	**28.0%**	**26.4%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	13.0%	10.1%	8.8%	19.9%	22.8%	25.7%
Workers without disabilities	-	14.8%	16.5%	13.3%	26.5%	28.9%	31.4%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**15.0%**	**13.2%**	**11.2%**	**-**	**26.8%**	**24.8%**
South Asian	-	18.3%	14.4%	3.2%	-	31.2%	31.0%
Chinese	-	13.5%	12.3%	12.9%	-	27.0%	11.6%
Black	-	3.8%	5.1%	10.9%	-	16.2%	14.7%
Filipino	-	0.9%	9.3%	4.7%	-	8.8%	20.0%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	34.0%	35.9%
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	34.3%	33.3%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	26.7%	19.5%
Other racialized group	-	18.3%	15.9%	12.6%	-	30.3%	27.3%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**11.5%**	**12.8%**	**11.1%**	**-**	**28.1%**	**27.0%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**16.6%**	**17.5%**	**17.3%**	**14.6%**	**32.5%**	**29.6%**	**-**
Ten or less years	17.4%	18.8%	16.2%	16.9%	40.7%	32.0%	-
More than ten years	16.6%	17.4%	18.3%	14.0%	31.0%	29.1%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**21.0%**	**16.7%**	**10.8%**	**8.4%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**9.1%**	**10.0%**	**10.9%**	**9.7%**	**26.3%**	**27.4%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**16.6%**	**15.9%**	**23.1%**	**17.9%**	**34.7%**	**33.5%**	**42.6%**
First Nations	17.1%	19.0%	24.1%	22.1%	36.1%	45.7%	49.2%
Métis	16.1%	12.3%	21.5%	12.3%	28.6%	16.9%	35.2%
Non-Indigenous	**12.3%**	**13.4%**	**13.3%**	**11.7%**	**28.2%**	**28.0%**	**26.4%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	18.8%	16.8%	15.1%	43.5%	38.4%	38.5%
Workers without disabilities	-	15.0%	16.7%	13.3%	26.5%	28.9%	31.4%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**20.9%**	**20.3%**	**17.0%**	**-**	**31.4%**	**32.4%**
South Asian	-	21.3%	20.0%	21.0%	-	33.4%	33.6%
Chinese	-	8.7%	8.2%	16.6%	-	16.8%	15.3%
Black	-	23.6%	24.9%	5.7%	-	39.6%	40.4%
Filipino	-	28.4%	30.0%	26.9%	-	28.8%	40.6%
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	41.5%	34.6%
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	47.6%	41.1%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	24.5%	32.0%
Other racialized group	-	23.3%	21.9%	18.1%	-	33.7%	31.9%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**11.5%**	**12.8%**	**8.5%**	**-**	**28.1%**	**27.0%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**16.5%**	**16.7%**	**16.6%**	**14.5%**	**32.4%**	**30.2%**	**-**
Ten or less years	24.9%	21.3%	20.4%	19.3%	49.8%	41.2%	-
More than ten years	13.8%	15.1%	15.0%	12.4%	26.8%	25.7%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**25.6%**	**23.9%**	**28.1%**	**28.7%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**9.1%**	**10.0%**	**10.9%**	**9.7%**	**26.3%**	**27.4%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 16 / Gender pay gap in Quebec

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**10.8%**	**10.1%**	**9.0%**	**9.9%**	**22.5%**	**22.7%**	**21.7%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	9.6%	8.6%	7.4%	7.9%	19.7%	15.4%	17.0%
Age							
15 to 24 years	6.7%	5.8%	6.0%	5.9%	7.3%	12.2%	11.4%
25 to 54 years	9.9%	8.9%	7.4%	8.4%	24.5%	21.9%	22.2%
55 years and older	14.0%	15.2%	14.2%	13.7%	23.5%	31.2%	25.5%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**4.1%**	**5.6%**	**2.3%**	**2.5%**	**12.7%**	**32.9%**	**34.4%**
First Nations	-6.5%	-8.9%	-1.9%	-3.5%	-	-	-
Métis	7.8%	14.9%	5.4%	12.5%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**10.9%**	**10.1%**	**9.1%**	**10.0%**	**21.8%**	**18.6%**	**19.5%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	4.3%	10.0%	1.4%	12.1%	23.8%	18.3%
Workers without disabilities	-	11.8%	5.4%	7.8%	30.1%	24.3%	15.9%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**12.0%**	**10.0%**	**11.3%**	**-**	**20.9%**	**20.0%**
South Asian	-	11.6%	13.7%	7.8%	-	33.5%	17.0%
Chinese	-	12.8%	15.4%	12.0%	-	26.5%	40.0%
Black	-	11.4%	3.5%	14.8%	-	12.5%	7.9%
Filipino	-	4.3%	8.5%	5.8%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	29.2%	47.7%
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	18.6%	5.9%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	12.8%	12.7%	13.0%	-	12.1%	7.9%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**9.0%**	**8.3%**	**8.6%**	**-**	**18.1%**	**19.4%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**12.5%**	**13.8%**	**11.7%**	**15.5%**	**23.1%**	**27.4%**	**-**
Ten or less years	17.6%	15.5%	10.2%	14.1%	5.6%	30.5%	-
More than ten years	10.5%	13.4%	13.0%	16.7%	28.7%	27.1%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**1.9%**	**14.5%**	**7.4%**	**6.5%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**10.3%**	**8.4%**	**8.1%**	**7.9%**	**23.9%**	**18.2%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status							
Indigenous (total)	**15.3%**	**15.9%**	**15.5%**	**12.9%**	**20.7%**	**47.3%**	**41.7%**
First Nations	9.1%	16.6%	12.9%	13.6%	-	-	-
Métis	21.3%	14.6%	18.2%	14.4%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**10.9%**	**10.1%**	**9.1%**	**10.0%**	**21.8%**	**18.6%**	**19.5%**
Disability status							
Workers with disabilities	-	9.5%	12.5%	7.7%	35.8%	39.7%	35.2%
Workers without disabilities	-	11.8%	4.9%	7.8%	30.1%	24.3%	15.9%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**23.2%**	**21.7%**	**20.1%**	**-**	**30.6%**	**29.8%**
South Asian	-	27.7%	21.6%	22.7%	-	42.4%	28.6%
Chinese	-	10.4%	9.4%	20.5%	-	29.0%	21.7%
Black	-	24.7%	23.4%	13.4%	-	21.6%	29.8%
Filipino	-	36.6%	33.8%	30.8%	-	35.6%	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	31.0%	39.6%
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	35.4%	24.5%
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	42.9%
Other racialized group	-	21.8%	21.3%	18.0%	-	37.5%	22.7%
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**9.0%**	**8.3%**	**4.7%**	**-**	**18.1%**	**19.4%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**17.5%**	**17.0%**	**15.5%**	**16.1%**	**31.0%**	**27.2%**	**-**
Ten or less years	27.5%	22.9%	21.0%	20.3%	21.0%	38.7%	-
More than ten years	12.2%	13.9%	12.8%	13.8%	34.0%	22.2%	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**11.8%**	**24.4%**	**29.0%**	**30.8%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**10.3%**	**8.4%**	**8.1%**	**7.9%**	**23.9%**	**18.2%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 17 / Gender pay gap in New Brunswick

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**9.6%**	**7.9%**	**7.3%**	**4.9%**	**22.5%**	**20.0%**	**20.1%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	8.5%	6.6%	5.2%	3.5%	17.3%	15.7%	14.2%
Age							
15 to 24 years	2.2%	3.3%	2.3%	5.8%	27.5%	16.3%	16.7%
25 to 54 years	9.3%	6.9%	6.0%	3.0%	18.5%	18.2%	19.7%
55 years and older	15.2%	13.1%	14.0%	11.5%	35.9%	29.5%	29.4%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status (Atlantic region, total)							
Indigenous (total)	**12.7%**	**9.9%**	**9.6%**	**7.5%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
First Nations	7.9%	10.2%	9.4%	9.1%	-	-	-
Métis	21.2%	9.2%	7.3%	6.5%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**11.0%**	**9.0%**	**9.7%**	**6.0%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Disability status (Atlantic region, total)							
Workers with disabilities	-	9.5%	8.8%	8.5%	23.9%	11.2%	7.0%
Workers without disabilities	-	8.6%	11.3%	7.4%	20.1%	23.0%	18.9%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**16.8%**	**11.0%**	**2.2%**	**-**	**24.4%**	**34.5%**
South Asian	-	19.6%	13.2%	-0.4%	-	-	-
Chinese	-	36.4%	24.6%	-3.7%	-	-	-
Black	-	12.5%	5.9%	-2.9%	-	-	-
Filipino	-	4.6%	-10.7%	6.8%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	11.7%	18.9%	6.6%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**6.8%**	**6.8%**	**4.9%**	**.**	**18.6%**	**14.2%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**21.9%**	**17.6%**	**17.9%**	**8.9%**	**55.8%**	**-4.7%**	**.**
Ten or less years	13.3%	20.3%	9.3%	5.2%	-	-	-
More than ten years	30.9%	15.9%	26.9%	16.2%	-	-	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**19.1%**	**5.8%**	**3.3%**	**6.2%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**8.4%**	**6.6%**	**5.9%**	**4.2%**	**17.7%**	**17.2%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status (Atlantic region, total)							
Indigenous (total)	**16.8%**	**13.0%**	**14.6%**	**8.1%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
First Nations	18.3%	15.0%	16.1%	10.7%	-	-	-
Métis	19.1%	11.8%	12.6%	5.7%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**11.0%**	**9.0%**	**9.7%**	**6.0%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Disability status (Atlantic region, total)							
Workers with disabilities	-	16.2%	15.6%	7.9%	42.1%	22.1%	20.1%
Workers without disabilities	-	8.6%	11.4%	7.4%	20.1%	23.0%	18.9%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**17.4%**	**22.7%**	**16.9%**	**-**	**33.0%**	**36.1%**
South Asian	-	13.6%	29.0%	17.6%	-	-	-
Chinese	-	5.8%	4.5%	12.0%	-	-	-
Black	-	18.4%	20.3%	5.0%	-	-	-
Filipino	-	27.6%	27.1%	26.7%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	13.5%	21.2%	16.5%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**6.8%**	**6.8%**	**2.4%**	**.**	**18.6%**	**14.2%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**12.6%**	**11.4%**	**15.6%**	**14.3%**	**20.1%**	**21.8%**	**-**
Ten or less years	20.9%	19.4%	19.9%	19.8%	-	-	-
More than ten years	7.7%	1.5%	7.3%	3.8%	-	-	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**19.1%**	**24.1%**	**29.3%**	**30.8%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**8.4%**	**6.6%**	**5.9%**	**4.2%**	**17.7%**	**17.2%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 18 / Gender pay gap in Nova Scotia

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**10.8%**	**8.0%**	**9.4%**	**6.5%**	**28.1%**	**23.4%**	**23.6%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	7.9%	6.0%	8.3%	4.6%	21.2%	10.6%	17.8%
Age							
15 to 24 years	8.1%	7.6%	1.9%	2.3%	29.7%	19.8%	11.0%
25 to 54 years	9.9%	7.3%	9.7%	5.6%	30.0%	23.7%	24.2%
55 years and older	15.5%	10.3%	12.7%	11.7%	33.8%	31.2%	29.3%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status (Atlantic region, total)							
Indigenous (total)	**12.7%**	**9.9%**	**9.6%**	**7.5%**	**16.6%**	**24.6%**	**35.4%**
First Nations	7.9%	10.2%	9.4%	9.1%	-	-	-
Métis	21.2%	9.2%	7.3%	6.5%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**11.0%**	**9.0%**	**9.7%**	**6.0%**	**25.4%**	**15.4%**	**21.2%**
Disability status (Atlantic region, total)							
Workers with disabilities	-	9.5%	8.8%	8.5%	22.8%	11.3%	26.6%
Workers without disabilities	-	8.6%	11.3%	7.4%	26.5%	18.2%	24.2%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**13.3%**	**6.8%**	**5.6%**	**-**	**13.4%**	**6.6%**
South Asian	-	14.9%	13.3%	-4.3%	-	-	-
Chinese	-	15.2%	-4.4%	12.5%	-	-	-
Black	-	2.8%	-4.3%	0.1%	-	-	-
Filipino	-	4.6%	-6.3%	-14.9%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	21.8%	13.7%	14.7%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**6.9%**	**10.1%**	**6.6%**	**-**	**15.9%**	**23.7%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**9.2%**	**15.1%**	**12.9%**	**7.4%**	**31.8%**	**7.5%**	**-**
Ten or less years	7.2%	16.6%	9.8%	2.9%	-	-	-
More than ten years	11.1%	15.3%	20.5%	13.1%	-	-	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**13.9%**	**16.5%**	**11.6%**	**15.1%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**10.1%**	**6.5%**	**9.0%**	**5.9%**	**26.6%**	**17.9%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status (Atlantic region, total)							
Indigenous (total)	**16.8%**	**13.0%**	**14.6%**	**8.1%**	**20.4%**	**32.4%**	**25.2%**
First Nations	18.3%	15.0%	16.1%	10.7%	-	-	-
Métis	19.1%	11.8%	12.6%	5.7%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**11.0%**	**9.0%**	**9.7%**	**6.0%**	**25.4%**	**15.4%**	**21.2%**
Disability status (Atlantic region, total)							
Workers with disabilities	-	16.2%	15.6%	7.9%	29.9%	22.3%	31.7%
Workers without disabilities	-	8.6%	11.4%	7.4%	26.5%	18.2%	24.2%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**21.2%**	**17.1%**	**13.7%**	**-**	**16.1%**	**22.3%**
South Asian	-	21.4%	25.0%	9.6%	-	-	-
Chinese	-	17.8%	10.5%	20.8%	-	-	-
Black	-	17.9%	8.1%	0.5%	-	-	-
Filipino	-	19.7%	16.7%	13.6%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	25.6%	15.4%	12.2%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**6.9%**	**10.1%**	**3.3%**	**-**	**15.9%**	**23.7%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**7.0%**	**9.9%**	**11.9%**	**10.5%**	**33.6%**	**11.0%**	**-**
Ten or less years	11.2%	21.0%	17.4%	12.2%	-	-	-
More than ten years	2.6%	-2.0%	3.9%	7.4%	-	-	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**24.7%**	**26.8%**	**29.1%**	**27.8%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**10.1%**	**6.5%**	**9.0%**	**5.9%**	**26.6%**	**17.9%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 19 / Gender pay gap in PEI

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**0.2%**	**4.4%**	**1.0%**	**-3.6%**	**18.9%**	**15.7%**	**20.3%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	-1.0%	2.2%	-1.3%	-5.0%	10.6%	1.1%	15.7%
Age							
15 to 24 years	1.6%	1.1%	8.7%	2.2%	20.9%	12.7%	17.8%
25 to 54 years	-0.8%	3.6%	-1.1%	-8.5%	17.2%	17.1%	18.2%
55 years and older	4.0%	10.8%	7.6%	8.8%	29.4%	18.9%	33.4%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status (Atlantic region, total)							
Indigenous (total)	**12.7%**	**9.9%**	**9.6%**	**7.5%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
First Nations	7.9%	10.2%	9.4%	9.1%	-	-	-
Métis	21.2%	9.2%	7.3%	6.5%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**11.0%**	**9.0%**	**9.7%**	**6.0%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Disability status (Atlantic region, total)							
Workers with disabilities	-	9.5%	8.8%	8.5%	0.9%	-18.6%	20.6%
Workers without disabilities	-	8.6%	11.3%	7.4%	27.5%	17.6%	22.7%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**8.5%**	**2.2%**	**5.0%**	**-**	**7.2%**	**12.1%**
South Asian	-	-1.6%	4.8%	-3.3%	-	-	-
Chinese	-	18.4%	4.0%	5.1%	-	-	-
Black	-	8.0%	6.2%	13.0%	-	-	-
Filipino	-	3.5%	-0.3%	2.4%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	18.8%	6.3%	13.2%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**3.7%**	**1.7%**	**-3.6%**	**-**	**8.8%**	**19.6%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**8.3%**	**4.1%**	**3.3%**	**9.1%**	**25.7%**	**-7.9%**	**-**
Ten or less years	8.0%	7.4%	4.4%	6.4%	-	-	-
More than ten years	9.3%	-1.6%	4.9%	19.2%	-	-	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**2.3%**	**14.0%**	**-2.8%**	**-7.8%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**-0.6%**	**3.8%**	**1.7%**	**-4.4%**	**18.8%**	**8.2%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status (Atlantic region, total)							
Indigenous (total)	**16.8%**	**13.0%**	**14.6%**	**8.1%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
First Nations	18.3%	15.0%	16.1%	10.7%	-	-	-
Métis	19.1%	11.8%	12.6%	5.7%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**11.0%**	**9.0%**	**9.7%**	**6.0%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Disability status (Atlantic region, total)							
Workers with disabilities	-	16.2%	15.6%	7.9%	29.9%	16.9%	22.0%
Workers without disabilities	-	8.6%	11.4%	7.4%	27.5%	17.6%	22.7%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**26.7%**	**26.7%**	**26.2%**	**-**	**25.7%**	**36.7%**
South Asian	-	24.4%	32.8%	23.3%	-	-	-
Chinese	-	28.7%	10.3%	32.1%	-	-	-
Black	-	26.0%	26.0%	22.8%	-	-	-
Filipino	-	29.2%	28.4%	25.1%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	25.9%	24.8%	20.9%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**3.7%**	**1.7%**	**-3.8%**	**-**	**8.8%**	**19.6%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**12.8%**	**13.0%**	**20.6%**	**19.7%**	**44.5%**	**40.1%**	**-**
Ten or less years	23.6%	21.6%	26.5%	25.4%	-	-	-
More than ten years	-0.9%	-3.4%	6.6%	7.2%	-	-	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**27.8%**	**40.2%**	**25.2%**	**25.6%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**-0.6%**	**3.8%**	**1.7%**	**-4.4%**	**18.8%**	**8.2%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

Table 20 / Gender pay gap in Newfoundland and Labrador

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Total	**15.6%**	**13.4%**	**15.8%**	**10.4%**	**34.3%**	**30.2%**	**28.1%**
Job tenure							
Full-time	14.8%	11.2%	15.5%	8.6%	24.9%	20.3%	25.8%
Age							
15 to 24 years	-2.1%	5.4%	7.0%	7.0%	-4.9%	19.1%	24.4%
25 to 54 years	14.2%	12.5%	14.1%	8.1%	27.0%	32.9%	28.0%
55 years and older	27.3%	20.0%	23.1%	20.0%	59.4%	28.4%	34.3%
Gender pay gap: Within group comparisons							
Indigenous status (Atlantic region, total)							
Indigenous (total)	**12.7%**	**9.9%**	**9.6%**	**7.5%**	**36.6%**	**27.8%**	**18.6%**
First Nations	7.9%	10.2%	9.4%	9.1%	-	29.4%	6.4%
Métis	21.2%	9.2%	7.3%	6.5%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**11.0%**	**9.0%**	**9.7%**	**6.0%**	**32.3%**	**23.3%**	**27.5%**
Disability status (Atlantic region, total)							
Workers with disabilities	-	9.5%	8.8%	8.5%	46.3%	4.4%	17.2%
Workers without disabilities	-	8.6%	11.3%	7.4%	32.1%	29.2%	28.1%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**17.6%**	**16.0%**	**3.6%**	**-**	**-**	**15.6%**
South Asian	-	19.1%	20.3%	15.0%	-	-	-
Chinese	-	-	-	-1.9%	-	-	-
Black	-	1.0%	10.9%	-8.5%	-	-	-
Filipino	-	20.9%	4.0%	-2.4%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	24.0%	23.0%	10.6%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**13.2%**	**16.2%**	**11.1%**	**-**	**23.7%**	**27.1%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**15.8%**	**15.7%**	**14.7%**	**8.3%**	**41.5%**	**45.5%**	**-**
Ten or less years	21.5%	22.4%	13.1%	10.1%	-	-	-
More than ten years	1.5%	3.5%	19.7%	4.0%	-	-	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**-18.8%**	**6.7%**	**18.9%**	**11.9%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**15.9%**	**13.1%**	**16.2%**	**10.6%**	**28.6%**	**22.7%**	**-**

	Average hourly wage*				Average annual earnings*		
	2019	2022	2024	2025	2019	2022	2023
Gender pay gap: Relative to non-Indigenious, non-disabled, non-racialized and Canadian-born men, respectively							
Indigenous status (Atlantic region, total)							
Indigenous (total)	**16.8%**	**13.0%**	**14.6%**	**8.1%**	**39.4%**	**26.8%**	**28.8%**
First Nations	18.3%	15.0%	16.1%	10.7%	-	29.7%	27.9%
Métis	19.1%	11.8%	12.6%	5.7%	-	-	-
Non-Indigenous	**11.0%**	**9.0%**	**9.7%**	**6.0%**	**32.3%**	**23.3%**	**27.5%**
Disability status (Atlantic region, total)							
Workers with disabilities	-	16.2%	15.6%	7.9%	54.3%	39.1%	42.0%
Workers without disabilities	-	8.6%	11.4%	7.4%	32.1%	29.2%	28.1%
Racialized status							
Racialized workers (total)	**-**	**27.7%**	**33.5%**	**26.8%**	**-**	**34.8%**	**39.9%**
South Asian	-	36.2%	36.2%	36.1%	-	-	-
Chinese	-	5.7%	7.1%	28.2%	-	-	-
Black	-	20.8%	38.4%	-1.1%	-	-	-
Filipino	-	43.5%	37.2%	31.4%	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Latin American	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Southeast Asian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other racialized group	-	20.8%	27.7%	20.6%	-	-	-
Non-racialized / white workers	**-**	**13.2%**	**16.2%**	**11.1%**	**-**	**23.7%**	**27.1%**
Immigration status							
Landed immigrants (total)**	**9.7%**	**18.3%**	**21.1%**	**17.8%**	**27.5%**	**-2.9%**	**-**
Ten or less years	21.4%	29.5%	30.9%	29.1%	-	-	-
More than ten years	-12.5%	-0.2%	4.3%	-10.2%	-	-	-
Non-landed immigrants**	**23.5%**	**30.6%**	**42.5%**	**42.2%**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Canadian-born	**15.9%**	**13.1%**	**16.2%**	**10.6%**	**28.6%**	**22.7%**	**-**

Note Shaded cells are rated E quality: use with caution.

* Gender pay gap is defined as the difference in average hourly wages and annual earnings between male and female workers. The figures presented exclude the self-employed, full-time students, and those with zero earnings. Unless otherwise stated, all figures for workers aged 15 years and older.

** Landed immigrants refer to people who are, or have been, granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Non-landed immigrants include Canadian-born citizens (including those born outside of the country) and non-permanent residents (e.g., refugees, those on study or work permits and their family members.

Sources Statistics in the first section are based on: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0064-01 - Employee wages by industry, annual; and Table 11-10-0239-01 - Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces. Annual earnings for all workers based on wages, salaries and commissions of employees. Excludes self-employed. The gender gap by population group is based on custom tabulations from Statistics Canada's Centre for Income and Socioeconomic Well-being Statistics using the Labour Force Survey (hourly wages) and Canadian Income Survey (annual earnings). Excludes self-employed and full-time students.Additional sources include: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0418-01 Average hourly and weekly wages and average usual weekly hours by Indigenous group living off reserve; and Table 14-10-0477-01 Labour market indicators for persons with and without disabilities, annual.

Appendix 3

History of pay equity policy in Canada

This is an overview of key moments in the evolution of pay equity laws in Canada, highlighting federal and provincial developments over a 75-year period.[273] Pay equity is aimed at closing the wage gap that disadvantages women as a result of gendered segregation in employment and the systemic undervaluation of the work typically performed by women. Today, approximately 1.4 million people (or 6.8 per cent of the workforce) are covered by the federal *Pay Equity Act*, including core public administration and related agencies, the military and RCMP, and federally regulated private sector businesses. The remaining workers are subject to various provincial and territorial regulations, where they exist. These developments are the result of tenacious advocacy efforts and many legal victories to secure women's access to equal pay for work of equal value.

1951

On June 23, 1951, the International Labour Organization, a United Nations agency that brings together governments', employers' and workers' representatives, adopts ILO Convention 100, concerning "Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value."[274]

1970-72

In 1970, the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW) releases its final report, with a list of recommendations, including a call to ratify ILO Convention 100 and that governments in Canada reform existing labour law to "ensure universal observation of equal pay for equal work" in the spirit of the Convention.[275] As part of the response to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Canada finally ratifies ILO Convention 100 in 1972.

1975

The Quebec government enacts its *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, which states: "Every employer must, without discrimination, grant equal salary or wages to the members of his personnel who perform equivalent work at the same place."[276]

1976

The Ontario Equal Pay Coalition is founded, comprised of dozens of trade unions, women's and businesswomen's groups, and community organizations. It has worked for 50 years to end gender pay discrimination and to close the gender pay gap through legislation, collective bargaining, and community activism.[277]

1977

The *Canadian Human Rights Act* is enacted in 1977 and subsequently amended in 1985, 1996, 1998 and 2017, prohibiting discrimination in federally regulated industries and public administration. Section 11(1) of the act states: "It is a discriminatory practice for an employer to establish or maintain differences in wages between male and female employees employed in the same establishment who are performing work of equal value."

The act establishes the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which has, amongst others, the mandate to assess and investigate complaints to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of wage discrimination to merit referral to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Following its enactment, a number of pay equity complaints are filed against the Treasury Board of Canada and several federally regulated employers, including Bell Canada, Telus, Canada Post and Air Canada.

1984

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) launches a landmark pay equity case alleging the federal government paid lower wages for "women's work" in six female-dominated occupations, eventually winning a $3.6 billon settlement in 1999 covering 200,000 former and current employees, the largest ever awarded. In 2002, PSAC launches several additional complaints against the Treasury Board for refusing to extend that 1999 pay equity settlement to employees in similar female-dominated jobs working in related agencies. All complaints are finally settled in 2016.

1984

Judge R.S. Abella releases *Equality in Employment: A Royal Commission Report* that makes several recommendations, including: "Equal pay for work of equal value should be part of all employment equity programs."[278]

1987-96

Some provincial governments enact proactive pay equity regimes to replace their complaint-based approach. The first such legislation is introduced in Manitoba in 1986, followed by Ontario in 1987, Prince Edward Island in 1988, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in 1989 and Quebec in 1996. The new legislation in these provinces applies only to public sector employers, except for Ontario and Quebec, where all employers, in both the private and public sector, with 10 or more employees are covered.

1987

Ontario passes proactive pay equity legislation, which comes into effect on January 1, 1988, with further amendments in 1993 for women working in female-dominated workplaces. In contrast to a complaints-based system, the new law requires employers to proactively address any gender pay gaps, to post a pay equity plan in the workplace demonstrating how pay equity gaps will be closed, and to maintain pay equity over time. Where gaps exist, employers must make annual adjustments of at least one per cent of the previous year's payroll until pay equity is achieved in female-dominated workplaces. Ontario's Pay Equity Commission is established to monitor compliance with the act.

1991

The Saskatchewan Pay Equality Coalition forms in 1991 to promote pay equity legislation. The newly elected NDP government states its support for the principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value' but brings in an Equal Pay for Equal Value Policy Framework instead. The framework requires all government departments and Crown corporations to negotiate wage adjustments and jointly develop gender neutral job evaluation systems with public sector unions.[279] In response to pressure, the policy is extended to include health care workers in 1999.

1993

The Ontario *Pay Equity Act* is amended to introduce the innovative proxy comparison method to apply to female-dominated workplaces in Ontario's broader public sector including child care centres, long-term care, home-care agencies, community and social services agencies. The amendment establishes proxy comparators for use in determining equal pay for work of equal value. In 1995, the new conservative government attempts to eliminate the proxy comparator method and limit financial awards in proxy workplaces, prompting legal challenge. In 1997, the Ontario Court of Appeal strikes down these efforts as a violation of women's section 15 equality rights under the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Quebec and the federal government incorporate the proxy comparison method using regulatory-prescribed male comparators in their legislation in 2003 and 2018, respectively.

1995

In 1995, the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* is unanimously adopted by 189 countries, including Canada. It remains the most comprehensive blueprint for women's and girl's equality ever published. It is one of several international covenants, including the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, that set out the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work of equal value in international human rights law.[280]

1996

Quebec introduces proactive pay equity legislation as part of a suite of gender equality measures (e.g., low-cost child care and expanded parental leave) designed to support women's employment and reduce poverty.[281] As in Ontario, private and public sector employers with 10 or more employees are required to conduct gender pay assessments and to address wage gaps within a set time frame as set out in legislation. Self-audits are required every five years, with annual online reporting. Non-compliant companies are identified; fines are levied. The Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) oversees compliance.

1996-99

Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) wins significant pay equity decisions after lengthy court battles (See 1984 entry).

2000

Pay equity is one of the priority demands of the 2000 World March of Women. Inspired by the 1995 Women's March Against Poverty in Quebec, 35,000 women gather on Parliament Hill in Ottawa calling for action to end poverty and violence against women around the world.

2001

Following the World March of Women, the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity is formed, building on the work of the Fédération des dames d'Acadie. It calls on the provincial government to update and expand provincial legislation. It continues to fight for pay equity and decent work for women in New Brunswick.[282]

2001

The Canadian Human Rights Commission tables *Time for Action* in parliament, a special report on pay equity,[283] noting that the complaints-based approach is not well suited to address systemic discrimination and that the built-in incentives and opportunities for delay are the most significant challenges in the current pay equity regime. The commission recommendations include that a proactive pay equity system be established.

2001-04

The Government of Canada appoints an independent Pay Equity Task Force (the Bilson Task Force) to conduct a review of complaints-based section 11 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and make recommendations to improve the federal pay equity legislative framework in 2001.

In May 2004, after widespread consultations, the Bilson Task Force submits its report, entitled *Pay Equity: A New Approach to a Fundamental Right*, to the ministers of justice and labour.[284] The Task Force concludes "that the regime in place under section 11 has provided an inadequate foundation for significant and systematic progress towards the goal of pay equity across the federal jurisdiction as a whole."

The report includes 113 recommendations, including the replacement of the complaint-based model of pay equity with new stand-alone, proactive legislation similar to the models in place in Quebec and Ontario and the expansion of coverage to other marginalized workers, as well as part-time, temporary and casual workers. It also recommends that an independent Pay Equity Commission and Pay Equity Tribunal be established to support and enforce the law.

2004

The Supreme Court rules in *Newfoundland (Treasury Board) v. Newfoundland Association of Public Employees* (2004) that the provincial government was justified in delaying pay equity adjustments for female health workers due to a 1991 "fiscal crisis." The court acknowledged the wage cuts were discriminatory, but it ruled they were permissible under s. 1 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, prioritizing fiscal necessity over immediate pay equity. The decision is widely criticized by women's rights groups and the labour movement for allowing financial concerns to justify continued pay discrimination.[285]

2005

The women's movement and the labour movement, which were actively engaged in the federal Pay Equity Task Force consultations, form the Pay Equity Network (PEN) and launch a campaign calling on the government to implement the task force's recommendations.[286]

In October, the government responds to the Bilson Report, stating that, although it recognizes the contribution of the report, it "does not provide an adequate blueprint for the implementation of pay equity in a broad range of federally-regulated workplaces."[287] It announces its intention to create a new task force and begin new consultations on issues such as pay equity and collective bargaining, employer and union obligations, the role of pay equity committees and the definition of an "establishment."

2006

The Conservative Party wins the federal election in January. It rolls back commitments to women's rights, cuts funding for women's groups and Status of Women Canada (SWC) program staff, removes "equality" from mandate of SWC, cancels funding for the Canada-wide child care program and Court Challenges Program, closes 12 of 16 SWC regional offices, and refuses to proceed with proactive pay equity legislation. Demonstrations are organized across the country.[288]

2009

In March 2009, parliament enacts the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act*, as a separate, equal pay for work of equal value regime for federal public sector employers, their employees, and bargaining agents. It effectively eliminates workers' right to equal pay for work of equal value, putting the issue into the hands of bargaining units and removing the right of federal employees to file complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Unions are prohibited from encouraging or assisting members in filing pay equity complaints.

The act's introduction generates considerable opposition, including a constitutional challenge by the impacted unions. The act is not brought into force because supporting regulations are never completed.

2009

The Government of New Brunswick introduces a *Pay Equity Act* that applies to the public service, the education and health sectors, as well as to Crown corporations. The law comes into force in 2010. In 2012, the government releases the findings of voluntary pay equity exercises for three government-mandated services: transition house workers, child care staff, and home support workers. The current government has announced it will introduce proactive pay equity legislation in 2026.[289] See the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity website for a detailed chronology of pay equity developments.[290]

2009

Quebec government introduces amendments to its *Pay Equity Act*, including the elimination of retroactivity of pay equity maintenance payments. These reforms were contested in court by a coalition of trade unions, up to the Supreme Court. In 2018, the unions were successful in having Quebec's approach to pay equity maintenance found unconstitutional (*Quebec (Attorney General) v. Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux*).[291]

2011

In a case filed 28 years earlier to the Canada Human Rights Tribunal, the Supreme Court of Canada, upholds the pay equity claim of clerical workers at Canada Post that Canada Post discriminated against its predominantly-female clerical and regulatory staff in paying workers in predominantly-male postal operations more for work of equal value.

2016

The new Liberal federal government establishes a special committee to study the issue of gender-based pay inequity and provide recommendations for federal action, as part of its commitment to promoting gender equality. *It's Time to Act* is released in June 2016, recommending that the government develop proactive pay equity legislation for the federal public service and federally regulated employers "within 18 months".[292] In October, the government signals its intention not to bring the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* into force and, instead, develop a new direction for pay equity.

2018

In 2018, 31 years after the equality rights guarantee in the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* took effect, women win their first Supreme Court of Canada appeal based on sex discrimination. Amendments to Quebec's pay equity legislation, which reduced an employer's obligation to ensure pay equity is maintained, were deemed a violation of women's equality rights.[293]

In another legal action, an arbitrator rules that Canada Post is discriminating against its rural and suburban mail carriers—a workforce that is roughly two-thirds female—by not providing equal pay for work of equal value compared to predominantly male urban letter carriers. The decision results in a 25 per cent pay increase and improved benefits for over 12,000 workers, retroactive to 2016, a settlement of $540 million.

2018

The Government of Ontario introduces its *Pay Transparency Act, 2018*, the first legislation of its kind in Canada. It mandates salary ranges in job postings, prohibits asking for compensation history, and requires employers to report on gender pay gaps and to reduce compensation disparities. The legislation is suspended with election of Conservative government in June 2018.

In 2024, the Conservative government introduces the *Working for Workers Four Act, 2024* (Bill 149), sidestepping the 2018 *Pay Transparency Act*. New provisions in Ontario's employment standards require employers with 25 or more employees to include salary ranges on job postings and to disclose use of AI in hiring process. Regulations also prohibit employers from asking interviewees about past salary history or to take action against employees who discuss their salaries.

Feminist groups and trade unions note that the new provisions are weak, applying only to public job postings that pay less than $200,000 per year and allow very large, almost meaningless, salary ranges of up to $50,000. The legislation does not require employers to file or publish formal "Pay Transparency Reports" on gender pay gaps; nor is there a robust enforcement mechanism under employment standards legislation.

2018-26

In October 2018, the government introduces the *Pay Equity Act*, part of Bill C-86, *Budget Implementation Act, 2018, nº2,* replacing the complaint-based system in the *Canadian Human Rights Act* with a proactive pay equity system for public and federally regulated private employers with at least 10 employees. Employers are now required to develop pay equity plans and take action to address systemic disparities, and a new Pay Equity Commissioner, a full-time member of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, is appointed to administer and enforce the act.

Gender equality organizations celebrate the historic win yet note the legislation's significant shortcomings, including significant lack of resources for program roll-out and the new Pay Equity Office.[294]

The *Pay Equity Act* comes into force on August 31, 2021. The initial deadline for posting plans for federal public service employees is extended from September 2024 to 2027.[295] There are also significant delays in posting plans among several federally regulated private sector employers. In fiscal year 2024-25, authorization applications to the Office of the Pay Equity Commissioner rise by 2000 per cent, mostly for extensions. There is a steep rise in the number of formal disputes submitted for adjudication as well.[296] Data from the first round of annual reports submitted in June 2025 reveal low compliance among federally regulated employers.

2021

New pay transparency measures in federally regulated workplaces come into effect under the *Employment Equity Act*; as part of the amendments, businesses with more than 100 employees are required to provide detailed salary data starting in 2022. These pay transparency measures are aimed at addressing wage gaps that affect four designated groups: women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities and members of racialized groups.

2022

Newfoundland and Labrador introduces proactive pay equity legislation for permanent core public sector workers 34 years after the government entered into—and then reneged on—an agreement with the Newfoundland Association of Public Employees to address gender wage disparities in the provincial public service.[297]

In 2023, the St. John's Status of Women Council and the Newfoundland Federation of Labour call for a complete reset, noting the inadequate engagement with community partners and labour as well as the legislation's limited coverage and lack of provision for independent oversight.[298] Promised pay equity regulations have not been released.

2023

The *Report of the Employment Equity Act Review Task Force*, led by Professor Adelle Blackett, is released.[299] The report emphasizes that establishing an effective employment equity regime is necessary to removing the systemic and intersecting barriers that cause gender wage gaps.

2025

New Brunswick announces its intention to introduce pay transparency legislation in 2026. Susan Holt's government also promises to expand New Brunswick's existing pay equity legislation to include private sector employers.

2026

As of June 2026, three jurisdictions—New Brunswick (2026), British Columbia (2023), Newfoundland and Labrador (2022—not in force)—have stand-alone pay transparency legislation and reporting requirements, and others—Ontario (2024), P.E.I. (2022), Canada (2021), and Nova Scotia (2019) have recently introduced various pay transparency provisions in their employment standards legislation. Canadian approaches are considered weaker than those being introduced in Europe under the EU Pay Transparency Directive, which require strict reporting on pay gaps for firms with 100+ employees.[300]

B.C. is the first jurisdiction in Canada to mandate pay transparency beyond the gender binary (acknowledging non-binary and Two-Spirit individuals in pay gap analysis).

Four provinces—Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec—and the three territories have no pay transparency requirements at this time (not including public sector compensation disclosure regulations). Emerging evidence suggests low rates of compliance with pay transparency regulations.[301]

2030

Canada is not on track to meet its Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, Ambition 5.5: Reducing the gender wage gap.[302]

Appendix 4

Pay equity legislation in Canada

Table 21 / Comparative table of pay equity legislation in Canada

	Coverage	Data collection	Process	Reporting/maintenance/ enforcement
Manitoba				
Pay equity	Public sector including core administration, Crown agencies, health authorities.	Employers do not have an obligation to collect information; the Pay Equity Bureau and executive director must prepare and maintain statistics	Equalization occurs through negotiations between employer and bargaining agents.	No specific section on maintaining pay equity settlements once reached
P.E.I.				
Pay equity	Public sector including core administration, Crown agencies, colleges, and nursing homes.	Employers do not have an obligation to collect information; the Pay Equity Bureau has to prepare and maintain statistics	Equalization occurs through negotiations between employer and bargaining agents.	Prior to 1995 agencies could process complaints following post pay equity achievement. Now no enforcement/ maintenance
Pay transparency	Prince Edward Island's Employment Standards Act was amended in 2022 to include pay transparency provisions. The legislation prohibits employers from seeking pay history from job applicants and from preventing employees from discussing wages. The law also encourages the inclusion of salary ranges in job postings.			

	Coverage	Data collection	Process	Reporting/maintenance/ enforcement
New Brunswick				
Pay equity	Public sector, including core administration, school boards, hospitals, and some Crown agencies.	Employers have to compare the job classes (no set guidelines for data collection); the Pay Equity Bureau must prepare and maintain statistics	Equalization occurs through negotiations about an evaluation system and pay adjustments between employer and bargaining agents	The employer must maintain pay equity, after it is achieved, they must conduct a pay equity review and make pay adjustments to ensure pay equity is maintained
Pay transparency	Stand alone legislation passed in 2026. Employers are required to include salary or wage ranges in job ads and bans them from asking about compensation history. It also prohibits any kind of retaliation against employees who discuss or inquire about pay. Employers are also required to submit annual pay transparency reports, content to be set out regulations. Employers and government required to make pay transparency reports public.			
Nova Scotia				
Pay equity	Public sector, including core administration, municipalities, universities, health care facilities and Crown agencies.	Employers have no obligation to collect data; the Pay Equity Commission has to prepare and maintain statistics	Equalization occurs through negotiations regarding an evaluation system and the employer must bargain in good faith to achieve pay equity	Legislation envisions a single wage adjustment. There is no maintenance provision
Pay transparency	Employers are prohibited from asking prospective employees for their wage history or disclosing wage information about employees, with few exceptions. Employers may not pursue any form of retaliation against employees who discuss or inquire about pay. Currently, Nova Scotia law does not explicitly require employers to include salary ranges in job advertisements, although this is proposed in pending private members' bill.			
Ontario				
Pay equity	Public and private sector employers with 10 or more employees.	Employers do not have an obligation to collect data but they must create a pay equity plan.	If unionized: equalizing occurs through negotiations between employer and bargaining agent. If non-unionized: occurs through employers' pay equity plan, (employees review and comment). Three wage comparison mechanisms can be used: job-to-job comparison, proportional value comparison, and proxy comparison.	Requires ongoing maintenance to ensure pay equity is sustained. The pay equity office monitors and audits pay equity plans to assess legislative compliance and the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal adjudicates disputes. Some penalties (fines) are explicitly defined in legislation.
Pay transparency	Ontario's new law (effective from January 2026) mandates that employers with 25 or more employees to include salary ranges (up to $50,000) in job postings, bans asking for compensation history and requiring Canadian work experience, and requires that employers disclose AI use in hiring. Unlike the law first proposed in 2018, this law does not require employers to submit public reports on their compensation practices and workforce trends.			

	Coverage	Data collection	Process	Reporting/maintenance/ enforcement
Quebec				
Pay equity	Public and private sector employers with 10 or more employees.	Employers do not have an obligation to collect data but depending on the size they must create a pay equity plan	Equalization takes place differently depending on the size of the employer; it can include a pay equity committee, a pay equity plan, and wage adjustments	Employers must conduct a re-evaluation every five years to identify and correct any new wage gaps. The pay equity commission conducts complaint investigations and includes penalties (fines) for non-compliance based on the employer's size
Newfoundland and Labrador (not in force)				
Pay equity	Public sector, municipalities, hospitals, Crown agencies and other public bodies with 10+ employees	Employer are required to prepare reports relating to pay equity and their actions taken, content and timing to be set out regulations	Equalization occurs through negotiations about an evaluation system and pay adjustments between employer and bargaining agents	Employers expected to "take the action that is necessary to maintain, and where necessary implement, pay equity in the public sector." The Pay Equity Officer will review employer reports, assess and report on employer compliance to legislature
Pay transparency	Pay transparency (not in force): Stand alone legislation. Employers are required to include salary or wage ranges in job ads. It also prohibits any kind of retaliation against employees who discuss or inquire about pay. Employers are also required to submit pay transparency reports, content and timing to be set out regulations. Employers and government required to make pay transparency reports public.			
British Columbia				
Pay equity	No pay equity legislation			
Pay transparency	Enacted in 2023, BC's legislation requires employers to include salary or wage ranges in job ads. It also prohibits any kind of retaliation against employees who discuss or inquire about pay. Starting in 2024, large employers will need to submit annual pay transparency reports. By 2027, all employers with 50+ employees will be required to submit reports to the government and make available to employees. Reports must detail the pay differences between genders, including data on bonuses and overtime. The Act requires the Minister of Finance to publish an annual report by June 1 each year that describes the differences in pay among genders, trends in relation to those differences and the number of reports of non-compliance.			

	Coverage	Data collection	Process	Reporting/maintenance/ enforcement
Federal scheme				
Pay equity	Federal public service and federally regulated workplaces (banking, transportation, telecommunications) with 10 or more employees.	If the employer or pay equity committee finds that there is at least one predominantly female job class and at least one male, they must determine the value of the work performed by both classes.	Equalization occurs through a pay equity plan (employer must post a draft pay equity plan, allow employers to provide written comments on it, and take their comments into consideration when finalizing the plan).	Requires an annual pay equity statement and plan updates every five years. The Commission can conduct compliance audits and penalties (fines) are included for non-compliance
Pay transparency	Employers with at least 100 employees must include detailed data about gender-based wage gaps at their organization as part of annual employment equity reports required by Employment Equity Act.			

Appendix 5

Pay equity legislation in Northern Canada

Pay equity in Canada's Northern territories (Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon) is largely governed by territorial human rights legislation and specific public sector statutes. At this time, territorial governments and local territorial employers are exempted from federal proactive pay equity legislation. (Federally regulated workplaces, such as financial institutions and telecom companies working in the territories, are covered by federal legislation). The federal government can, at any time, issue an order in council setting out the date on which the *Pay Equity Act* will come into force in the three territories. It has indicated, however, that this would only take place if there was "interest [on the part of the territorial governments] in diverging from the status quo."[303]

In Yukon, the *Human Rights Act* prohibits discrimination in employment, including compensation. Section 15—Equal pay for work of equal value specifically prohibits employers—including the Government of the Yukon and municipalities and their corporations, boards, and commissions—from establishing or maintaining "a difference in wages between employees who are performing work of equal value, if the difference is based on any of the prohibited grounds of discrimination."[304,305] And the *Employment Standards Act*, Section 44, prohibits private sector and territorially regulated employers from paying women less than male employees "for similar work performed in the same establishment under similar working conditions and the performance of which requires similar skill, effort, and responsibility."[306]

Like other complaints-based systems, individuals are required to come forward to lodge complaints of discrimination with the Human Rights Commission. This process presents huge barriers to complainants seeking justice, as described above. For its part, the Yukon Human Rights Commission has struggled to meet the terms of its mandate because of persistent funding issues, high staff turnover, gaps in policies and procedures including around the exercise of discretion on the part of the Director, and an over-reliance on settlements to manage a high workload.[307]

The Nunavut government also relies on human rights legislation, specifically the *Nunavut Human Rights Act*, to protect women from pay discrimination in employment, but the act does not explicitly contain a specific "equal pay for equal work" provision, nor does the territory have a dedicated pay equity law.[308] As noted above, the Government of Nunavut and Indigenous governing bodies are exempt from federal proactive pay equity legislation; it is covered by the Canadian *Human Rights Act*.

In the Northwest Territories, the right to equal pay for work of equal value was established by Section 40 of the *Public Service Act* and applies to the GNWT public service, the NWT Power Corporation, and teachers. The Equal Pay Commissioner, an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, is appointed to receive, investigate and report on pay equity complaints. They also are tasked with promoting greater understanding and awareness of the right to equal pay for work of equal value.[309] The commissioner files an annual report on the office's activities with the speaker of the Legislative Assembly, which is reviewed by the legislature's Government Operations Committee.

In the 2023-24 annual report, the commissioner noted that there had only been one official complaint submitted to the office in 2019, but the lack of complaints cannot be understood to mean that there is no pay discrimination in the NWT. The commissioner noted that there was support for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value but that collective bargaining and job evaluation systems had their limits, that pay equity systems were needed to "ensure that equal pay for work of equal value is demonstrably established and maintained over time, across an entire establishment."[310] The commissioner recommended that employers and bargaining agents undertake voluntary pay equity reviews to identify and address any pay inequities that "make their way back into compensation systems over time, despite the best of intentions."[311] In her 2024-25 report, the commissioner suggested that proactive pay equity legislation would “provide a more robust and enduring mechanism for accountability.”[312]

In its review of the 2023-24 commission’s report, the Standing Committee on Government of the Legislative Assembly recommended that government review the pay equity provisions of the *Public Service Act* and bring forward amendments “to address how intersectionality impacts pay equity” and “to require regular maintenance reviews or proactive pay equity plans.”[313] The Department of Finance responded that it will work with the Equal Pay Commissioner to identify potential gaps in the legislation as it related to intersectionality. On the question of the need for regular maintenance, however, it noted that “GNWT jobs are continually under review.”[314] What was left unsaid was that no further action is required.[315]

Private sector employers, for their part, are covered by the NWT *Human Rights Act*. Section 9 prohibits pay discrimination among employees employed in the same establishment performing “the same or substantially similar work.”[316]

Appendix 6

Jurisdictional scan

The following table is based on the Summary Table of selected pay equity regimes, published in: Megan Bowers, et al. 2020. Section 14.2, Summary of Jurisdictional Scan. Mind the Pay Gap: A legislative approach to ending pay discrimination in B.C., Simon Fraser University.

Table 22 / Jurisdictional scan of selected pay equity regimes around the world

Jurisdiction	Type of pay legislation	Legislative elements	Observed outcomes
Summary of jurisdictional scan of European Union			
European Union	*European Union Pay Transparency Directive (2023); European Economic Commission—Equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value (1957)*	▪ New directive requires employers to disclose pay data, bans salary history checks, requires joint pay assessments and filing of gender pay gap statistics. Includes enforcement. ▪ Central body tracks the progress of EU member states in taking action on gender-based pay discrimination. ▪ Issues recommendations and reports on policy best practices.	▪ A number of EU member states have made significant strides in closing gender-based pay gaps. ▪ Several Nordic countries recognized as having some of the most progressive gender equality policies in the world.
Summary of select Scandinavian countries			
Denmark	*Act on Equal Pay for Men and Women (2006)*	▪ Targets companies with 35+ employees, which must report pay data and disclose gender-based disparities. ▪ Firms provide an opportunity to consult with management on the reported pay gap results. ▪ Employers can opt to voluntarily conduct a pay equity analysis and implement a pay equity plan as an alternative.	▪ Only 30 per cent compliance rate. ▪ Did not increase the wages of female employees. ▪ The overall effect was a reduction in the aggregate wage bill of two per cent, a small reduction in gender wage gap. ▪ Pending changes to bring Denmark into compliance with EU pay transparency directive.
Finland	*Act on Equality between Women and Men (2005); (2014)*	▪ Targets companies with 30+ employees. ▪ Employers are required to prepare a "gender equality plan" every two years. ▪ Data for gender equality plans are collected through regular employee pay surveys. ▪ Mandatory pay audits.	▪ High rates of compliance, between 65-85 per cent in 2012. ▪ Pending changes to bring Denmark into compliance with EU pay transparency directive.
Iceland	*Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights Irrespective of Gender (No. 150/2020); ÍST 85—The Equal Pay Standard—Certification Model (2018)*	▪ Targets companies with 25+ employees. ▪ Every three years, companies must provide evidence they are paying men and women equally for jobs of equal value. ▪ Daily fine of 50.000ISK ($500CAD) for non-compliance. ▪ Phase in complete.	▪ Evaluation studies are underway. ▪ Pending changes to bring Iceland into compliance with EU pay transparency directive.
Norway	*Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act (2018)*	▪Gender pay gap reporting requirements for companies with 50+ employees. ▪Annual and biannual reports. ▪ Provides complete transparency about all citizens' salaries — regardless of employer, sector, or company size.	▪ Empowerment of marginalized groups. ▪ Political culture an important determinant. ▪ Pending changes to bring Norway into compliance with EU pay transparency directive.

Jurisdiction	Type of pay legislation	Legislative elements	Observed outcomes
Summary of select commonwealth countries			
United Kingdom	*Pay Transparency via Equality Act Regulations 2017*	• All companies with 250+ employees must publish an annual report. • Report must include the differences between the mean and median hourly pay of male and female employees and the proportions of male and female employees in each pay quartile.	• Mixed results. Regulations successful in raising the profile of gender disparities, but limited impact on the size of the gap to date. • Loopholes in legislation, lack of action on part of companies. • Considering new law to require ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting for employers with over 250 employees.
New Zealand	*Equal Pay Amendment Bill (2018, amended 2025)* *Equal Pay Act (1972)* *Government Service Equal Pay Act (1960)*	• New Zealand's system puts the responsibility for initiating pay equity proceedings on employees. Employers must notify all employees. • Encourages mediation similar to the way unions and firms engage in bargaining, produce sector-wide results.	• 2018 amendment streamlined process. • In 2025, legislation amended again, raising the bar for bringing and progressing claims.
Australia	*Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012)*	• Mandatory reporting requirements for companies with more than 100 employees. • Annual public reporting. • Public shaming of companies that fail to comply.	• Modest gains for women since monitoring began. • High rates of compliance. • In 2025, large pay equity win for 175,000 workers in five areas, including child care, health professionals. Fair Work Commission proposed substantial pay rises of up to 35 per cent.
Summary of select Canadian provinces			
Ontario	*Working for Workers Four Act (2024)* *Pay Transparency Act* (2018) (not implemented) *Pay Equity Act* (1988)	• Public and private sector employers with 10+ employees. • Employers must compare female-dominated job classes to male ones of equal value and address gaps. Adjustments limited to one per cent of the employer's payroll per year. • New requirements to provide information on salary, hiring process in job postings. Employers prohibited from asking about previous Canadian job experience in ads.	• Very small overall effect on the gender pay gap. • Evidence of non-compliance among employers.
Quebec	*Pay Equity Act* (1996)	• Applies to public and private sector employers with 10+ employees. • Employers must compare male- and female-dominated job classes of equal value and address gaps within four years. • Required self-audits every five years and companies required to fill out an online form annually.	• Has had mild, positive effect on reducing the gender pay gap. • Compliance estimated around 84 per cent (2016). • Considering new transparency requirements for job posting.

Notes

1 Claudia Goldin. 2014. "A grand gender convergence: Its last chapter." American Economic Review 104(4): 1091-1119.

2 Mary Cornish and Jennifer Quito. 2013. Where to go for pay equity: Canadian remedies for gender pay discrimination, Cavelluzzo, Shilton, McIntyre & Cornish LLP. Prepared for the Canadian Bar Association National Administrative Law, Labour and Employment Law Conference November 29-30, 2013.

3 See: Canadian Women's Foundation. 2025. The Facts about Women and Poverty in Canada; LEAF. 2023. Gender and Poverty.

4 Amina Khalique. 2024. What You Should Know About the 2023 Gender Wage Gap. Center for American Progress, Oct 24, 2024.

5 Dawn Desjardins, Carrie Freestone and Rannella Billy-Ochieng', and Naomi Powell. 2022. Equal measures: Advancing Canada's working women in a post-pandemic economy, RBC Economics. A Deloitte study completed for the Ontario Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee (2016) found that closing the gender wage gap could generate $2.6 billion in additional revenues from personal income and sale taxes. As family income rose, spending on social assistance, tax credits, and child benefits would decrease in turn—by an estimated $103 million.

6 Kathleen Lahey, in her 2016 study of Alberta, modelled five different pay equity scenarios increasing women's adjusted incomes in the aggregate by 5 per cent to 32 per cent, all of which would increase tax revenues for the federal and provincial governments and related saving in transfers, ranging from $769 million in Scenario A—bringing women's average salaries up to 90 per cent of men's median wages in the selected occupations—to $5,596 million in Scenario E—adjusting all women's wages to the male median in all occupations in which the male median wage is higher than women's, than adding an adjustment for childcare and homecare workers to approximate the result that would be achieved for the all-female care occupations where there are no direct male comparison wages. Kathleen Lahey. 2016. Equal worth: Designing effective pay equity laws for Alberta. Parkland Institute.

7 Steven Pennings. 2022. "A Gender Employment Gap Index (GEGI): A Simple Measure of the Economic Gains from Closing Gender Employment Gaps, with an Application to the Pacific Islands." Policy Research Working Paper 9942, World Bank, Washington, DC.

8 According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, it will take Canada more than 80 years to close its total gender gap and more than 200 years to close women's economic gap with men. WEF. 2025. Global Gender Gap Report 2025. June 2025.

9 Kathleen Lahey. 2016, p. 3.

10 OECD, Gender wage gap (indicator). 2025. The OECD tracks the difference between the male and female median full-time earnings as a percentage of male earnings. This measure is based on the wages or earnings received by employees, excluding income from self-employment or other forms of labour market participation.

11 See: Marie Drolet and Mandana Mardare Amini. 2023. "Intersectional perspective on the Canadian gender wage gap", Statistics Canada, Studies on Gender and Intersecting Identities, Catalogue no. 45200002, 2023; Sheila Block and Grace Edward Galabuzi. 2023. A rising tide does not lift all boats: Ontario's colour-coded labour market recovery, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; Danielle Lamb, Rupa Banjeree and Anil Verma. 2021. "Immigrant-non-immigrant wage differentials in Canada: A comparison between standard and nonstandard jobs." International Migration Vol. 59, no. 5, pp. 114–133; Tammy Schirle and Moyosoreoluwa Sogaolu. 2020. A work in progress: Measuring wage gaps for women and minorities in the Canadian labour market, The C.D. Howe Institute.

12 Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn. 1997. "Swimming upstream: Trends in the gender wage differential in the 1980s," Journal of Labor Economics 15(1), 1–42; See also: Blau and Kahn. 2017. "The gender wage gap: Extent, trends, and explanations," Journal of Economic Literature 55(3), 789–865.

13 In 2017, McKinsey estimated that Canada could add $150 billion in incremental GDP by 2026 or see a 0.6 percent increase of annual GDP growth by increasing women's participation in the workforce, increasing hours worked (e.g., moving from part-time to full-time), and shifting women into higher-paying sectors like technology. Sandrine Devillard et al. 2017. The power of parity: Advancing women's equality in Canada, McKinsey.

14 Information on hourly wages is collected monthly in the Labour Force Survey. Respondents are asked to report their usual wage/salary before taxes and other deductions, and include tips, commissions and bonuses, for their main job.

15 Annual earnings are defined in this report as employment income from the wages, salaries and commissions of employees—excluding self-employed workers—as reported in the Statistics Canada's Canadian Income Survey.

16 The Government of Canada also tracks these two measures of the gender pay gap in the Gender Results Framework, part of a larger suite of measures designed to measure progress in advancing gender equality, aligned with other international frameworks including the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. See also federal government reporting on employment equity and pay equity in federally regulated industries (e.g., Equi'Vision) and the core public service.

17 Rachelle Pelletier, Martha Patterson and Melissa Moyser. 2019. The gender wage gap in Canada: 1998 to 2018. Statistics Canada, Labour Statistics: Research Papers, Catalogue no. 75-004-M—2019004.

18 The earnings figures presented here are for all workers aged 15+ years, based on wages, salaries and commissions of employees, excluding self-employed. Statistics Canada, Table 11-10-0239-01—Income of individuals by age group, sex and income source, Canada, provinces.

19 In 2025, 33 per cent of female workers worked in unionized workplaces compared to 28 per cent of male workers.

20 Adam King. 2026. "Here's how Canadian workers and unions fared in 2025," *The Maple*, January 5, 2026.

21 According to the 2024 Canadian Income Survey, the gender wage gap in annual earnings among 15- to 24-year-olds was 20.5 per cent in 2024, an increase over 2023, reflecting in part the significant drop in employment among young people and the erosion of wages in sectors like food and accommodation. There was no change in the gender gap in annual earnings among working-aged women and a small decrease among women aged 55 to 64 years.

22 In 2025, women worked an average of 33.1 hours per week compared to 37.6 hours among men, and roughly one in four (23.9 percent) worked part-time hours (less than 30 hours per week at their main job). The proportion of women working part-time has declined slightly since 2019 as women took up more full-time work in the aftermath of the pandemic. See: Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0035-01—Usual hours worked by industry, annual; and Table 14-10-0327-01—Labour force characteristics by gender and detailed age group, annual.

23 Nicole Fortin. 2019. "Increasing Earnings Inequality and the Gender Pay Gap in Canada: Prospects for Convergence." Canadian Journal of Economics 52(2), p. 415. See also: Marie Drolet. 2020. Equally mobile, equally stable: Gender convergence in labour mobility and job stability in Canada, Statistics Canada, Labour Statistics: Research Papers, Catalogue no. 75-004-M—2020001.

24 The authors did not find large differences between married mothers and those in common-law partnerships or between those born in Canada and those born in another country. See: Marie Connolly, Marie Mélanie Fontaine and Catherine Haeck. 2023. Child penalties in Canada. *Canadian Public Policy*, December.

25 In another recent study by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, the FAO found that it takes mothers up to four years to return to their previous earnings level after the birth of a child. FAO. 2023. Women in Ontario's Labour Market: Progress, challenges and potential impacts of $10 a day child care.

26 Sylvia Fuller and Lynn Prince Cooke. 2018. "Workplace Variation in Fatherhood Wage Premiums: Do Formalization and Performance Pay Matter?" *British Sociological Association*, Volume 32, Issue 4.

27 Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0327-01—Labour force characteristics by gender and detailed age group, annual.

28 Federal/provincial/territorial ministers responsible for seniors. 2018. Promoting the labour force participation of older Canadians promising initiatives. Employment and Social Development Canada.

29 René Morissette and Feng Hou. 2024. Employment by choice and necessity among Canadian-born and immigrant seniors, Statistics Canada, Social and Economic Reports, Catalogue no. no. 36-28-0001.

30 Statistics Canada. 2022. More than half of women provide care to children and care-dependent adults in Canada, 2022, *The Daily*, November 8, 2022; Bev Betkowski. 2023. "Seven reasons we should care about caregivers," *Folio*, University of Alberta.

31 Beth Almeida and Christian Weller. 2024. Promoting Economic Advancement for Older Women in the Workplace. Centre for American Progress.

32 For a discussion of the gender wage gap in Atlantic Canada, see: Daniel Cerdas Sandí and Christine Saulnier. 2026. Closing the gaps: Gender pay inequity in Atlantic Canada. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—Nova Scotia Office.

33 Jim Stanford. 2025. The Alberta Wage Disadvantage: Evidence on Alberta's Continuing Suppression of Wages and Salaries, Centre for Future Work.

34 For example, the employment rate among women aged 15 years and older in January 2025 was 73.4 per cent in Yukon, significantly higher than the Canadian benchmark (57.4 per cent). Rates were also high in the Northwest Territories, at 64.5 per cent, and 58.7 per cent in Nunavut. (These figures refer to unadjusted three-month moving averages.) See: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0292-01—Labour force characteristics by territory, three-month moving average, seasonally adjusted and unadjusted

35 In the Yukon, women make up the majority of workers in business, finance, and administrative occupations, as well as occupations in education, law and social, community and government services. Men, by contrast, are more likely to be employed in the trades, management occupations and as transport and equipment operators and related occupations.

36 See: Yukon Bureau of Statistics. 2023. Indicators of gender equity: Economic equality and employment. See also: Annual Wages, Salaries and Commissions, 2021.

37 Annual data on the average hourly wage is not available in the public Labour Force Survey tables. Given the small sample sizes in the north, all data must be interpreted with caution.

38 Rose Olfert and Dianne Moebis. 2006. The Spatial Economy of Gender-Based Occupational Segregation, *Review of Regional Studies,* 36(1).

39 See the Canadian Research Institute on Women's FemNorthNet project website for a collection of resources on economic development in the North from a feminist perspective.

40 For example, from 2006 to 2021, the Indigenous population grew by 56.8 per cent, or nearly four times faster than the non-Indigenous population over this period (15.4 per cent). High growth has been linked to higher fertility rates—in 2016, for example, the fertility rate among Registered First Nations people was 2.20 children per woman compared with 1.59 for the total Canadian population—and the growth in the number of people self-identifying as Indigenous.

41 Statistics Canada. 2022. "Indigenous Population Continues to Grow and Is Much Younger than the Non-Indigenous Population, Although the Pace of Growth Has Slowed." *The Daily*, September 21.

42 National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB). 2024. The Indigenous Economic Development Report 2024.

43 According to the 2021 census, 78 per cent of the Indigenous population aged 25 to 64 had at least a high school diploma, compared with 91 per cent of the non-Indigenous population of similar age.

44 Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0418-01—Average hourly and weekly wages and average usual weekly hours by Indigenous group living off reserve.

45 For a detailed breakdown of employment earnings by Indigenous group, see Indigenous Services Canada. 2023. Annual report to parliament, 2023: An update on the socio-economic gaps between Indigenous Peoples and the non-Indigenous population in Canada: Highlights from the 2021 Census.

46 The decline among Indigenous workers was immediate, falling from 60.9 per cent in 2022 to 58.7 in 2023 among workers aged 15 years and older, and then to 57.1 per cent in 2024, below the 2019 benchmark 57.5 per cent. At the same time, the number of unemployed started to rise as did the number of Indigenous people "not in the labour market"—the latter at more than twice the rate compared to non-Indigenous people (13.9 per cent vs 6.1 per cent).

47 In 2024, the rate of poverty among women with disabilities (15+ years) was 17.6 per cent, as measured by the Low-Income Measure after tax, representing almost 950,000 women. Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0090-01—Poverty and low-income statistics by disability status. The respective figure for women without disabilities was 10.6 per cent.

48 Simonetta Longhi. 2017. The disability pay gap. Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex, Vol. 10, 2019.

49 For a profile of people with disabilities, see Benoît-Paul Hébert, Christina Kevins, Amirabbas Mofidi, Stuart Morris, Diana Simionescu and Madison Thicke. 2024. A demographic, employment and income profile of persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over in Canada, 2022. Statistics Canada, Reports on disability and accessibility in Canada, Catalogue no. 89-654-X2023002.

50 Olivia Watkin-McClurg. 2025. Changes in the population and employment rates of persons with disabilities, 2017 to 2022. Statistics Canada, Reports on disability and accessibility in Canada, Catalogue no. 89-654-X2023002.

51 In 2024, three in five (59 per cent) people with disabilities reported experiencing barriers to accessibility in the labour market-related barrier, including barriers related to the physical environment, communication, transportation and technology. See: Statistics Canada. 2025. Accessibility barriers related to employment among persons with disabilities or long-term conditions, 2024. *The Daily*, February 10, 2025.

52 Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0377-01—Labour force status of persons with and without disabilities aged 15 years and over, by age group and gender. See: Daniel Vergara and Vincent Hardy. 2024. Labour market characteristics of persons with and without disabilities, 2023. Labour Statistics at a Glance. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 71-222-X; Daniel Vergara and Vincent Hardy. 2025. Labour market characteristics of persons with and without disabilities, 2024. Labour Statistics at a Glance. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 71-222-X.

53 Carrly McDiarmid. 2023. Earnings pay gap among persons with and without disabilities, 2019. Statistics Canada, Reports on disability and accessibility in Canada, Catalogue no. 89-654-X2023002.

54 These figures are based on public tables for employees. They include full-time students. See Statistics Canada, Table 14-10-0477-01—Labour market indicators for persons with and without disabilities, annual; Table 11-10-0088-01—Income of individuals by disability status, age group, sex and income source.

55 These annual earnings figures are based on custom tabulations from Statistics Canada, and report on employment income, excluding self-employed workers and full-time students. They are much higher than the publicly available data for the population as a whole.

56 See note 48.

57 Pacinthe Mattar. 2025. DEI Was Always Flawed, but the Backlash Is Truly Alarming, *The Walrus*, March 26, 2025.

58 David Macdonald and Katherine Scott. 2025. Federal cuts will worsen gender, racial and Indigenous inequality in Canada, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

59 According to the Canadian Income Survey, the average earnings (wages, salaries and commissions) of all women with disabilities was $45,400 in 2024 compared to $61,800 among men with disabilities (for a gap of 26.5 per cent) and $75,000 among men without disabilities (for a gap of 39.5 per cent). These estimates include full-time students, a slightly different population group than the one presented in this study).

60 Previous studies of the gender pay gap have relied on the census, fielded every five years. For example, see: Aneta Bonikowska. 2024. Gender earnings ratio differences among population groups in Canada. Statistics Canada, Economic and Social Reports, Catalogue no. 36-28-0001.

61 These figures are based on custom tabulation from the Labour Force Survey and Canadian Income Survey and exclude self-employed workers and full-time students.

62 Feng Hou. 2024. "The improvement in the labour market outcomes of recent immigrants since the mid-2010s", Economic and Social Reports, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 36-28-0001; Garnet Picot and Tahsin Mehdi. 2024. "The provision of higher- and lower-skilled immigrant labour to the Canadian economy." Economic and Social Reports, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. Catalogue no. 36-28-0001.

63 See Katherine Scott. 2025. Still Struggling: Racialized workers in the post-pandemic labour market. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Also: Jessica Gill. 2025. Employees with low pay, 2024. Statistics Canada, Quality of employment in Canada, Catalogue no. 14-28-0001.

64 Public administration workers are identified as those employed by federal, provincial, territorial and indigenous governments. The public sector is a broader category that also includes those working in crown corporations and other government funded and directed institutions like schools, universities, hospitals and libraries.

65 The employment rate of men aged 25 to 54 years hit 88.1 per cent, its highest level since the early 1980s.

66 Katherine Scott. 2024. Work in Progress: Women in Canada's changing post-pandemic labour market. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, p. 43.

67 However, it wasn't enough to substantially narrow the sizable gender wage gaps in these industries as male wage gains more than kept pace. In professional services, the wage gap was narrowed only slightly between 2019 and 2024 (by less than a percentage point) and then fell again to 18.9 per cent in 2025. The wage gap in finance and insurance widened from 18.1 per cent to 19.2 per cent between 2019 and 2025.

68 Kathryn May. 2023. "The federal public service strike ends on compromise over wages, remote work," *Policy Options*, May 1, 2023.

69 Heightened labour militancy and a tight labour market helped secure higher settlements—the average percentage adjustment across the public and private sectors was 3.3 per cent in 2023, 3.4 per cent in 2024, and 3.9 per cent last year, with first-year bumps often much higher. As newly released data reveals that 2025 will be another strong year with an average annual wage increase of four per cent. Vanmala Subramaniam. 2026. Unions negotiated largest wage gains in a decade last year, surpassing inflation, *The Globe and Mail*, January 6, 2026.

70 Kathryn May. 2024. Public service job cuts loom as Ottawa misses spending and deficit targets. *Policy Options*, November 12, 2024.

71 Priscilla Ki Sun Hwang. 2025. Carney budget to slash public service by 16,000 over 3 years, CBC News, November 4, 2025.

72 Josh Pringle. 2026. "24,000 public servants warned their jobs could be at risk. Here is the latest on federal job cuts," CTV News, January 14, 2026.

73 David Macdonald and Katherine Scott. 2025. See note 58.

74 See: David Macdonald. 2024. How the public sector is fighting income inequality (And why it's still not good enough), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; Nicole Fortin. 2019. "Increasing earnings inequality and the gender pay gap in Canada: Prospects for convergence," *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 52: 407-440, 2019; Rachelle Pelletier, Martha Patterson and Melissa Moyser. 2019.

75 See: Statistics Canada. Table 45-10-0104-01—Daily average time spent on various activities, by age group and gender, 2022.

76 In 2023, 79.8 per cent of mothers aged 20 to 49 years-old with a child under 18 living at home were engaged in the paid labour market compared to 93.4 per cent of fathers. See: Statistics Canada. 2024. Employment rate of mothers and fathers, 2023, Quality of Employment in Canada, Catalogue no. 14-28-0001.

77 See Vanier Institute of the Family. 2024. Chapter 20—Reconciling family care with paid work is a struggle for many families, *Families Count 2024*.

78 For example, in 2023, employed mothers were nearly five times as likely as employed fathers to work part-time (17.6 per cent compared with 3.7 per cent). Among mothers and fathers working part-time, nearly half (46.1 per cent) of mothers did so to take care of their own children, compared to 15.8 per cent of fathers. See: Statistics Canada. 2024. Employment rate of mothers and fathers, 2023.

79 Claudia Goldin. 2023. Gender pay gap? Culprit is 'greedy work', *The Harvard Gazette*, October 17, 2023.

80 See note 18. The drop in earnings among mothers is demonstrated in the comparative literature as well. The Office of National Statistics in the UK found that the total earnings loss experienced by mothers between 2014 and 2022 amounted to an average of £65,618 ($120,000 CDN) over five years following the birth of a first child, £26,317 ($48,900 CDN) following the birth of a second child and £32,456 ($60,300 CDN) following the birth of a third child. Office for National Statistics (ONS), released October 3, 2025, ONS website, statistical bulletin, The impact of motherhood on monthly employee earnings and employment status, England: April 2014 to December 2022.

81 International Labour Organization. 2018. Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work, p. 53.

82 Sandy Besporstov and Amanda Sinclair. 2022. Estimating the Economic Value of Unpaid Household Work in Canada, 2015 to 2019, Statistics Canada. Latest Developments in the Canadian Economic Accounts, Catalogue no. no. 13-605-X.

83 For example, it could be measured by the forgone wages of the individual performing the unpaid work or it could be measured by the value of hiring someone to perform the work. In both examples, the wages of paid work in the marketplace play a role in estimating the value of unpaid work.

84 See: Francine Blau and Lawrence Kahn. 2017. "The gender wage gap: Extent, trends, & explanations," *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55 (3): 789-865.

85 See: Emma Quinn, et al. 2020. "Men and women at work in Canada, 1991-2016," *Labour & Industry*, 30(4): 401-412; Asaf Levanon and David Grusky. 2016. "The persistence of extreme gender segregation in the twenty-first century," *American Journal of Sociology*, 122(2): 573-619; Michelle Budig, Melissa Hodges, and Paula England. 2019. "Wages of nurturant and reproductive care workers: Individual and job characteristics, occupational closure, and wage-equalizing institutions," *Social Problems*, 66 (2): 294–319.

86 A 2019 CCPA study found that women in the C-suite earn only 68 cents for every dollar their male colleagues make—an average difference of $950,000 less a year. David Macdonald. 2019. The double-pane glass ceiling: The gender pay gap at the top of corporate Canada, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

87 There were just as many CEOs named Scott as there were women on the top CEO list. David Macdonald. 2026. Living the High Life: A record-breaking year for CEO pay in Canada, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

88 Katherine Scott. 2024. Work in Progress: Women in Canada's changing post-pandemic labour market, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. See also: Katherine Scott. 2023. The real world bears little resemblance to Barbie Land, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

89 Hadas Mandel in her study of the United States describes this phenomenon as moving "up the down staircase". Clerical work, for example, was once was associated with status and high pay before the influx of women after the Second World War. "Up the Down Staircase: Women's Upward Mobility and the Wage Penalty for Occupational Feminization, 1970-2007," *Social Forces*, Volume 91, Issue 4, June 2013. See also: Sharon Bolton and Daniel Muzio. 2008. "The paradoxical processes of feminization in the professions: the case of established, aspiring and semi-professions," *Work, Employment and Society*, Volume 22, No. 2.

90 See: Fortin, 2019.

91 These figures are based on calculations by Melissa Moyser (2017), updated with the 2021 Census of Population. Population aged 25 to 54 years. Melissa Moyser. 2017. "Women and Paid Work," *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Report*, Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 89-503-X.

92 See: Megan Moskos. 2020. "Why is the gender revolution uneven and stalled? Gender essentialism and men's movement into 'women's work'," *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27(4): 527-44.

93 Lisa Kaida and Monica Boyd. 2022. "Revisiting gender occupational segregation trends in Canada: 1991-2016," *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 59(S1): 4-25. See also: Neil Guppy and Nicole Luongo. 2015. "The rise and stall of Canada's gender-equity revolution," *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 52(3), 241-65.

94 See: Quinn et al. 2020.

95 See: Rachelle Pelletier, Martha Patterson and Melissa Moyser. 2019. See also: Marie Drolet and Mandana Mardare Amini. 2023; Mark Paul, Khaing Zaw & William Darity. 2022.

96 The variables included in Drolet and Amini's statistical model accounted for 13 per cent of the gender wage gap for all groups, a smaller share than in 2007.

97 Pelletier, Patterson and Moyser's (2019) study of wage gaps found that the industrial distribution of men and women—and, in particular, the larger share of men working in construction, manufacturing and mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction—explained the largest portion of the gender wage gap in 2018, accounting for 39.7 per cent. Altogether, the variables included in Pelletier, Patterson and Moyser's statistical model explained over one-third (36.6 per cent) of the gender wage gap in 2018. The remainder was attributed to unexplained factors, consistent with previous research.

98 See Bryan Evans, et al., *From Consent to Coercion: The continuing assault on labour*, 4th edition. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2023.

99 Katherine Scott. 2026. The Widening Gap: Gender segregation and job polarization in the post-pandemic labour market, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

100 Andrew Sharpe and James Ashwell. 2021, "The Evolution of the Productivity-Median Wage Gap in Canada, 1976-2019," *International Productivity Monitor*, No. 41, Fall 2021, Centre for the Study of Living Standards.

101 Silas Xuereb, Matthew Fisher-Post, Francois Delorme, Camille Lajoie. 2023. Income Inequality in Canada at the National and Subnational Levels 1982-2021, World Inequality Lab; Statistics Canada. 2025, Research to Insights: Wages in Canada, 1981 to 2024, Catalogue no. no. 11-631-X.

102 Jill Rubery. 2016. Tackling the gender pay gap: From individual choices to institutional change, UN Women, *Policy Brief No. 6*, p. 2.

103 This overview is based on a paper for the International Labour Organization, prepared by Jill Rubery and Aristea Koukiadaki. 2016. Closing the gender pay gap: A review of the issues, policy mechanisms and international evidence.

104 See Mary Cornish. 2007. "Closing the Global Gender Pay Gap: Securing Justice for Women's Work," *Comparative Labor Law and Policy Journal*, 28: 219-249 for a discussion of the right to pay equity enshrined in international labour standards and other conventions such as the 1966 UN *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the 1979 UN *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) and the *1995 Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action*. While international institutions have played an important role in promoting equal pay for work of equal value, none of the legal instruments incorporate a positive duty to advance equality of opportunity.

105 World Bank. 2024. Women, Business and the Law 2024, p. xiii. A total of 171 countries of 187 members of the International Labour Organization have ratified Convention 100.

106 See: Changing the narrative: Gender equality in SETT (Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology) report card, Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology.

107 For example, a new 15-week Employment Insurance adoption benefit is being introduced to support parents with the process of adopting a child, supplementing existing parental leave. This, along with corresponding job-protected leave under the Canada Labour Code, is expected to come into force soon.

108 See: The Prosperity Project. 2025. Annual Report Card on Gender Equity and Leadership; Larissa Kanhai, et al. 2024. Bridging the Gender Gap: Skills for the Advancement of Women, Diversity Institute, Future Skills Centre and Asper School of Business.

109 OECD. 2020. Can collective bargaining help close the gender wage gap for women in non-standard jobs?

110 Please note that in Canada, there are also prohibitions against unequal treatment in employment (including pay) in human rights legislation as well as a constitutional guarantee of equality in government actions in Section 15 of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*

111 For a detailed discussion of the evolution of the laws addressing gender discrimination in pay, see Mary Cornish and Jennifer Quito. 2013.

112 In 2017, Bill C-16 came into force, amending the *Canadian Human Rights Act* to prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression and adding the phrase "gender identity or expression" to the sections of the *Criminal Code* related to hate propaganda and sentencing (sections 318 and 718.2, respectively). Many provinces have likewise included these as protected grounds in provincial legislation.

113 Cornish and Quito. 2013.

114 In Canada, these newer pay transparency regulations complement existing public sector salary disclosure laws that were first introduced in mid-1990s in in several provinces.

115 For a discussion of women in the labour market over time see: Moyser, 2017.

116 Florence Bird. 1970. Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. Ottawa: Information Canada, p. 66.

117 *Ibid*. p. 67.

118 *Ibid*., p. 75.

119 The vague nature of the act on key terms, obligations of the parties, and methods for determining pay equity have also stymied the pursuit of justice, encouraging and extending costly legal proceedings.

120 Canadian Press. 2011. Postal workers win 28-year pay equity fight. CBC News, November 18, 2011.

121 See: Bruce Wallace, Luke Fisher. 2013. "Pay Equity for Federal Public Servants," *Maclean's*, April 28, 2003; PSAC. 2019. PSAC marks 20th anniversary of pay equity victory, October 28, 2019.

122 Guppy and Vincent argue that the judicial system and arduous litigation, aligned with changing public opinion, played an important role in Canada's move away from "equal pay for equal work" to "equal pay for work of equal value." Neil Guppy and Jennifer Vincent. 2021. "The Evolution of Canadian Pay Equity Legislation and the Social Organization of Public Opinion." *American Review of Canadian Studies*, *51*(2), 312–329.

123 Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2001. Time for Action: Special report to parliament on pay equity.

124 Pay Equity Task Force. 2004. Pay Equity: A new approach to a fundamental right, *Final Report*. Government of Canada.

125 Government of Canada. 2005. Government Response to the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. In its response, the government identified key issues that must be addressed, including the relationship between pay equity and collective bargaining, as well as the obligations of employers and unions. The government also reiterated its commitment to pay equity and its desire to ensure that any new legislation will be effective, equitable, efficient and sustainable.

126 Special Committee on Pay Equity. 2016. It's time to act: *Report*, Government of Canada.

127 Government of Canada. 2018. News Release: Government of Canada introduces historic proactive pay equity legislation, October 29, 2018.

128 Finance Canada. 2018. Budget 2018, p. 30.

129 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. 2022. Provincial Government Announces Pay Equity and Pay Transparency Legislation, October 17, 2022.

130 Ariyana Gomes. 2023. "Pay equity regulations nowhere to be found nearly a year after deadline, say advocates," CBC News, April 14, 2023.

131 More than two decades ago, Saskatchewan and British Columbia developed frameworks for negotiating pay equity with selected public-sector employees. These frameworks are not currently in use.

132 In the Northwest Territories, the right to equal pay for work of equal value is established under Section 40 of the *Public Service Act* and applies to the GNWT public service, the NWT Power Corporation, and teachers.

133 See: Petition to the Government of Canada, No. 451-00562, presented to the House of Commons by MP Lori Idlout (Nunavut), February 27, 2026; See also: Petition of the Government of Canada, No. 451-00153, Presented to the House of Commons by MP Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands), October 6, 2025.

134 Jennifer Sweet. 2025. Holt promises to move soon on pay-equity legislation for private sector, CBC News, October 20, 2025.

135 Judy Fudge. 1991. "Litigating Our Way to Gender Neutrality: Mission Impossible?" in Judy Fudge and Patricia McDermott. (eds.), *Just Wages: A Feminist Assessment of Pay Equity.* University of Toronto Press, 1991.

136 The original legislation included a requirement to conduct a study on ways to address wage disparities in female-dominated workplaces, a recognition that the job-to-job comparison method included in the act would be of no benefit to workers in workplaces where there were no appropriate male comparators. The group tasked with preparing recommendations reported to the Minister of Labour in 1992, and the government introduced amendments to the act, introducing a proportional and proxy comparison method.

137 Over half of OECD countries (21 of 38, or 55 per cent) now require private sector employers to analyze their pay data and report gender-disaggregated pay information to stakeholders like workers, workers' representatives, the government, and/or the public. Within this group, nine countries have implemented comprehensive equal pay auditing processes. OECD. 2023. Reporting Gender Pay Gaps in OECD Countries: Guidance for Pay Transparency Implementation, Monitoring and Reform. See also: OECD. 2021. Can pay transparency tools close the gender wage gap? And: OECD. 2021. Pay Transparency Tools to Close the Gender Wage Gap.

138 Eight of 10 provinces disclose or make available salary information for public sector employees above certain thresholds. The lists generally apply to government employees, hospitals, school boards, universities, and colleges funded by taxpayers. The exceptions are Prince Edward Island and Quebec.

139 There have been two attempts to introduce the *Pay Transparency Act* in Manitoba's legislature, but it has not been adopted yet.

140 See: Equi'Vision.

141 On the release of the Blackett Report in 2023, the government indicated that it would add two new designated groups (Black workers and 2SLGBTQI+ workers) to the legislation but, years later, there is still no indication if, and when, the government will do so. Adelle Blackett. 2023. Report of the Employment Equity Act Review Task Force. Government of Canada.

142 Megan Bowers, et al. 2020. Mind the pay gap: A legislative approach to ending pay discrimination in B.C., Simon Fraser University, p. 20.

143 The following overview draws on the work of several authors, including Marie-Thérèse Chicha. 2006. A Comparative Analysis of Promoting Pay Equity: Models and Impacts; Jill Rubery and Aristea Koukiadaki. 2016; Bowers et al. (2020); Cowper-Coles, et. al. 2021. Bridging the gap: An analysis of gender pay gap reporting in six countries.

144 Marie-Thérèse Chicha (2006). Chicha notes two conditions necessary to ensure the success of pay equity systems: the obligatory nature of the legislation, which is the only way to reach a significant level of compliance, and the support of a specialized and well-resourced body, such as pay equity, to ensure that employers meet their obligations.

145 Early evaluation of the UK system found that only 11 per cent of the sample surveyed had undertaken an equal pay review. The large majority were not familiar with the *Code of Practice on Equal Pay* or the *Equal Pay Review Kit*. Of those who didn't carry out a review, 85 per cent said that they didn't need to because no pay discrimination existed in their company. Cited in Chicha, 2006, p. 17.

146 Chicha notes that comprehensive pay equity models that provide detailed guidance on assessing and reporting on gender pay gaps are "most likely to engender the highest and broadest range of both costs and benefits." One of the challenges is that many of the benefits, such as reduced gender discrimination, do not always materialize in the short term and can be difficult to measure in monetary terms. On the other hand, most of the potential costs are immediate and "easily quantifiable" in monetary terms, serving as potential deterrent for employers to "embark on pay equity programs". Chicha (2006), p. 68.

147 Judy Fudge. 1991. "Litigating Our Way to Gender Neutrality: Mission Impossible?" in Judy Fudge and Patricia McDermott. (eds.), *Just Wages: A Feminist Assessment of Pay Equity* (University of Toronto Press, 1991). Cited in Judy Fudge. 2019. "Ontario's Pay Equity Act: Did it Make Good on its Promise?" in *Tamil Nadu National Law University Law Review*, Volume II Issue I, p., 37.

148 Bowers, et al. 2020. p. 44.

149 The Office of the Pay Equity Commission provides guidance on how to collect and employ inclusive gender data. See: Promising practices—Collecting inclusive gender data; and Determining the female or male predominance of a job class in an inclusive manner—Interpretations, Policies and Guidelines.

150 Lori Straznicky. 2026. Five Years of Canada's Pay Equity Act: Reflections from the Federal Pay Equity Commissioner, Equal Pay International Coalition, June 1, 2026.

151 Rosalie Silberman Abella, commissioner. 1984. Equality in Employment: A Royal Commission Report. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, p. viii.

152 *Ibid*., p. 203.

153 For a useful summary of different pay equity systems, see Bowers et al. 2020, Chapter 4: *Jurisdictional Scan & Literature Review*.

154 For a detailed discussion of the evolution of pay equity law in Ontario, see: Equal Pay Coalition. 2008. A Framework for Action on Pay Equity in Ontario: A special 20th Anniversary report contributing to Ontario's Future.

155 The act outlines three different wage comparison mechanisms which are tailored to suit different kinds of workplaces: 1) Job-to-job comparison; 2) Proportional value comparison; 3) Proxy comparison. Recognizing the limits of the job-to-job comparison method, the proportional value method and proxy method for public sector employers were added to the act by way of amendment in 1993. In the early years of pay equity implementation, many organizations could not pursue pay equity because they couldn't find male comparator groups. It was estimated that the addition of the proxy method extended the act's coverage to 100,000 female workers in the public sector (Equal Pay Coalition. 2001. Proxy pay equity—backgrounder. Cited in Singh and Peng, 2016. Note 139). For a description of these methods and the steps in the pay equity process, please see the Ontario Pay Equity Coalition website: Overview of the Pay Equity Act. Additional information is available on the Ontario Pay Equity Commission website: https://payequity.gov.on.ca/home_en/.

156 In a unionized workplace, the pay equity adjustments required by a pay equity plan are incorporated into and form part of the relevant collective agreements.

157 Parbudyal Singh and Ping Peng. 2010. "Canada's bold experiment with pay equity," *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 25(7), pp. 570-585. See also: Parbudyal Singh and Ping Peng. 2009. "Pay equity in Ontario: the case of a non-profit senior service Organization," *Canadian Public Administration,* Vol. 52(4), pp. 613-30.

158 Earlier evaluation studies include: Morley Gunderson. 2002. "The evolution and mechanics of pay equity in Ontario", *Canadian Public Policy,* Vol. 28, pp. S118-31; Michael Baker and Nicole Fortin. 2004. "Comparable worth in a decentralized labour market: the case of Ontario," *Canadian Journal of Economics,* Vol. 27 No.4, pp. 851-78.

159 CUPE. 2003. Proxy pay equity: Backgrounder.

160 These figures represent both male and female workers. Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0214-01—Employment for all employees by enterprise size, quarterly, unadjusted for seasonality.

161 For example, within an establishment, in determining equal-value comparisons, female majority jobs may be compared to male-majority jobs whose wages reflect other forms of discrimination. If there are no well-paying male-majority job classes within an employer's establishment then there can be no pay equity. It is also the case that existing comparison methodologies are most robust in analyzing disparities in large groups of workers. The challenges of documenting and addressing discrimination in very small establishments highlights the need for sector-wide approaches and strong employment standards.

162 Under the "job-to-job comparison method" in Ontario for establishing equal pay for work of equal value, if an employer identifies multiple male job classes of equal or comparable value to a female job class, they are legally required to use the lowest-paid male comparator as the benchmark.

163 Singh and Peng. 2010, p. 580.

164 Ontario Equal Pay Coalition. 2008.

165 Pay equity negotiations do not always benefit female workers. In a study of pay equity implementation in Ontario's retail grocery sector, Jan Kainer found that unions "did not exploit the potential presented by pay equity to raise wages." Instead, the unions and employers negotiated equity plans that reinforced the part-time workforce as a separate group, maintain an established division between a lower-paid, part-time workforce and a smaller full-time, higher-paid permanent workforce. Jan Kainer. 1998. "Pay Equity and Part Time Work: An Analysis of Pay Equity Negotiations in Ontario Supermarkets," *Canadian Woman Studies* 18 (1). Cited in Judy Fudge. 2019. "Ontario's Pay Equity Act: Did it Make Good on its Promise?" in *Tamil Nadu National Law University Law Review,* Volume II Issue I, p., 36.

166 Ontario has a "self-managed" system where employers with 10 or more employees must create and post pay equity plans in their workplaces.

167 Pay Equity Commission, *Annual Report, 2009-2010*, Pay Equity Office, p. 11. Cited in Mary Cornish. 2014. *A Growing concern: Ontario's gender pay gap*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, p. 16.

168 Pay Equity Office. 2011. *Assessing Proxy Use and Outcomes in the Broader Public Sector 2009-2010*. Cited in Ontario Ministry of Labour. 2015. Closing the gender wage gap*: A Background Paper*, p. 37.

169 Pay Equity Commission. 2017. Pay Equity Commission Annual Report 2016-17, p. 14.

170 Pay Equity Commission. 2025. Pay Equity Commission Annual Report 2024-25, p. 26.

171 Mary Cornish. 2008. Putting Fairness Back into Women's Pay, Ontario Alternative Budget. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Ontario Office, p. 3. For a discussion of the transformation of Ontario's pay equity regime in the early 1990s, see: Pat Armstrong and Mary Cornish. 1997. "Restructuring Pay Equity for A Restructured Work Force: Canadian Perspectives." *Gender, Work & Organization*, 4: 67-86.

172 Singh and Peng, 2010, p.582.

173 Judith McDonald and Robert Thornton. 2016. "Have Pay Equity Laws in Canada Helped Women? A Synthetic-control Approach." *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 46 (4): 452-473.

174 In other instances, the payment of wage increases to some groups of workers, such as child care workers, without addressing outstanding pay equity obligations, has exacerbated the wage gap of other workers even in the same establishment.

175 In 2021, the Ontario Court of Appeal in *ONA v Participating Nursing Homes* **held that maintaining pay equity** *internally*, without a male job comparator, was not sufficient. (The Supreme Court dismissed an application to appeal the decision from the province and several for-profit nursing homes). The Court of Appeal directed the Pay Equity Hearings Tribunal to determine how maintenance should be conducted for employers who achieved pay equity using the proxy method. In March 2026, the tribunal released its longawaited decision in *Glen Hill Terrace Christian Homes Inc. v CUPE Locals 2225-06/12 and 5110*, providing direction on how to maintain pay equity achieved through the proxy method.

176 In 2016, the Ontario Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee made 20 recommendations to address key barriers to women's full participation at work and in the economy, including reforms to enhance compliance. Specifically, the committee recommended that government: Set a defined time period to bring forward current complaints for non-compliance and retroactive payments; set regular intervals for employers to report on changes to their compensation practices and the impact on pay equity; limit retroactive payments to claims that arise within the reporting period; define the employer-employee relationship to better reflect 21st century workplace relationships; transfer the equal pay for equal work provision from the *Employment Standards Act* to the *Pay Equity Act*; clarify the role of unions and employees; and clarify the requirement to maintain pay equity. In addition, the government should ensure the enforcement agency for the act has sufficient capacity to support its role. p. 31-32.

177 See: Carole Sénéchal. 2020. "Quebec pay equity law in light of feminist theories," *Revue de droit comparé du travail et de la sécurité sociale,* No. 4.

178 Commission de l'Équité Salariale. 2002. "L'équité salariale: un poids, une mesure ," *Report on the implementation of the pay equity act in companies with 10 to 49 employees*, p. 15.

179 For an overview of the fight against Chapter 9, Quebec preferential pay equity stream, see: Bernard Faucher. 2026. La petite histoire d'une grande bataille, Gazette des femmes, 29 Janvier 2026.

180 Rhéal Séguin. 2006. "Women score pay-equity victory in Quebec," *Globe and Mail*, November 9, 2006.

181 The pay equity settlement covered more than 90 per cent of the total workforce in the health, social services, education and public service sectors in Quebec … "From 2001 to 2007, 73% of the workforce in Quebec's public administration benefited from pay equity adjustments. The entire workforce of Registered Nurses obtained an adjustment, and almost all (99.9%) Licensed Practical Nurses did as well. These percentages were over 80% for office workers (90.8%), teachers (84.8%) and technician assistants (82.2%) as well." Institut de la statistique du Québec. 2009. Rémunération des salariés. Portrait des ajustements d'équité salariale dans l'administration québécoise et impact sur la comparaison de la rémunération de 2007, Gouvernement du Québec, September 2009, p. 40. Cited in Senechal. 2020, p. 24.

182 Since 2016, the Commission de l'équité salariale has been a part of the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST), financed largely through employer contributions and investment income. In 2024. Ninety-nine staff worked for the commission, delivering programming and monitoring employer compliance. CNESST. 2025. Rapport annuel de gestion 2024.

183 "In 2002, 70% of employers and 63% of female employees were aware of the existence of the law; by 2006, those percentages had risen to 91% for employers and 80% for female employees." Sénéchal. 2020, p. 23.

184 Chicha. 2006, p. 14.

185 In the original act, the deadline for completing the first pay equity exercise and initiating adjustments was November 21, 2001, payments to be spread over a maximum period of four years. The 2009 amendments included a new "last chance" deadline of December 31, 2010, for an estimated 50 per cent of employers who still had not completed their initial plan, retroactive payments to be paid from the original deadline, with interest.

186 It is estimated that between 35,300 and 38,000 employers are subject to the *Pay Equity Act* in Quebec, representing approximately 16 per cent of all employers. These employers employ roughly two-thirds (65 per cent) of Quebec's female workforce. Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS). 2019. La loi sur l'équité salariale: un apport indéniable pour contrer la discrimination salariale. Rapport du ministre 2019 sur la mise en œuvre de la loi sur l'équité salariale, mai 2019, p. 41.

187 Of the 32,299 employers who completed an initial pay equity review, 31,613 were in the private sector (92.1 per cent of those covered by the act) and 686 were in the public sector (95.2 per cent of public and para-public sector employers covered by the act). *Ibid*., p. 46.

188 In 2017, a larger share of public employers compared to private employers completed their initial pay equity maintenance review, 83.1 per cent versus 68.8 per cent.

189 *Ibid*., p. 47.

190 In 2017, 12 per cent of private sector employers and 59 per cent of public sector employers reported making wage adjustments upon the completion of their initial pay equity review.

191 MTESS. 2019, p. 54-55.

192 *Ibid*., p. 52.

193 The maintenance wage adjustments are much smaller, ranging from 0.81 per cent to 2.16 per cent. *Ibid*., p. 54.

194 *Ibid*., p. 53. The Quebec government does not publish the value of wage settlements achieved through the work of the Commission de l'équité salariale as the Ontario Pay Equity Commission does. In general, there is very little information in either province reporting on the value of settlements negotiated each year or the number of workers impacted. Unions don't systematically track pay equity awards or settlements either.

195 Compliance rates have hovered at the 92 per cent mark since 2017. In 2024, 91.6 per cent of employers had completed at least an initial pay equity review, while a much lower proportion (63.2 per cent) had filed their annual report. Commission des norms, de l'equite, de la sante et de la securite du travil. 2025. Statistiques annuelles, 2024.

196 McDonald and Thornton used a synthetic-control method to assess the impact of Ontario and Quebec's pay equity act on the gender wage gap in annual earnings of full-time, full-year workers. McDonald and Thornton. 2016.

197 MTESS. 2019, p. 60.

198 Chicha. 2006, Section 3: Cost-benefit analysis of pay equity, p. 27. These findings do not factor in the direct budgetary costs of implementing and managing pay equity programs.

199 The amendment stated that employers need only provide redress for wage discrimination every five years when an audit is completed, and not in between, a provision that was deemed discriminatory by the Supreme Court in 2018.

200 MTESS. 2019, p. 62.

201 *Ibid*., p. 61.

202 Research suggests that pay equity programs do not negatively affect productivity but, rather, can generate greater commitment among employees if they believe that they are being paid fairly. See: Damian Grimshaw. 2013. *Minimum Wages, Pay Equity, and Comparative Industrial Relations*. London: Routledge, 2013. Cited in Lahey. 2016.

203 MTESS. 2019, p. 77.

204 In voluntary systems such as existed in the United Kingdom in the early 2000s, the vast majority of employers did not undertake recommended equal pay reviews, justifying it by stating that no discrimination existed in their pay systems. Chicha, 2006, p. 17.

205 MTESS. 2019, p. 62.

206 Commission des norms, de l'equite, de la sante et de la securite du travil. 2021. Statistiques annuelles, 2020.

207 See: Neil Guppy and Jennifer Vincent. 2021. "The Evolution of Canadian Pay Equity Legislation and the Social Organization of Public Opinion," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, *51*(2), 312–329.

208 Lia Lévesque. 2025. "Unions reach pay equity deal with Quebec government," *The Gazette*, January 4, 2024.

209 The New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity has Framework for Pay Transparency that sets out the key elements for meaningful legislation. See: Pay transparency in New Brunswick: The necessary tool to enforce equity in workplaces (2025).

210 Australia provides another interesting example. Its Fair Work Commission sets the minimum wage rate and wage floors across entire industries for roughly one in five Australian workers. In 2022, the new Labour government amended the Fair Wage Commission's act to take into account the need to achieve gender equality in setting modern award minimum rates of pay, including taking steps to eliminate gender-based undervaluation of work. Subsequent wage reviews and research have considered the impact of "gender undervaluation" and the commission is now moving to overhaul classification structures and introduce phased wage increases via sector-wide awards in several female-dominated services such as social and community services, shelters, home care workers, developmental services and dental assistants and or allied health professionals. See: Australia, Fair Work Commission, Gender-based undervaluation—priority awards review.

211 Special Committee on Pay Equity. 2016. Recommendation 3. For the government's response to Special Committee, see: Government of Canada. 2016. Government response to the recommendations of the Special Committee on Pay Equity: It's time to act.

212 Pay Equity Act, S.C. 2018, c. 27, s. 416.

213 Please see: Fay Faraday and Jan Borowy. 2018. Presentation to the Parliamentary Standing Committee Finance on C-86 Division 14, Federal Pay Equity Law, Ontario Pay Equity Coalition, November 6, 2018; Public Service Alliance of Canada. 2018. Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Regarding Bill C-86, *Budget Implementation Act*, 2018, No. 2, November 7, 2018; Public Service Alliance of Canada. 2018. Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance Regarding Division 14 of Bill C-86, *Budget Implementation Act*, 2018, No. 2, December 6, 2018; Canadian Union of Public Employees. 2018. Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance Regarding Bill c-86, *Budget Implementation Act*, 2018, No. 2, November 9, 2018; Federally Regulated Employers—Transportation and Communications (FETCO). 2018. Submission relating to Bill C-86 to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, November 9, 2028; Canadian Labour Congress. 2018. Pay Equity Act, Key Recommendations. Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance Regarding Division 14 of Bill C-86, *Budget Implementation Act*, 2018, No. 2, December 7, 2018.

214 Statistics Canada. Table 98-10-0598-01—Employment income statistics by industry subsectors, class of worker including job permanency, work activity during the reference year, age and gender.

215 Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom data.

216 Personal communication, Public Service Union of Canada, May 2026. As of December 2025, over half of PSAC's federally regulated employers had posted final pay equity plans. The rest have extensions in place with the Pay Equity Commission (either automatically due to a dispute or formally granted). Likewise, the PSAC's seven major core public administration employers have received extension authorizations and are due to post their final pay equity plans between 2026 and 2027.

217 "Medium and large-sized employers reported mostly below-average hourly increases across many job classes (ranging from $1.99 to $2.42 respectively) while smaller-sized employers reported mostly above-average hourly pay increases of $2.69. In the banking sector, medium and large sized non-unionized employers are reporting pay equity adjustment gaps of more than 30%. Similarly, in road transportation, small non-unionized employers reported a gap of about 25% in their pay equity adjustment." Office of the Pay Equity Commissioner. 2026. Advancing pay equity through accountability and action. The Pay Equity Commissioner's 2025-2026 Annual Report to Parliament. Canadian Human Rights Commission, p. 9.

218 In total, 576,000 people work in the broader federal public service, including Crown agencies and the military, and an additional 828,000 work in federally regulated private sector industries (ESDC. 2021. Distribution of Employees in the Federal Public Sector and the Federally Regulated Private Sector). And approximately 5,000 employers are covered by the act. Office of the Pay Equity Commissioner. 2026. The Pay Equity Commissioner's 2025-2026 Annual Report to Parliament, p. 18.

219 Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Expanded fiscal analysis of federal pay equity, November 30, 2021; Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Projecting Federal Personnel Expenses, August 28, 2025.

220 This estimate is considerably less than the average estimates for closing the pay gap published by the ILO's 2006 comparative study. See note 172.

221 See Katherine Scott. 2024. "Gender politics and the Trudeau record: The hard limits of neoliberal feminism," in Katherine Scott, Laura MacDonald and Stuart Trew (eds.), *The Trudeau Record, Promise vs Performance*. James Lorimer and Company, 2024.

222 Employment and Social Development Canada. 2018. Pay Equity Consultations: What we heard report, p. 2.

223 *Ibid*., p. 6.

224 *Ibid*., p. 9.

225 Marie-Thérèse Chicha. 2018. Potentially significant progress, but major obstacles stand in the way. *Brief on the Pay Equity Act*, Bill C-86, Division 14. Presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance, House of Commons, November 9, 2018

226 See endnotes 240 and 241.

227 Employers with 10 to 99 non-unionized employees are not required to establish a pay equity committee. However, they may, on their own initiative or at the request of an employee, decide to establish one.

228 See Pay Equity Committees—Interpretations, Policies and Guidelines.

229 The act states that no employer or bargaining agent should act "in bad faith or in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner while exercising their powers or performing their duties and functions under this Act"—but these terms are not defined. The commissioner has ruled that to be acting in bad faith must include an element of ill will or an intention to mislead or deceive. By contrast, labour advocates argue that employers should be expected/required to come to task of creating pay equity plans in good faith, as is the standard in common law. Personal communication: Jan Borowy, May 7, 2026.

230 For example, minor violations: failing to post notices. Serious violations: not establishing a required committee. Very serious violations: acts of reprisal against employees who participate in the pay equity process.

231 In Quebec (but not Ontario), the names of companies in violation of labour standards, health and safety regulations or their pay equity obligations are published on CNESST Offending Employers List. As of June 2026, there were 36 companies listed for violations in the last 24 months, with fines ranging from $1,000 to $3,500.

232 Adelle Blackett. 2023. Report of the Employment Equity Act Review Task Force. Government of Canada, p. 305.

233 The act sets out three criteria to consider for determining female predominant job classes, including jobs where at least 60 per cent of the positions are currently occupied by women, those where at least 60 per cent of the positions were historically occupied by women, or jobs that are "commonly associated with women due to gender-based occupational stereotyping".

234 Fay Faraday and Jan Borowy. 2018. Presentation to the Parliamentary Standing Committee Finance on C-86 Division 14, Federal Pay Equity Law, Ontario Pay Equity Coalition, November 6, 2018.

235 Kathryn May. 2018. "Federal union presses Liberals for pay-equity legislation," *iPolitics*, October 26, 2018.

236 Sharon DaSousa. 2025. "Time to launch long-delayed public service pay-equity plan", *The Hill Times*, September 22, 2025.

237 Gabriela Calugay-Casuga. 2024. "Pay equity planning process leaves unions frustrated," *Rabble.ca*.

238 In 2024-25, the Pay Equity Commissioner received a total of 679 requests for information, up from 401 in the previous year. Requests fell the next year to 490. Most requests continue to come from employers (66.5 per cent in 2025-26). Office of the Pay Equity Commissioner. 2026. The Pay Equity Commissioner's 2025-2026 Annual Report to Parliament. Canadian Human Rights Commission, p. 6.

239 Authorization requests, the large majority of which (94 per cent) involving requests for extensions, exploded in 2024-25, rising from 21 in 2023-24 to 465. In 2025-26, authorization requests fell back to 172. Of the backlog, 158 cases have been resolved, including 128 approvals. *Ibid*., p. 9.

240 Since 2023-24, 117 disputes have been filed by workplace parties, 34 this past year. In 2025-26, the Pay Equity Commissioner closed 12 disputes, two of which were resolved through formal decisions and 10 were withdrawn. *Ibid*., p. 13.

241 PSAC. 2026. CFIA delays pay equity progress for women, March 13, 2026.

242 An additional $9 million per year was allocated for the ongoing administration of pay equity within the federal public service itself. See Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer. 2021. Expanded fiscal analysis of federal pay equity.

243 Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2026. Canadian Human Rights Commission's 2025-2026 Departmental Plan.

244 Finance Canada. 2018. p. 43.

245 Office of the Pay Equity Commissioner. 2026. The Pay Equity Commissioner's 2025-2026 Annual Report to Parliament. Canadian Human Rights Commission.

246 Compliance rates were highest among employers in interprovincial road transportation and related services (37.8 per cent) as compared to 18 per cent in transportation and related services and 12.8 per cent in telecommunications, broadcasting and related services. Non-unionized employers reported considerably higher compliance rates than unionized employers, particularly in the air transportation sector, where non-unionized compliance was approximately four times that of the unionized employers (29.6 per cent compared to 7.2 per cent). *Ibid*., 8.

247 See Chapter 6, Blackett Report. 2023.

248 Leah Vosko study of employment standards legislation concludes that self-management systems do not adequately protect workers and that deterrence is a crucial pillar in any effective regulatory system. See Leah F. Vosko and the Closing the Enforcement Gap Research Group. 2020*. Closing the Enforcement Gap: Improving Employment Standards Protections for People in Precarious Jobs*, University of Toronto Press.

249 Blackett Report. 2023, p. 313.

250 *Ibid*., p. 319.

251 This estimate is based on a 5-day paid workweek, so weekends are not counted as paid workdays

252 Mark Paul, Khaing Zaw & William Darity. 2022. "Returns in the Labor Market: A Nuanced View of Penalties at the Intersection of Race and Gender in the US", *Feminist Economics*, 28:2, 1-31.

253 See: Kimberlé Crenshaw. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, Volume 1989, Issue 1. For a more recent discussion, see: Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality, More than Two Decades Later, *Columbia Law School*, June 2017.

254 Jill Rubery. 2016. "Tackling the gender pay gap: From individual choices to institutional change". *UN Women, Policy Brief No. 6*, p. 4.

255 Kathleen Lahey. 2016, p. 15.

256 Chicha. 2006, p. 7.

257 For an accessible guide to creating pay equity plans, see: New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity. 2025. Pay equity evaluations: A guide to understanding the process.

258 The federal *Pay Equity Act*, as currently written, allows for the exclusion of certain forms of compensation, such as the receipt of benefits, in calculating and comparing levels of compensation of different positions. These provisions will undercut potential pay equity awards due to temporary, casual and seasonal workers, in effect, amplifying the systemic inequities and precarity they already face.

259 Pay Equity Task Force. 2004. Final report. Pay Equity: A New Approach to a Fundamental Right, Government of Canada, p. 172.

260 See Mary Cornish. 2013. 10 Ways to Close Ontario's Gender Pay Gap, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; Mary Cornish. 2014. A growing concern: Ontario's gender pay gap. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

261 The need for a multi-pronged strategy was likewise acknowledged in federal budget 2018: "While proactive pay equity legislation is an important tool to close the gender wage gap, it needs to be part of a broader array of policy tools such as the Government's investments in early learning and child care, enhanced training and learning financing, enhanced parental leave flexibility, pay transparency and the continued appointment of talented women into leadership positions." Finance Canada. 2018, p. 44.

262 Pierre Fortin. 2017. What Have Been the Effects of Quebec's Universal Childcare System on Women's Economic Security? Brief Submitted to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) of the House of Commons.

263 Daniel Cerdas Sandí and Christine Saulnier. 2026, p. 57.

264 Jane Stinson. 2018. "Ontario Pay Equity Results for CUPE Service Workers in Ontario Hospitals: A Study of Uneven Benefits." *Public Service international,* March 2018.

265 "Collective bargaining is trade unions' key instrument to fight discrimination against women, not least as regards access to employment, pay, working conditions, promotion and workplace training. It can impact and shape job classification systems and performance-related wages, pay and grading systems as well as bonuses or benefits." European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC). 2020. "Collective Bargaining: Our Powerful Tool to Close the Gender Pay Gap."

266 Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0132-01—Union status by industry.

267 See: Statistics Canada. 2022. Age, Sex at Birth and Gender Reference Guide, Census of Population, 2021.

268 Statistics Canada. Classification of visible minority.

269 Statistics Canada. 2022. Report and Draft Recommendations—Results of the Consultative Engagement on the Visible Minority Concept.

270 Blackett Report. 2023. Report of the Employment Equity Act Review Task Force.

271 Employment and Social Development Canada. 2023. Minister O'Regan receives Task Force report on Employment Equity Act modernization.

272 For an excellent review of the issues involved in the measurement of the gender pay gap, see Melissa Moyser. 2019. "Measuring and analyzing the gender pay gap: A conceptual and methodological overview." *Studies on Gender and Intersecting Identities*. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 45-20-0002.

273 For additional information, see Government of Canada, Evolution of pay equity.

274 International Labour Organization. C100—Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)

275 Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. Chair Florence Bird. 1970. Report of the Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. Government of Canada.

276 See: Charte des droits et libertés de la personne. 1975. Section 19: https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/C-12?langCont=fr#se:19

277 See: Ontario Pay Equity Coalition.

278 Rosalie Silberman Abella, commissioner. 1984. Equality in Employment: A Royal Commission Report. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

279 David McGrane. 2006. Gender and Saskatchewan Social Democracy from 1900 to 2000, Presented to Annual Conference of Canadian Political Science Association June 3, 2006, Toronto.

280 See: Ontario Equal Pay Coalition. 2013. Pay and employment equity for women: International human rights obligations.

281 Alain Noel. 2023. "Quebec's other quiet revolution", *Policy Options*, April 3, 2023.

282 See: New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity.

283 Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2001. Time for Action: Special report to parliament on pay equity.

284 Pay Equity Task Force. 2004. Pay Equity: A new approach to a fundamental right, Final Report. Government of Canada.

285 NAWL. 2004. NAPE vs Newfoundland: Pay Discrimination.

286 NAWL. 2005. A Valentine's Day Message to Parliament; A Call to Action: The time for pay equity is now!; NAWL. 2006. Government inaction on pay equity.

287 Government of Canada. 2005. Government Response to the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. In its response, the government identifies key issues that must be addressed, including the relationship between pay equity and collective bargaining, as well as the obligations of employers and unions. The government also reiterates its commitment to pay equity and its desire to ensure that any new legislation will be effective, equitable, efficient and sustainable.

288 See: Ad hoc Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights. 2008. Women's equality and human rights, *The Harper Record*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; see also: Sophie O'Manique. 2015. Gender and austerity in post-crisis Canada: How the government is leaving women behind, in *The Harper Record* 2008-2015, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

289 Jennifer Sweet. 2025. "Holt promises to move soon on pay-equity legislation for private sector", CBC News, October 20, 2025.

290 New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity.

291 See: Supreme Court of Canada. 2018. Case in brief.

292 Special Committee on Pay Equity. 2016. It's time to act: Report, Government of Canada.

293 Quebec (Attorney General) v. Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux, 2018 SCC 17 (CanLII), [2018] 1 SCR 464: https://canlii.ca/t/hrx1n. See also: Centrale des syndicats du Québec v. Quebec (Attorney General), 2018 SCC 18 (CanLII), [2018] 1 SCR 522: https://canlii.ca/t/hrx1q. For an analysis of these decisions, see Fay Faraday, 2021. One Step Forward, Two Steps Back? Substantive Equality, Systemic Discrimination and Pay Equity at the Supreme Court of Canada.

294 Fay Faraday and Jan Borowy. 2018. "C-86 Division 14 federal pay equity law," Presentation to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, November 6, 2018; Katie Underwood. 2018. "In the pay equity fight, Canada's biggest provinces are ground zero," *Maclean's*, December 21, 2018.

295 See: Pay Equity in the Public Service.

296 Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2025. The Pay Equity Commissioner's 2024-2025 Annual Report, Government of Canada.

297 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. 2022. Provincial Government Announces Pay Equity and Pay Transparency Legislation, October 17, 2022.

298 Ariyana Gomes. 2023. "Pay equity regulations nowhere to be found nearly a year after deadline, say advocates," CBC News, April 14, 2023.

299 Blackett Report. 2023. Report of the Employment Equity Act Review Task Force.

300 See EU Pay Transparency Directive.

301 Sheila Reid. 2026. "How much does that job pay? Employers still failing to comply with new salary transparency laws," *Toronto Star*, January 12, 2026.

302 See: Canadian Indicator Framework for the Sustainable Development Goals Data Hub.

303 See: Petition to the Government of Canada, No. 451-00562, Presented to the House of Commons by MP Lori Idlout (Nunavut), February 27, 2026.

304 Government of Yukon. Human Rights Act, Revised Statutes of the Yukon (RSY) 2002, Chapter 116.

305 The 2024-25 Annual Report of the Yukon Human Rights Commission notes that it has developed a long-term research plan to investigate pay equity in the private sector under section 15 of the act in order "to better understand how Yukon compares to other jurisdictions."

306 Government of Yukon. Employment Standards Act, RSY 2002, c 72.

307 Jason Pedlar and Kelly Hjorth. 2024. Yukon Human Rights Commission complaints: Investigative Report. Office of the Yukon Ombudsman.

308 Government of Nunavut. Official Consolidation of Human Rights Act. C.S.Nu., c.H-70.

309 See: Office of the Northwest Territories Equal Pay Commissioner.

310 Northwest Territories Equal Pay Commissioner. Annual Report 2023-24, p. 3.

311 *Ibid*., p. 4.

312 Northwest Territories Equal Pay Commissioner. Annual Report 2024-25, p. 3.

313 Standing Committee on Government Operations. 2024. Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Equal Pay Commissioner, p. 3-4.

314 Government of the Northwest Territories Response to Committee Report 11-20(1): *Report on the Review of the 2023-2024 Annual Report of the Northwest Territories Equal Pay Commissioner*.

315 Please note: The Standing Committee report on the Equal Pay Commissioner's 2024-25 Annual Report is not posted on the government's website, nor is the response from the government.

316 Government of the Northwest Territories. Human Rights Act, SNWT 2002, c 18.

This report is available free of charge at www.policyalternatives.ca. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) is an independent policy research organization. This report has been subjected to peer review and meets the research standards of the centre. The opinions in this report, and any errors, are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CCPA or funders of the report.

We acknowledge the Anishinaabe Algonquin People whose traditional unceded, unsurrendered territory is where this report was produced.

Acknowledgements
Special thanks to our colleagues at the CCPA and the external reviewers who kindly provided invaluable advice on the methodology and content and design of this report, including Jan Borowy, Fay Farraday, David Macdonald, Verda Cook, Ashley Bickerton, Liam McCarthy and Michele Girash. Ryan Romard assisted with the generation of data for this report along with the team at Statistics Canada who prepared the custom data tables. Trish Hennessy, Amanda Klang, Jon Milton, Gina Gill Hartmann and Tim Scarth have transformed this report with their tremendous talents, at once making it more engaging and extending its reach and impact. Thanks to you all.

About the authors
Katherine Scott is a senior researcher at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. She is the director of the CCPA's initiative on gender equality and public policy, Making Women Count, and is involved in other related social policy research and advocacy.

UNIFOR
Local567

CCPA

CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
CENTRE CANADIEN
de POLITIQUES ALTERNATIVES