



Civil Rights Department

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Civil Rights Department Announces Settlement Agreement to Resolve Employment Discrimination and Equal Pay Lawsuit Against Activision Blizzard

SACRAMENTO – The California Civil Rights Department (CRD) today announced reaching an approximately \$54 million settlement agreement to resolve allegations that Activision Blizzard, Inc., Blizzard Entertainment, Inc., and Activision Publishing, Inc. (Activision Blizzard) discriminated against women at the company, including by denying promotion opportunities and paying them less than men for doing substantially similar work. Under the agreement, which is subject to court approval, Activision Blizzard will take additional steps to help ensure fair pay and promotion practices at the company and provide monetary relief to women who were employees or contract workers in California between October 12, 2015 and December 31, 2020.

“California remains deeply committed to promoting and enforcing the civil rights of women in the workplace,” **said CRD Director Kevin Kish.** “If approved by the court, this settlement agreement represents a major step forward and will bring direct relief to Activision Blizzard workers. At the California Civil Rights Department, we will continue to do our part to fight for the rights of our state’s residents.”

After more than two years of investigation, CRD filed a lawsuit against Activision Blizzard in 2021 for alleged violations of California’s Equal Pay Act and Fair Employment and Housing Act — key civil rights laws that help protect Californians against discrimination. In the lawsuit filed before the Los Angeles County Superior Court, the department sought relief on behalf of the State of California and a class of women employees and contract workers who allegedly experienced discrimination in compensation, promotions, and other aspects of Activision Blizzard’s workplace. Headquartered in Santa Monica, California, Activision Blizzard is a video game company known for many popular video game franchises played around the world, including “Call of Duty,” “World of Warcraft,” “Guitar Hero,” and “Diablo.”

Today’s announcement is in addition to measures Activision Blizzard has implemented through a separate 2021 consent decree with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and other proactive recruitment and retention steps as described in the company’s 2022 Environmental, Social, and Governance Report.

If approved by the court, the settlement agreement will require Activision Blizzard to:

- Pay approximately \$54,875,000 to cover direct relief to workers and litigation costs. Of the total, approximately \$45,750,000 will go to a settlement fund dedicated to compensating workers.
- Distribute any excess settlement funds to charitable organizations focused on advancing women in the video game and technology industries or promoting awareness around gender equality issues in the workplace.
- Retain an independent consultant to evaluate and make recommendations regarding Activision Blizzard's compensation and promotion policies and training materials.
- Continue its efforts regarding inclusion of qualified candidates from underrepresented communities in outreach, recruitment, and retention.

Women who worked as employees or contract workers for Activision Blizzard in California between October 12, 2015 and December 31, 2020 may be eligible to receive compensation. At this time, no action is needed by individuals covered under the proposed agreement and additional information will be posted on CRD's website upon approval by the court. If the court approves the settlement, covered workers will receive further information and updates from a settlement administrator.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of employment discrimination, CRD may be able to assist you through its complaint process. General information about CRD's complaint process and how to file a complaint is available [here](#). Additional information regarding protections against discrimination and harassment in the workplace is available [here](#).

The settlement announced today comes as a result of the efforts of attorneys in CRD's Legal Division and at Outten & Golden LLP, with support from CRD investigators.

The proposed consent decree is being finalized for submission to the court. Additional information on the settlement agreement will be provided as soon as it is available.

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CRD is the state agency charged with enforcing California's civil rights laws. Formerly known as the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH), the mission of CRD is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and state-fund programs and activities, and from hate violence and human trafficking. For more information, visit calcivilrights.ca.gov.

