

2019 MAMAGENDA

Make salary history a thing of the past

The gender wage gap costs Washington women **\$18 billion** each year. You read that right.

Over the past few years, we've made progress toward closing the wage gap with passage of bills like pregnant workers accommodations, universalized paid sick and safe leave, paid family and medical leave, and the Equal Pay Opportunity Act. But with a problem this big, we need to tackle wage discrimination on all fronts. Next session, we have the opportunity to take a next step forward by passing legislation to prohibit potential employers from asking about salary history and creating more transparency around pay ranges.



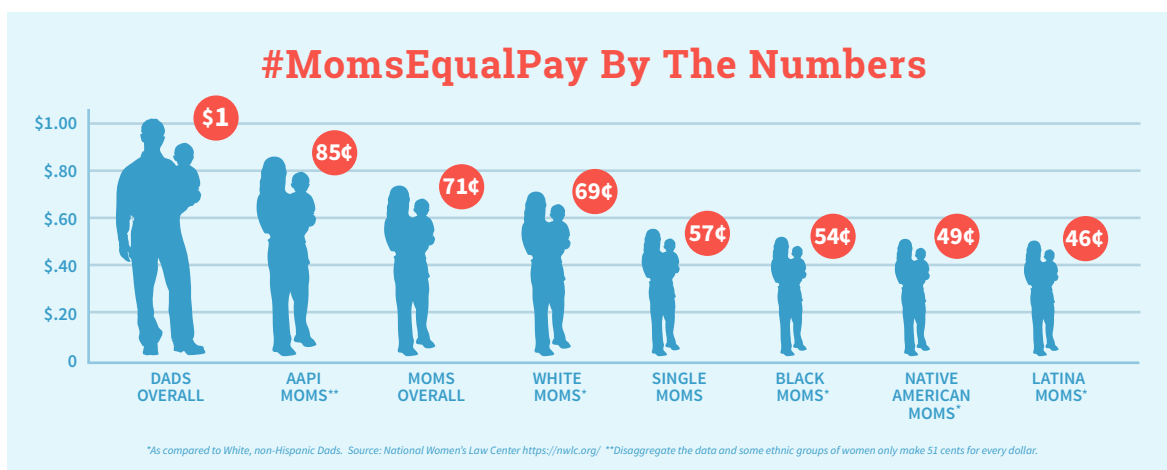
What's going on?

Salary history has a big role in perpetuating the wage gap. According to the National Women's Law Center:

Women job applicants, especially women of color, are likely to have lower prior salaries than their male counterparts. Indeed, women working full time, year-round typically are paid only 80 cents for every dollar paid to their male counterparts – and compared to white, non-Hispanic men, women of color face even larger wage gaps. Even when factors like race, region, unionization status, education, occupation, industry, and work experience are taken into account, 38 percent of the wage gap remains unexplained. Because women systematically are paid less than men, employers who rely on salary history to select job applicants and to set new hires' pay will tend to perpetuate gender- and race-based disparities in their workforce. [1]

What can we do about it?

Together, we can pass strong legislation to prohibit employers from asking about an applicant's salary history, require pay ranges on job postings, and give employees new rights to know where they are in the pay band for their current position. We can look to legislative proposals like SB 5555 and HB 1533 proposed by Senator Wellman and Representative Dolan from the 2017-18 legislative sessions as models for the 2019 legislative session.



Know your rights under WA's new Equal Pay Opportunity Act

The EPOA, passed into law just last year, gives workers new rights under Washington State law:

- 1. Protects the right of workers to share their wage or salary information with co-workers without fear of retaliation**
- 2. Creates a new right of action for women who are unfairly passed over for promotions or tracked into lower paying jobs**
- 3. Provides a new administrative remedy for wage discrimination (which means that women can ask the State to investigate wage discrimination claims without having to hire an attorney and file a lawsuit)**

SOURCES: [1] Asking for Salary History Perpetuates Pay Discrimination from Job to Job
<https://nwlc.org/resources/asking-for-salary-history-perpetuates-pay-discrimination-from-job-to-job/>

[2] Washington State Dept. of Labor and Industries: Equal Pay Opportunity Act: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/Wages/PayReq/EqualPay/default.asp>