ACEC
BRITISH COLUMBIA

acec-bc.ca

BC Pay Transparency Reporting

Insights and Practical Guidance for Consulting Engineering Firms

By ACEC-BC's Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee

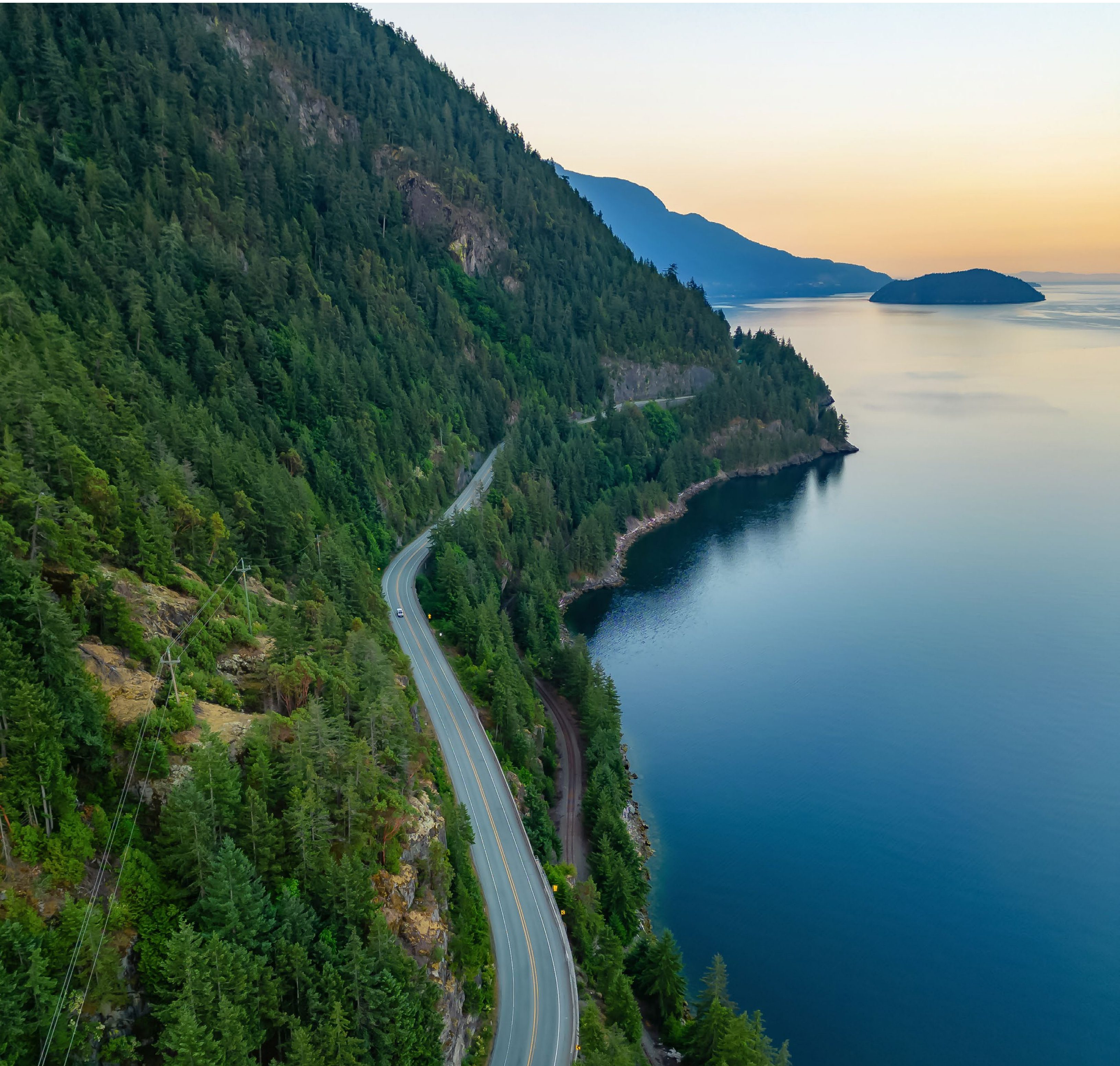
June 2026

Introduction and Purpose

This guide, developed by ACEC-BC's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, supports member firms in developing pay transparency reporting under the BC Pay Transparency Act. It reflects ACEC-BC's commitment to advancing fair, inclusive, and transparent workplace practices across the consulting engineering industry.

This resource is intended for those preparing or overseeing pay transparency reporting, which may include HR professionals, firm leadership, and finance teams.

It provides practical insights and lessons learned from firms that have reported, to help organizations approach reporting, interpret results, and communicate effectively. This guide does not replace official government requirements or provide legal advice.



ACEC-BC's Position on Pay Transparency and Pay Equity

ACEC-BC views pay transparency as a meaningful, evidence-based tool for advancing pay equity and addressing systemic wage gaps. When implemented thoughtfully, it can strengthen fairness, accountability, and trust within organizations.

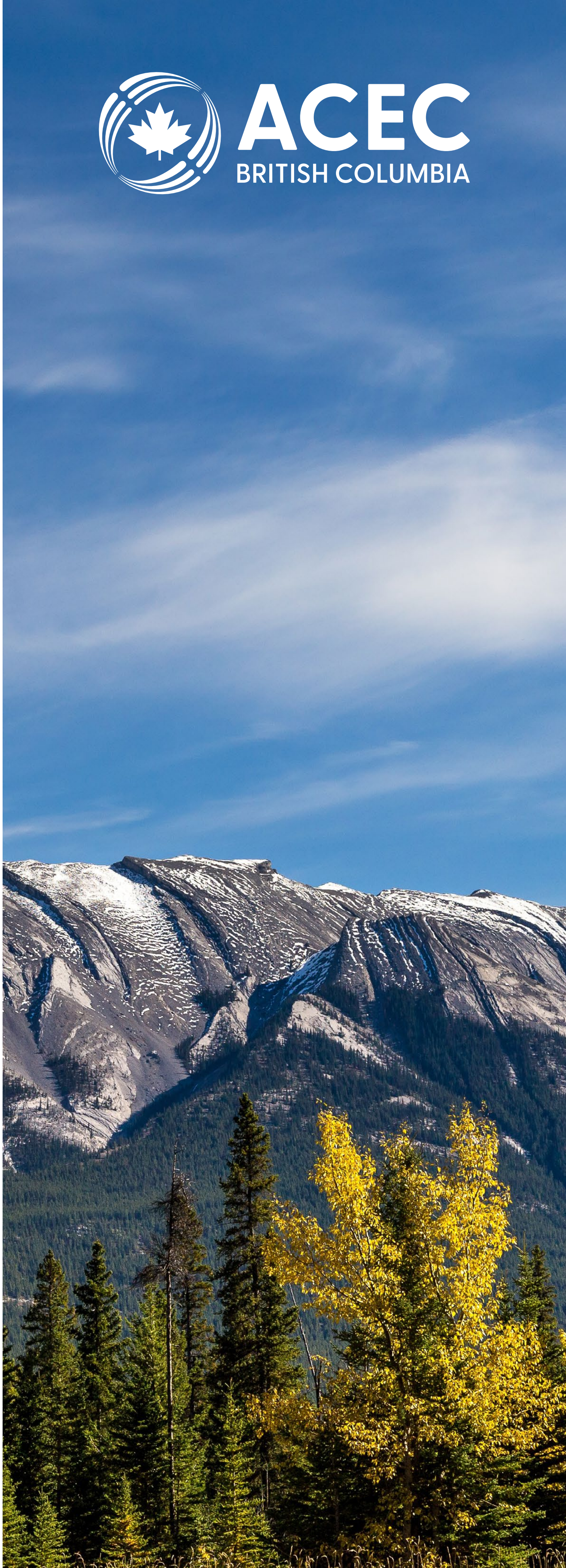
At the same time, compensation in the consulting engineering sector is nuanced and is influenced by factors such as:

- Experience and career stage
- Role type and responsibilities
- Performance and specialized skills
- Regional labour market conditions and participation rates
- Overtime eligibility and practices
- Incentive pay, profit sharing, and ownership structures
- Non-monetary benefits

These factors provide context that is not captured in aggregate reporting.

ACEC-BC recognizes the value of pay transparency reporting while noting that the current report format on its own may not paint a complete picture. Meaningful use of reporting requires interpretation, clear communication, and supporting internal analysis.

Pay transparency is not an endpoint, but one component of a broader, ongoing effort to advance equity, inclusion, and excellence across the consulting engineering industry.



Overview of the BC Pay Transparency Act

The BC Pay Transparency Act, in force since May 11, 2023, is provincial legislation intended to increase transparency in pay practices, reduce gender-based pay gaps, and support more equitable and consistent compensation decisions.

The Act includes several key requirements:

- Job postings must include a realistic pay rate or range
- Pay history bans prevent employers from asking about past compensation
- Reprisal protections allow employees to discuss and inquire about pay without fear of retaliation
- Pay transparency reporting was phased in for employers based on number of employees with reporting for organizations with 50+ employees required as of November 2026.

This guide focuses on pay transparency reporting, which supports visibility into pay practices and helps organizations identify potential gaps.

Firms can review resources published by the BC government including guides and samples, as well as publicly available pay transparency reports from organizations that have already reported (e.g. larger firms subject to earlier requirements) to inform them how they structure and present their own reporting. Where possible, firms should also look to similar organizations, as results can vary based on the sector.

To learn more visit the BC Government website.

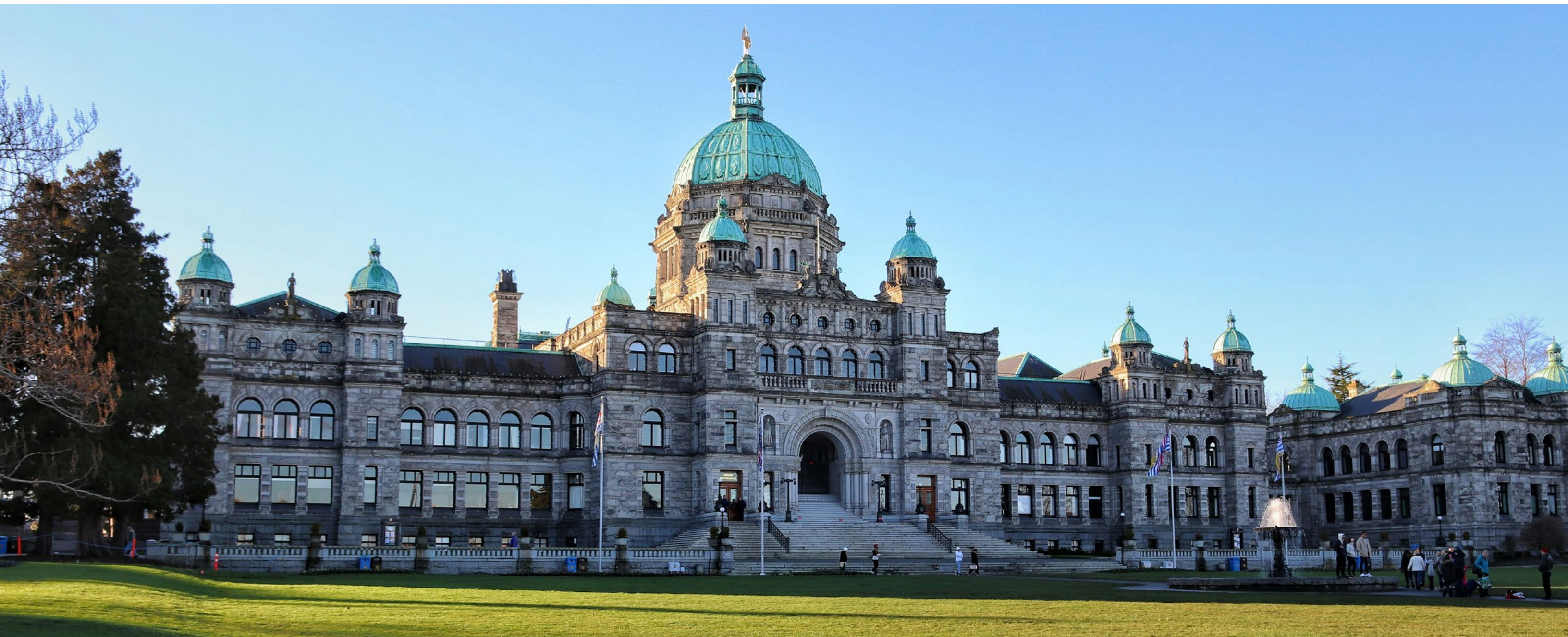
Reporting Requirements

Pay transparency reporting was introduced by the province through a phased approach based on employer size:

- 2024: 1,000+ employees
- 2025: 300+ employees
- 2026: 50+ employees

Employers that meet the threshold must publish a report annually by November 1 on a publicly accessible website. Reporting requirements apply to provincially regulated employers with employees in BC.

Larger consulting engineering firms are already reporting, and many more will be required as the threshold decreases to 50+ employees in 2026. Pay transparency reports are completed using the Pay Transparency Reporting Tool. Reports summarize compensation in the areas of salary, overtime, and bonuses, and analyze results by gender to identify potential gaps.



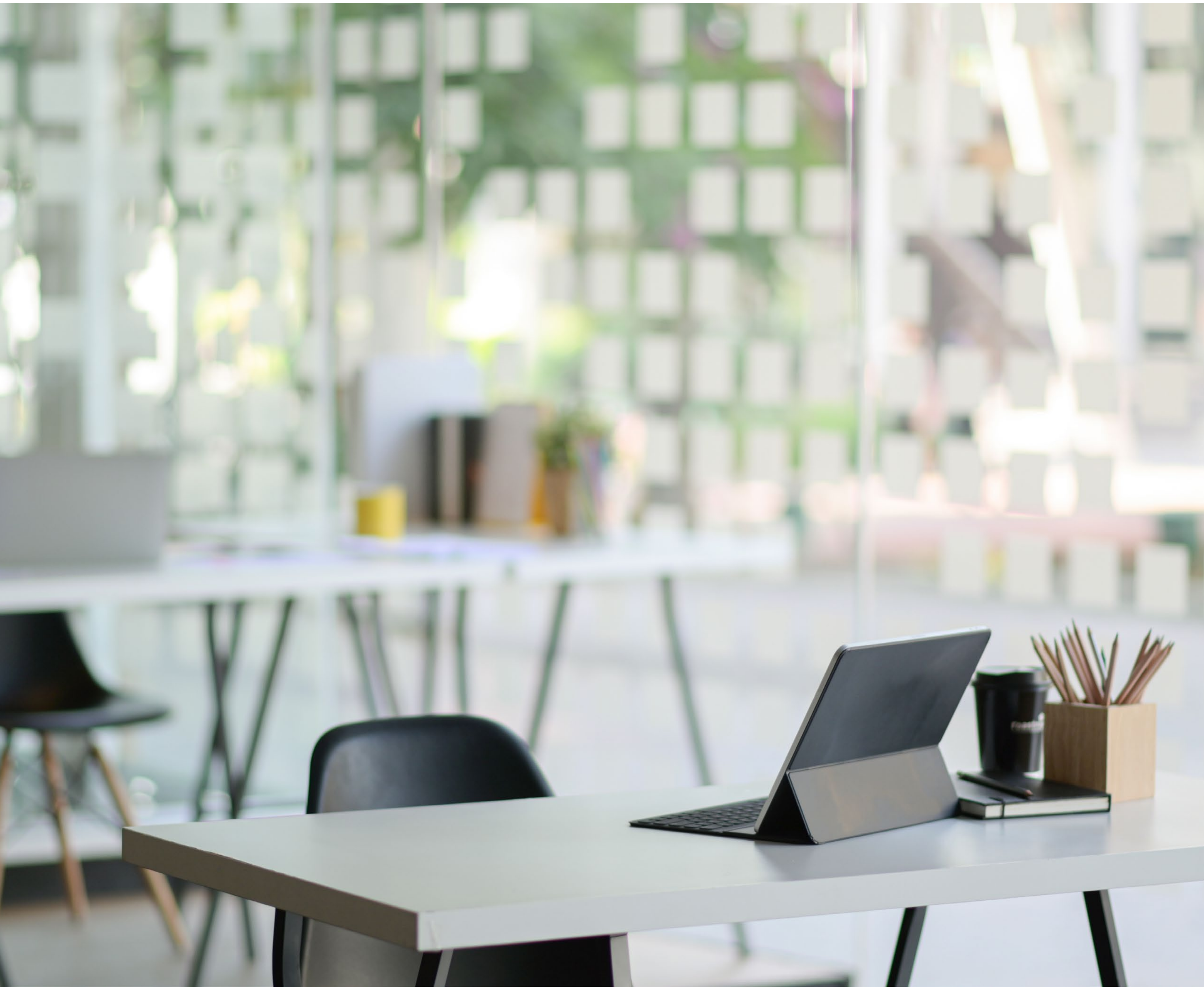
Common Challenges and Limitations of the Reporting Model

The BC pay transparency reporting model increases visibility but also has limitations.

Key limitations include:

- Reliance on aggregate data, without required breakdowns by factors such as discipline or technical specialization, role level or job family, and career stage or seniority. For example, aggregated results may combine senior and junior roles, and technical and administrative roles, making it difficult to distinguish between workforce composition and pay differences.
- Does not account for factors such as experience, tenure, or ownership structures.
- For consulting engineering firms, where workforce composition can differ significantly across disciplines and levels, it can be challenging to distinguish between representation gaps (e.g., fewer women in senior roles) and actual pay differences within roles of equal value within an organization.

Employers can supplement their reports with additional context and analysis of the data beyond the minimum prescribed by the province to mitigate the risk of misinterpretation.



Insights from Past Reporting Experiences

This guide reflects input from some member firms that have completed reporting, including BGC, McElhanney, Urban Systems, and WSP. The insights below reflect common themes from these discussions and broader industry observations. The firms were asked about challenges and how they addressed them, opportunities, and lessons learned that could benefit other member firms.

Representation significantly influences results

Workforce composition, particularly underrepresentation of women and other groups in senior, technical, or ownership roles, can significantly affect reported outcomes. Many firms supplemented required reporting with additional analysis to distinguish between representation gaps and pay differences. In some cases, this additional analysis was shared internally and in other cases it was shared externally in addition to the required reporting.

Firms also observed that different components of pay (e.g. salary, bonus, overtime) can influence results in different ways. In some cases, bonus or overtime pay had a greater impact on overall gaps than base salary, which was often a reflection of role type and workforce composition.

Data readiness extends beyond access to systems

Firms shared challenges in preparing the data required for reporting and additional analysis. Complex compensation structures (such as pay, overtime, and other compensation), and the need to aggregate information across systems make producing the report a substantial effort. In some cases, aligning and grouping components into the appropriate categories took time, as did developing job groupings or levels to support additional analysis.

Taking time to work with the data and determining how to align it with the required reporting categories was key to producing meaningful reports. A practical approach is to work through the data in advance by testing how payroll, bonus, and overtime data align with reporting categories, and identifying any gaps early.

Communication is critical

Many firms that identified a disconnect between their internal pay equity analysis and the simpler methodology used in the legislated reporting tool developed more detailed internal and/or external reporting alongside the required report to better understand results and provide meaningful context to employees.

Many firms found that interpreting and explaining results was more challenging than producing the report. In practice, this included preparing internal FAQs, briefing managers, and clearly explaining what the report does and does not show. Leading practices included proactive communication plans, preparing managers to respond consistently, and sharing context with employees before public release.

Plan your review and approval team

Firms emphasized the importance of identifying who will be involved in developing, reviewing, and approving the report, including executive leadership. This includes roles responsible for data compilation and analysis, as well as reviewing results and shaping messaging. Coordination across these groups can take longer than expected, making early alignment essential, and involving communications expertise from the outset supports proactive internal and external messaging.

Start early and test your approach

Firms consistently noted that the overall effort, spanning data preparation, multiple iterations, internal review, and communications, was greater than initially anticipated.

Firms with smoother experiences began preparing several months in advance, tested the reporting tool early, and conducted preliminary analysis to understand the factors that were influencing their results. Given that many firms have small or uneven data sets, firms emphasized the importance of not over-interpreting data that is not statistically robust. In practice, this often means running multiple internal drafts of the report as more complete data becomes available and refining how results are interpreted and explained.

Practical Guidance for Firms

Pay transparency reporting is both a technical and organizational exercise: it requires gathering data for reporting along with interpretation of the data and consideration for communications and messaging. The interpretation and messaging provide opportunities to identify and share insights that can lead to meaningful understanding and actions.

Prepare your data and systems

A practical approach is to begin with a data audit. Firms can do this by reviewing payroll, HRIS (Human Resource Information System), and compensation data to confirm salary, overtime, and bonuses are complete and consistently recorded. Plan gender data collection carefully to be voluntary, respectful, and privacy compliant.

Interpret results thoughtfully

Firms must understand what the report does and does not show. They can do this by reviewing results alongside additional internal analysis that breaks down data by role, level, or career stage. For example, comparing pay within a specific role such as junior engineer or intermediate technologist can help determine whether gaps exist within comparable positions, rather than across the organization. Firms should not rely on aggregate results alone and instead supplement them with internal analysis that reflects how roles and levels are structured within their organization. Establishing a consistent methodology in how you manage and interpret the data supports meaningful year-over-year comparison.

Plan communication

Firms can do this by preparing a summary for employees, identifying key messages, and equipping managers with talking points to ensure consistent communication. Anticipate common questions, brief leaders in advance, and provide context to support informed interpretation. Treat communication with the same importance as data preparation by equipping leaders with clear messaging and guidance. Firms should also consider messaging for external audiences, given that reporting requirements includes sharing the report publicly.

Provide context and protect privacy

Help employees understand the factors influencing results, such as workforce composition and role distribution. For example, firms can explain how workforce composition such as a higher proportion of men in senior roles may influence overall results, even where pay within roles is equitable. For smaller firms or groups, take care to aggregate data appropriately to avoid identifying individuals.

Take a continuous improvement approach

A practical approach is to treat the first year of reporting as a baseline and then identify one or two specific actions for improvement (e.g. data quality or conducting deeper role-level analysis) to implement before the next reporting cycle. Many firms will need to strengthen data quality and internal analysis over time. Be transparent about limitations, set realistic goals, and use findings to inform ongoing improvements in compensation practices.

Pair transparency with accountability and dialogue

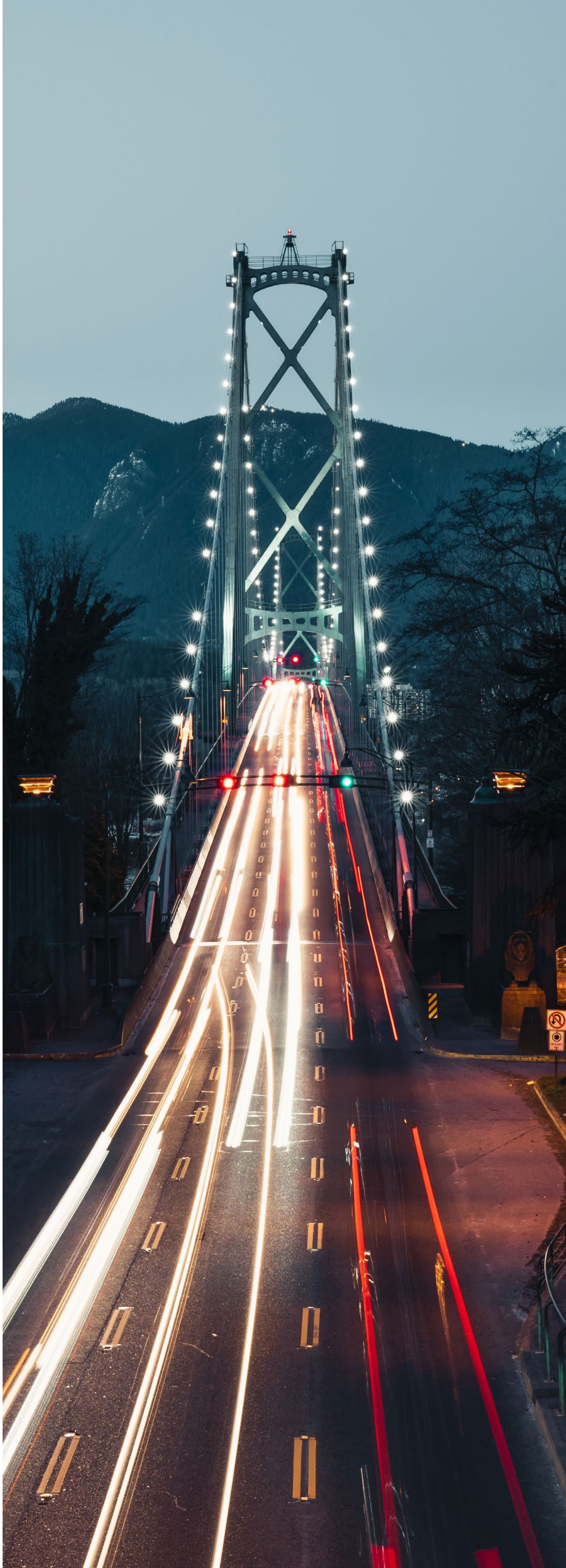
Reporting alone does not drive change. Firms should assign clear accountability, identify areas for follow-up (e.g. specific roles or levels), and take action where gaps are identified.

Connect reporting to broader strategy

Use reporting to inform broader EDI, talent, and compensation decisions. For example, firms can use reporting results to trigger reviews of compensation frameworks, promotion criteria, or hiring practices, particularly where patterns suggest potential barriers to equity.

Leverage industry collaboration

Sharing approaches across the industry can improve consistency and reduce duplication. A practical step is to review publicly available reports from peer firms and discuss approaches through industry networks to understand how others are interpreting and communicating results.



Resources and Additional Information

Government of BC resources

- BC Pay Transparency Act – official legislation and guidance
- Guidance for preparing pay transparency reports – Province of British Columbia
- Pay transparency reporting template and instructions

Additional resources

- Workplace Gender Equality Agency (Australia)
- Korn Ferry – Pay transparency in the workplace

Acknowledgments

ACEC-BC gratefully acknowledges the contributions of member firms BGC, McElhanney, Urban Systems, and WSP for generously sharing their insights and experiences to inform this resource. We also extend our appreciation to the ACEC-BC Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Committee for their leadership and commitment in developing this guide, including conducting interviews, gathering and analyzing data, and developing the content.