

6 Ways to Help Identify Gender and Minority Wage Gap Issues

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Former ICMA President Lee Feldman reminds us that eliminating wage gaps is essential to attracting and cultivating a diverse and talented workforce.

Recently forbes.com reported that public administration ranked second out of 10 industries with the biggest gender wage gap. This seemed somewhat surprising (actually alarming), considering the proliferation of gender-neutral civil service systems in local and state government. Perhaps it is time that we do some self-examination of our own organizations to determine if a gender-based wage gap does exist.

I contacted Elliot Susseles, senior vice president with [Segal Waters Consulting](http://SegalWatersConsulting.com), a leader in public sector human resources, and asked him his thoughts on how local government administrators can assess whether there is a gender or minority wage gap in their organizations. He suggests using the following diagnostic:

Evaluate your Compensation System for Internal Equity

- Do you have a method to determine salaries and benefits?
- Do you use a method that ensures consistent pay for workers with substantially similar levels of experience and education who hold jobs calling for substantially similar degrees of skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions, even though job titles may be different?
- How does pay compare for positions with similar pay grades or scores within your organization?

Evaluate your Compensation System for Industry Competitiveness

- Have you evaluated your compensation system periodically to ensure that it meets equal employment opportunity goals?
- Do you have a method to determine the market rate for any given job?
- Are all market rates applied consistently?
- Are minority and non-minority workers compensated similarly relative to market rates?

Assess How Raises/Bonuses are Determined

- Do you have a consistent method of evaluating performance for all workers?
- Do men, women, and minorities receive consistent raises based on similar performance standards?
- Are men, women, and minorities with similar levels of performance awarded bonuses or variable rewards on a consistent basis? Do they receive bonuses of similar monetary value?

Conduct a Self-Audit of Recruitment Policies/Practices

- Do your sourcing and recruiting practices actively support and seek diversity from your qualified applicant pool?
- Do you regularly post job openings and salary ranges within the workplace?

Assess Your Job Evaluation System

- Do you have up-to-date job descriptions for all positions?
- Do you establish criteria for assigning values to skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions of jobs?
- Do you compare your system with market rates and other external competitiveness factors consistently?
- Do you assign consistent compensation to jobs within similar grades or scores?

Evaluate Opportunity for Training/Development and Advancement

- Do all employees have the same opportunities for professional development and promotion?
- How are workers selected for participation in training opportunities or special projects that lead to advancement?

ICMA and its 10,800+ members are committed to ensuring that local government reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. Ensuring the elimination of any gender (or other) wage gap is essential if we are to attract and cultivate a diverse and talented group of individuals dedicated to the highest ideals of public service.