Maryland Commission for Women
Pay Equity Advisory Committee Meeting with MDOL

October 22, 2026 | 1:30 PM–3:30 PM

Maryland Commission for Women

OCTOBER 22, 2026 | 1:30–3:30 PM

Meeting Agenda

1:30 PM	I. Opening Remarks	Ariana Kelly & Secretary Portia Wu
1:45 PM	II. Equal Pay Commission: Background	Commissioner Virk
1:55 PM	III. Intent & Purpose of the Commission / Advisory Group	Ariana Kelly
2:00 PM	IV. 2026 Equal Pay Report & Data Benchmarking	Anupa Geevarghese
2:30 PM	V. National Landscape	Vasu Reddy, NWLC
3:00 PM	VI. Establishing Future Goals	Secretary Portia Wu
3:25 PM	VII. Next Steps & Adjournment	Ariana Kelly

Equal Pay Commission: Background & Statutory Origin

Read the full statute: Maryland Labor and Employment Article § 3–309

Statutory framework

- Commission membership and appointment structure
- Representation from business, labor, pay equity organizations, and higher education/research
- Composition should reflect Maryland's racial, gender, and geographic diversity
- Governor designates the Chair; members are unpaid but may receive expense reimbursement

Commission charge

- Evaluate wage disparities across public and private sectors
- Establish employer data collection mechanisms
- Recommend equal-pay best practices and study legal/administrative processes
- Share findings to support enforcement; build partnerships for data, outreach, and funding

Questions & Discussion

Discussion focus: How can the Commission's statutory mandate be supported with stronger data, partnerships, and implementation capacity?

Six Core Statutory Duties

01 Evaluate Wage Disparities

Assess public- and private-sector disparities across race, sex, and gender identity.

02 Enable Employer Data Collection

Establish a mechanism for collecting employer data to evaluate disparities.

03 Recommend Best Practices

Develop strategies for equal pay for equal work for individuals, employers, and policymakers.

04 Harmonize Processes

Study and make recommendations regarding whether and to what extent administrative and legal processes and remedies can be streamlined and harmonized across this and other employment anti-discrimination laws.

05 Build Partnerships and Resources

Work across public and private sectors on data, outreach, and potential funding.

06 Support Enforcement

Share data and findings directly with the Commissioners to assist in enforcement actions.

Highlights: How Labor & Industry's Work Connects

Wage and Labor Standards Enforcement

- Over 1,000 wage claims investigated in FY 2026 (72% increase since FY 2023)
- $1,115,316 in wages recovered in FY 2026 (80% within 90 days)
- Most claims are under $5,000

Implementation of Pay Transparency Laws

- Compliance materials and webinar developed for employers (2,998 registered attendees), with key materials posted online receiving many thousands of unique visitors
- Enforcement of pay range and paystub laws (investigation and compliance letters)

Partnership with MDH on Implementation of SB 371 (2024) - Residential Service Agencies Annual Report

- Second year of data collection from residential service agencies regarding personal care aide compensation, benefits, and retention
- Anonymized data made publicly available



1:55 PM | ARIANA KELLY

Intent & Purpose of the Advisory Group/Commission

Align the Equal Pay Commission's statutory structure & responsibilities with the practical work needed to advance pay equity in Maryland.

Why this meeting?

With new staff resources, the Commission for Women is available to provide staff support for a reinvigorated Equal Pay Commission.

This is timely.

What the advisory group can advance

Stakeholder expertise from around state
Focused attention on making Maryland a leader in Equal Pay policies.
Address barriers to data collection.

State of Maryland

Maryland Equal Pay Report 2026



Anupa Geevarghese, Esq.

Director of Policy

Maryland Department of Labor, Office of the Secretary

Date: October 22, 2026

Maryland Leads Nationally But the Gap Persists

87¢ per $1.00 (5th Smallest Gap in U.S.)

From 2020–2024, Maryland women working year-round were paid 87¢ for every $1 men earned, compared to 82¢ nationwide.

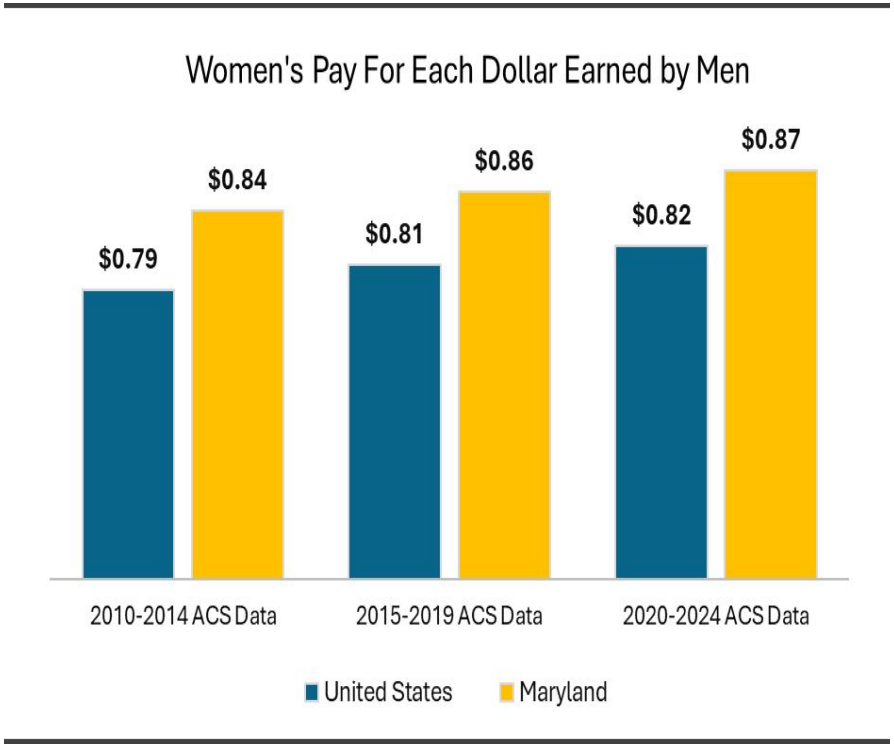
$70,211 Median Earnings (3rd Highest in U.S.)

Maryland women had median earnings of $70,211 relative to $55,274 nationwide. The median earnings for Maryland women working full-time are the third-highest in the nation.

78%+ Labor Force Participation

More than 78% of Maryland women between the ages of 25 and 54 participate in paid work in the labor force.

Historical Wage Comparison: Maryland vs. United States

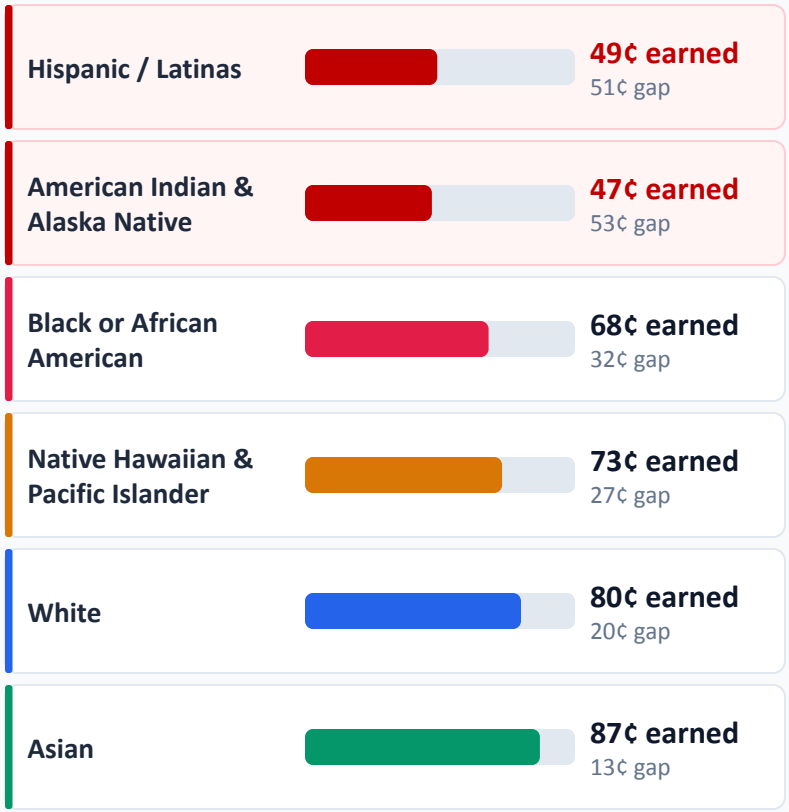


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Equal Pay is an Intersectional Issue

In Maryland, for every dollar a white, non-Hispanic man makes:

Cents Earned & Wage Gap per Dollar



Lifetime Wage Gap & National Rank

Hispanic / Latinas	> $1.9 Million Lifetime Wage Gap	3rd Highest Gap
American Indian & Alaska Native	> $2.0 Million Lifetime Wage Gap	3rd Highest Gap
Black or African American	> $1.2 Million Lifetime Wage Gap	16th Highest Gap
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander	> $1.0 Million Lifetime Wage Gap	22nd Highest Gap
White	> $760,000 Lifetime Wage Gap	9th Highest Gap
Asian	> $490,000 Lifetime Wage Gap	29th Highest Gap

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Gender Wage Gaps by County

Prince George's County Leads at $1.09

Women earn less than men in 23 of 24 counties. Prince George's is the sole exception where women are paid $1.09 for every dollar a man makes. Baltimore City and Charles County follow with the smallest negative gaps ($0.95).

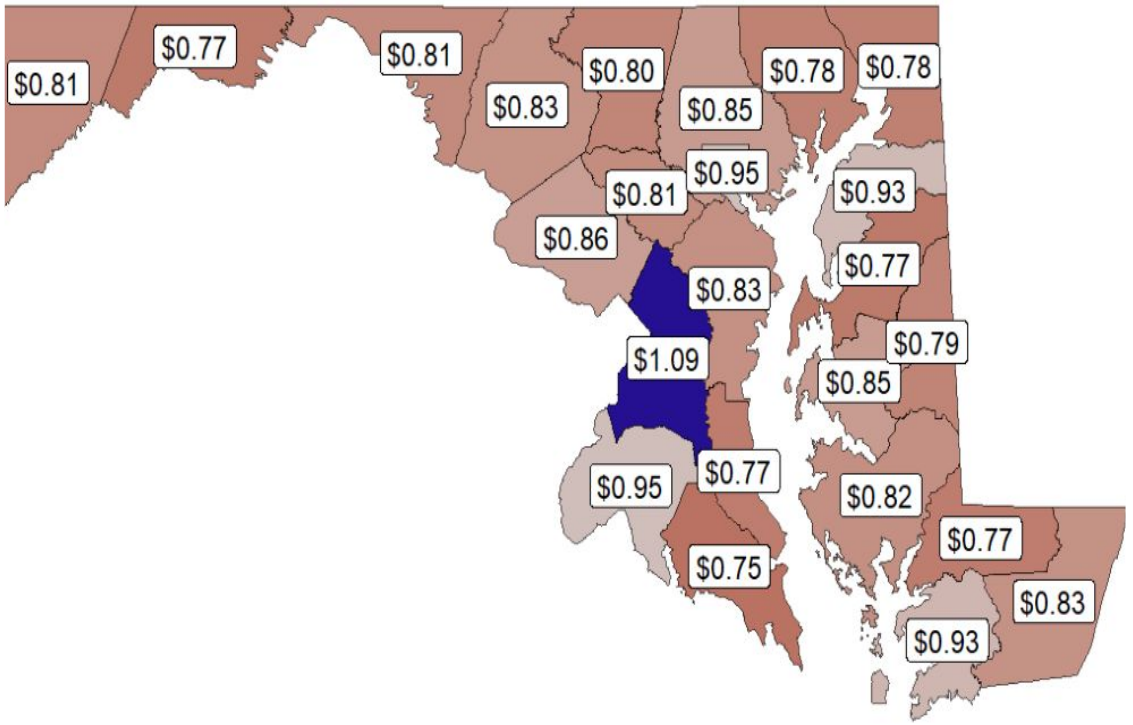
Wider Wage Gaps in Rural Counties

Wage gaps are generally larger in rural areas. All three Western Maryland counties exceed statewide and national gap averages. Seven of nine Eastern Shore counties also exhibit larger gaps than the national average.

Demographic Insight: Washington County

In Washington County, Asian women earn $1.31 for every $1 earned by a white, non-Hispanic man.

Maryland Wage Gap Ratio by County ($ per $1.00)



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Wage Gap By Education

Greatest Gap: High School Non-Graduates

The gender pay gap is greatest for Maryland women with less than a high school diploma or equivalent, reaching a 35-cent pay gap per dollar.

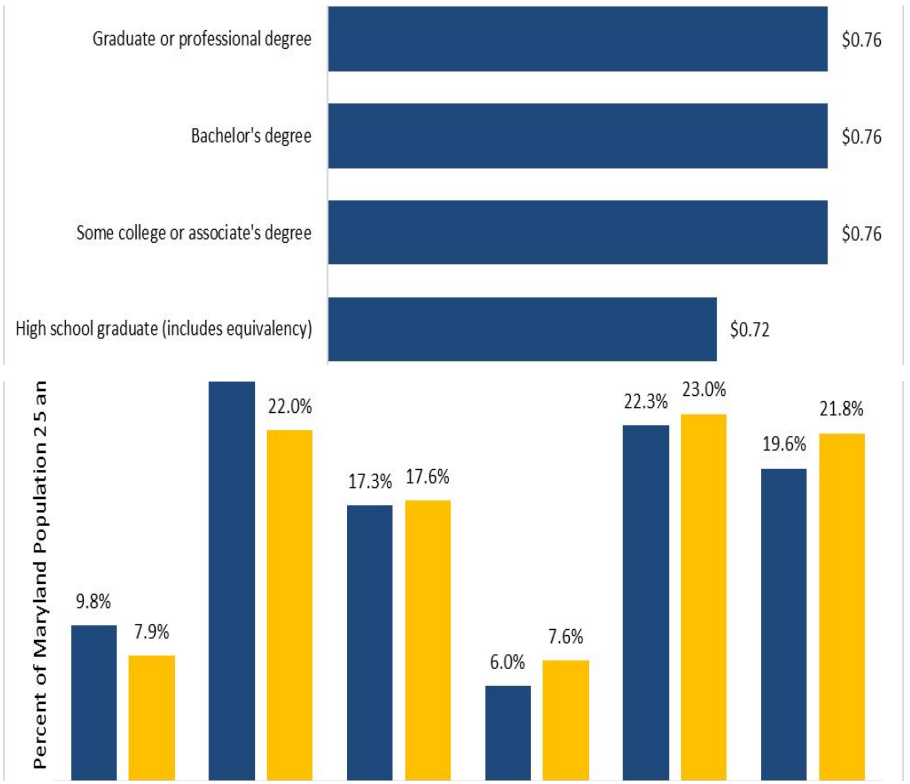
Smallest Gap: Higher Educational Degrees

The wage gap is smallest for women with some college, an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, or a graduate/advanced degree (wage gap of 24 cents).

Key Finding: Education Is Not The Primary Driver

Disparities in educational attainment do not appear to be drivers of the gender wage gap in Maryland.

Educational Attainment & Pay Differences in Maryland



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Drivers of the Wage Gap: Occupational Crowding

Crowded Into Low-Wage Occupations

Women in Maryland are generally crowded into (overrepresented in) low-wage occupations. Median wage and salary income in these top occupations is below the Maryland median of $58,050 as of 2024.

- Childcare Workers:$35,150
- Maids and housekeeping cleaners: $34,100
- Hairdressers, hair stylists, and cosmetologists: $36,440
- Nursing assistants: $40,000
- Preschool and kindergarten teachers: $44,935

Crowded Out of Higher-Wage Trades

Five key occupations women are crowded out of have median wages above the statewide level ($58,050):

- First-Line Supervisors: $76,800
- Electricians: $65,650
- HVAC Technicians: $65,000
- Plumbers & Steamfitters: $63,270
- Carpenters: $60,130

Occupational Crowding for Ten Largest Occupations in Maryland

Occupation	Crowding Ratio	Median Wages
General and Operations Managers	0.87	$105,320
Retail Salespersons	1.04	$34,310
Secretaries & Admin Assistants	1.90	$46,800
Cashiers	1.50	$32,870
Registered Nurses	1.67	$96,830
Fast Food and Counter Workers	1.50	$31,200
Laborers & Freight, Stock Movers	0.49	$40,240
Janitors and Cleaners	0.87	$36,090
Customer Service Representatives	1.40	$40,310
Stockers and Order Fillers	0.79	$38,340

Drivers of the Wage Gap: Caregiving Responsibilities

Infant Care & Childcare Costs

$19,916 / year ($1,660/mo)

Maryland has the **11th most expensive** infant care in the nation. (Source: Economic Policy Institute)

Child Care Workforce Impact

Crowding ratio: **2.05** (Highest in MD) | Median: **$35,150**



Motherhood Wage Disparity

Maryland has the smallest wage gap for mothers in the U.S., yet significant disparities remain:

76¢

Full-Time, Year-Round Mothers

Earned for every $1.00 earned by fathers.

69¢

All Working Mothers

Includes part-time and part-year workers vs. fathers.

Positive Advancements

Time to Care Act (2022)

Establishes MD's Family & Medical Leave Insurance (FAMLI) program at MD Department of Labor.

- **Implementation:** Program benefits start in **2028**.
- **Coverage:** Supports **2.5 million** Maryland workers.
- **Duration:** Up to **12 weeks** of job-protected paid leave annually.
- **Wage Benefit:** Payments up to **$1,000 / week**.

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Drivers of the Wage Gap: Pay Standards & Pay Transparency

While women represent just under half of the workforce, they comprise nearly two-thirds of low-paid workers—with women of color disproportionately represented—driving the persistent gender wage gap.

What Can Be Done? Policy Levers & Legislative Action

1. Raising Low-Wage Pay

Minimum Wage to $15.00/hr

Effective Jan 1, 2024, Maryland raised the minimum wage for all workers, providing a direct lift to women in caregiving and service sector roles.

2. Reducing Disparities

Wage Range Transparency Act

Requires all Maryland job postings to list clear wage/salary info, bridging information gaps between employers and workers (2024).

3. Negotiating Power

Equal Pay for Equal Work Act

Mandates public and private employers to disclose pay ranges, benefits, and compensation descriptions across all job postings.

Impact & Results Since Passage of the Equal Pay for Equal Work Law, as amended (Sept 2024 – Mar 2026)

139,000

Homepage Views

Visited by over 101,000 unique users on the Employment Standards Service site.

65,000+

Resources Accessed

Downloads & views of webinars, FAQs, pay stub templates, and disclosure forms.

62

Compliance Notices

Employers notified regarding non-compliance with transparency laws since enactment.

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Drivers of the Wage Gap: Low Unionization Rates

Only 10% of the U.S. workforce is unionized, with women experiencing lower unionization rates than men. In Maryland, union membership stands at 12.7%. Expanding union representation and targeted policy levers are critical to addressing persistent wage disparities. (BLS, Union Members - 2025)

1. Union Rates & Gender Gap

9.6% women vs **10.4%** men

- **National Rate:** 10.0% of U.S. workers unionized (14.7M total).
- **Maryland Rate:** 12.7% of wage and salary workers.
- **Membership Totals:** 6.8 million women vs. 7.9 million men.
- **Historical Progress:** The gender gap narrowed significantly since 1983 (when rates were 24.7% for men and 14.6% for women).

2. Union Wage Advantage

+$241/wk

Women's Union Earnings Premium

Weekly Earnings for Women (16+):

- **Union Members:** **$1,297** / week
- **Represented by Union:** $1,270 / week
- **Non-Union Workers:** $1,056 / week

Weekly Earnings for Men:

- **Union Members:** $1,487 | Non-Union: $1,289

3. Policy Levers for Equity

- **Skills-Based Hiring**

Emphasize practical competencies over rigid degree constraints to broaden access.

- **Apprenticeship Programs**

Expand and diversify registered apprenticeship pathways into skilled trades and tech.

- **Strategic Workforce Training**

Target education investments toward high-growth, high-wage growth industries.

Goal: Enable more women and people of color to secure high-wage positions.

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Questions?

Federal and State EEO Data Collection Laws

Vasu Reddy, National Women's Law Center

Presented to Maryland Commission for Women and Maryland Department of Labor

October 22, 2026

Federal EEO-1 Component 1 (Demographic Data)

- Adopted: 1966
- Covered employers:
  - Private employers with 100+ employees
  - Federal contractors with 50+ employees
- Frequency: Annual
- Agency: EEOC, OFCCP
- Data: Number of employees by race/ethnicity, sex, and job category, during snapshot period

Federal EEO-1 Component 1 (Demographic Data), cont'd.

- Race/ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino or Not Hispanic or Latino; white, Black or African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Two or More Races. Voluntary self-ID is preferred method.
- Sex: Male, Female
- Job categories: Executive/Senior Level Officials and Managers, First/Mid Level Officials and Managers, Professionals, Technicians, Sales Workers, Administrative Support Workers, Craft Workers, Operatives, Laborers and Helpers, and Service Workers

Federal EEO-1 Component 2 (Compensation Data)

- Adopted: 2016
- Covered employers: Private employers and federal contractors with 100+ employees
- Data: Within each pay band, number of employees and total hours worked by race, ethnicity, sex, job category
  - Pay bands based on Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupation Employment Statistics (OES)
  - Total annual compensation determined using W-2 earnings
  - Total annual hours worked based on employer's own tracking, or standard number of hours for FLSA-exempt employees

EEO-1 Rescission Timeline

- 2017: OMB issues “review and stay” of compensation data collection. NWLC and partners file FOIA requests, sue under Administrative Procedures Act and Paperwork Reduction Act.
- 2019: U.S. District Court for D.C. orders administration to reinstate data collection.
- 2020: EEOC discontinues compensation data collection.
- 2026: EEOC announces that it will discontinue all five demographic data collections.

State EEO Data Collection Laws

State	California	Illinois	Massachusetts	Colorado
Year	2020 (decoupled 2022)	2021 (decoupled 2025)	2024	2026
Employers	Private employers with 100+ employees or 100+ labor contractor employees, at least one of whom is in CA	Private employers with 100+ employees in IL	Employers with 100+ employees in MA that are subject to federal EEO-1 report*	Private employers doing business in CO with 100+ employees who, as of 3/1/26, is required to submit federal EEO-1 report
Frequency	Annual	Biennial	Annual	Annual (or biennial by discretion)
Agency	Civil Rights Department	Department of Labor	Secretary of the Commonwealth	Secretary of State

State EEO Data Collection Laws, cont'd.

State	California	Illinois	Massachusetts	Colorado
Demographic Data	Number of employees in each job category by race, ethnicity, and gender	Individualized data: gender, race, ethnicity; county; hire date; whether employee is covered by CBA	Number of employees in each job category by race, ethnicity, and gender	Number of employees in each job category by race, ethnicity, and gender
Compensation Data	Number of employees in pay bands and median/mean hourly pay rate by job category, race, ethnicity, gender	Individualized data: total wages; hourly/salary classification; if hourly, hourly pay rate	No (coupled with federal law)	No
Additional	No	Equal pay	No	No

State EEO Data Collection Laws, cont'd.

State	California	Illinois	Massachusetts	Colorado
Confidentiality/ Publication	May publish aggregate data – must be reasonably calculated to prevent association with any individual business or person	Individual data is confidential and not subject to FOI; aggregate data or decision on whether to issue, revoke, or suspend certificate is not confidential	Employer data reports are not considered public records subject to FOI; department shall publish aggregate data annually	Not specified
Funding?	Civil penalties ($100-$1,000) for failure to comply; deposited into Civil Rights	$150 application fee	Not specified	Appropriation ($43,210)

Additional Resources – Federal

National Women's Law Center:

- Fact Sheet: EEOC's Latest Attack on Civil Rights: Eliminating Workforce Data Collection
- Resource Collection: EEO-1 Pay Data Collection

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: Evaluation of Compensation Data Collected Through the EEO-1 Form

EEOC: 2024 EEO-1 Component 1 Data Collection Instruction Booklet

Additional Resources – State

National Women's Law Center:

- Fact Sheet: EEOC's Latest Attack on Civil Rights: Eliminating Workforce Data Collection
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National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: Evaluation of Compensation Data Collected Through the EEO-1 Form

Additional Resources – State

California

- Law
- Pay Data Reporting FAQ
- Pay Data Reporting Handbook for Employers
- Pay Data Dashboard

Colorado

- Law

Massachusetts

- Law
- Workforce Data Reporting FAQs
- Workforce Data Interactive Dashboard

Illinois

- Law
- Equal Pay Registration Certificate FAQs
- IDOL & UIUC: Evaluation of Pay Data Collection

Contact Information

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202-384-2336

Establishing Future Goals

PW

PRESENTER

Secretary Portia Wu

Department of Labor

3:25 PM | ARIANA KELLY

Next Steps & Adjournment

Action Items

- Initiate outreach to business community leaders and industry representatives in disproportionately impacted sectors.
- Identify potential partners across business, academia, community organizations, and policy.
- Confirm follow-up responsibilities and immediate next steps.
- Presentations from Vasu and Anupa will be shared following the meeting, alongside the updated Advisory Group participant roster.

Adjourn Meeting

Thank you!