

CUPE Ontario May 2008 Convention Action Plan

2007 Report Card

DRAFT FOR DEBATE BY MEMBERS



2007 REPORT CARD

Actions

Equality

Build on previous campaigns promoting and expanding equality within CUPE and externally in communities.

Health Care

Continue to oppose health care privatization, including competitive bidding and public-private partnerships, and advocate for public solutions for the delivery of health services and 3.5 hours of care for residents in long-term care homes.

Results

- Organized a ground-breaking series of Anti-Racism forums.
 - Coordinated a successful CUPE Ontario Human Rights Conference.
 - Participated in the province-wide Aboriginal Day of Action.
 - Continued to work within the CUPE structures to build a more inclusive union representative of our diverse membership.
 - Launched the CUPE Ontario Women's list serve.
 - Expanded on the work done by the convention accessibility committee to ensure all CUPE Ontario conferences and events are barrier-free.
 - CUPE Ontario's Pink Triangle Committee had a substantive presence during Toronto Pride Week events.
 - Using communication tools including: briefs to government committees, media releases, opinion columns and letters to editor, CUPE Ontario advocated for public policy and government actions to cut poverty.
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- Working with labour and community allies like the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) forced the second moratorium on home care competitive bidding.
 - Launched a province-wide campaign calling for a fully funded public home care system and an end to competitive bidding. The campaign includes a 1-888-599-0770 home care hotline to collect information about levels and quality of care under a competitive contract system.

Actions

Health Care

Municipal

Build capacity in the municipal sector to actively engage in anti-privatization campaign in their local communities and through local municipal councils.

Results

- Through sustained province-wide campaigning, forced the provincial government to fund hiring 4,300 PSWs and nurses within the long-term care sector. Continuing to campaign for 3.5 hours of hands on care for residents in long-term care facilities.
- Successfully organized the communities of Uxbridge, Midland, Ajax, and eastern Ontario to protect local hospital and lab services and to oppose hospital closures proposed under LHINs restructuring.
- Intervened through the courts with the OHC to secure documents showing cost-overruns at Ontario's P3 hospitals.

- Made provincial service downloading a key election issue.
- Actively and successfully mobilized local P3 and anti-privatization of municipal services campaigns.
- At the OMECC conference, municipal sector CUPE members helped develop a provincial model to fight privatization locally and explored building capacity in the sector to coordinate bargaining sectorally.
- In coalition with other unions, launched a campaign to achieve pension fairness for paramedics.
- CUPE Ontario's successful challenge to legal improprieties at Borealis resulted in recouping \$210,000 in legal costs.

Actions

Results

School Board

Develop and wage a province-wide campaign focused on fair funding to pressure the provincial government to address flaws in funding for school support programs/workers through a provincial negotiations process.

Social Services

Continue to develop and apply:

- province-wide political/government lobbying, and community and member mobilizing strategies
- government public policy lobbying initiatives and coalition building

to coordinate bargaining, achieve improved collective agreements and other sectoral goals, challenge provincial service 'transformation' and secure adequate funding for social services.

- Using the fair funding campaign and local union bargaining as leverage, were successful in achieving enhanced collective agreement protections and \$309 million in funding earmarked for school support envelopes.
- Continued to meet with the education ministry through the school board workers advisory group (SWAG), discussions result in the first ever sector-wide provincial negotiations process now underway.
- Organized a sector-wide emergency meeting where CUPE school board leadership endorsed a provincial plan to participate in the provincial negotiations resulting in a framework agreement for all school support worker locals.
- Laid the groundwork for political/policy strategies to secure a permanent provincial bargaining process for school boards in the future.

ACL

- Improved funding for developmental services.
- Achieved a March 2009 contract expiry date for 55 CUPE ACL locals and improved wages, job security, health and safety, pay equity and pensions.
- Building alliances with parents/families and employer groups as a way to mobilize and show bargaining strength for 2009 negotiations.
- Mobilized the sector membership to carry out strategies.

Child Care

- Coalition work with Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) and the OFL advocating for a universal, public, not-for-profit child care system and a moratorium on for-profit child care expansion.
- Fought the threat of municipal child care program closures.
- 180 municipalities proclaim child care worker appreciation day.
- Worked with the Equal Pay Coalition in a province-wide campaign pushing for provincial pay equity funding.

Actions

Social Services

Results

CAS

- Tracking and responding to sector transformation (Bill 210) and Auditor General's report.
- Developing a campaign focused on sector underfunding and the consequences on an under-resourced child welfare system on CAS workers and children at risk.
- Developed a draft CUPE response protocol to support workers in child death inquests and police investigations.
- Successful round of coordinated bargaining with collective agreement enhancements.

Community Agencies

- After the June 2007 launch of the 'Joining Hands' labour/community agency campaign, produced a report detailing the impacts of government underfunding on service quality and front line worker wages and working conditions.
- Used report to lobby provincial and municipal politicians for improved funding.
- Developing a resource tool kit for locals to use to protect services, influence decision-makers and fight employers.
- Developing policy and practice recommendations to support deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing members.
- Continued pilot project to coordinate bargaining.
- Support LHINs fight-back initiatives.

Municipal Social Services

- Continued to monitor alternative service delivery models and other privatization initiatives like Jobs Now for direct impact on services and CUPE members.
- Surveyed the sector membership to develop an action plan related to issues of workplace violence, workload and privatization.
- Begin to work with the broader municipal sector to campaign to address funding shortfalls due to provincial downloading.

Actions

Results

Universities

Work in coalition with students and other university workers to campaign for increased public funding to improve working and studying conditions at Ontario universities.

Elections/Political Action

Organize and mobilize members to participate in elections.

- Mobilized to fight concessions and further privatization and contracting out.
 - Organized a conference focused on bargaining coordination.
 - Continued to coordinate bargaining and aligned 31 collective agreements with 2008 expiry dates moving to a sector-wide coordination by 2010.
 - CUPE 1334 secured key collective agreement language on violence in the workplace.
 - Developed and began the implementation of a provincial strategy to do wall-to-wall organizing in the sector.
 - Political lobbying for increased public funding for post-secondary education.
 - Mobilized on campuses during the provincial election to highlight CUPE members support for public post-secondary education.
 - Organized support for the 'Fight the Fees 14' (U of T students and workers arrested after a peaceful sit-in on campus protesting tuition increases).
 - CUPE Ontario and OUWCC leadership supported local bargaining through rallies and strike picket lines in the sector.
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- CUPE Ontario launched provincial election campaign on Labour Day calling on voters to 'Put People First.'
 - CUPE Ontario campaign bus hit the road, began a 7,000 km provincial tour visiting 20 cities and garnered featured media coverage estimated at over \$360,000.
 - CUPE Ontario provided resources to organize the 'Vote Out Poverty' event.
 - Developed CUPE strategies to raise awareness of poverty issues and the value of public services.
 - A record 11 CUPE members ran in the provincial election as NDP candidates.

CUPE ONTARIO 2008 ACTION PLAN SUMMARY

- Fight P3s, privatization and contracting out of all public sector jobs and services
- Secure improved funding for public services through lobbying, member and community mobilization
- Highlight the important role of public sector workers
- Promote the merits of unionization
- Continue unionization drives
- Fight for a fully funded, fully public health care system
- Oppose the deregulation of electricity and private power generation
- Continue to support public, green environmental strategies including public sector green jobs
- Continue to fight against tuition fees which are a form of user fees
- Fight to end the commercialization of post-secondary education
- Continue a no concessions bargaining policy
- Continue with coordinated bargaining strategies
- Continue to build solidarity between sectors for all strike votes and strike action that occurs
- Provide leadership on issues that affect CUPE members and ultimately all workers' rights like the right to strike
- Continue and enhance our work with community and labour allies
- Oppose the expansion of trade deals that have a negative impact on workers and communities
- Continue building on the successes of our international solidarity work
- Stand in solidarity with workers around the world who are oppressed and disenfranchised
- Promote ethical pension investment
- Advance equality in all facets both internally and externally
- Advocate for better wages, benefits and pensions for our members
- Fight to secure pensions, benefits and a living wage for all
- Counter government and corporate policies that fuel poverty, destroy good jobs and advance low-wage strategies
- Demand safe and secure workplaces free of violence and achieve legislation to protect workers
- Build on the foundation for member mobilization in elections at all levels of government
- Continue working with CUPE National to effectively resource campaigns
- Continue the CUPE Ontario affiliation drive



2008 Action Plan - Introduction

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Strengthening the future of public services and workers' rights in Ontario

Public services, once considered the best way for governments to create social equality, are increasingly under attack by those promoting greater "market solutions and economic growth," less government and greater power and profits for corporations. Emboldened employers are increasingly demanding concessions from workers.

Today, governments have bought into the corporate mantra to cut taxes at the expense of public services. Governments suggest economic and demographic pressures of an aging population are making it increasingly difficult to fund universal social programs. The intent is to reduce government's role in the provision of public services—that create social fairness and enhance the common good—and to reduce the argument to one simply based on cost. It's a purposeful message that sets the stage for increasing erosion and privatization of public services.

Social inequality, particularly for racialized groups, women, new immigrants, and Aboriginals is further compromised and poverty fueled through government policies dependent on low-wage strategies that force workers into part-time contingent jobs. Many of these jobs are non-union and do not provide workers with a living wage, workplace benefits and pensions.

Recent studies show that income disparity is growing in Ontario and that middle income wages are stagnant, while the wealthy are seeing unprecedented income growth. With the growing income gap, class divisions are heightened with a permanent "underclass" living in poverty and a disappearing middle class.

The loss of well paid manufacturing and resource sector jobs is wreaking havoc on the lives of many Ontario families and communities. The manufacturing jobs crisis is also increasing pressure on some labour unions

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to acquiesce to employer demands that weaken workers' rights, including the right to strike. In the absence of a collective strategy to fight back under strong central labour bodies, unions are developing their own approaches, leading to new divisions within labour and the erosion of hard-won rights and protections.

Fueled by interests promoting expanding global free trade deals and new inter-provincial deals like the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), there is a renewed attack on labour laws that make it harder for workers to join a union and unions to organize workers. There is also a push to undermine free collective bargaining including the right to strike by declaring workers in the public sector 'essential.'

CUPE: The Power That Makes Change

CUPE Ontario believes that progressive labour unions are key in strengthening the broad social movement. Labour can lead the fight and advocate for real change, for good jobs, new public sector green jobs, social and economic equality, for inclusion for all in our communities and workplaces and quality public services.

The CUPE Ontario 2008 Action Plan continues the work already underway. It is a roadmap for the future to make **CUPE: The power that makes change a reality.**

At the CUPE Ontario convention last May, delegates provided massive support for the 'Agenda for Change' – a key component of the 2007 Ontario Action Plan. Members followed up on this support at the CUPE National Convention in October and designed five key areas of focus that include:

1. Access to the National strike fund for every CUPE member
2. Taking measurable action on equality
3. Ensuring CUPE implements National policy directed by convention
4. Ontario getting a fair share of resources
5. Working to consensus in decision-making at the CUPE National Executive Board

The recent approval by the National Executive Board (NEB) to establish a \$2.5 million fight-back fund that will provide financial help to members facing attacks on their labour and workplace rights by government and employers is a result of a cooperative resolve to one of the identified areas of focus in the 'Agenda for Change'.

The leadership of CUPE Ontario is clearly committed to working with the CUPE National Officers and the National Executive Board to see the full implementation of these key issues that will result in a stronger, more inclusive CUPE.

Common actions to sectoral strategies

While this action plan is set out along sectoral lines, it applies to all Ontario CUPE members in all sectors.

We all access and rely on public health care, education, social services and municipal services. We all have a stake in preserving our environment by supporting actions and policies sensitive to the impact on workers and the poor. And we all benefit from fighting to increase equality for all citizens of our province.

This action plan is a roadmap for collective action into the future using a dual track approach to:

- Mobilize/campaign with community coalition partners and our labour allies to affect positive legislation and progressive public policy, and to secure improved funding for public services.
- Leverage our mobilizing/campaigning influence to make gains and improve working conditions for CUPE members at the bargaining table.

As the biggest public sector union in Ontario, CUPE will:

- Continue to challenge the push by governments to privatize, contract out, restructure and downsize public services in all CUPE sectors.
- Work with CUPE National on anti-privatization campaigns resulting from policy and campaign initiatives approved at the CUPE National convention in October 2007.
- Show leadership in the broader labour movement to:
 - ▣ Protect existing workers' rights like the right to strike and work with the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) on a province-wide campaign to pressure the provincial government to expand automatic card check certification to all workers who want to join a union.
 - ▣ Continue the campaign with labour allies for legislated changes to the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act to include violence and harassment in the Act.
 - ▣ Protect jobs in the public sector and work with allies to protect jobs in the private sector in Ontario.

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- Strengthen the role of central labour bodies and bring labour together in order to develop collective strategies to fight the push to weaken workers' rights (including the right to strike) and new organizing models to grow union density.
- Continue to support public, green environmental strategies including publicly delivered alternative power generation and eco-friendly conferences and activities to continue to decrease our environmental footprint.
- Begin work with our sector committees to develop a public services green jobs strategy that includes increasing CUPE membership through new public sector industries.
- Continue work begun with CUPE Quebec, CUPE National, the OFL and the QFL to oppose the expansion of the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA).
- Build on success and continue to grow our relationship with unions in countries around the globe fighting bad trade deals and globalization.
- Continue a variety of membership education initiatives and solidarity actions with workers worldwide on the connection between international issues, globalization and our members' jobs here in Ontario and the preservation of public services globally.
- Enlist the support of the entire labour movement through CUPE National and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) to ensure no workers' pensions are being used to invest in public-private partnerships (P3s) and in corporations that trample on human rights.
- Advance equality in all facets from internal CUPE policies and employment equity hiring practices to advocating on behalf of individuals with disabilities so they are not forced to live in poverty.
- Advancing equality includes working with CUPE National to organize low-wage workers, Aboriginals and racialized groups, to fight for a minimum wage for all CUPE members of no less than \$15.00 an hour, and achieving a pension plan for all CUPE members in Ontario.
- Work with CUPE National to implement a campaign for the federal election that is likely to be called later this year.
- Continue to work in coalition with community organizations and other union activists on a variety of struggles such as rights for undocumented workers, non-status immigrants, and peaceful solutions to issues in war-torn countries.
- Continue the drive to have more locals affiliate to CUPE Ontario in order to improve information and resource sharing and build our political strength.

A. PUT EQUALITY FRONT-AND-CENTRE IN OUR UNION

Ensure equality-seeking groups are represented in our committees, our leadership, and in our political action—both in CUPE Ontario and CUPE National—through the following measures:

- Lobby CUPE National to establish a two-year pilot campaign in Ontario to educate, encourage, persuade and/or influence locals to put detailed employment equity plans in their bargaining proposals.
- Use the CUPE Ontario Human Rights Committee to develop an assessment tool to measure employment equity language in collective agreements.
- Use the CUPE Ontario Pink Triangle Committee to develop an assessment tool to measure how widespread language is protecting transgendered workers' rights in CUPE collective agreements.
- Continue to work with CUPE National to achieve open and transparent hiring practices and for an employment equity plan for the organization.
- Continue the work of developing an integrated equality agenda for CUPE Ontario.
- Support the work done by the CUPE Ontario Women's Committee toward the outcomes of the National Women's Task Force.
- Continue the campaign with CUPE National and the Equal Pay Coalition to reinstate full funding for pay equity legislation in Ontario.
- Continue to work with the CUPE National Organizing Branch, Aboriginal Council and leadership of First Nations Peoples in Ontario to develop successful organizing strategies for Aboriginal workers.
- Examine the Saskatchewan model for increasing the representation of Aboriginal peoples into public service jobs.
- Work through the CUPE Ontario Aboriginal Council to educate and mobilize our members to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal peoples on issues like land claims.
- With the CUPE Ontario Young Workers Committee, work to build participation in education for young CUPE members, and increase mentorship opportunities for young members to increase their overall participation in the labour movement.
- Work with CUPE National to lobby the federal government to rescind regulations and policies specific to blood and organ donations that discriminate based on sexual orientation.
- Continue to build on the work of the Convention Access Committee to make CUPE Ontario events barrier-free.

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- Continue the work begun both internally and with the OFL and other unions to achieve legislation recognizing violence and harassment as workplace hazards.
- Continue to campaign to provide fairness in the OMERS pension plan and make plan improvements that will benefit all members. This includes an end to the practice that discriminates against paramedics being able to retire at the same age as other emergency occupation workers.
- Continue to build activism and knowledge on equality issues, including social and economic inequality.

B. SUPPORTING OUR SECTORS

Health Care:

Political Action

- The mobilizing of CUPE and other labour groups has resulted in funding in the 2008 Ontario budget to hire 4300 nurses and personal support workers (PSWs) in long-term care over the next three years. CUPE must increase pressure on the provincial government to introduce 3.5 hours of care per resident per day for long-term care residents.
- Continue to oppose any health care privatization and restructuring through the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs)—or other measures—that result in services being moved out of communities, and in program, service and job loss.
- Maintain a state of preparedness, up to and including strike activity, and take province-wide political action in the event that any LHINs moves to merge, transfer, close or privatize a service in a community.
- Build on the work underway with community and labour groups to stop competitive bidding in home care and build a public, not-for-profit system.
- Continue to work with community coalitions like the Ontario Health Coalition (OHC) and labour allies to keep health care public, fight P3 hospitals, and stop the expansion of market competition.

Bargaining Action

- Continue to support the coordination of bargaining in the long-term care sector and to explore options to coordinate long-term care homes outside chains.

Organizing Action

- Work within the sector to develop wall-to-wall organizing plans and capacity in all CUPE workplaces.
- Work to ensure CUPE National implement an effective strategy to organize home care workers and Personal Support Workers (PSWs).

Municipal:

Political Action

- Working through the Ontario Municipal Employees Coordinating Committee (OMECC), begin immediately to implement the province-wide anti-privatization/downloading campaign to ready members to fight P3s and contracting out approved by members at the OMECC conference in March 2008.
- Support work underway to keep municipal electrical utilities and their subsidiaries publicly owned and operated. Continue to oppose the creation of P3s, deregulation of electricity and private power generation, while promoting renewable generation by publicly owned and operated utilities. Call for an end to an open wholesale electricity market.
- Begin now to build an effective mobilizing plan to be ready for the 2010 municipal elections. This should include assessing the performance of labour-endorsed candidates in the 2006 elections.
- Continue to work with coalitions to convince municipal councils to demonstrate their commitment to public tap water.
- Participate in political action/mobilization against LHINs-initiated restructuring.

Bargaining Action

- Through OMECC, coordinate common bargaining language on contracting-out contracting-in, job security, work of the bargaining unit.
- Support OMECC to build participation in true coordination of bargaining, building on the successes that have been achieved in other sectors.

Organizing Action

- Work within the sector to develop wall-to-wall organizing plans and capacity in all CUPE workplaces.

School Boards:

Political Action

- Continue to build on successes using the 2008 provincial discussion table negotiations with school board employers to fight the flawed funding formula for school boards.
- Continue to lobby the provincial government for the creation of a provincial benefit plan for support staff in the school board sector.

- Begin now to build an effective mobilizing plan to be ready for the 2010 school board elections. This should include assessing the performance of labour-endorsed trustee candidates in the 2006 elections.

Bargaining Action

- Use the 2008 provincial discussion table negotiations to make gains in the priority proposals identified by members in the school board sector and to facilitate local bargaining.
- Support the Ontario School Board Coordinating Committee (OSBCC) in implementing the motion passed at their 2008 conference to build toward a centralized bargaining model for school boards in Ontario.

Organizing Action

- Work within the sector to develop wall-to-wall organizing plans and capacity in all CUPE workplaces.

Social Services:

Political Action

- Develop a province-wide CUPE plan to counter provincial government policies that fuel poverty and that promote a low-wage, contingent job strategy for social service workers.
- Expand the 'Joining Hands' labour/community agency campaign Toronto pilot project to other Ontario communities.
- Continue campaigns to address government underfunding that includes lobbying, community and member mobilizing to raise awareness of funding inadequacies that impact on the quality of services and the working conditions of social service workers.
- Participate in political action/mobilization against LHINs-initiated restructuring.
- Respond to government attempts to privatize, transform and restructure service by working with our coalition partners like the OCBC to develop and implement fight-back strategies against increasing privatization and corporatization.
- Continue to oppose mandatory affiliation to regulatory bodies (i.e. provincial colleges) for workers where accountability structures are already applicable.
- Continue to highlight the important role of social service workers in building strong communities, fighting poverty, and promoting social justice.

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Bargaining Action

- Continue to support sectoral coordinated bargaining efforts in the Children's Aid Societies (CAS), multi-service community agencies and the Association for Community Living (ACL) workers sectors.
- Continue to encourage locals to bargain language to protect workers from the impacts of underfunding and transformation/restructuring initiatives that include job security, workload, stress/burnout, de-skilling, violence in the workplace and new regulatory bodies.
- Continue to support the exploration of, and pilot projects for, improved bargaining models in child care and shelters/hostels.
- Continue to develop bargaining strategies that include proposals to broaden pension coverage for social service members under the Multi-Sector Pension Plan (MSPP).

Organizing Action

- Continue to support the efforts of the Ontario Child Care Council (OCCC) to build strength in the child care sub-sector throughout the province.
- Work within the sector to develop wall-to-wall organizing plans and capacity in all CUPE workplaces.

Universities:

Political Action

- Continue to work in coalition with staff and faculty unions, the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) and other campus allies, to fight for increased public funding to improve working and studying conditions, and fight the increased use of user fees such as tuition, and privatization and commercialization of post-secondary education.
- Fight to protect the right to freely assemble, rally and protest on all university campuses.
- Fight contracting out in the post-secondary sector by developing an action plan focused on raising awareness of the effects of contracting out on both students and workers, and on achieving across-the-board collective agreement language.
- Develop a communications strategy to build solidarity with students and to increase student awareness of the merits of unionization on campus.

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Bargaining Action

- Continue to enhance the coordination of bargaining in the sector including lining up contract end dates with CUPE post-secondary locals across the country by 2010, achieve wage parity for all classifications, establish provincially recognized job titles and descriptions, tuition fee protection language in collective agreements, and job security language for part-time workers.
- Table proposals on employment equity that promote targets for job postings and interviews from members of equity-seeking groups on campus.

Organizing Action

- Continue to raise our profile in universities across the province and work specifically to organize food service workers and staff associations.
- Work within the sector to develop wall-to-wall organizing plans and capacity in all CUPE workplaces.

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