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Update on Pay Equity Reports Since August 2017 Sector Conference

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In the approximately 18 months since our last sector conference, several locals have continued their push for pay equity for women and minorities or plan to do so. And a newly organized group, the Los Angeles Times Guild, sought salary data as soon as workers voted to join TNG.

IAPE (Local 1096): IAPE, which represents journalists at the Wall Street Journal and other Dow Jones organizations, is the mother of the Guild's focus on pay equity. This local did the first such study, and other locals, especially Philadelphia, credit IAPE for prompting them to study salaries.

The first study, published in 2016, was a “bombshell revelation,” said Tim Martell, IAPE's executive director. “People said ‘you put out an eyebrow-raising report, but there wasn't a lot of detail.’”

The main question raised was whether men and women were paid differently when they had the same experience and did the same work. Follow-up studies in 2017 and 2018 came up with the same answer: yes.

Since the studies were published, hundreds of employees have sought pay reviews. The studies have allowed those workers to have more informed conversations with their managers.

Management has spoken more with an employer-sponsored group called Women@DJ than with IAPE, Martell said. At an event hosted by that group, managers indicated that they don't think there is a pay equity problem, but they have moved to fix discrepancies where they see them.

The data also shows that the Wall Street Journal has very few people of color in certain positions, particularly as reporters. That hiring imbalance made it difficult to discern salary inequities between people of color and white people.

NewsGuild of Greater Philadelphia (Local 38010): This local reports greater cooperation from management on the issue of pay equity than any other within TNG. Christine Bonanducci, a consultant for the local, said significant progress continues to be made although pay inequity still exists in a few classifications.

"The goal is pay equity in all classifications," Bonanducci said. "The Guild was ahead of the curve when it addressed this issue in 2016. It has now become a major national issue."

In 2016, newly hired female reporters made approximately 16 percent less than male reporter new hires. Today, new hire salaries for female reporters are on par with new hire salaries for male reporters that were hired prior to 2017. The highest gap is at 20-plus years of service, but that difference in wages continues to close with each analysis.

Progress has been made in diversity hiring as well, she said, with 38 people of color (19.2 percent) now working in the Inquirer/Daily News and Philly.com newsroom, compared to 28 (12.7 percent) when the study began.

The Guild and managers now have a good working relationship and are working on a joint two-year plan to address pay equity adjustments, performance-based merit increase criteria and minority recruitment and retention, Bonanducci said.

Washington-Baltimore NewsGuild (Local 32035): Washington Post unit Chair Freddy Kunkle said Post management "took a very aggressive stance against us" and argued that no pay disparity existed.

But, as WBNG Executive Officer Cet Parks told the 2017 sector conference, the local, using management-provided data from 2014, found that on average, women earned 86 percent of what men earned and people of color earned 85 percent of what white employees earned.

During the most recent bargaining, management agreed to a provision that allows employees to see a pay review. In general, that means the Post will review that employee's salary and the salaries of others in the same unit or team.

"More importantly, we have heard all around the company that since the Guild began pushing this issue, many women have sought pay reviews and received raises afterward," Kunkle wrote in an email. "Others have received raises – and assurances from some managers that it had nothing, nothing at all, to do with the Guild's campaign."

But of course, those raises had everything to do with WBNG's campaign.

Minnesota Newspaper and Communications Guild (Local 37002): Local President Janet Moore said the group received updated data in 2017, which wasn't as complete as information it first received in 2016 from the Star-Tribune.

The numbers showed that some progress was made: the makeup of the newsroom is now 18 percent nonwhite compared to 16 percent before. Women on the whole narrowed the pay gap by three-quarters of a percentage point – 95.5 cents for every dollar earned by a man compared to 94.8 cents previously.

Negotiations will resume this spring and the local will request more updated data. She expects the pay gap to shrink more, not because of increased salaries, but because many of the people who retired over the past year tended to earn more pay over wage scales.

NewsGuild of New York, Local 31003: At the 2017 sector conference, local President Grant Glickson reported that a union study released in May 2016 revealed that people of color at the New York Times earn, on average, 10 percent less than their white counterparts. Women earned 7 percent less than men, Glickson said.

Management then conducted its own study and make a handful of adjustments without discussing them with the union.

Since then, the local has worked with CWA on a follow-up report that isn't completed yet.

Los Angeles Times Guild: Anthony Pesce, co-chair of the bargaining unit and a leader of the organizing campaign, said pay equity emerged as a top priority during organizing. The group got the data soon after the vote to join TNG, and Pesce, a data journalist, crunched the numbers. They showed that women and people of color are paid dramatically less even when accounting for age, which Pesce used as a proxy for experience.

During bargaining, management and the owner have agreed that they need to address what they call "pay leveling," Pesce said. While he's not convinced that management pay proposals fully address the issue, the local has gotten a tentative agreement on language involving pay equity, he said. A member can file a grievance over a pay equity issue and get the same civil remedies they would under California law.

But when a member chooses to file through the Guild, he or she gives up the option to sue civilly, which made the language appealing to management.

One unusual result of the study was that the previous owner, Tronc, filed an unfair labor practice against the group when it released the numbers. The new owner pulled the ULP after the sale of the Times.