

Final report and recommendations of the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF ^[2]

Executive summary

In the Minister of Labour's 2014 Mandate Letter, the Premier charged the Minister of Labour with "leading the development of a wage strategy". This includes working with the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and other ministers to develop a wage gap strategy that will close the gap between women and men in the context of the 21st century economy.

The four members of the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee (the "Committee") were appointed on April 20, 2015. The committee is made up of two volunteer external members, an Executive Lead from the Ministry of Labour (MOL) and the Pay Equity Commissioner.

With a few exceptions, we met weekly from the time of our appointments. As requested, we were successful in achieving consensus in our recommendations to close the gender wage gap, with the goal of improving the economic and social outlook of Ontario women and families, as well as the province as a whole.

We retained a consulting firm to estimate the potential benefits for the province's economy from closing the gap. In the course of our considerations, we examined academic and inter-jurisdictional research, solicited feedback from stakeholders and led public consultations with Ontarians.

All of us attended the public consultation sessions held in 14 locations across the province between October 2015 and February 2016. A consultation summary was published April 19, 2016. Other ministries were consulted to help identify current government activities, and to provide information about the possible impacts of actions under consideration.

Our Background Paper provides a detailed discussion of factors of the gender wage gap that reflects research and inter-jurisdictional perspectives. This report focuses on the following areas:

- There are insufficient options for child care and elder care, resulting in women doing more unpaid caregiving and having less time for paid work.
- The sectors and jobs where women and men work are differently valued, with work done by women being undervalued; and,
- There is gender bias and discrimination (intentional or unintentional) in business practices that can prevent women from achieving their full economic potential.

Government, businesses, and other organizations may already have initiatives underway to help them understand and address gender wage gaps. These activities should continue. However, there is an urgent need for further action through an integrated strategy that addresses the key barriers to women's full participation at work and in the economy.

The recommendations in this report are grouped into five parts:

1. Balancing work and caregiving
2. Valuing work
3. Workplace practices
4. Challenging gender stereotypes
5. Other ways government can close the gender wage gap.

Key recommendations in part 1 include the need for investments in child and elder care, and development of a parental shared leave policy

to help “share the care”.

In part 2, recommendations are aimed at simplifying the pay equity law, in order to support the valuation of work.

Part 3 is focused on workplace practices, and calls for greater pay transparency, gender workplace analysis, and an increase in the number of women on boards.

Challenging gender stereotypes is the theme of part 4, which would raise social awareness generally, as well as in our schools and skills training systems.

Part 5 concludes with recommendations on other ways government can close the gender wage gap, such as performing gender-based analysis, making use of its procurement policies, and helping people access their rights under antidiscrimination legislation.

The report ends with a call to action, noting that there is a role for everyone in helping to close the gender wage gap.

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