



Equal Pay and Opportunities Act

The Equal Pay and Opportunities Act (RCW 49.58) prohibits gender pay discrimination and promotes fairness among workers by addressing business policies and practices that contribute to income disparities between genders.

Both employees and job applicants have rights under this law.

Employee Rights

Equal Pay

Your employer cannot pay you less than other similarly employed employees because of your gender. Employees are “similarly employed” if they work for the same employer; the performance of their job requires similar skill, effort, and responsibility; and their jobs are performed under similar working conditions. Differences in pay for similar jobs may be acceptable only in certain circumstances not related to gender.

Equal Career Advancement Opportunities

Your employer cannot limit or deprive you of career advancement opportunities because of your gender.

Open Wage Discussions

Your employer cannot prohibit you from discussing wages. Your employer also cannot take an adverse action against you for inquiring about, disclosing, comparing, or otherwise discussing your wages with other employees, or for asking your employer about your wages or lack of career advancement opportunities.

Wage and Salary Range Disclosure

Your employer must provide you with the wage scale or salary range of a new position after a job offer is made for an internal transfer or promotion, upon your request. If a wage scale or salary range does not exist, your employer must provide you the minimum pay rate expectation set by the employer prior to posting the position. Note: This only applies to employers with 15 or more employees.

Retaliation

Your employer cannot retaliate against you for exercising your rights under this law, or for aiding or encouraging another employee to exercise his or her rights under the law.

Job Applicant Rights

Wage and Salary History Privacy

Employers cannot seek or request your wage or salary history when you are applying for a job. This includes questions on job application forms, even if the question is optional. However, an employer may confirm your wage or salary history if you voluntarily disclose the information or after you are offered a position and negotiated compensation.

Employers also cannot require that your prior wage or salary history meet certain criteria, such as requiring that you have previously earned a minimum specified amount, to consider you for a job.

Wage and Salary Range Disclosure

Employers must provide you with the minimum pay rate or salary of the position that you are applying for, if you request the information after you are offered the job. Note: This only applies to employers with 15 or more employees.

Think Your Rights Have Been Violated?

You can file a complaint with the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) if you think your rights were violated. *Equal Pay and Opportunities Act Complaint* form: www.Lni.wa.gov/go/F700-200-000.

You also have the right to take civil legal action against your employer. If a civil complaint is filed in court, L&I cannot investigate your complaint.

Contact Us

Call: 1-866-219-7321

Email: esgeneral@Lni.wa.gov

Web: www.Lni.wa.gov/EqualPay