



CUPE / Canadian Union
of Public Employees

Social Service Workers

CUPE members working in Manitoba's social services and child care facilities are some of the lowest paid unionized workers in the province. They provide important supports for individuals in need, yet they get very little recognition for the important work they perform.



At the same time, their work load is becoming more demanding. First, the number of people in need is increasing. Second, there are changing pressures on the supports provided due to the nature of domestic violence, the effects of poverty on youth, women being paid less than men, fewer secure jobs with benefits, and sky-rocketing costs of housing and transportation.

The provincial government is also looking for guidance on how to improve social services in Manitoba. The *All Aboard* program was announced recently and a consultation on homelessness will take place in the fall. These initiatives create an important opportunity for CUPE members to be heard on their concerns about accessibility and funding for services and appropriate wages and benefits for social services workers.

In short, the time is right for a major coordinated effort in this sector to support both CUPE members and the people they serve in their communities.

RESPECT Campaign Profile

For the next year, CUPE will coordinate a campaign that will build union capacity and improve relations with community allies so that frontline workers in social services and child care can get the resources they need to do their important work. This campaign will raise the profile of what CUPE members contribute to the people in their care and therefore for their communities. This profile in turn is expected to help raise funding levels for Manitoba's social services and child care, and strengthen CUPE bargaining for increased wages and benefits.



The main message of the campaign is that social services are important to all Manitobans and therefore the personnel in these service agencies are important to all Manitobans – simply put, they deserve RESPECT.

Funding support for the Campaign is coming from CUPE National, Strategic Directions initiative. Activities planned include community events, research on service issues, briefs to Legislative Committees, correspondence with politicians and training workshops for CUPE members.

The immediate objectives of the campaign are to:



- mobilize and train CUPE members working in the sector to strengthen their bargaining capacity through expanded relations with the public, allies and government officials;
- work with the membership to consider and propose options for reorganizing locals to better enable them to meet member needs;
- research, document and present the current situation faced by CUPE members in this sector to provincial authorities responsible for funding Manitoba's social services.

The longer term objectives of the campaign are to:

- increase the bargaining power of the union in contract negotiations and therefore improved wages and benefits for members;
- identify potential for and organize new members for CUPE;
- strengthen CUPE's relations with community coalitions advocating for support to services;
- increase public awareness of the needs of vulnerable people and therefore support for meeting these needs (particularly for women and Aboriginal people in Manitoba); and
- increase funding to social service agencies where CUPE members are working and therefore allow for improved wages and benefits.

Join the Campaign

There is a role for all CUPE members and staff in this campaign. Join us! We need union activists to support their sisters and brothers in the social services sector. We need National Reps to help the locals they are assigned to, to get involved.

A RESPECT Campaign Advisory Committee will meet monthly to coordinate action. You are welcome to join the meeting and have a say in what we do. They are set for:



October 22nd, November 12th, December 10th (call us to confirm times and locations)

Contact: Sheree Capar is the Coordinator taking the lead in the campaign.
Dennis Lewycky is the Administrator.
Carmelle Chartier is providing clerical support.
Kathy Macdonald is the Member Mobilizer booked off for the campaign.
Call us at 942-0343 or go to: http://manitoba.cupe.ca/RESPECT_campaign