



Dear Community Partner,

In May, the YWCA Alaska Board of Directors passed a bold resolution that *YWCA Alaska will eliminate the Gender Pay Gap in Alaska by 2025*. This resolution was inspired by what we all know to be true: when Alaska's women thrive, our state thrives—our employers are able to find the talent they need to excel, families are well cared for, and neighborhoods are active and communities connected.

In 1963, the U.S. Congress passed the Equal Pay Act, prohibiting pay discrimination on the basis of gender. Over 50 years later, women still only earn 77 cents on the dollar nationally. Women in Alaska are paid just 67 cents for every dollar men earn.

The persistent wage gap between working men and women is a barrier to women's success and to the success of Alaska. When women are underpaid and undervalued, it is more challenging for them to pay off student debt, provide for their families, contribute to their communities, and save for retirement. Women's options become limited and so does their ability to strengthen our businesses and our state.

YWCA Alaska recognizes that when Alaska's women thrive, so do Alaskan businesses. Local businesses are facing increasing shortages of skilled labor and, as a state, Alaska is working hard to incentivize our talented young women and men to remain in the state for their careers. However, this work is missing a critical component: gender pay equity. Without equal pay for equal work, Alaska's businesses may lose out on half of the talent pool and our economy will miss critical opportunities for growth.

YWCA Alaska has chosen to directly address this issue by taking the lead to close the gender pay gap in Alaska. We recognize that progress on pay equity can only be made with community support and participation. **We ask that you endorse YWCA Alaska's goal to eliminate the gender pay gap in Alaska by 2025 and help us work to strengthen Alaska.**

Sincerely,

Hilary A. Morgan
CEO
YWCA Alaska

What We Need from the Community

YWCA Alaska is asking you to endorse and join our work to close the gender pay gap in Alaska, making 33 cents of progress in 11 years.

Endorsements to date

Access Alaska Alaska Community Foundation Alaska Pacific University American Diabetes Association AK Anchorage Chamber of Commerce NEA Alaska Girl Scouts of Alaska McDowell Group United Way of Anchorage Providence Health & Services Alaska	Bettye Davis – School Board Dana Stabenow – Author Senator Lisa Murkowski (R) Representative Don Young (R)	<i>Alaska State Representatives</i> Lynn Gattis (R) Charisse Millet (R) Cathy Munoz (R) Garen Tarr (D) <i>Alaska State Senators</i> Anna Fairclough (R) Berta Gardner (D) Lesil McGuire (R)
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Funding to date

Providence Health and Services, Alaska - \$75,000

Action Steps for Year 1 (June 2014-July 2015)

Educating Organizations and Leaders

- Create a Best Alaskan Companies for Working Women Survey and pilot with 3 companies
- Obtain 50 endorsements to the Gender Pay Gap elimination resolution

Educating Women and Girls

- Gender Pay Equity Summit: May 1, 2015
- University Training– Entering the Workforce: Salary Negotiation for Women and People of Color
- High School Training– Entering the Workforce: the Gender Pay Gap and Career Field Options

Action Steps for Years 2 & 3

Educating Organizations and Leaders

- Administer Best Alaskan Companies for Working Women survey to 12 businesses
- Establish a certification and consultation program for businesses wanting to implement gender neutral policies
- Create an educational program on the gender pay gap for the community at large
- Design and implement an Attitudes Towards Working Women survey

Educating Women and Girls

- Annually host a Gender Pay Equity Summit
- Increase high school and college trainings to out of Anchorage sites
- Produce a needs assessment for vocational education programs to promote non-traditional occupations to girls in the state.

In Alaska, women earn only .67 cents for every dollar men earn. The national average is .77 cents.

Alaska ranks 48th in the nation for women's pay.

YWCA Alaska is committed to eliminating the gender pay gap in Alaska by 2025.

[Join the Gender Pay Gap Initiative](#)

The economic and societal impact is great

In today's Alaska, women make up nearly 48% of the workforce.¹

89% of registered nurses are women, but female nurses make only **95%** of male nurses' earnings.²

76% of teachers are women, but female teachers earn just **83%** of their male counterparts' earnings.³

Women make less money than men in **every** major industry group in Alaska.⁴

The financial disparity is substantial

Over the course of her career, a typical woman working in Alaska **loses \$646,000**.⁵

In the highest paying occupation for women - physicians and surgeons - men make an average of **\$62,901** more than women annually.⁶

In the largest Alaskan occupation - retail salespersons - **58%** of workers are women, but they earn an average of **\$4,842** less than their male counterparts.⁷

Change is coming too slowly

The gender pay gap in Alaska only decreased 5 cents from 1990-2010.⁸

Doing nothing, at this rate, the gender pay gap will not close until 2142.

The modern gender pay gap has 2 sets of distinct issues:

1) Equal Pay for Equal Work Issues

2) Institutional/Structural Barriers to Gender Equity in the Workforce Issues

¹ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 4.

² Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 11.

³ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 10-13.

⁴ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 5.

⁵ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 4.

⁶ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 9.

⁷ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 9.

⁸ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 4.

The Modern Gender Pay Gap

In today's Alaska, women make up nearly 48% of the workforce, but the average Alaskan woman earns just 67¢ for every dollar earned by the average man.⁹ Women's earnings compared to men's have begun to increase, but only at a glacial pace. In 20 years, the gender pay gap only closed 5¢--1¢ every 4 years.¹⁰ Over the course of her career, the gender pay gap will cause the typical woman working in Alaska to lose \$646,245.¹¹ That money could pay for a house, 50,000 gallons of gas, and food for a family of 4 for 20 years. YWCA Alaska is committed to closing the gender pay gap in Alaska by 2025. That's 33 cents of progress in 11 years.

The gender pay gap is caused by a combination of explained and unexplained factors. Explained factors make up approximately 60% of the gap and include: education, experience, occupational choice, and location.¹² Unexplained factors make up the other 40% of the gap and include both overt and unintentional forms of discrimination.¹³

Part 1: Equal Pay for Equal Work

As individuals, women have worked for over 6 decades to change factors that contribute to the equal pay for equal work portion of the gap. There are 3 major factors that are partially influenced by the choices an individual makes:

- 1) Level of education or training:** Today women outperform men in higher education. In 2011, women received 57.2 percent of bachelor degrees, 60.1 percent of master's degrees, and 51.4 percent of all doctoral degrees.¹⁴
- 2) Participation in the workforce:** In 1950, only 33.9% of women participated in the labor force.¹⁵ In Alaska in 2012, 65.7% of women were part of the workforce.¹⁶
- 3) Occupation:** In 2012, women made up the majority, 51.5 percent, of workers in management, professional, and related occupations.¹⁷

Women have done all they can as individuals to eliminate the pay gap and progress through this avenue of change has plateaued since the early 1990s.¹⁸ To eliminate the remaining gap we need a concerted effort to change the explained and unexplained factors that endure. A December 2013 report by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission identified the 6 most significant obstacles to equal pay and offered recommendations for abolishing these obstacles. The 3 following recommendations would have the most far-reaching impacts if implemented:

- 1) Ensure that positions requiring similar qualifications receive equal pay.**
- 2) Offer women opportunities equal to their male counterparts for: training, developmental assignments, networking, mentorship, and promotion into management.**
- 3) Provide workplace policies that allow flexibility for employees who are also caregivers--men and women alike.**

⁹ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 4.

¹⁰ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 4.

¹¹ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 4.

¹² Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn, "Gender Differences in Pay," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 14.4 (2000): 82.

¹³ Blau and Kahn, "Gender Differences in Pay," 82.

¹⁴ "Professional Women: A Gendered Look at Occupational Obstacles and Opportunities," Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO, accessed August 1st, 2014, <http://dpeaflcio.org/wp-content/uploads/Professional-Women-2014.pdf>.

¹⁵ Howard N. Fullerton, Jr., "Labor force participation: 75 years of change, 1950-98 and 1998-2025," *Monthly Labor Review*, December (1999): 4.

¹⁶ "American Community Survey: Alaska 2012 1-Year Data," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed August 1st, 2014, <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cen/acsdetails.cfm#E05>.

¹⁷ "Professional Women."

¹⁸ Schultz, "Gender and Earnings," 4. Blau and Kahn, "Gender Differences in Pay," 76.