



Coalition pour l'équité salariale
Coalition for Pay Equity

HISTORY OF PAY EQUITY IN NEW BRUNSWICK

- 1899** Robert Emmerson, Premier of NB, pointed out that a woman received little more than half the wages a man received for the same work and that this was discrimination.
- 1965** The government passed a law stipulating the same minimum wage for men and women.
- 1971** The provincial government passed the *Human Rights Act*, of which article 3(1) stipulated that: "no employer shall discriminate against any person in respect to employment or any term or condition of employment because of sex."
- 1980** The NB Advisory Council on the Status of Women (ACSW) analyzed certain public jobs in NB. At the time, untrained male nurses earned \$26 to \$27 per evaluation point and Liquor Commission clerks \$22, while registered nurses earned between \$8 and \$15.
- 1987** Premier Richard Hatfield promised a law on pay equity for the public and private sectors.
- 1989** Frank McKenna's government passed the *Pay Equity Act*, which only covered employees in Part I of the civil service (i.e. civil servants).
- 1991** The NB Federation of Labour presented its brief *Pay Equity Legislation in New Brunswick* to the provincial government and recommended applying the *Pay Equity Act* to the public and private sectors.
- 1996** The NB Advisory Council on the Status of Women (ACSW) published the working document *The Wage Gap: Causes, Consequences, Actions*.
- 1998** The Fédération des dames d'Acadie founded the *Women's Union for Pay Equity*, which became the *Coalition for Pay Equity* in 2001.
- 2000** The New Brunswick World March of Women 2000 committee and the *Women's Union for Pay Equity* asked the government for a law on pay equity.

2002 Margaret-Ann Blaney, then minister responsible for the Status of Women, set up a Wage Gap Roundtable.

2003 The minister's Wage Gap Roundtable released its report, which recommended voluntary measures for five years, followed by an evaluation and, if progress was limited, the implementation of "appropriate wage gap reduction legislative mechanisms, applicable to both the private and public sectors of the New Brunswick economy."

The Coalition for Pay Equity and the NB Federation of Labour put forward independent recommendations asking the government to adopt a law on pay equity and to develop a strong education campaign as soon as possible.

2004 The Coalition for Pay Equity drafted Pay Equity Legislation. In June, Elizabeth Weir, leader of the New Democratic Party, introduced the bill proposed by the Coalition for Pay Equity (bill 77) at the Legislative Assembly. Carmel Robichaud, Liberal MLA, seconded the introduction of the bill. The bill was sent to the Law Amendment Committee.

The Law Amendment Committee held public hearings on November 18, 19 and 26, and received written submissions on Bill 77. Out of 34 public presentations, 30 were in favor of Bill 77 as is or with minor modifications.

2005 In June, Margaret-Ann Blaney released her Wage Gap Action Plan, in response to the Round Table's recommendations, on June 2, 2005. The five-year action plan outlines four goals, which includes increasing "the use of pay equity practices" in the private sector and achieving "pay equity in the public service," without legislation.

In December, the Law Amendment Committee released its report on Bill 77. It recommends NOT adopting the Bill but supports the voluntary Action Plan on the Wage Gap. However it recommends legislating in five years if no progress is made.

2006 During their election campaign, Shawn Graham's Liberals promise to extend pay equity legislation to all of the public sector and to "*bring together all stakeholders to further address issues raised at recent public hearings with the goal of extending pay equity to the private sector through legislation*". They are elected on September 18.

2007 The government released its first progress report on the 5-year Wage Gap Action Plan for New Brunswick. No data is yet released on the placement of pay equity programs in the private sector.

2008 The government released its second progress report on the 5-year New Brunswick Wage Gap Action Plan.

The government promises to adopt a pay equity law in the public sector in its throne speech: « Significant progress continues to be made in achieving pay equity. Your government is leading by example by implementing job evaluations resulting in pay equity with agencies contracted by government, such as child care, home support and transition houses. A new Pay Equity Act will be introduced to ensure pay equity legislation applies to all parts of the public service. »

2009 Mary Schryer, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, introduced the *Pay Equity Act, 2009*. The *Act* covers the civil service, health, education and Crown corporations and will come into force in April 2010.

The provincial government announced that five groups from the private sector will receive pay equity adjustments beginning in 2010-2011: child care, home support, nursing home, transition house and group home workers.

2010 The *Pay Equity Act, 2009* came into force in April. Nursing homes completed an internal equity process that the government considers as pay equity. No final report is ever published on the 5-year Wage Gap Action Plan.

2012 The Alward government announced \$ 6.4 millions for pay equity in its 2012-2013 budget and other payments for the following 5 years. Reports on the pay equity process followed for the child care, home support and transition house workers are released. Only to job classes will receive adjustments and these will be spread over 5 years. **The Coalition for Pay Equity expresses concerns that this would be too little to reach pay equity.** The government considers that the other job classes already reached pay equity wages. Job evaluations for group homes workers are not completed yet.

While *Pay Equity Act, 2009* requires job evaluations to be completed by April 2012, only one job class has completed the process and, according to the government, it has already reached pay equity. In June, the pay equity report for home care, child care and transition house workers are finally made public and available online. The pay equity exercise for group homes is still not complete.

2013 The Coalition for Pay Equity releases it's "*Comment on the Results of the Government of New Brunswick's Pay Equity Program for Non-Legislated Sectors*" and asks the government to improve the methodology it developed in the context of workplaces where there are no predominantly male jobs.

2014 The Government of New Brunswick makes public *the pay equity results for community residences workers*. These results are higher than in the other sectors (child care, halfway house, home support), due to a change in the methodology. However, these results are still far from the level of fair wages due to other methodological errors highlighted by the Coalition.

In June, Ruth Rose, economist and expert on pay equity, published a report in which she states that the methodology used by New Brunswick to calculate pay equity for caring services is incorrect. As a result, wages determined as "fair" for female-dominated jobs are much too low compared to those of male-dominated jobs. Ruth Rose attributes this to the overvaluation and the low wages assigned to male-dominated jobs used as comparators for female dominated jobs.

2014 Brian Gallant's Liberals win the election. According to their election platform, they will improve the pay equity methodology, require pay equity plans from organizations with more than 50 employees doing business with the government, and fully implement the Pay Equity Act, 2009.

2016 The provincial liberal government announces pay equity adjustments for [educational support staff](#) and [court stenographers](#), but it lags behind on its electoral pay equity promises