

Workers are
WORTH IT

Better Wages, Better Ontario

It's time to bust some of the myths about public sector workers.

Myth: Ontario public sector workers are overpaid.

Facts: Rising costs, inflation, and stagnant wages have made it nearly impossible for Ontario's public sector workers to keep up.

- Public sector workers earn less in real terms today than they did 10 years ago.
- Public sector wages have been curbed for more than a decade by both Liberal and Conservative governments through a combination of underfunding and legislation (Bill 124, which caps wage increases at 1%, is the most recent example).
- Many public sector workers are taking on second jobs, using food banks, or are leaving the jobs they love for better paid work elsewhere.
- Women workers, many of them racialized, have been disproportionately affected by government efforts to suppress wages.
- See what workers have lost with this inflation calculator.
<https://cupe.ca/cpi-calculator>

Myth: Wages have no effect on the quality of public services in Ontario.

Facts: There's a direct link between low wages and staffing shortages in Ontario's public sector

- Low wages mean hospitals, child care centres, long-term care homes, and other employers can't retain and recruit enough staff to provide high-quality services. This results in staff shortages that limit access to services, force program cancellations, increase wait times, and lead to longer wait lists.
- Staff turnover in health care is running at almost 15% and is directly contributing to increased wait times in Ontario's health-care system.

Myth: If we raise wages for workers, inflation and cost of living will get worse.

Facts: Increasing workers' wages does not drive up inflation. Inflation is being driven upward by low corporate tax rates, corporate greed, and profiteering.

- When public sector wages were frozen, Ontario still experienced inflation.
- While costs rise for consumers, corporations are making record profits. In 2020, corporate profits in Ontario increased by 9.3% and increased another 13.7% in 2021. This trend is continuing.
- If we taxed corporate profits fairly, we could use that money to pay public sector workers better wages.
- Increasing corporate taxes by just 1% would generate more money in twelve months (\$3.7 billion) than the government has saved in four years of wage suppression with Bill 124, which, thus far, has amounted to \$2.1 billion.
- Watch this video from CUPE to learn more about how inflation affects wages.
<https://youtu.be/pJiPXfxPbS4>

Myth: The government can't afford to pay workers more.

Facts: The Ford Conservatives have been creating budget surpluses by spending less than promised on essential public programs.

- The Ontario government spends far less than other provinces on paying public sector workers fairly. If Ontario spent the same per person as the rest of Canada does, there would be an additional \$31.9 billion to improve wages for vital jobs and services.
- For 15 years, successive Ontario governments have used the law to freeze and suppress public sector wages.
- Between 2019 and 2022, Bill 124 robbed Ontario's public sector workers of \$2.1 billion in wages. (Last year, the courts struck down Bill 124, but the Ford Conservatives are fighting to keep it in place.)

Myth: Ontarians don't want to pay public sector workers more.

Facts: Most Ontarians support better wages for public sector workers. In December 2022, an Abacus poll found that 79% percent of Ontarians agree that tying public sector wage increases to inflation makes sense.

Debunk the myths. Invest in better wages now.

