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**Defining Comparable Worth/Pay Equity**

**Comparable Worth** (also called job title pay equity) - A reform effort to pay different job titles based on their value to their employer regardless of the gender/race predominance of those working in such titles.

At the heart of comparable worth or job title pay equity reform is the fact that jobs traditionally done by women and people of color have been systematically undervalued in the marketplace. The net result is that these jobs are paid less than comparable jobs with the same levels of skills and responsibilities but commonly held by white males. This bias can be demonstrated and subsequently eliminated by assessing the economic value of different jobs through the use of a gender-neutral job evaluation system. For example, food service, nurse, maintenance, dispatcher, supply clerk and drafting jobs can be compared using job evaluation factors such as the education/training necessary, the working conditions and the responsibility (for budgets, supervision, health and safety, etc.) required.

Pay equity studies seek to differentiate legitimate job title wage differences from those that are solely a function of the gender/race of the typical job incumbent. Some job title salary inequities are blatant. For instance, some school districts pay secretaries and teaching assistants (job titles that require associate degrees) less than the cleaners. School nurses in the West Islip school district once started at $27,000, while groundskeepers started at $29,000. In Denver, nurses were found to make less than gardeners. To establish and eliminate such job title salary inequities, the comparable value of these dissimilar job titles is established using a job evaluation system and the job titles are paid accordingly.

“Does that explain the differences in our salaries?”