

The Case for Pay Equity



Women's roles in the Canadian labour market has changed profoundly in recent generations. Women have entered the labour force in record numbers, are more strongly attached to the labour force than in previous years, and have made considerable gains in the kinds of characteristics typically rewarded in the labour market (such as experience and education). Women's skill levels (relative to men) have risen, as have women's educational levels and levels of job experience, and women have successfully infiltrated many previously male dominated occupations (Drolet 2001, Gunderson 1998).

Such changes reflect in part the fact that women's earnings have also become increasingly important for both their own and their families' economic well-being. Indeed, the single-earner family with one male 'breadwinner' now represents only 18 percent of Canadian families (Gunderson, 1998).