

# SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Winter 2024

**SSWCC**  
Social Service Workers  
Coordinating Committee



**CCTSS**  
Comité de coordination  
des travailleurs des  
services sociaux

## WHO WE ARE

The Social Service Workers Coordinating Committee represents 30,000 workers across Ontario's care economy, including children's aid societies, child care, community agencies, developmental services, and municipal social services.

As a part of CUPE Ontario, we defend workers and campaign for high-quality, publicly funded social services across the province.

### SSWCC Members

#### CHAIR

Juanita Forde

#### CAS REPS

Lorrie Pepin  
Kim Leonard  
Karen Trench

#### VICE CHAIR

Kelly Poisson

#### MUNICIPAL REPS

Rod Billard  
Kirby Steinhoff  
Kelly Poisson

#### TREASURER

Rod Billard

#### SECRETARY

Jess Tomas

#### CHILD CARE REPS

Carolyn Ferns  
Athina Basiliadis  
Jessica Tomas

#### TRADES COMMITTEE

Frederica Pottinger

#### OMERS WORKING GROUP

Lorrie Pepin

#### INJURED WORKERS

Frederica Pottinger

#### DS REPS

Jaison Parayil  
Janis Thompson  
Nathan Juhasz

#### HEALTH AND SAFETY

Melinda McClean

#### WSIB

Rebecca Punkari

#### COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Paula Masys-Pollock  
Wayde Smith  
Jo-Anne Rabannillo

#### EQUITY & INCLUSION

Dorcas Ako-Manieson

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Hello mighty social service workers.

There is more that unites us across subsectors than divides us. That is the core idea behind our Care Economy campaign and the animating drive behind my efforts as Chair of the SSWCC.

I see my position as Chair to educate, encourage, and empower members within the sector with information and opportunities to take a more active role in our union. That means navigating political changes, creating campaigns, and supporting coordinating bargaining, all to defend and support public services and good jobs.

When the committees developed our strategic plan in September 2024, we identified top issues for our sub-sectors. Unsurprisingly, there was tremendous overlap as the challenges faced by workers echo each other under a punitive Conservative government. We remain focused on fighting privatization, securing funding, reaching members, and improving the coordination of our sectors. These areas of focus will continue to guide our committee's work as we build out our Care Economy campaign.

This newsletter contains important updates and things to look ahead to. It also contains some impressive victories. Wins are possible - but they take concerted effort and devoted action. Stay connected, share the information at your local level as well with your neighbors within the community. When we fight for change together, we evolve together.

I hope to see you at the SSWCC conference in 2025.

Juanita Forde

Chair, Social Service Workers Coordinating Committee

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## SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS

### RALLIES

Members took over Queen's Park several times recently for the Raise the Rates rally and to support 10 Days of Action for \$10 Child Care.

### BARGAINING WINS

CUPE 2977, representing workers at Bethesda Community Services, won 7.56% over two years, 2x forced overtime pay and better benefits.

### MEDIA COVERAGE

The placement crisis in Children's Aid Societies has continued to dominate the media. While the Raise the Rates campaign has helped drive the conversation around legislated poverty.

### Upcoming Dates

Look out for sub-sector all-presidents call in January and February to be held over Zoom

SPRING CUPE SCHOOL  
February 18-23  
Sheraton Hotel, Toronto

SSWCC CONFERENCE  
March 24-27  
Sheraton Hotel, Toronto

CUPE ONTARIO CONVENTION  
May 25-31  
Sheraton Hotel, Toronto

## DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

We are organizing a **campaign** to raise awareness about the **privatization of passport services**. This shift threatens unionized jobs and compromises workers' rights and safety. When individuals or families choose private services staffed by non-unionized employees, it undermines the security of unionized positions, putting jobs at risk. Additionally, the privatization of these services can lead to health and safety concerns, as non-unionized workers often lack essential benefits like insurance and proper workplace protections. Our goal is to highlight these dangers and encourage support for unionized workers by promoting the value of secure, safe, and fair labor practices in public services like passport issuance. We'll have more updates and actions for members to take in the coming months.

### End of Year Message

We want to express our deepest gratitude for the hard work, dedication, and commitment shown by all Direct Support Professionals, support staff, office administration, and all CUPE Ontario members, as well as our invaluable casual and part-time workers. Each of you plays an essential role in the success of our work and the well-being of those we serve. Whether you're providing direct care, maintaining a safe and clean environment, supporting behind the scenes, or stepping in during critical times, your contributions make a real difference. We are incredibly proud of all that we've achieved together. However, we must acknowledge that there is still work to be done. One key area of focus remains addressing the impact of Bill 124, which continues to affect many in our sector, as well as the privatization of funding. We remain committed to advocating for a remedy and fair treatment for all workers impacted by these issues. As we look ahead to the new year, let's continue to work with passion, embrace new opportunities, and support each other in our shared goals. Wishing you a joyful, restful holiday season and a new year filled with health, happiness, and success. Thank you for all that you do.

Janis, Jaison & Nathan

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## CHILDREN'S AID

It has been a very busy year in CAS. Our considerable efforts to highlight the placement crisis not only generated widespread media coverage of the failures of the Conservative government, they also led to investigations and ministerial reviews. These, along with the ongoing financial audits, presents opportunities as well as challenges and we continue to coordinate a fight back campaign with locals to ensure we're able to provide the types of services our communities need. We're also creating a framework for coordinated bargaining, including shared proposals and a campaign, for locals bargaining in 2025. If you want your local to participate, get in touch!

### End of Year Message

We are stronger when we use our collective voices and work together. This holiday season, as you gather with friends and family, please bring copies of our legislative petition to sign. You can find the petition on CUPE Ontario's website. We need to continue to keep children, families, and workers at the forefront of peoples' minds as we highlight the dire situation in child protection heading into a possible election.



Lorrie, Kim & Karen

## CHILD CARE

Energy has continued to build in the child care sector, most recently with the launch of the Canada-wide campaign, Ten Days for \$10-a-Day Child Care and Decent Pay. The child care sector held a press conference and rally at Queen's Park on November 20th, together with our community allies at the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario.

Meanwhile, CUPE has been busy organizing child care centres to ensure decent work, pay, and union protections for more workers, while bargaining units have continued to make incremental gains, most notably within composite local 2484's Raising the Floor coordinated campaign. This model was successful across multiple employers and is being undertaken for a second round. Finally, please share the new group Parents for Child Care with parents of young children in your life to help bring families who care about the future of child care together.



### End of Year Message

Early Childhood Educators and child care workers have raised their voices this year. In the new year, let's keep fighting for decent work and pay. We are WORTH MORE!

Carolyn, Athina & Jess



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## MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES

Never has the urgency to increase social assistance rates been greater with more people than ever forced to rely on food banks, living on the streets, and being legislated into poverty. In this context, the Raise the Rates coalition held a press conference and rally at Queen's Park on October 24, following rallies in Ottawa, Sudbury and Hamilton. We are now reaching out to various municipalities to connect with City and County Councils to out forth motions to petition the Ontario Government to Raise the Rates for OW and ODSP.

Beyond the campaign, your reps are also focused on stopping the centralized intake rollout which continues to threaten the quality of services and safety of jobs across the province.

### End of Year Message

The Municipal Sector Reps would like to wish everyone a Happy and Safe Holiday season

Rod, Kirby & Kelly



## COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Did you know that almost 200 community agencies are represented by CUPE? Our services run a wide spectrum, from housing and employment services to mental health supports; from HIV-AIDS organizations to shelters; from immigrant-focused organizations to those dealing with seniors, any many more.

The committee is in the process of obtaining accurate information for all locals and presidents so you are receiving up-to-date information pertinent to your work in the subsector. Help improve our communications by joining the new CUPE Ontario Community Agencies group on Facebook by scanning the QR code below.

### End of Year Message

Your Community Agencies Committee Representatives are here for YOU! Reach out with any issues that we can support you with, especially if you need help in bargaining or are facing a possible strike, or lockout. We want to show your wins and challenges on on social media so email us at [communityagencies@cupesswcc.ca](mailto:communityagencies@cupesswcc.ca).



Paula, Wayde & Jo-Anne