



Coalition pour l'équité salariale
Coalition for Pay Equity

51 Williams Street, Moncton, NB E1C 2G6
Tel.: 506.855.0002 / Fax: 506.854.9728
coalitio@nb.sympatico.ca / www.equite-equity.com

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Equal pay for work of equal value. For over 10 years, the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity has been advocating for pay equity and has been committed to the struggle for recognition of the fair value of female-dominated jobs. Some progress has been made, especially since the enactment of the *Pay Equity Act, 2009*, but this legislation is strictly limited to the public sector and so the work of the Coalition is still ongoing.

This document briefly outlines some of the Coalition's main concerns for the current year and its recommendations concerning the 2013-2014 provincial budget.

MAKING DECISIONS THAT RESPECT EQUALITY

The values that shape the Coalition are at the core of a fair and just society: gender equality and the respect of human rights. A recent study shows that 92% of Canadians support gender equality (while only 20% of people think that we should lower income tax levels)¹. New Brunswickers undoubtedly share these same values and standpoints. As our

¹ Environnics Institute for Survey Research.. 2012. The Common Good: Who Decides? A National Survey of Canadians. <http://www.environnicsinstitute.org/uploads/institute-projects/tf%202012%20survey%20-%20backgrounder%20-%20final%20november%2012-2012.pdf>. Accessed February 7, 2013.

government should act in the interest of the population, it should promote those very values and its economic decisions should reflect this reality.

EVALUATION OF THREE PRIVATE SECTOR GROUPS

Last year, the government confirmed its commitment to reduce the wage gap between men and women in New Brunswick with the inclusion in its budget of \$6.4 million to address pay equity. These funds were to provide pay adjustments to a number of female-dominated public sector employees as well as workers in the private sector.

Results of job evaluations and comparisons completed for three private sector groups were finally released shortly after, i.e. those of childcare workers, home support workers and workers in transition houses.

The methodology used in this exercise definitely needs to be improved². Yet it was determined that childcare support workers and home support workers were entitled to wage adjustments. However, two problems remain: 1) these pay adjustments have yet to be made, and 2) these wages do not take inflation rates into account. Will retroactive payments be issued? Will these “fair wages” include inflation rates? If these problems are not addressed immediately, we risk seeing a significant increase in pay inequity.

COMMUNITY RESIDENCES

As the government also promised last year to complete all job evaluations of community residence workers in the course of the current fiscal year and to allow pay adjustments in its 2013-2014 budget, the Coalition expects for results to be announced soon and for the necessary funds to be allocated in the next budget.

² See the brief prepared by the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity, [*Comment on the Results of the Government of New Brunswick's Pay Equity Program for Non-Legislated Sectors*](#).

PUBLIC SECTOR

In line with the *Pay Equity Act, 2009*, the New Brunswick government has undertaken the task of evaluating public sector jobs. The Act required job evaluations to be completed and adjustments to begin in April 2012. The following table illustrates that the work is late. At this point in time, information regarding progress made within Crown Corporations is unavailable.

Pay Equity Steps Completed for the Public Sector, as of October 23, 2012

Group	Not yet started	Evaluations underway	Evaluations Completed	Male Comparator Identified	Male Comparator Evaluated	Inequities (yes/no)
Laboratory & Medical Professionals		X	X	X	X	No
Court Stenographers		X	X	X	X	
Teachers	X					
Admin Support, part II		X	X	X		
Professional Support, part II		X	X	X		
Nursing		X	X	X	X	
Nursing Supervisory		X	X	X	X	
Para Medical	X					
Specialized Healthcare Professionals	X					

X = Step is completed

The Coalition expects the government to further finance the Pay Equity Bureau and to put in the necessary resources for the completion of job evaluations within the shortest possible time.

TAXATION SYSTEM

The government is evidently very eager to return to budgetary balance and therefore needs to increase its revenues. If the government does not take appropriate measures, the Coalition fears it might consider additional cuts in public services such as health and education. These services are vital to New Brunswick's population. Furthermore, any reduction in funding to these services would have a substantive effect on women in

female-dominated fields, whether it be in the public or in the private sector in the case of services subcontracted by the government.

Women are generally the ones providing government regulated services in the private sector and are often underpaid. As resources are necessary to eradicate pay inequity in many of these services, the government might be tempted to use the province's deficit to justify inaction. However, maintaining pay inequity to overcome the deficit is simply not acceptable; women should not carry the burden of the deficit.

A study conducted by the former Advisory Council on the Status of Women in July 2008³ showed that reducing the degree of progressivity of personal income taxes would further benefit individuals with higher income, more often men than women. An increase in sales tax (HST) would also result in a widening of the after-tax wage gap between men and women.

It should also be reminded that only 20% of Canadians feel we should keep a low income tax level and cut services⁴.

Hence, the Coalition considers progressive income tax as the best way to reduce the deficit in an equitable and efficient manner. It shares this point of view with the Common Front for Social Justice and an important group of the province's economists⁵. In short, the Coalition supports the requests made by the Common Front for Social Justice to return to the income tax levels of 2008, and to introduce a new tax bracket of 21% on personal incomes exceeding \$150,000. The Coalition also recommends returning to the tax level of 2008 for corporations, at 13%, and to the 2011 level for small and medium-sized businesses, at 5%.

³ Kathleen A. Lahey. 2008. What About Women? Gender Analysis of Discussion Paper on New Brunswick's Tax System. <http://76.12.152.213/media/acsw/files/documents/What%20About%20Women.pdf> . Page consulted on February 7, 2013.

⁴ Environnics Institute for Survey Research.. 2012. The Common Good: Who Decides? A National Survey of Canadians. <http://www.environnicsinstitute.org/uploads/institute-projects/tf%202012%20survey%20-%20backgrounder%20-%20final%20november%2012-2012.pdf>. Page consulted on February 7, 2013.

⁵ *Statement by economists on NB's finances*, commentary published in the Telegraph-Journal, December 14, 2012.

PAY EQUITY LEGISLATION FOR THE ENTIRE PRIVATE SECTOR

The *Pay Equity Act, 2009* is limited to the public sector. Therefore, the Coalition continues to advocate for similar legislation for the private sector. Pay equity is as much a concern for the private sector as it is for the public sector. Investing financially in pay equity is investing in our province's future for a fairer society.

A study headed by economist, Ather Akbari, demonstrated that removing wage discrimination in New Brunswick would increase the province's income tax and sales tax revenues by about \$226 million, and would also result in savings of about \$60 million in healthcare services (income being a determinant factor in health)⁶.

Pay equity legislation for the private sector would therefore be profitable for the province and would improve the quality of life of its residents.

WOMEN'S VOICES

Following the Voices of Women Summit held in November 2011, the Coalition was invited to join a working group whose goal was to present to the provincial government recommendations on how to ensure that women's voices continue to be heard.

In short, this group is to suggest possible new mechanisms to adequately replace the former Advisory Council on the Status of Women which was abolished by the present government in the spring 2011.

The Coalition, along with the other members of this working group, sincerely hopes that the government will allocate the necessary funds for the proper implementation and functioning of this new mechanism.

⁶ Ather H. Akbari. 2004. Gender Wage-Gap in New Brunswick. Study prepared for GPI Atlantic, Halifax, N.S.

CONCLUSION

The Coalition welcomes the efforts of the government in matters relating to pay equity and its commitment to improve the economic state of the province of New Brunswick. In the eyes of the Coalition, both go hand in hand. It is vital for the government to tackle the province's economic recovery while respecting women's rights and aiming for a fair society.

On behalf of its more than 800 individual members and 84 member organizations, the Coalition urges the government to continue its work on pay equity in both public and private sectors, to respond favourably to the recommendations of the Women's Voices working group, and to put in place a progressive income tax system. The Coalition considers these measures to be necessary and reiterates its willingness to work with the government on all these issues.