



Bridging the Gap: International Equal Pay Day 2026

On September 18th, non-governmental organizations and international bodies unite to mark **International Equal Pay Day**. Initiated by the United Nations, this day calls for action toward realizing equal pay for work of equal value—a fundamental human right that remains unfulfilled for millions of women.

Here in Ontario, the reality of the gender wage gap continues to demand our advocacy. According to recent data, average annual earnings for women in Ontario remain roughly **31% lower** than those of men—a figure that widens significantly for racialized women, Indigenous women, newcomer women, and women living with disabilities.

For CFUW Ontario Council members, pay equity is not merely an abstract economic concept; it directly shapes the lifelong financial security of women across our communities.

Key priorities intersecting with our Status of Women and Human Rights mandate include:

- **The Gender Pension Gap:** Lifetime wage inequities translate directly into retirement insecurity. In Canada, senior women face a 17% to 18% gender pension gap, leaving single and older women disproportionately vulnerable to low income in their later years.
- **Universal, High-Quality Childcare:** Access to affordable, dependable early learning and childcare is the cornerstone of economic participation. Without robust early learning infrastructure, caregiving responsibilities continue to fall disproportionately on women, leading to career interruptions and involuntary part-time work.



- **Pay Transparency & Equity Enforcement:** Strengthening provincial legislative frameworks and ensuring transparency in compensation structures are essential to holding employers accountable and dismantling systemic pay bias.
- **Valuing Care & Public Sector Work:** Female-dominated fields—such as healthcare, social services, and early childhood education—remain underfunded and undervalue the vital contributions of women workers.

As CFUW members, our collective voice is one of our most powerful tools. This September 18th, let us renew our commitment to advocacy. Engage with local representatives, support community coalitions, and champion policies that guarantee equal pay for equal value—ensuring economic justice for generations to come.

Sources:

<https://payequity.gov.on.ca/peo-reflects-on-groundbreaking-gpg-report/>

<https://bpwbarrie.com/gender-wage-gap/>

https://www.equalpayinternationalcoalition.org/en/whats_new/ontario-pay-equity-office-canadas-gender-wage-gap-has-narrowed-but-the-gender-pension-gap-has-not

<https://cupe.on.ca/campaigns/mind-the-gap-how-the-gender-wage-gap-affects-workers/>

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/equal-pay-day>