

BEST PRACTICES

Closing the Gender Wage Gap



The Opportunity Gap

Women make 83 cents for every dollar men earn. This comparison may seem small, but it adds up to a \$10,000 difference annually. This gap indicates that women tend to occupy lower-paying jobs, work fewer hours, and have fewer positions of power.

The Controlled Gap

When accounting for factors such as same job title, education, experience, industry, job level, and hours worked, the gap narrows to 99 cents. While one cent seems negligible, it compounds over a lifetime. This gap indicates unconscious bias and discrimination still play a role.

5 Strategies to Close the Gender Pay Gap

#1 Evaluation (W.A.G.E.S.)

Use a systematic approach to identify & address pay disparities.

Why

- Develop proposal articulating reasons, benefits, objectives, and expected outcomes of compensation analysis.

Action Plan

- Define the project scope, establish a timeline, and select team members.
- Collect employee data (job descriptions, departments, job levels, pay, location, tenure, years of experience, education level, training, certifications, performance evaluations, and EEO-1 data).
- Select sources to benchmark against market compensation as needed (e.g., LaborIQ, Comp Analyst, ERI, Salary.com, Glassdoor, Indeed).

Gauge

- Compare employee pay within the same or similar positions, using tools such as Megastar HR's Gender Wage Gap Calculator.

- Identify pay discrepancies and determine whether justifiable based on factors such as tenure, experience, and performance level.
- Identify employees underpaid relative to these factors.

Execute

- Create defined pay bands based on value added to the organization.
- Correct pay adjustments if employees fall outside of their pay bands.
- During hiring and promotion process, position individual pay decisions within the pay structure.

Share

- Train leaders to have transparent pay equity conversations, including rationale for current pay.
- Discuss future growth opportunities and create individualized development plans.

#2 Education

Gender diversity training can be an effective investment if it focuses on systemic and sustainable change.

- Involve different departments and gender identity groups in designing training.
- Design a comprehensive program that covers unconscious biases, respectful conduct, and inclusive leadership.
- Schedule bias training just before periodic evaluations or hiring/promotion decisions. Include specific strategies to recognize, combat, and measure bias.
- Make trainings voluntary to motivate engagement.
- Encourage leaders to express the value of the training and actively participate.
- Frame gender diversity as being for all genders, not as a divisive issue.

#3 Recruitment

For many women, the gender wage gap starts upon hire and widens throughout their career.

- Implement a policy to not request previous wage information from applicants.
- Include a pay range on job postings based on established criteria.
- Eliminate preferences and non-essential requirements in job postings.
- Express willingness to invest in trainable skills and employee development.
- Use growth-mindset language (e.g., “committed to improvement” rather than “high performer”).
- Conduct blind screenings by removing names and other gender-identifying information.
- Train hiring leaders to recognize double bind, higher bar, extra scrutiny, and shifting criteria biases.
- Establish clear and consistent evaluation criteria for all candidates.
- Ensure diverse backgrounds in hiring panels.

#4 Advancement

Organizations with greater gender diversity among senior leaders are more profitable.

- Identify concentrations of women in leadership positions and differences in promotion rates.
- Implement women’s leadership programs that address organizational issues rather than perceived deficiencies in women.
- Include men in conversations about gender equity.
- Provide women with promotional opportunities to use what they learn from leadership programs.
- Provide concrete, “next step” feedback to all employees during performance evaluations.
- Ensure an equal distribution of high- and low-level assignments among men and women.
- Ask open-ended questions about motivation and vision rather than make assumptions about career goals.

#5 Retention

Organizations with a diverse staff are more productive, innovative, and successful.

- Introduce paid or partially paid leave, equal for men and women.
- Provide flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote work, compressed workweeks, job sharing) and other family-friendly benefits, such as childcare assistance.
- Develop a return-to-work program and proactively discuss the transition before leave.
- Gather feedback using meetings, surveys, and exit interviews to understand bias-related barriers.



This initiative by Inspire In Utah spotlights 100 organizations with family-friendly policies and practices impacting recruitment, retention, and advancement. Nominate your company at inutah.org/100-companies.



Through the ElevateHER Corporate Challenge and leadership development cohorts, the Institute empowers companies and women to direct their leadership abilities and commit to positive and proactive change. Find resources at wliut.com.



The Utah Women & Leadership Project (UWLP) coordinates partnerships across diverse teams, research groups, and action communities to create meaningful change empowering women and girls. Join the movement at abolderwayforward.org.



Visit megastarhr.com/resources for the full guide and additional resources.