

## The Union Advantage for Women in Alberta

Many workers – both union and non-union – saw their wages drop during Alberta’s recession.

But one thing remains constant. When women are covered by unions, their wages keep better pace with men’s. Without unions, women – especially young women – are earning median hourly wages that are low by any measure and do not keep pace with the economy.

| <i>Unionized Men’s Median Hourly Wages – 2011, Alberta</i> | <i>Unionized Women’s Median Hourly Wages – 2011, Alberta</i> | <i>The Pay Gap: Women’s Wages as a % of Men’s</i> |
|--|--|---|
| Age 15-24 \$20.00  | Age 15-24 \$17.84  | 89%   |
| Age 25-54 \$29.67  | Age 25-44 \$26.44  | 89%   |
| Age 55+ \$31.00  | Age 55+ \$25.10  | 81%   |

| <i>Non-Unionized Men’s Median Hourly Wages – 2011, Alberta</i> | <i>Non-Unionized Women’s Median Hourly Wages – 2011, Alberta</i> | <i>The Pay Gap: Women’s Wages as a % of Men’s</i> |
|--|--|---|
| Age 15-24 \$15.00  | Age 15-24 \$12.00  | 80%   |
| Age 25-54 \$27.00  | Age 25-54 \$19.59  | 72%   |
| Age 55+ \$26.00  | Age 55+ \$18.00  | 72%   |

### The Pay Gap

Alberta has the highest pay gap in Canada. Alberta women working full year and full time earn a median 68 per cent of what men earn. But Canada wide, women earn 79 per cent of what men earn.

Unions in Alberta play an important role in gender equality. Alberta ranks poorly on a number of indicators of equality (investment in child care, provision of family leave, lack of a provincial child benefit, low employment standards and few health and safety protections for pregnant or breastfeeding women).

The Alberta Federation of Labour recently lobbied the Government of Alberta, asking for our province to include a voice for women in government as a way to ensure our province undertakes action on women’s equality. Every other province and territory in Canada has a minister responsible for the Status of Women or an Advisory Council on the Status of Women. It has been a year since the AFL asked the government for action on women’s issues, but there has been no response.

*Note to Editors on Sources: All figures are taken from Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Median hourly and weekly wage rates; female-to-male earnings ratios for full-time, full-year workers; union and non-union coverage.*