

Equal pay coalition urges Ontario government to close 31.5 % gender pay gap as consultations launch ^[1]

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The Equal Pay Coalition is urging government to take prompt action to close Ontario's substantial gender pay gap. As part of Premier Wynne's directive to the Ministry of Labour, the government's Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee will be launching public consultations in Toronto on Monday, October 26.

The gender pay gap in Ontario is 31.5%. This means that women on average in Ontario earn approximately 68 cents to every dollar that a man earns. For women who are racialized, Aboriginal, have disabilities or are immigrants the gaps are much higher.

Equal Pay Coalition Chair Mary Cornish says the public consultations are a step in the right direction, but is concerned about the need for prompt action and planning to close the pay gaps.

"Undervaluing and underpaying women's work is a form of discrimination. Pay equity is a fundamental, international human right. It's shocking that in 2015 Ontario women are still experiencing so much pay discrimination. Action is needed to realize the economic potential of Ontario's women. Businesses and governments need to step up and take action to close the gender pay gaps for which they are responsible," says Cornish.

"The Coalition is calling for 12 action steps to be implemented so that Ontario's gender pay gap is closed from 31.5% to 0% by 2025. Governments and businesses need to start acting now on these steps so that the labour market finally operates with equal outcomes for men and women," says Cornish.

The 12 steps are:

- Treat closing the gender pay gap as a human rights priority
- Raise awareness through annual Equal Pay Days and education
- Develop the "Close the gender pay gap by 2025 Plan"
- Enforce and expand pay equity laws
- Implement employment equity laws and policies
- Promote access to collective bargaining
- Increase the minimum wage
- Provide affordable and accessible child care
- Mainstream equity compliance into government laws and policies
- Mainstream equity compliance into workplaces and businesses
- End violence and harassment of women
- Secure decent work for women across the economic spectrum

The Coalition's member groups represent women who experience gender pay gaps across the province in the public and private sector.

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care is a Coalition member. "Ensuring quality affordable child care and pay equity for child care workers is a critical part of any government and business planning to close gender pay gaps," says Carolyn Ferns, Public Policy Coordinator of the OCBCC.

Members of the Equal Pay Coalition will be participating in consultations across the province and will be monitoring to see that what the panel learns at the consultations is translated into concrete action by Ontario's businesses and governments. The launch of the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee's public consultations will be held at the Central Toronto YMCA at 20 Grosvenor Street from 7:30 a.m. to

9:00 a.m. on Monday, October 26.

Equal Pay Coalition Chair Mary Cornish, registered midwife Katrina Kilroy, Carolyn Ferns from OCBCC and other Coalition organization representatives will be available for interviews.

About the Equal Pay Coalition

The Equal Pay Coalition was formed in 1976 as a coalition of organizations seeking to close Ontario's gender pay gap through taking action at many levels to make visible and value women's work and its contributions to Ontario's prosperity. The Coalition has over 39 constituent and partner groups.

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