

WINTER | 2020

LABOUR **ACTION**

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Moving Climate Justice

THE DECADE WE DECIDE



The third decade of the 21st century arrived with haunting images of flames engulfing Australia. The world's largest exporter of coal provides a graphic example of the looming climate emergency, even as its politicians join Donald Trump and Saudi billionaires to sabotage the Paris Climate Agreement.

As Greta Thunberg eloquently reminds us, this is the decade that will decide the planet's future.

That is why Labour Council is stepping up to deepen our leadership on a workers' climate justice agenda. We know union members have the skills and ability to make a difference in our workplaces and our communities. And we know that forcing governments to act decisively is essential to the survival of humankind. Harnessing the power of labour – and linking with the growing movement of young people – is the only way to counter a broken economic system driven by reckless corporate greed.

It will be hard work, but we can be guided by labour's rich experience on health and safety. That struggle started with a small group of activists and leaders who built a movement to challenge how business carried out business. They demanded employer action, government regulation, training of members and safety reps, and new workplace rights. They shut down workplaces and rallied to win mandatory safety committees and worker safety reps, and eventually won laws that punish for those

responsible for workplace deaths. With relentless determination, they made a real, tangible difference.

Every day, unions challenge the behaviour of short-sighted employers and the politicians who serve them. Our Labour Council has worked for a century and a half to harness the power of labour into collective efforts for social, economic, racial and climate justice. At times, that has led us to journey through difficult terrain, but those who came before us “made the path by walking.” That is the commitment that has powered the labour movement throughout our history.

In this edition of Labour Action, you will find our Strategic Plan for the next three years. There will be much to do, and many issues to tackle. But none is more urgent than the climate emergency. No matter what sector your members work in, they can be part of the solution – indeed they must be part of the solution! Every one of us has a role in making a better world possible for our children and grandchildren.

By John Cartwright, President, Toronto & York Region Labour Council



Holding the Line for Our Kids

Teachers and education workers are at the forefront of the battle to maintain the high standard of public education we have come to expect and deserve in Ontario. With bargaining dragged out since August and a government that prefers press conferences and underhanded legislation to honest dialogue, it has been a hard road to negotiate for Ontario's education unions.

Our kids will have the best chance in life if they can benefit from safe school environments with smaller classrooms, where every learner can thrive. Our school staff must be treated fairly so they can focus on being caring adults who help our kids thrive.

While the Conservative government's entire frame for decision-making on education seems to be about making budget cuts at any cost, our teachers and education workers are holding the line for the true values of education. Here is a brief summary of worker efforts to maintain quality public

education in Ontario:

- On October 4, 55,000 **CUPE** education workers narrowly avoided a strike with a deal just hours before the deadline. They secured an agreement with no concessions and won back 1,300 support staff jobs.
- **ETFO**, representing 78,000 elementary teachers, have engaged in work-to-rule since November. As of January 20, elementary teachers will hold rotating one-day strikes across the province until a deal can be reached.
- **OSSTF**, representing 55,000 secondary teachers and education workers, began province-wide strike action on December 4, followed by regional one-day strikes held on Wednesdays in a quarterly rotation. All districts are participating in weekly information pickets.
- **OECTA**, representing 45,000 English Catholic teachers, began work-to-rule on January 13 and strike action on January 21.
- **AEFO**, representing 12,000 French school board teachers, began work-to-rule on January 16.

- Bill 124 was passed on October 7. The legislation caps public sector wage increases at an average of 1 per cent annually for the next three years. ETFO, AEFO, OSSTF, and OECTA have filed court challenges against Bill 124, and they are joined by a coalition of 10 more public-sector unions.

Labour Council calls on union members from all sectors to support our public education workers during this crucial time. Education unions have come out in solidarity for many cross-sectoral issues over the past few years, and have been especially supportive of the Stop the Subway Upload campaign and climate justice initiatives. It is time for us to show our solidarity with their fight.

The only way that we'll win this fight is if we continue to keep the public on our side. We all have a role to play to keep our education system healthy, equitable, and public.

For updates and resources, visit:
labourcouncil.ca/education.



QUALITY EDUCATION It's All Our Fight

There are times in life when you have to stand up for what you believe in.

Across Ontario, teachers and education workers are doing just that – standing up to the bullies at Queen’s Park who want to undermine the quality of education in this province.

The Conservatives are imposing increased class size in Grades 4 through 12, resulting in poorer learning conditions, the loss of thousands of teaching positions, and a reduction in the programs available for current and future students. They want mandatory e-learning to replace classroom teaching. And, they are cutting back on supports for students with special needs.

These are the issues at stake as teachers and education workers take job action.

The **Conservative government is making deep cuts** to education and social services in order to pay for tax breaks for corporations and wealthy individuals. That agenda is guaranteed to lead to turmoil and disruption – and every community will be affected.

It’s time for the Conservatives to bargain in good faith and abandon their approach of half-truths and confrontation. **It’s time for everyone in Ontario to tell this government that it is wrong.**

Working families know why we support teachers and education workers. We all want quality education that will give every student what they need to succeed.

labourcouncil.ca/education



Organizing in York Region



Parent advocate in the Town Hall launch photo booth



Students celebrate at the Town Hall Launch



Teachers show their hearts for education at the Tailgate for Public Services



Young supporters at the first Tailgate BBQ

York Communities for Public Education is a coalition of parent advocates, students, teachers, education unions, and community members who are committed to fighting for public, well-funded education. The young organization is building community power and supporting the growth of new, youthful activists who are standing up to the cuts.

The words rang out from Angel Xing, a grade 12 student, as she captivated her audience of parents, grandparents, and educators with her powerful spoken word piece (read her poem on the back cover). Hers was one of several stand-out student contributions to the Town Hall Launch event for York Communities for Public Education. Dancers with original choreography, a Broadway musical solo, a Beatles medley by an autistic student, and a commanding young emcee were just some of the important expressions of heartfelt passion from the youngest members of the coalition.

The October 28 launch event took place at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. Attendees learned about the cuts to education and heard first-hand accounts from educators, parents, and students about how those cuts are already being felt. Official Opposition education critic Marit Stiles gave her perspective on the fight at Queen's Park and took audience questions. MPPs from other parties were invited but did not attend.

The coalition has been very active this fall: on September 14, YCFPE played off of the Premier's fixation on tailgate parties and held one of their own—in the Minister of Education's own riding. The group took advantage of fantastic fall weather to gather around 200 people in the parking lot outside the Longo's store in Maple. The event earned positive media coverage and

Mitzie Hunter, the Liberal education critic, showed up in support.

On October 5, YCFPE and ATU Local 113 held a joint tailgate BBQ in support of public services, this time in Minister Mulroney's riding of York—Simcoe. Another 100 or so supporters came out to this community picket.

This past month, since many of our secondary school educators are striking to stand up for smaller class sizes, appropriate student supports, and to protect public education, YCFPE members were right there at the picket lines to offer support.

This burgeoning coalition is actively planning its next steps, but it needs your support to succeed! We eagerly anticipate the group's next actions.

If you'd like to stay up to date on YCFPE's activities or wish to contribute, join the mailing list by visiting yorkcommunitiesford.ca or by following along on social media.

 @YCFPE

 @YORK4_PUBLIC_ED

 @YORKCOMMUNITIESFORD

Ten Years after the Metron Tragedy

On Christmas Eve 2009, four immigrant construction workers were killed and another crippled when the swing stage they were working on broke in two and they plunged 13 storeys. It was the worst construction accident in Toronto since the Hogg's Hollow tunnel disaster fifty years earlier.



The workers – Alexander Bondorov, Aleksey Blumberg, Fayzull Fazilov, Vladimir Korostin, and survivor Dilshod Mamurov – were deemed to be “subcontractors” by their employer Metron Construction. No independent lifelines for tie-off were in place as required by law. In fact, there had been a Ministry of Labour stop work order on the site for weeks due to the unsafe swing stage setup. It is clearly an example of new immigrants, many without status, being put in harm's way by a non-union company that was cutting corners and breaking safety rules.

But this tragic event exposed the tip of a much larger problem. Precarious work has become far too common, and the misclassification of workers allows employers to cheat on WSIB, EI, CPP and employer health contributions. It sets up a system that often results in wholesale evasion of federal and provincial income tax. In an environment where all of those rules are being bent, it is easy to see how the rules applying to training, safety procedures, and a worker's right to refuse unsafe work are also violated.

Labour Council and the OFL called for criminal charges against the company in line with the Westray Law which had been won after years of effort. Due in part to the diligence of the investigating police officer who treated the site as a crime scene, the supervisor for Metron was sent to jail. For the first time in Ontario history, an employer was truly held responsible for criminal negligence in a worker's death.

The tragedy sparked a provincial review and stricter laws for working from heights. But there are still big loopholes in how Ontario enforces workplace safety. Nearly ten years after the Metron tragedy, Enrico Miranda became the fifth temp agency worker killed while working for Fiera Foods. Temp agencies supply three-quarters of Fiera's workers, making a mockery of the idea of a joint health and safety committee. Meanwhile, Doug Ford refuses to sign off on regulations to hold temp agencies and the owner-client jointly responsible for safety or workers compensation.

On October 16, union and community activists occupied Ford's Rexdale office demanding he take action. Eight were arrested, but neither Ford nor Labour Minister McNaughton have done anything to fix the laws. As precarious work expands, and the gig economy draws more people into the status of so-called “independent contractors,” this issue will continue to fester. Ten years after the Metron tragedy, we need to ramp up pressure for real workplace justice.





STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

ORGANIZE, EDUCATE, RESIST!

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council was founded in 1871. Every day, our Council works to build a society based on social, economic, racial and climate justice. We have survived through tough times and won victories that have made real improvements in people's lives. None of those victories came easily — we combined skillful strategic thinking with membership engagement and a conscious alliance policy. In the next three years, we will need to draw on all our experience and resilience to weather new challenges.

LABOUR COUNCIL'S ROLE FOR 2020-2022

June 7th, 2019 was the first anniversary of the Conservative party's victory in Ontario. Across much of the world, the rise of right-wing governments is deeply troubling, and threatens to reverse many of the gains that working people have made in recent decades. While Doug Ford's rhetoric is cloaked in fake populism, it masks an objective that is just as revolutionary as the Harris regime of the past: to permanently change how our province functions. The corporate elites largely support "structural adjustment" to limit wages, privatize public services and assets, and open up commercialization of all aspects of society. But austerity measures always land hardest on vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Although we win some battles, there will be further attempts to undermine labour rights while forcing municipalities, school boards, healthcare and social service agencies to share the dirty work of cutting programs and turning on their own employees. Labour must relentlessly challenge the rationale for austerity; there is ample money in the system if tax fairness were in place. Just by collecting taxes at the same rate today as in 2000, we would have an extra \$56 billion a year that could be used to address urgent needs like child care, pharmacare, public transit, tuition fees and effective action on climate.

It is crucial to build a resistance movement that can challenge every element of this destructive agenda as it rolls out, in solidarity with each other's fights, and not just wait for the next provincial election. We have already seen Ford's government change course on some issues in the face of determine resistance.

But it is also vital that labour has a clear vision for our country's largest urban centre in the lead up to the next election. ORGANIZE, EDUCATE, RESIST! was the slogan of our movement in response to the Harris Conservatives. We must embrace and popularize that approach across York Region and in Toronto for the next three years.

Over the next three years, Labour Council will continue advocating for justice and building the resistance movement in Ontario. Council's efforts will concentrate on five key areas:

- 1. Defend and fight for good jobs and public services**
- 2. Deepen equity and forge solidarity**
- 3. Tackle climate change**
- 4. Take political action/transform politics**
- 5. Develop diverse leadership**

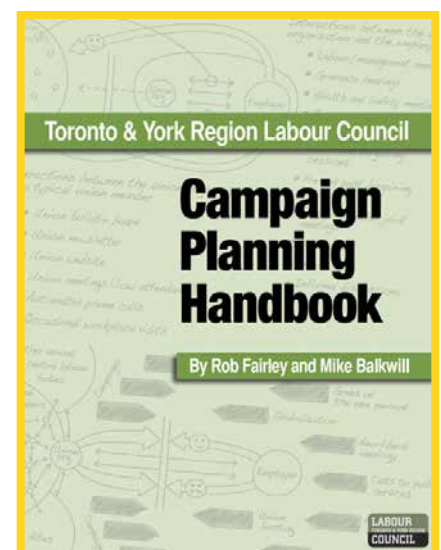
1. DEFEND AND FIGHT FOR GOOD JOBS AND PUBLIC SERVICES

The austerity agenda of Bay Street and Queen's Park must be challenged relentlessly. The impending disruption of artificial intelligence and the lack of workplace rights in the gig economy is expanding precarious and poverty-wage work. Housing affordability is at a crisis point. Union density continues to fall in the private sector, and racialization of poverty is becoming more pronounced. This can only be addressed by a change in the power dynamics of our society. Our goal is to achieve significant campaign wins in the fight for a "good jobs for all" economy while restraining austerity policies and limiting privatization.

We will:

- **Work with community partners to build powerful coalitions** that fight against the Conservative cuts, the restructuring of services, and reducing accountability across every sector including health care and education
- **Provide educational materials** to expose the true nature of Conservative policies and why they fail working families
- **Ask affiliates to join campaigns and inform their members** about labour's allies and campaigns so they can become active and engaged
- **Focus on developing new and diverse spokespeople**, while also **engaging retirees**
- **Continue the fight for better labour laws and regulations** to govern corporate behaviour and keep supporting the \$15 and Fairness campaign
- **Support gig economy workers** in their efforts to organize and bargain collectively, and encourage affiliates to continue organizing non-union workers
- **Respond to emerging threats** that undermine the role of school boards and municipalities

Key Resource: The Campaign Planning Handbook shows how to focus priorities and build winning campaigns. It is an essential resource for our movement, and is one of the many planning tools available at labourcouncil.ca/manuals_guides.

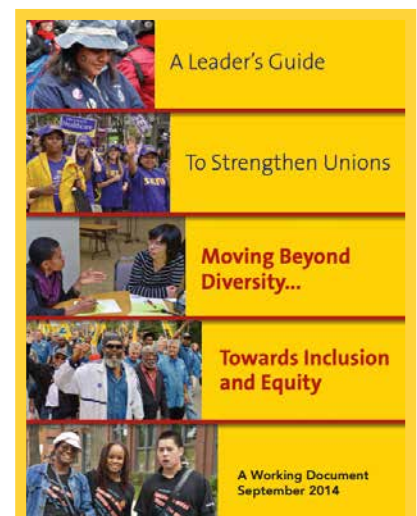
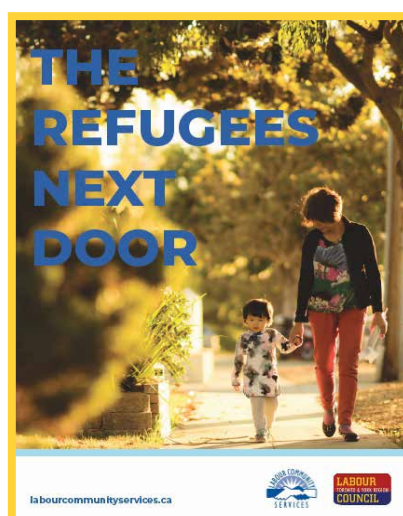


2. DEEPEN EQUITY AND FORGE SOLIDARITY

The politics of division is a key element of anti-union forces in our country and across the world. Far-right hate groups are inflaming Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, homophobia, and intolerance against any equity seeking groups. To deepen the equity agenda in the labour movement and defeat the politics of division, Labour Council will relentlessly advance policies for inclusion and respect, challenging both ourselves and others with the goal of ensuring that equity is a core practice of every organization in greater Toronto.

We will:

- Work to **strengthen the collective support** for partners engaged in tackling economic inequality and discrimination, including the Urban Alliance on Race Relations
- Ask affiliates to **support Labour Council's diverse worker networks** to reach workers in key newcomer communities as well as support them as leaders in our movement
- Celebrate the activism and leadership of workers from diverse communities within labour and allied movements.
- Ask every union to become engaged in Labour Council's **campaign against systemic racism**
- Ask every union to **promote the Refugee Project** of Labour Community Services
- Support the **expansion of Community Benefits Agreements** to ensure diverse communities get access to solid careers in trades and other occupations
- **Embrace the recommendations** outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Report and the Task Force on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



3. TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

We are in a climate emergency. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has declared that our world has only a limited amount of time before passing the tipping point of permanent harm. Our economy and society will be transformed by new technologies and the necessary actions to reduce carbon emissions. There is no contradiction between a strong economy and climate justice – in fact they are complementary. That message must become the norm in every public forum and the media.

Labour Council will be in the forefront of the movement for green jobs, fighting for equity and Just Transition in a sustainable economy. Our goal is to build a climate justice workers movement.



We will:

- Work to **counter the efforts to sabotage climate action** by polluters and conservative politicians, including their “carbon tax revolt” which is promoted by Conservative premiers and climate change deniers
- **Establish a climate justice labour network**
- **Provide educational material** to highlight the real cost of inaction by governments and businesses, and get young members engaged by using new, creative approaches
- Continue to **work in coalition** with key environmental organizations including youth and student-led groups
- **Work with affiliates, local governments and school boards** to adopt serious climate action policies
- Continue promoting the creation of **Joint Labour-Management Environment Committees** and ask affiliates to bargain for their establishment
- Help to popularize the key elements of a **Green New Deal for All**



Key Resources: Greenprint for Greater Toronto

4. TAKE POLITICAL ACTION / TRANSFORM POLITICS

The rise of right-wing populism across the world has been a dramatic setback for working people. South of the border, more states are adopting so-called Right to Work laws and restricting women's access to abortion. Our goal is to defeat right-wing politicians at provincial, federal and municipal levels. The resistance to Ford's policies helped stop the Scheer Conservatives, leading to a minority government. That opens up the opportunity for labour and popular movements to mobilize around key legislative goals as the NDP holds the balance of power in Parliament. Targeting politicians in their ridings helps spark conversations with members, builds experience, and weakens local support for the right-wing agenda while building support for progressives.

We will:

- Mount campaigns to **oppose regressive policies while raising consciousness** among working people about the class nature of politics
- Among union leaders and members, **deepen the understanding about how and why we carry out “political bargaining”** to achieve our goals of social and economic justice including by asking affiliates to engage with their membership on broader “political” issues
- Develop stronger **relationships with local elected officials** to help achieve our policy goals
- Work with allies to **challenge the austerity agenda**, and to make it clear that future governments must reverse the damage to local economies and public services
- Work relentlessly to **defeat the politics of fear and racism**
- **Expand our engagement** of affiliates and activists in York Region
- Build a lasting partnership with **Progress Toronto**
- **Engage affiliates to develop plans for 2022** provincial and municipal elections
- Encourage election participation and voting, while **promoting political engagement year round**





Our Leadership Institute provides a unique experience in shared knowledge and training

5. DEVELOP DIVERSE LEADERSHIP

Our society is experiencing major demographic and technological change. The Labour movement needs leaders dedicated to strengthening and transforming their organizations and building a movement that empowers working people in a rapidly changing world. That will require translating the lessons of past struggles and using “teachable moments” to develop keen, dynamic leaders capable of tackling the challenges ahead. The goal is to offer effective tools that ensure new, diverse labour leaders come to the fore equipped with the skills, knowledge and capacity needed for the third decade of the 21st century.

We will:

- Hold the **Labour Council Leadership Institute** on a regular basis
- Ask affiliates to **identify new, diverse activists**, and support capacity building including creating a mentoring process to pair up veteran leaders with those who are emerging
- **Recruit young workers** to join campaigns, delegates’ meetings, committees and diverse workers’ networks, and attend the Indigenous and Workers of Colour Conference (IWOC) and Bromley Armstrong Awards
- Explore ways of **incorporating culture and social events** to build deeper relationships
- **Conduct an affiliation campaign** to increase Labour Council affiliation by 25% and strengthen relationships with delegates
- **Partner with allied progressive organizations** in ongoing leadership development
- **Create a handbook of leadership case studies**
- **Challenge our committees** to provide analysis and strategic guidance on key issues

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Over the next three years there will be many battles. But we know that joining in struggle with others is a powerful antidote to apathy or fear.

Out of knowledge, comes power. Out of struggle, comes leadership.

What becomes clearer every day is that solidarity among working people and our community allies is absolutely necessary. **We need to see ourselves as a collective movement.** We call on the next generation of leaders to step confidently forward, supported by veteran leaders to share the lessons of past struggles.

Working with allies, rooted in diverse communities and workplaces, our resistance to injustice will see us through the tough times ahead and continue labour's historic role of fighting for a better world for all.



Challenging the Gig Economy and Defending the Public Good

What does technological advancement have to do with the public good? Potentially everything: from the quality of work and legislative decisions to questions of ethics, the rapid pace with which new technologies have penetrated our social sphere is impacting the way we function as a society.

The media often romanticizes the gig economy with the notion of choice, suggesting that gig workers would rather be free to move between jobs. Millennials especially are painted as drifters who don't want to be tied down to the 9-5 office job. Yet the "gig" economy is just another euphemism for high-tech exploitation.

Precarious work has had a monumental rise in the GTA. Around half of all jobs are now precarious, meaning they lack job security and benefits. A recent report by Statistics Canada found that around 10 percent of Canadians are engaged with the gig economy in some way. Precarious workers can be found in many economic sectors, and in many cases, the too-quick adoption of tech "solutions" causes more social problems than it solves.

For instance: the Toronto Public Library, which serves over 19 million patrons every year, has a workforce that is more than 50 percent part time. Over the last year the library board has undertaken a pilot project to remove staff from two libraries in an effort to cut even further back on wages. They sold the public the idea of a 24-hour library that you can access simply by swiping your card. Yet library workers provide services well above and beyond checking out and re-shelving books. They curate activities, give help and suggestions to patrons, provide

a source of human engagement for socially isolated individuals, and keep an eye on vulnerable patrons. By losing library workers, we lose the heart and soul of our libraries.

Food delivery services like Foodora have taken off, both among consumers and as a source of income for young workers. People love having easy access to any food they can think of without getting off the couch. But what about the employment status of workers? Misclassification as independent contractors is the key issue in front of the Labour Board in the Foodsters United certification drive supported by CUPW, and in the case of Uber Black drivers organizing with the UFCW. There are now some 90,000 drivers working for Uber and Lyft in the GTA, which has overwhelmed the traditional taxi service.

The rise of short-term rental platforms, especially Airbnb, has been extremely

contentious – especially here in the GTA. The company bills their platform as "home sharing," but in reality, the majority of properties listed are not shared homes but ghost hotels. In Toronto, where the rental vacancy rate is under 2 percent and the average cost of a one bedroom is around \$2,300, every space that should be available for long-term rental is desperately needed. And who gets hired to clean these units? Not the unionized hospitality workers employed in legitimate hotels.

At all orders of government, regulating the tech industry has become a game of whack-a-mole. When "disruptive" technologies are allowed to come into operation in a legislative vacuum, the public good is placed at a serious disadvantage. As we have already seen in the last decade, once a new service is in place, it is extremely difficult to ban it.

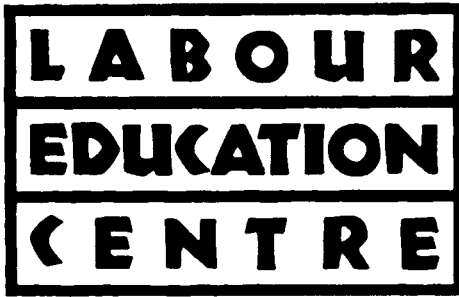
The impact of disruptive technologies is something that unions have addressed for most of our history. We need to continue to challenge the power of unbridled capitalism and defend the public good – for everyone's benefit.

SIDEWALK LABS WATERFRONT REDEVELOPMENT

Sidewalk Labs, a Google subsidiary, is moving closer to an agreement with Waterfront Toronto to redevelop a 12-acre site in Toronto's east waterfront. Sidewalk asserts that they are "reimagining cities to improve quality of life." However, their proposal has led to concerns about how corporate-driven urban tech will disrupt our principles of inclusion, democratic control, sustainable development, strong public services and a healthy workforce.

Labour Council published a list of outstanding questions that need to be answered before an approval is finalized. The interim agreement between Sidewalk and Waterfront has firmed up the scope of the project, and started to address digital governance and privacy matters at Quayside. Read the full list of questions at: labourcouncil.ca/gig_economy.

The Labour Education Centre (LEC)



TradeLinx graduates receive their certificates of completion on December 19, 2019



LEC staff with a message on climate action

The LEC is a project of Toronto and York Region Labour Council, serving unions since 1987.

Originally established as a labour leadership training centre, LEC has expanded to deliver adjustment programs for unions in the Toronto area. The organization now has a variety of programs, including: employment and training services, adult basic literacy and adult community literacy, trades training and our Working Green programming; Talking About Climate Change; Talking and Acting on Climate Change, Joint Labour Management Emissions Committee and our research on Just Transition. All of LEC's programs are intended to serve unions and union members.

LEC is delivering employment services and community literacy programs in a number of locations in the community. We have a social worker who spends Saturdays at the office of the Toronto Community Benefits Network connecting clients to jobs or referring them to the appropriate service. We are holding literacy classes in Thorncliffe Park and in workplaces. LEC has a unique seniors program that is working with older adults on digital literacy. We connect employers with qualified employees to provide on-the-job experience through the Canada Ontario Jobs Grants program.

The graduates of TradeLinx, LEC's trades training program, can now be found in many construction trades. Some are completing apprenticeship programs, others are now journeypersons. We are graduating 3 cohorts a year through this program supported by the City of Toronto and the United Way.

In order to serve unions more effectively LEC is striving to become the place in the labour movement that exemplifies climate justice being union business, a place where climate urgency informs union activism. Our Working Green programs are serving workers by developing presentations, workshops and engagement strategies to help unions understand how climate change will affect jobs and to manage transitions due to climate change.

LEC spoke at the OFL convention in Toronto, is finishing a series of studies on Just Transition that is looking at the closing of coal-fired electricity plants in Alberta, Australia and Ontario. LEC continues to support a Joint Labour Management Committee at the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) that has made a number of recommendations to dramatically decrease the GHG emissions in the Board. LEC is also partnering with other climate-focused organizations to help the City of Toronto meet the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.

In 2020 LEC is working to expand the services we offer to workers and their unions and continue building on the foundation of Working Green, exploring other instances of Just Transition and working with unions to meet the demands of a rapidly changing economy in terms of new technology, new skills and new types of training.

A Job-Rich Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy

Labour Council has sent the following sample resolution for endorsement by every affiliated union, as part of deepening labour's involvement to climate action. Engaging front line workers in every sector is vital to shape a job-rich transition to a low-carbon economy.

To ensure human survival – including the lives of our children and grandchildren – we must challenge the powerful corporate interests that drive the current unsustainable economic model and seek to sabotage effective climate action. At the same time, we must show the opportunities to build prosperity and justice for all.

Not only is climate action the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to work on. Our union will commit itself to joining in the fight for climate justice, seeking to transform our workplaces into low-carbon operations that reduce energy use, waste, and greenhouse gas emissions, while protecting workers and training for the jobs of the future. We will undertake a comprehensive approach to becoming leaders in sustainability, which includes:

- Asking the employer to detail their plans to **climate-proof the workplace**;
- **Bargaining contract language** on climate, and a union role in sustainability;
- Seeking the establishment of **Joint Workplace Environment Committees**;
- Establishing **training programs** for members to be actively involved in greening the workplace;
- **Utilizing an equity lens** to ensure new job opportunities benefit all of our communities;
- Engaging in **campaigns for climate justice** – including **Just Transition legislation** for workers and communities impacted by changes to a low-carbon economy;
- **Supporting public services** that deliver quality programs and good jobs while ensuring public control and operation.

Find the "Our Unions and Climate Change" resolution and more at labourcouncil.ca/climate

Failing on Climate Change?

"Canada Post has a vast delivery network that can be a key part of a low-carbon economy. Postal workers have a green transition plan to bring new services to every community. We just need the politicians to agree."

**WE'LL PAY
MUCH MORE LATER.**





Labour Community Services

Your Labour Voice in the Community

POVERTY IS #UNIGNORABLE



The 2019-2020 United Way of Greater Toronto annual fundraising campaign is focused on the “unignorable” experiences of those who go hungry and struggle daily to secure basic necessities. The United Way of Greater Toronto is labour’s charity of choice, and we work together to ensure that workers and working families get the support they need to succeed. We encourage you to show your #LocalLove by contributing to the campaign.

Visit unitedwaygt.org/donate or contact Marcia Lopez at 416-445-5819 ext. 22 or mlopez@labourcommunityservices.ca to learn more about ways to give.

SPRING LCAT TRAINING DATES

The next round of courses for the Labour Community Advocate Training Program will be starting up shortly. If you’re interested in taking on a leadership in role in your union as a trained Labour Community Advocate member, this is a course for you. Gain the knowledge and skills to help your coworkers with appropriate referrals to community services.

While LCS delivers LCAT at regularly scheduled times throughout the year, the program delivery can be customized for groups to a time and format that best suits your union.

OPSEU members who participated in a customized 4-day course over the span of 2 weekends had this to say about the course:

“Thanks very much for putting together and allowing us to take the Level 1 Labour Community Advocate course. It was by far the best training I’ve attended.”

“The facilitator and speakers were very knowledgeable and on point. We were able to walk away with a full tool box of information for future use.”

“The dynamic of the class was incomparable to others I’ve experienced, and we were able to participate and share our feelings/thoughts without having to measure our words because we were comfortable enough to know that what was shared would remain within the room.

We are all excited and looking forward to the Level 2 course. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.”

The next Toronto LCAT training will take place over 11 Wednesdays running from March 11 to May 20, 2020. The program is being hosted at the IBEW local 353 union Hall (1377 Lawrence Ave E).

For information about registering, contact Najib Soufian at 416-445-5819 ext.26 or nsoufian@labourcommunityservices.ca. Visit labourcommunityservices.ca/training.

THE REFUGEE NEXT DOOR



Labour Community Services has been working hard to tackle discrimination and anti-refugee sentiments. On September 25, 2019, in coordination with Labour Council, we hosted an evening forum entitled “We All Belong: Labour’s Commitment to Refugees.” Labour and community activists gathered to hear several in-depth and knowledgeable presentations that spoke to a range of challenges that refugees face upon their arrival and settlement in Canada, as well as the traumas that they may have experienced before arriving.

There are tens of thousands of people living in the GTA who arrived as refugees. These are our neighbours, classmates, coworkers and friends. As a labour movement, we recognize that we have a responsibility to help everyone succeed. To do so effectively, we need to have our eyes wide open and be committed to sustained action.

As part of the Refugee Next Door project, the project committee has developed an informative 10 minute presentation which we are available to deliver to labour gatherings in Toronto and York Region.

To arrange a presentation for your union or meeting, please contact: Sharon Simpson at 416-445-5819 ext. 23 or ssimpson@labourcommunityservices.ca.

We Stopped the Upload: A shared organizing victory

On October 16, we received the welcome news that the Province's efforts to take over Toronto's subway would be coming to an end.

This is an important victory for transit workers and for all transit riders. While there are still challenges ahead on the transit file, this was a major achievement for our movement.

Many allies worked together to show the Province and Toronto Council that transit users want local, accountable, and public transit. A year ago Labour Council worked closely with local unions and TTCriders to build the Stop the Subway Upload Coalition. We organized three mass canvasses and,

each time, more than 30 labour and community groups went out to leaflet commuters at subway stations. From teachers to construction workers to civil servants, it was clear that keeping transit local is important for all of us. Petitions and lobbying helped drive the message home to the Ford government.

Undoubtedly, this will not be the last fight with the Conservatives around public transit. But it goes to show that fighting back makes a difference. Let's celebrate that victory together.



Upcoming Events

February 12

Climate Justice
Roundtable

February 16

Chinese Workers'
Network Lunar New
Year Banquet

March 8

International Women's
Day March

March 21

International Day for
the Elimination of Racial
Discrimination

April 28

National Day of
Mourning for Workers
Killed and Injured at
Work

June 13

Indigenous and Workers
of Colour Conference

Get details of these and other events at
labourcouncil.ca/events

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If you cut us do we not bleed?

When knife is pressed against tomato skin
It splits and the flesh ruptures
Orange liquid stains steel
And the tomato is no longer whole

When scissors close in on paper
Clean lines separate white pulp
Fine fibres disappear into the air
And the paper is no longer whole

When blade chips away at bark
Each strike brings closer to the core
Splinters fly, dust arise, sap slows
And the tree is no longer whole

When government cuts money spent on education
Classes seat to the fire-hazard max
Educators replaced by e-learning
Creative hands stilled and chained
Standardized testing regress to the mean
Special needs are sought in vain
Extracurriculars, extra particulars
And the students are no longer whole

If you cut us do we not bleed!
Your future generation
Your prospect of salvation
Your very own children
With every dollar you take another dream
A penny for your thoughts - you have stolen what it means
To think, to live, to be.
I think therefore I am yet
Taking away our individuality
Taking away our thinking
Taking away our identity
How can we be?

Tell me is my voice too loud
Is it not something to be proud that I have learned

To speak for myself
Or is that why you are stopping it now
A nuisance
Imprudent
Another wrench in your faulty system

Tell me is my voice too loud
Angry and pained, each word strained
For it is not the first time
Nor the last
That you force our indignance before hearing our pleas

Tell me is my voice too loud
A grating sound piercing the beautiful silence:
Children should be seen and not heard
Compliant and quiet, empty husks for your indoctrination
For your prescription
For your fear of subversion

I am not here to plead
I am not here to entreat
I am here as a messenger of your very own future:
Do not expect a prospective path when you've burned the roads
Scorched by greed and incompetence, ash the sole remains.
You reap what you sow and if you sow nothing
Do not be surprised when you are left empty handed during a famine
Fields barren, sterile coal replaced fertile seeds.

You forget one key thing:
We are your future generation
Your prospect of salvation
Your very own children
If you cut us, do we not bleed?

By Angel Xing, Grade 12 student in York Region District School Board and member of York Communities for Public Education