

NCWBA 2013 Summit
August 9, 2013
Gender Equity – Moving the Bar Forward
San Francisco, California

Group on Gender Equity in Society, Patricia Sturdevant - moderator

The group had a lively discussion and reached consensus about the importance of collaborating with other women's organizations, specialty bars, and committees on women in the profession, as well as of enhancing transparency of salaries to put a spotlight on the need for pay equity. We also agreed that women lawyers can use our special training and skills to contribute significantly to educating women about gender based pay inequity and how to address it through community forums, speaking out, calls to action, Op Ed Pieces and "did you know" communications, which are all valuable tools. The group suggests that addressing the increase in family finances and purchasing power if women were paid salaries equal to those earned by men are important messages to convey to the public to show that pay equity is not just about women, but would benefit families and communities. Our recommendation is an educational program that could be readily developed and easily replicated around the country: A Toolkit for Negotiating Your Worth at Work, to empower women by enabling them to successfully negotiate for themselves.

The Project: A Toolkit for Negotiating Your Worth at Work Program. Using the techniques for effectively getting ahead in the workplace described by Professor Joan Williams, and the statistics on gender based pay inequity provided by Noreen Farrell of Equal Rights Advocates, develop a practical and effective approach that women can use to obtain changes in their compensation and work assignments and become full partners in the workplace.

Target Audience: Women and people of color working in the legal profession and in other jobs and occupations, since pay inequity is pervasive in our society.

Major Players and Leaders: Current and past leaders of women's bar groups and specialty bar associations, progressive political leaders, women in positions of power and influence in corporations and in the community, state and local government officials, and men who are similarly situated and understand the business value of promoting the advancement of women..

How to obtain Buy In: Form steering committee and strategic partnerships with other organizations, offer sponsorship opportunities, be inclusive of a variety of constituencies and interests, use social and mainstream media to increase awareness and attendance.

Needed Resources: Many of the resources are already available, and NCWBA could serve as a clearinghouse to provide information about the statistical pay gap, using materials developed by ERA, the National Committee on Pay Equity, and others.

Obstacles or high risks: Some women may be fearful of becoming involved in what could be perceived by their employers as a confrontational or divisive issue and believe that working hard is enough to be treated fairly and equitably in the workplace.

Similar Programs for Guidance: Oregon Women Lawyers is developing a similar program called “Pay Up” that could be very helpful. Lawyers Club’s community forum on pay equity and California Women Lawyers and Women Lawyers of Sacramento’s Unhappy Hour, both marking equal pay day and seeking to raise awareness of gender based pay inequity, may also be useful.

Measure of success: By the number of strategic partners obtained, attendees at the program, revenue obtained from program fees, feedback from participants and publicity of the program.

Publicity: Use social media and bar association newsletters to communicate the facts and consequences of pay inequity in articles by WBA leaders, and short “Did You Know” items. Enhance broader awareness by utilizing the mainstream and legal media through Opinion-Editorial pieces by WBA leaders, working with reporters on feature stories about the impact of pay inequity on children and families and letters to the editor