The Problem

It has been nearly five decades since President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act into law, making it illegal for employers to pay unequal wages to men and women who hold the same job and perform the same work.

Yet unequal pay still exists because job titles performed predominately by women and people of color have been underpaid due to historic discrimination. For example clerical workers, nurses and teacher’s aides may be paid less than groundskeepers and security staff. These lost earnings and pension benefits are particularly painful for workers and their families forcing them to fall below the poverty line. According to the WAGE project, if women and people of color were to receive wages equal to those of men for comparable jobs, working families would gain a staggering $200 billion in family income annually, with each working woman’s family gaining more than $4,000 per year.

How can we ensure economic equity for women and people of color here in New York and nationwide? The Equal Pay Coalition NYC and NYWA are focused on some proven solutions. Following is information about some of the work groups across New York are doing to promote policies and legislation which:

- Require comparable pay for job-titles requiring comparable levels of skills and responsibilities
- Ensure Minority and Women Business Enterprises (MWBEs) get a fair share of government contracts
- Increase opportunities for women for good paying jobs, which are typically in male-oriented fields, i.e. “non-traditional” jobs

The Solutions

Comparable Worth, also called job title pay equity, is a reform effort to pay different job titles based on their value to their employer regardless of the gender/race predominance of those working in such titles.

At the heart of comparable worth or job title pay equity reform is the fact that jobs traditionally done by women and people of color have been systemically undervalued in the marketplace. The net result is that these jobs are paid less than comparable jobs with the same levels of skills and responsibilities but commonly held by white males. This bias can be demonstrated and subsequently eliminated by assessing the economic value of different jobs through the use of a gender-neutral job evaluation system. For example, food service, nurse, maintenance, dispatcher, supply clerk and drafting jobs can be compared using job evaluation factors such as the education/training necessary, the working conditions and the responsibility (for budgets, supervision, health and safety, etc.) required.

Pay equity studies seek to differentiate legitimate job title wage differences from those that are solely a function of the gender/race of the typical job incumbent. Some job title salary inequities are blatant. For instance, some school districts pay secretaries and teaching assistants (job titles that require associate degrees) less than the cleaners. School nurses in the West Islip school district once started at $27,000, while groundskeepers started at $29,000. In Denver, nurses were found to make less than gardeners. In Minnesota there are laws requiring pay equity for all public sector job titles. In Minnesota the wage gap between men and women employed in the public sector is virtually eliminated. To establish and eliminate such job title salary inequities, the comparable value of these dissimilar job titles is established using a job evaluation system and the job titles are paid accordingly.

“A key problem is that society undervalues the work women do… That’s why those who care for our young children earn less than those who care for our cars, our pets, our lawns.”

Ellen Bravo, Taking on the Big Boys
Reducing Poverty with Pay Equity

Pay equity policies, which aim to realign wages, are designed to reduce the gender-based wage gap and lift women and people of color out of poverty. Pay equity does this by revaluing traditionally under-valued female occupations. Although critics argue that pay equity would benefit only the middle-class and single women without children, research has shown this is not true — pay equity has the potential to lift many workers, especially women out of poverty.  

In a study of pay equity’s potential to reduce race-based, as well as gender-based discrimination, pay equity reduced poverty among the working poor while alleviating race- and gender-based wage discrimination. Across occupations, for women of color, pay equity reduced the percentage of workers earning poverty-level wages for a family of 3 by 48.8%. The comparable figure for white women was 40%; for men of color, 37.1%; and for white men 31.8%. Among the working poor in occupations dominated by people of color, pay equity raised 60% of them above the poverty threshold for a family of 3, and in occupations dominated by women of color, lifted 52% out of poverty.  

Combined with access to affordable child care and other anti-discrimination measures, pay equity can provide most women with the ability to earn enough money to sustain their families and to drastically reduce the percentage of women and people of color living at or below the poverty level.

Research also indicates that pay equity may have a far greater impact than the living wage in helping women achieve economic self-sufficiency, thereby helping them transition off public assistance. In jobs typically dominated by people of color, where workers earn approximately 66% of what white men earn, pay equity decreased that disparity almost completely, bringing the earnings ratio up to approximately 94%; by contrast, living wage policy had little impact on gender or race differentials. Pay equity reform has the power not only to drastically decrease the number of people living at or below the poverty line and to assist those transitioning off public assistance, but also to eliminate the race and gender-based job and wage discrimination that has kept working women, especially women of color, at the bottom of the pay scale.


But How Can You Compare Apple Job Titles and Orange Job Titles?

Apples and oranges can be compared by using any common denominator such as vitamins, juice content or calories, etc. For over 70 years, most, if not all, large employers have had job evaluation wage-setting processes in place to relate the common denominator requirements of vastly different job titles to their salaries. Now you know what personnel/human resource departments do. Most job evaluation systems are composed of nine to twelve factors that include:

- **Job knowledge** (the education and experience required)
- **Accountability** (responsibility for people, budgets, resources, reputations)
- **Human relationship skills** (the communication abilities required)
- **Management/Supervision** (the responsibility for the work of others)
- **Working conditions** (the amount of exposure to discomfort and hazards)

The pay equity reform movement proposes that the same tool, the job evaluation system, be used to compare all job titles, regardless of the gender and race of those working in them, and pay job titles accordingly. Currently, many employers use slightly different job evaluation systems to evaluate job titles in different occupational groups so that comparisons cannot be made across blue collar, white collar, professional and administrative groups. But, as demonstrated in the many countries and jurisdictions that have passed pay equity reform, it is possible to evaluate all job titles fairly using the same job evaluation system and set salaries accordingly. **Pay equity is good personnel policy.**

Equal pay can never exist if it is possible to ghettoize women and people of color into traditionally female jobs and, therefore, pay them less than their work is worth. This is a family pocketbook issue that impacts pensions and social security as well as current household income.

### Real Life Pay Equity Examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County of Los Angeles, California</th>
<th>State of Minnesota Pay Equity</th>
<th>State of Wisconsin Pay Equity Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Children's Social Service Workers $35,000</td>
<td>Male Delivery Van Driver $1,382</td>
<td>Female Administrative Secretary $14,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Probation Officers $55,000</td>
<td>Female Clerk Typist 2 $1,115</td>
<td>Male Meatcutter $17,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$20,000 annual income</strong></td>
<td><strong>$267 per month</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,011 annual income</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Female Corrections Agent Sr $1,961</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female Library Associate $17,681</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Female Registered Nurse $1,723</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male Natural Resource Specialist $21,951</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$238 per month</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,270 annual income</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Legislative Solutions to Pay Equity**

**New York State:** Despite efforts to institutionalize pay equity after the one-time pay equity adjustment ordered by the Gov. Mario Cuomo, legislation has eluded advocates. Since 2002 the NY Assembly has passed the NYS Fair Pay Act with bi-partisan support, and in 2009, due in large part to the efforts of NYSPEC and EPCNYC, 27 Senators co-sponsored the bill and moved it out of the Labor Committee for the first time. Advocates from across NYS are back this year to push for pay equity reform. You can help!

**Upcoming New York State Pay Equity Bills:**

**A6712/S5271** - provides that people who work for NY State in job titles where women and people of color predominate receive equal pay for job titles of equal value. Sponsors: Assembly-Linda Rosenthal, Senate - Velmanette Montgomery

**A1119/S5480** - provides that all who work in the public sector in NY State will receive equal pay for job titles evaluated to be of comparable worth. Sponsors: Assembly- RoAnn Destito, Senate-Diane Savino

**A3911/S955 - NYS Fair Pay Act** - provides that all who work in NY State, in both the public and private sectors, will receive equal pay for job titles evaluated to be of comparable worth. Sponsors: Assembly- Susan John, Senate- Craig Johnson

**Federal Legislation is Critical:**

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was signed into law in January of 2009. Does this mean that we can stop working for passage of Pay Equity legislation? No, the Ledbetter Act restores the 1964 Civil Rights Act equal-pay protections for people whose jobs involve the same work.

**Paycheck Fairness Act - H.R.1338/S.766** would update and strengthen the Equal Pay Amendment by strengthening penalties, prohibiting retaliation against workers who disclose information about wages, providing compensatory damages and back pay, and directing the U.S. Department of Labor to provide public information for eliminating wage discrimination and to issue guidelines for evaluating jobs. Sponsors: Rep.Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Sen. Hillary Clinton was the sponsor.

**Access to Better Jobs**

Today women represent nearly half of our nation’s workforce, but more than one-half of working women are concentrated in only 25 of 504 occupational categories. Many of these occupations are among the lowest-paid. Non-traditional jobs have career ladders with pay between $20 and $30 per hour. (USDOL) In addition to higher wages, non-traditional jobs in the trades or technical fields tend to be unionized with great health benefits, sick leave, pension/retirement plans, and paid vacation time. Too, they hold greater opportunity for advancement and job satisfaction.

Many real challenges remain: Exposure to discrimination, harassment, hazardous working conditions, and isolation, to name a few. Yet, to break the negative financial cycle that working women face throughout out their lives and careers, jobs in non-traditional and emerging markets we must address the need to heighten the skills of half of our workforce and supports women on the path to economic security for themselves and their families. Source www.wow.org

Increased attention and action is necessary of the state, federal and city level. For example, **Federal Legislation: Women WIN Jobs, H.R 4830**, supports the recruitment, training, placement, and retention of women in nontraditional fields where low-income women can earn 20 to 30 percent more than in traditionally female jobs. More information is posted at www.equalpaynewyork.org

**Access to Capital**

Access to Capital continues to hinder the success of women and minority owned business which in turn is slowing the “economic engine.” In New York, despite being one of the most ethnically diverse states in the country and having the 2nd highest number of women-owned enterprises (WBEs) and 3rd highest number of minority business enterprises (MBEs), as of 2008, at least 8 other states were spending more with minority and women-owned firms. With a gross state product (GSP) of $822 billion, New York is the 11th largest economy in the world, but only 9.2% of the state’s discretionary budget went to MWBE’s in 2008.

Dramatically increasing the amount the state spends with MWBE vendors can result in higher service levels, increased innovation and lower costs. Numerous states, including New Jersey, have directly linked their MWBE expansion initiatives to state contracting cost reductions. Too, studies consistently show that MBEs are much more likely than nonminority owned business to locate in minority communities and to employee minority workers.

**Legislative Action on MWBE:**

**New York State Senate Bill S1799** would strengthen Article 15-A of the State’s Executive Law, which determines how state agencies award contracts, business, and employment opportunities to minority- and women-owned businesses. Advocates are working to improve Article 15-A by: enlarging the number of state agencies covered; including the use of MBEs in financial and professional services in state contracts; specifying the diversity practices used to judge vendors; clarifying state agency reporting requirements; and establishing a “public authorities procurement council” composed of senior leaders from state agencies and representatives of the private sector.

Source of information: www.mwbeunited.org

MORE!!

There are many pieces to this puzzle including family friendly policies and women in leadership positions. Many EPCNYC members and national groups are working on these issues, i.e. Catalyst’s research and A Better Balance’s sick days campaign. Resources and links are provided at EPCNYC’s site: www.equalpaynewyork.org
TOOLKIT FOR CHANGE

Use EPCNYC|NYWA’s TOOLKIT online and build a better future for yourself and community!
www.EqualPayNewYork.org

WHAT CAN YOU DO?
- HELP PASS NEW YORK STATE PAY EQUITY LAWS!
- HELP CHANGE NEW YORK CITY WAGE POLICIES!
  HEARING WILL BE HELD ON JUNE 16th!
- HELP PASS PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT: Go to the national Fair Pay Campaign - http://www.nwlc.org/fairpay/

ARE YOU BEING PAID FAIRLY?
- CALCULATE YOUR WAGE GAP: http://www.wageproject.org/content/gap_calc/
- START A WAGE CLUB with small group and meet regularly to hold strategy sessions on money, negotiations skills and what to do if you are being paid unfairly. http://www.wageproject.org/content/get_even/howtostart.php
- CONDUCT A WORKPLACE PAY AUDIT
- SET-UP A SMART STARTS WORKSHOP at your college
  Contact Beverly Neufeld bcnuefled@gmail.com

WHAT’S YOUR STORY?
- SHARE YOUR PAY (in)EQUITY STORY & YOUR OPINION

HOW CAN I HAVE MORE IMPACT?
- MEDIA TRAINING
- ADVOCACY TRAINING
- NEGOTIATION SKILLS

RESEARCH and BOOKS:
- The Shriver Report, Maria Shriver/Heather Boushey
- WCECA Self-Sufficiency Study, Merble Reagon
- Economic Status of Working Women in NY, Gittell 2007
- AAUW - Beyond the Gender Gap
- Institute for Women’s Policy Research - Best and Worst States
- Taking on the Big Boys by Ellen Bravo, 2007
- Women Are Getting Even by Evelyn Murphy, 2006

RESOURCES:
- American Association of University Women www.aauw.org
- Institute for Women’s Policy Research www.iwpr.org
- League of Women Voters of NY www.lwvny.org
- National Committee on Pay Equity www.pay-equity.org
- National Women’s Law Center www.nwlc.org
- New York Women’s Agenda www.nywaconnect.org
- Women Work www.womenwork.org
- Shriver Report www.awomansnation.org

JOIN THE EQUAL PAY COALITION NYC:
Individuals: Go to www.EqualPayNewYork.org
Groups: Contact EPCNYC Coordinator Beverly Neufeld or NYWA Government Affairs Committee Co-chairs Joan D. Firestone and Marilyn Abalos info@nywa.org or 212-937-2411

ABOUT THE RESOURCE GUIDE:
This guide was prepared for the New York Women’s Agenda and Equal Pay Coalition NYC by Beverly Neufeld, BCN Consulting. Thanks to Lois Haignere of NYSPEC for contributing content. Special thanks to the New York Women’s Foundation for supporting the work of EPCNYC|NYWA including this guide, the toolkit and the forum, FAIR PAY: Forging a Strong Economic Future for Women. The information and resources included in this guide are intended to empower our community to take an active role in impacting pay equity policies and closing the wage gap.

A Better Balance · AAUW-Manhattan · AAUW-NYC · Asian Women in Business · Catalyst Inc. · Center for the Women of New York · Coalition of Professional Women in the Arts and Media · CUNY-Howard Samuels Center · 50/50 in 2020 · Human Rights Project of Urban Justice Center · Institute of the Puerto Rican/Hispanic Elderly · Jewish Women’s Foundation of New York · Junior League of the City of New York · Latina PAC · League of Professional Theatre Women · League of Women Voters of New York City · Legal Momentum · Manhattan Chamber of Commerce · Women’s Business Committee · 9 to 5: National Association of Working Women · National Association of Italian American Women NOW-Brooklyn/Queens · NOW-NYC · NOW-NYS · National Association of Female Executives · National Association of Women Business Owners NYC · New York Coalition of 100 Black Women · New York Women’s Agenda (Coordinator) · New York Women's Foundation · 100 Black Men · Women Chefs and Restauranteurs · Women in Development, New York · Women in Health Management · Women on the Job Taskforce/New York State Pay Equity Coalition · Women’s City Club of New York · Women’s Center for Education and Career Advancement · Women’s Media Center ·YWCA Brooklyn ·YWCA Orange County · Zonta Club of Greater Queens · Authors: Ellen Bravo, Dr. Debra Condren, Barbara Ehrenreich ,Prof. Marilyn Gittell, Dr. Francine Moccio, Dr. Pamela Stone

EQUAL PAY COALITION NYC is a consortium of civic organizations, advocates and experts working together for Pay Equity in NY. EPCNYC was created in 2007 by NYWA, a New York nonprofit charitable corporation, in response to growing concern and mounting evidence of the continuing economic discrimination suffered by New York’s women and minorities and their families. EPCNYC promotes policy and legislative action on all levels of government to create fair pay practices, and primarily focuses its efforts on NY State and NY City Pay Equity reform. This nonpartisan and nonprofit effort welcomes organizations and individuals who want to identify with this fair pay campaign and work together to further these goals.

ACTIVITIES OF EPCNYC | NYWA
- Equal Pay Day April 19th in NYC and April 20 in Albany!
- Forums - FAIR PAY: THE TIME IS NOW! with Lilly Ledbetter and Forging a Stronger Economic Future for Women
- Petition, Action alerts and advocacy for the NYS Fair Pay Act, and NYC and federal laws
- Part of national effort to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Act (signed 1/2009)and Paycheck Fairness Act.
- Principal force behind NY City Council’s unanimous resolutions #896A and #1152 calling for passage of the NYS Fair Pay Act and federal laws, passed 6/08
- Online Education and Media campaigns
- 2009 Mayoral Candidate Questionnaire

NEW YORK WOMEN’S AGENDA is a coalition of women professionals and community activists who support the diversity and interests of New York women through collaboration, advocacy, and education. NYWA’s members represent the diversity of the city and include community groups; religious, ethnic, and political groups; professional associations; and issues-based groups. Through NYWA, these groups unite to work on issues of common interest and to advocate for public policy. Together, the voices of NYWA members work in concert to become one rousing chorus. www.nywaconnect.org