

DEFENDING OUR RIGHTS

At Work, On the Streets, and In Our Communities



September 3, 2018: WAC members and allies leading the Labour Day March in Toronto

WORKERS' ACTION CENTRE

Annual Report

April 2018 - March 2019



Digital meets grassroots organizing

Bringing people together to support workers' rights has always been the most important goal of our grassroots organizing. We rely on face-to-face conversations at meetings, social events, and outreach in neighbourhoods across the city. How do we invite people to come out and join us? Well, nowadays we are using a few really interesting digital tools that help us reach out to new people and grow our decent work movement and our membership.

Phone banking is critical to our organizing! NationBuilder is a database tool that helps us keep track of \$15 & Fairness supporters and comes in handy when we have hundreds of people to call. Leaders at the Workers' Action Centre use call sheets created through NationBuilder to invite workers to local events. We have found that it's a great way to bring out new people who are interested in becoming Workers' Action Centre members.



Phone banking with Call Hub



Brampton keeps in touch

Call Hub is another digital tool that has made it easier for us to connect with thousands of workers. By keeping track of the actions our supporters have taken in each neighbourhood, we can make sure that we are doing effective follow-up that keeps workers informed and engaged. Call Hub streamlines calls during our phone banks and allows us to digitally enter the replies and results of each phone call.

Being able to send text messages in multiple languages also helps us keep in contact with workers in many communities. Our organizers can send local updates targeted to specific communities. For example, in Brampton, we are able to send text messages in both English and Punjabi, which we have found is a great way to keep in touch and bring together everyone who has come out to an event or met us through a workshop.

IN SOLIDARITY

We would like to thank all of our union allies for their generous financial support of the Fight for \$15 & Fairness campaign.

Special thanks to:

CUPE Local 905 / ETFO / IAMAW / IBEW 353 /
OCUFA / OECTA / OSSTF / SEIU Local 2 /
The Society of United Professionals / Unifor /
USW

The challenge of public education when workers' rights are under attack!

When Bill 148 came into effect in 2018, we had to update and produce new educational materials about the new workplace rights we won. This included:

- A multilingual poster (including 12 languages) to tell workers that they had new rights at work and direct them to our hotline and website
- Updating our booklet, *Your Rights at Work*, in English, Tamil, Chinese, and Spanish.
- Postcards on the minimum wage and personal emergency leave in English, Tamil, Chinese, Spanish, Bengali, Punjabi, and Somali
- Factsheets on key issues such as temp agency work

Throughout 2018 we worked hard to get these new materials out into our communities – through workshops, outreach, events, info sessions, and on our website. WAC members were relentless in making sure neighbourhoods across the GTA got information about their new rights. It was inspiring to see all the hard work every week to reach workers at grocery stores, bus terminals, subway stops and places of worship. We also distributed our materials across Ontario through the \$15 and Fairness network reaching thousands of people in smaller cities and communities.

When the Conservative Ford government rolled back many of our new rights through Bill 47, we had to start again! 2019 has been busy with updating the *Your Rights at Work* booklet, our factsheets and translating them. We also produced new factsheets on “Working for Cash,” “Leaves” and “Protect Yourself: Checklist for Workers.” All of our factsheets (and a new poster) are available in English, Chinese, Tamil, Spanish, Punjabi, Bengali, and Somali. They are on the website for download and are available in print at the WAC office.

Protecting Workers' Rights

38 Community agencies hosted a WAC employment standards workshop for their community members

122 Workshops on employment rights at locations across the GTA

357 Front line staff of community agencies received training on workers' rights

805 Workers supported through our Workers' Rights Information Phonenumber

2,354 Workers attended a “Know Your Rights” workshop or support clinic

11,980 Booklets and factsheets distributed on workers' rights



“Know Your Rights” workshop

Fighting for \$15 and Fairness



Key moments of our 2018 fight for decent wages and working conditions.

June 16, 2018:
March for Decent Work
from the Ministry of
Labour to Queen's Park

September 15, 2018:
Etobicoke North
Day of Action



September 15, 2018:
Eglinton-Lawrence
Day of Action



October 15, 2018:
Provincial Day of Action

*Thank you to the staff and allies
who contributed their photos!*

"Fighting the good fight"



October 29, 2018:
Community Vigil for a temp
agency worker at Upper Crust
Bakery who was killed on the job

November 5, 2018: MPP
visit to Scarborough's
Doly Begum



November 19, 2018:
Outreach at the
Santa Claus Parade



November 20, 2018: Delaying the
vote on Bill 47 at Queen's Park



CityNews

VOTE ON SICK DAYS DELAYED

TUE
-3°

Putting “feet on the ground” by building worker leadership

Through the 2019 “Feet on the Ground” Training Program, worker leaders from across Ontario are participating in leadership and skills-building training to support decent work organizing in their communities. WAC is partnering with the Ontario Employment Education and Research Centre to deliver this program for the third time.

This year, “Feet on the Ground” is bringing together a total of 34 worker leaders from 12 cities or towns (Bancroft, Bracebridge, Brampton, Hamilton, London, Markham, Mississauga, Niagara, Newmarket, North Bay, Ottawa, Trenton), 6 Toronto neighbourhoods (Eglinton West, South Etobicoke, North Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, St. James Town, Victoria Park), 12 sectors (care work, cleaning, colleges, construction, education, factory work, grocery stores, healthcare, libraries, nail technicians, restaurants, universities), and 10 language communities (Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Spanish, Somali, Urdu, Vietnamese). The diversity of participants has created a strong environment for cross-fertilization and shared learning.



“Feet on the Ground” 2019 participants

Participants began their training by joining over 150 decent work organizers from across the province at the Fight for \$15 & Fairness Provincial Strategy Meeting in February 2019 – a great way to connect with and draw inspiration from active organizers across Ontario.

Starting in March, participants have been working one-on-one with mentors to build a “base” of workers to advance decent work in their own communities through outreach, know your rights workshops, organizing meetings, and many other strategies.

Through these community organizing efforts, we are building our collective power and the decent work movement across the province is growing!

WAC members organizing!

34

Public presentations on decent work

48

Meetings with MPPs and government officials by our members

104

Media moments by members — reaching English, Spanish, Somali, Tamil and Punjabi speaking communities

55

Organizing meetings and member events

241

Community outreach events

Building a movement for decent work

28+

Community organizations, unions, and coalitions as networking partners

34

Worker leaders in the 2019 Feet on the Ground Training Program

194

Media moments

56

Meetings with MPPs and government representatives

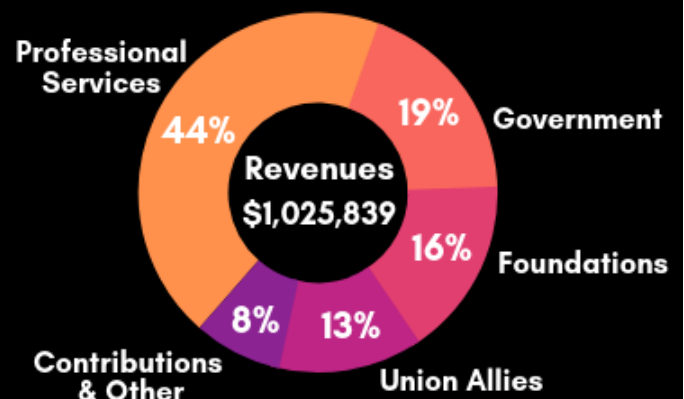
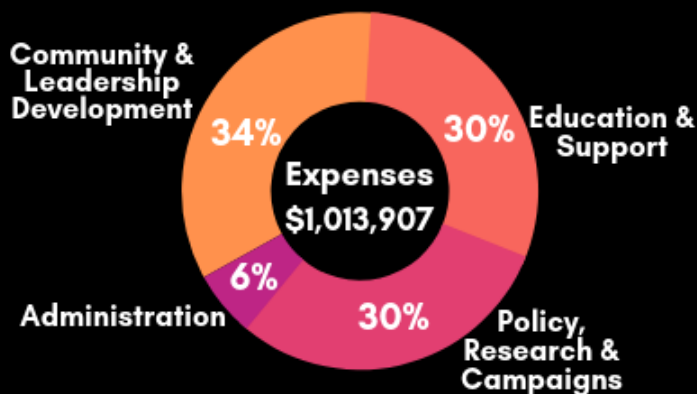
13,900+

Allies and community members informed on decent work issues

100,000+

Flyers and backgrounders distributed on decent work

Financials





November 15, 2018: Outreach by our Scarborough members

The Workers' Action Centre

is a worker-based organization committed to improving the lives and working conditions of people in low wage and precarious work – through education, support, leadership development, research, policy analysis, advocacy and community action. Our work is guided by these principles: maximum involvement of the people affected, developing leadership among workers, shared learning and action for change.

A Big Thank You to our 2018-19 Project Funders

City of Toronto
Canadian Community Fund (Unifor)
Ontario Ministry of Labour
The Law Foundation of Ontario
United Way Greater Toronto

A Special Thanks to:

Our Members, who make all our work possible

Our allies – union members, social justice and student activists, faith leaders, healthcare providers, and community partners - for your commitment and spirit to improving the lives of all workers

Our legal volunteers who give their time, energy and support

Our Monthly Solidarity Program Financial Supporters (you know who you are!)

We would like to especially acknowledge the following for their support, guidance and commitment to social justice:

- The Atkinson Charitable Foundation
- The George Cedric Metcalf Charitable Foundation
- The Maytree Foundation
- Ontario Employment Education and Research Centre
- Parkdale Community Legal Services

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