

# Ten myths about pay equity

Myths about pay equity distort the truth and play on our fears about economic insecurity.

**Myth #1: Women work for a secondary income.**

Women use their income for basic necessities such as food, housing and clothes - moreover, they head 83% of single-parent Canadian families.

**Myth #2: Pay equity will hurt men.**

This is an attempt to pit male and female workers against each other. Where pay equity laws exist, adjustments are made outside of regularly negotiated wage increases. Also, unions state that pay equity adjustments- whether bargained or won through job evaluation - will not be made at the expense of men's wages.

**Myth #3: Women are not committed to the workforce.**

Most women who were employed full-time before having a child continue working full-time. Often, women who work part-time do not have a choice of full-time jobs.

**Myth #4: Women have better and safer working conditions than men.**

Many predominantly female-held jobs in offices, social services, hospitals, and the service industry expose women to chemical, biological, physical and psychological hazards.

**Myth #5: Women choose to work in low-paying jobs.**

Nobody chooses to have their work undervalued and under-paid. Traditionally female-held jobs such as child care and nursing are worth decent wages, but women also need more work and training opportunities in traditionally male-dominated jobs.

**Myth #6: Pay equity threatens the free market system.**

Even if the market were 'free' and unmanipulated, exploiting women as cheap labour to subsidize business competitiveness is unacceptable. This is not the kind of society most Canadians want.

**Myth #7: Pay equity means the end of a free and democratic society.**

What's democratic about a system that perpetuates the social and economic inequality of women?

**Myth #8: Pay equity will hurt women.**

This myth perpetuates the threat that employers will hire men to evade pay equity laws. Even if employers were that mean-spirited, the tactic wouldn't work because wages will be based on jobs, not gender.

**Myth #9: Pay equity will mean economic disaster.**

Actually, paying women fair wages will put money into the economy -after all, 50% of Canadian consumers are female. Societies with pay equity laws still have strong economies.

**Myth #10: Pay equity will create another huge bureaucracy.**

It doesn't need to. In unionized workplaces, pay equity can become part of collective bargaining.