

# EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK MONTANA TASK FORCE

## Moving Forward

An Update from the Task Force

### 2016 TASK FORCE SNAPSHOT

- The Equal Pay Task Force held its inaugural 2016 meeting on March 11th in Helena, which included planning and preparation for the Equal Pay Summit and a groundwork discussion on priority issues for the coming year.
- The Equal Pay Summit, held May 2-3, 2016, was a great success this year, bringing approximately 300 attendees to Montana State University for dynamic panels, speakers and wage negotiation trainings. The theme of the Summit was “Women in Business,” with Jen Welter, first woman to coach in the NFL, serving as the keynote speaker.
- In conjunction with Department of Administration State HR, the Task Force released a “Self-Audit Pay Primer” for Montana employers after identifying the need among public and private sector employers for guidance on conducting their own pay audits.
- On June 29th, the Task Force met to set its priorities for the upcoming legislative session, solidify its community initiative projects and receive information and updates on paid leave in Montana and State government Leading by Example initiatives.

### 2015 LEGISLATURE

The Task Force proposed three bills:

1. **HB 306, Rep. Jenny Eck.** This bill passed and provides for unemployment insurance benefits for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. Intimate partner violence is the leading cause of death on the workplace for women. Research shows that women transitioning to more economic independence face increased threats of domestic violence. This bill provides a safety net for victims of abuse (who are mostly women) to leave unsafe situations.
2. **SB 158, Sen. Diane Sands.** This bill did not pass, but it would have provided for wage transparency through a Paycheck Fairness Act designed specifically for Montana.
3. **SB 198, Sen. Mary Caferro.** This bill did not pass, but it would have solved an inequity in state employee benefits caused by a rule requiring service to be uninterrupted for the purpose of the longevity allowance calculation. This disproportionately affects female state employees due to leaves taken to care for children.

### EQUAL PAY SUMMITS

- The 2014 Equal Pay Summit in Bozeman featured Lilly Ledbetter as keynote speaker and more than 50 Montana leaders speaking on panels covering topics from leadership, to business, to STEM careers.
- The 2015 Equal Pay Summit in Butte featured Meredith Walker from Amy Poehler’s Smart Girls At the Party organization and focused on the importance of promoting women in STEM careers.
- The 2016 Summit was May 2-3 and features keynote speaker Jen Welter, the first woman to coach in the NFL. The Summit theme was Women in Business and featured related panels of women community

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leaders, entrepreneurs, and policy leaders to examine fair pay issues and best business practices to support and enhance women's work in the state. The Summit also hosted wage negotiation trainings on May 2nd for approximately 150 attendees. Registration reached maximum capacity.

## PAID LEAVE RESEARCH

The Task Force won a competitive national grant to study paid family leave through a program sponsored by the US Department of Labor Women's Bureau. This grant funded three reports that culminate in a model policy proposal prepared by the Montana Budget and Policy Center and two surveys—a business survey conducted by the Montana Department of Labor and a public opinion poll conducted by Lake Research Partners. This data was presented nationally at the U.S. Department of Labor Paid Family and Medical Leave Findings Symposium, and reports are available on the U.S. Women's Bureau website.

Highlights from the poll:

- 60-66% of Montanans support paid parental leave (support varies depending on maternal or maternal/paternal)
- 73% of Montanans support paid leave to care for an aging parent

## WAGE NEGOTIATION TRAININGS

In 2014, the Departments of Labor and Administration trained more than 40 people to serve as Wage\$mart trainers in Job Services, state agencies, and community nonprofit partners. The Wage\$mart trainings are focused on increasing women's ability to negotiate for higher pay. The Task Force also successfully advocated to bring \$tart\$mart, the college-based wage negotiation training, to each of the MSU campuses.

Through Job Service and ICCW, hundreds of Montanans have received Wage\$mart training in local communities. Job Service offices are now providing negotiation training one-on-one for job seekers who request this service. \$tart\$mart is being implemented statewide on campuses as well.

The 2016 Equal Pay Summit hosted the most recent wage negotiation training on May 2nd, with registration at maximum capacity.

Stay tuned for more information on the next stage of the Task Force's wage negotiation training initiative.

## CALL TO ACTION

- Due to their engagement on the Task Force, several Task Force members have become active in their communities to promote wage equity and workplace fairness.
  - Task Force member Deb Larson worked with a coalition in Bozeman to get a pay equity resolution passed by the City Commission.
  - President Waded Cruzado has been a force for change at MSU and university system-wide.
  - Jen Euell from the Women's Foundation has been able to grant funding to projects around the state aimed at closing the gender pay gap.
  - Pam Haxby-Cote in Butte and Aimee Grmojlez have been advocates and ambassadors to the business community so that employers better understand how to ensure that their employees are treated fairly.
  - Previous Task Force member Stevensville Mayor Gene Mim Mack conducted a pay audit of city employees in his home community.
  - These are just a few examples of the great work that individuals can achieve in their hometowns and surrounding communities.
- The Women's Policy Leadership Institute prepares Montana activists and advocates to make an impact for women across the spectrum. From voter education to pay equity to legislative advocacy and violence prevention—we cannot make meaningful change without the work of the people at WPLI.

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**LEADING BY EXAMPLE: Improving gender pay equity in state government**

- *Pay Audit.* The Department of Administration (DOA) conducted a pay audit of state employees to assess the state of pay equity and lead by example. While this audit found greater gender equity for state employees than in the private sector, there were significant numbers of female employees who are underemployed. Women are much more likely than men to work in jobs with higher qualifications than the minimum requirements for the job. DOA is conducting follow-up surveys and interviews to better understand this phenomenon and ensure that hiring and promotion practices promote gender equity and diversity in the state workforce. The State of Montana is currently working on the second pay audit and recommendations.
- The Department of Administration amended State contract language in May 2015 to require contractors to comply with Equal Pay Act of 1963. This contract is used by state agencies for the purchase of goods and services.
- The State of Montana has served as a resource for the gender pay equity initiatives in Missoula and Bozeman city governments.
- Montana State HR provided training to the Cabinet at the 2014 Managing Montana conference regarding unconscious gender bias training. Chief Economist Barb Wagner (DLI) toured the state with the Montana Chamber of Commerce at their mid-annual update economic tour. She presented research and information about the wage gap and fair pay.
- State HR is proposing changes to EEO/Nondiscrimination/Harassment Prevention rules. These changes include:
  - prohibiting discrimination or harassment based on pregnancy, childbirth, or medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth;
  - providing reasonable accommodations for pregnancy-related disabilities or medical conditions related to such.
  - provide EEO/Diversity action plans that include strategies and measureable goals and objectives to promote greater representation in underrepresented fields
  - new requirements for diversity/inclusion/equal opportunity training for all employees, including training reports
  - annual State HR progress reports on diversity metrics
- Agencies have reported:
  - outreach to college and university women for jobs with underrepresentation for women
  - focused outreach to professional organizations for STEM jobs. For example, an agency participated in a STEM expo for grade school kids, and promoted leadership training opportunity for women
  - provided targeted partnerships with schools or organizations for women
  - State HR has released a mentoring fact sheet for leaders and mentors throughout state government
  - The Interagency Committee for Change by Women (ICCW) surveyed members on their awareness of nursing mother rooms and their usability, sponsored a Work\$mart training for state government employees, hosted a webinar on women in business: simple skills to beat gender bias (8/11/2015), hosted a panel on Montana Women in STEM Panel (3/18/2015), hosted presentations on the pay audit, mentoring, Employee Assistance Program during monthly staff meetings and participated in the Montana STEM initiative

*Stay tuned for more updates from your Equal Pay for Equal Work Task Force.*