

## **PROGRAM ON A PAGE (or two)**

### **PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF THE PAY GAP**

Women working full time earn about 75 percent of what men working full time earn. Even after considering job tenure, years in the labor market, occupation, education, and other factors usually associated with pay, about 20 percent of the gap remains unexplained. Do Americans know about this disparity? Why do they think there is a pay gap? In March 2005, the AAUW Educational Foundation commissioned a nationally representative poll conducted by Lake, Snell, Perry, Mermin and Associates to learn about common perceptions of the pay gap.

#### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH**

Americans are well aware that a pay gap exists between male and female full-time workers, according to AAUW's research.

Eighty-one (81) percent of women and 69 percent of men agree that there is a difference between the wages of male and female full-time workers.

Only 12 percent of women believe there is no gender gap, compared with 24 percent of the men surveyed.

Women are more likely to believe there is a pay gap, and they estimate a bigger gap, on average, than do men.

Men and women ages 45 and older are more likely than younger adults to strongly agree that there is a pay gap.

Democratic and Republican women agree that a pay gap exists and believe that a key reason for it is that employers don't promote young women because employers believe women will leave if they have children.

Over half (56 percent) of Americans include employers' unwillingness to promote young women because they may leave when they have children as either the first (29 percent) or second (27 percent) most important reason for the pay gap.

About 41 percent say it is because women prioritize family over work and are less committed to their careers. An identical number (41 percent) say it is because employers discriminate against women in their hiring and promotion practices.

About a fifth of Americans (28 percent) chose gender differences in negotiation and assertiveness as a leading factor.

Only 12 percent of adults think there is a wage gap because men are more likely to have the education and skills needed for higher paying jobs.

Women's skills and educational attainment are not considered an important factor in the gender pay gap by either men or women —work/family balance issues, employers' perceptions of women's family commitments, and discrimination by employers are considered more important.

This information is from the AAUW website and was provided by Deb Trombley of the Escanaba Area branch.