



UNIONS WORK FOR EQUITY

Economic prosperity in our province is not shared equally.

British Columbia continues to have one of the worst gender pay gaps in Canada. The BC government's 2025 report on pay transparency confirmed that **women in BC earned 85 cents for every dollar men earned** in 2024.

Larger disparities exist for Indigenous, racialized, newcomer, disabled, and 2SLGBTQIA+ workers. The CCPA's 2024 report, *Trapped in the Wage Gap*, exposed the depth of the gender and racial pay gap in Metro Vancouver. The study found that **half of all racialized women in Metro Vancouver don't earn a living wage** (the income a worker needs to pay for the necessities of life).

Indigenous women earned 81 cents for every dollar earned by men in 2024. Persons with disabilities are the most under-represented group across the work force and some of the lowest-paid workers. In relation to race, BC's pay gap is larger than the national average.

Equity-seeking groups are less likely to have full-time, permanent jobs with benefits and more likely to work in low-wage, precarious positions. They remain underrepresented in higher-paying sectors like the skilled trades.

They are also **less likely to be in unions**, which fight for gains like pay equity through the collective bargaining process; unionized women earn more and experience a smaller wage gap. In the absence of province-wide legislation for pay equity, non-union and precarious workers have little ability to fight discrimination.

UNIONS: HELPING TO CLOSE THE GAP

When more workers have access to union representation, our economy becomes fairer, stronger, and more inclusive for everyone.

While unionized workers earn more than their non-union counterparts, the difference is even greater for equity-seeking groups. The Canadian Labour Congress reports that unionized women's hourly wages are 34% higher than those of non-unionized women. And most unionized workers receive extended health benefits, helping reduce financial barriers to essential care like dental and prescription drugs—costs that disproportionately affect women. Nearly 70% of unionized workers have pregnancy and parental benefits, compared to just 40% of non-union workers.

Collective agreements set clear, enforceable rules around pay, benefits and hiring, which reduces the influence of bias and discrimination. They establish transparent pay grids and fair compensation, along with important provisions like classification processes, pregnancy and parental leave, and bullying and harassment protections that also help to reduce economic discrimination.

Unions have also fought to improve working conditions for all workers, like raising the minimum wage and providing paid sick days and access to leave for family responsibility. By raising standards for all workers, unions lift up those who have been historically left behind.



| WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED TOGETHER

Unions working together with progressive governments toward shared goals are a powerful force. We help the BC government understand the most pressing issues facing working people — and work to create the political room to address them.

That's how we've won important victories to advance equity for working people, including:

- **pay transparency**, requiring employers to include salary information in job postings, and to analyze and publish information on their gender pay gap;
- protection for workers from **reprisal for disclosing their own pay**, an important step to help workers identify and address discrimination;
- **BC's Anti-Racism Act and Anti-Racism Data Act**, requiring the government to collect data identifying gaps in racial equity and take action to address them; and
- **single-step certification**, which makes it easier for members of equity-seeking groups to organize, and address discrimination and intimidation with the strength of a union.

| WHAT'S NEXT

BC workers and our unions need action from your government in these key areas:

- introducing **intersectional pay equity** legislation, accompanied by effective data collection and reporting. Transparency alone does not address discrimination. Pay equity legislation is needed to require employers to find and fix discriminatory wage differences, and ensure equal pay for work of equal value;
- building on single-step certification and removing barriers to joining a union, by **implementing sectoral certification and bargaining** to ensure all workers can choose to join a union. Workers from equity-seeking groups disproportionately experience the kind of fragmented, isolated workplaces that sectoral approaches help to address;
- recognizing **discrimination as a workplace hazard** and requiring employers to take steps to prevent it in the same way they are required to address any other workplace threats to worker safety; and
- investing in **skilled trades training** with a focus on improving the representation of women, Indigenous and other underrepresented groups, and ensuring they have an equal opportunity for rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

In challenging times, **unions** are a crucial part of the solution to many of the problems BC is facing. Whether it's affordability and the economy, health and safety, equity or building the infrastructure we need, **unions help make our province and our communities stronger.**

move**up**

