



# LABOUR COUNCIL HANDBOOK

CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

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## Introduction

The strength of Canadian unions has always been based in the workplace and that will always remain true.

Without such roots, without the direct lesson that collective action matters in the offices, institutions, and factories that so dominate workers' lives, other union activities will wither and die.

It has also been commonplace to argue that this workplace base must be supplemented with sources of strength outside it, in the local community, at the national level, and at the international level.

Our ability to achieve our goals as workers is not only based on our collective strength but also on our ability to organize and mobilize in the face of laws, policies, the economy, and societal attitudes.

We need unions, the CLC, federations of labour, our political allies, and our allies in the community to rid ourselves of destructive right-wing agendas.

We need effective labour councils at the grass roots, in the communities, fighting on behalf of working people. The CLC emphasizes building and providing support for labour councils so that we can change the direction Canadian society has taken in recent years. We want to ensure that every local, lodge, and branch of all CLC affiliates takes steps to affiliate with the appropriate labour council, so that we are better prepared to take on this fight.

This handbook can be utilized in a number of ways. For the labour council officer, it can provide useful ideas and tips to run the labour council. For the labour council activist, it can serve as an education tool to provide an overview of the way a labour council works. For the new delegate to the labour council or the local union considering affiliation, this handbook is a source of education as to why we need community labour councils and why it is important to participate in them.

The CLC wants to ensure that your labour council participates effectively to influence positive change on behalf of working people.

*Note: This handbook is also designed to assist labour committees, where they exist.*

## Labour's Structure

New delegates to labour council meetings can often be perplexed at the structure and terms of the Canadian labour movement. And for good reason. Our labour movement is a huge network of local unions, branches, lodges, divisions, unions, and federations. In addition, these groups are organizations of people who, in most cases, voluntarily give their time and energy to represent workers in all walks of life.

The Canadian Labour Congress is the national labour centre at the federal level. Federations of labour are the coordinating bodies for the labour movement in the ten provinces and three territories. Labour councils operate at the municipal level and are the bodies most often charged with the “hands-on” delivery of labour programs. Organized labour’s political objectives are accomplished through coordinated action by these central labour organizations, bringing together unions having common objectives and interests. The leverage for action by the CLC, provincial federations of labour, and labour councils comes from affiliated national and international unions, which provide the membership and resources.



## **Canadian Labour Congress**

The Canadian Labour Congress is the organization of unions at the national level. The CLC coordinates the relations between the labour movement and the federal government in Ottawa and the establishment of alliances with organized workers on a worldwide scale.

The CLC is the largest central labour body in Canada. It is an organization of approximately 54 national and international unions representing more than 3 million workers. It is funded by affiliation fees from the headquarters of its affiliated national and international unions. These are set in the revenue section of the CLC Constitution. Over 3,000 local union delegates attend the CLC national Convention every three years to discuss the policies and programs to be followed by the CLC. Every affiliated union, provincial/territory federation of labour, and labour council is entitled to submit resolutions for consideration by the Convention and to send at least one delegate. The subject matters discussed at Convention cover a wide variety of issues and illustrate the scope of interest of the Canadian labour movement. They include economic issues, regional economic development, housing,

Medicare, various forms of social legislation, labour legislation, adjustment to technological change, women's issues, human rights, 2SLGBTQI+ issues, pension issues, environmental issues, immigration, and international affairs. This enables the CLC to act as “the voice of labour” at the national level and as the voice of Canadian workers on the international scene.

## **Federations of Labour**

Federations of labour exist as chartered bodies of the CLC in each province and territory and act in a similar fashion to the way the CLC acts on a national basis. They pressure and lobby provincial governments and coordinate the activities of their affiliated locals. Because labour legislation in most industries and sectors is a provincial responsibility, federations deal with matters affecting labour legislation and other statutes and legislation within their respective province or territory.

Federations of labour are financed by per capita fees from affiliated locals, according to their constitutions. Federations are comprised of local unions within the province or territory who belong to national or international unions affiliated to the CLC.

Local unions send delegates to federation conventions to determine federation policy, elect officers, and determine directions for that federation. Federations are the bodies which will represent labour in any provincial or territorial coalition or network which exists.

### **Your Labour Council**

CLC chartered labour councils deal with matters concerning local government. These include municipal councils, local boards and commissions, school boards, and regional districts. Every local union belonging to a CLC-affiliated national or international union is eligible to join a local labour council.

Labour councils provide a means of bringing together local unions in a community and enable labour to play a role in their community. Labour council responsibilities go beyond that, with the responsibility at the community level for carrying through the policies of the trade union movement initiated at the provincial and national levels. The range of activities in which the labour council involves itself is diverse – from providing strike support for local unions, lobbying MPs, provincial elected officials and local government officials, assisting in local area organizing,

United Way participation and fundraising, hosting local CLC educational schools, to implementing national and/or provincial campaigns developed by the CLC.

In addition, labour councils are labour's vehicle as partners in community networks and coalitions with like-minded groups in our community.

## Canadian Labour Congress Representative

The job of linking your labour council into the huge organizational structure of the Canadian labour movement rests with your CLC representative. It is that person's role to assist and advise the local labour council. This ensures that the labour council promotes, articulates, and coordinates CLC policy and action at the community level and within the labour movement.

Your CLC representative has access to specialized services provided by various departments of the CLC. These services include Education, Political Action and Communications, Human Rights, and Social & Economic Policy. Services include providing education materials, research, and information on a huge variety of issues and subjects. In addition, your CLC representative has access to specialists in other unions who might be of assistance to your labour council.

The CLC representative works primarily as an advisor and provides organizational assistance. As well, the CLC representative is responsible for assisting labour councils

in the field of affiliation drives. The CLC representative will assist councils in community organizing and building contacts for networks and coalitions at the community level.

CLC representatives are accorded all rights and privileges of delegates at meetings of the labour council, except the right to vote. They are also charged with ensuring that elections are fair and properly run, that the Constitution and by-laws are followed, minutes kept and distributed, and that audits are regularly performed. Labour council by-law changes must be approved by the CLC, and your representative is also responsible for processing such changes.

## Operation of a Labour Council

Your labour council must adhere to the principles and policies of the Canadian Labour Congress. These policies are determined and established at triennial CLC conventions and become the general policy guide for all affiliated and chartered organizations. Thus, the duty and responsibility of labour councils is to promote activities at the community level in accordance with these policies and principles. A labour council also has a duty and responsibility to support and assist affiliated unions on “issue” campaigns and strike support when requested.

Labour councils should encourage local unions to join the labour council. They should also reach out into the community, networking and building coalitions with progressive groups and like-minded organizations on a broad range of issues.

The labour council differs somewhat from a local union. It is a delegated organization of many different unions, each with their own interests, issues, and style of operation.

Delegates work for many different employers, some private and some public sector. Diversity is to be respected at the labour council and should be viewed as a source of strength. The positions taken by different unions should be respected and accommodated insofar as possible in developing positions for the labour council.

Labour councils need to make use of limited resources in the best way possible. Failure to work effectively results in a poorly run and ineffective labour council and burnout, for labour council activists. This section details the role of labour council officers and suggests key committees, important events, and some tips on effective leadership at the labour council level.



## Labour Council Officers

The labour council elects officers to form an executive body. The labour council's executive is set out in the council's constitution and by-laws. Each of the members of the executive must be members "in good standing" of an affiliated organization. It is the duty of the executive to conduct the labour council's business between council meetings and to provide guidance to the meetings. The importance of a well-functioning executive can make the difference between the council being successful or not. The work of the council, from the running of meetings to mobilizing around campaigns in the community, will be affected by the work of the executive. A dysfunctional executive will lead to a dysfunctional council. However, an executive that works together, plans effectively, and provides guidance and leadership will be rewarded by a responsive council. This does not mean there won't be high and low points, but generally speaking, when the executive works, the council works.

Election of the labour council officers is normally held by secret ballot, at least every second year.

Your CLC representative will usually conduct the election. Note that the positions of secretary and treasurer are often combined.

## **President**

The president is the chief officer of the labour council and exercises supervision over the affairs of the labour council. It is the president's responsibility to ensure that the labour council functions in a united, effective, and democratic manner. They must utilize, as much as possible, the abilities, ideas, and cooperative efforts of the entire labour council membership. The president signs all official documents and presides over all regular and special meetings and the meetings of the executive.

To do the job well, the president must be familiar with:

- CLC Constitution
- Labour council by-laws
- Parliamentary procedure
- The labour council affiliates

The president is the council's major contact for the regional CLC representative and community organizations.

The president is normally the chief spokesperson for the council. As the council's chief spokesperson, the president is seen as the voice of the council on a day-to-day basis. The president carries the words and the message of labour to the community. This happens through their contact with the media, community groups, schools, etc. The president, as demonstrated, is much more than just a meeting chairperson.

### **Vice-President(s)**

The vice-president(s) assists the president in their duties and acts on the president's behalf in their absence. This position is a very important one because it prepares the person to become president, either as a matter of succession or in circumstances where the president is unable to fulfill the duties.

Many labour councils have the vice-president(s) act as chairperson of various committees. This practice has a two-fold purpose – it gives the person some experience in conducting meetings and chairing committees, and it also enables the president to share the administrative load to the advantage of all concerned.

To do the job well, the vice-president(s) must also be familiar with:

- CLC Constitution
- Labour council by-laws
- Parliamentary procedure
- The labour council affiliates

## **Secretary**

The secretary's major responsibility is to keep a correct and impartial record of the proceedings of each council meeting. It is also the secretary's duty to write all correspondence on behalf of the labour council. The secretary must ensure that meeting notices, advance notice of elections, and proposed by-law changes/ amendments/notices of motion that will be considered are sent out and properly forwarded to all delegates. The secretary must work closely with the CLC representative. All reports and minutes of the labour council should be forwarded to the CLC regional office. The secretary should ensure that reports and minutes of meetings are available for delegates, either by mail-out or at general meetings. Affiliates should also receive reports and minutes as a general practice.

The secretary (secretary-treasurer) should ensure that the CLC regional office is informed, within one month of annual meetings, of any changes in officers or trustees so that the following may be updated:

- CLC regional and national mailing lists
- Labour Council Directory
- Federations of labour mailing lists

The recording secretary must be familiar with:

- Labour council by-laws
- Parliamentary procedure
- The labour council affiliates

*See Appendix F for suggested copies of Labour Council Information Update forms.*

## **Treasurer**

The treasurer is the financial officer of the labour council and is responsible for the labour council's books, documents, and files. The treasurer must report the labour council's financial status at each meeting, so financial statements and reports must be continually updated and prepared. In addition, the treasurer must also prepare a budget.

The treasurer must have the statements, books, and vouchers ready for the trustees for audit twice per year. The treasurer must also provide minutes of council meetings to verify that expenditures were authorized. The treasurer is also responsible for investing labour council monies, paying bills that have been approved, and keeping a true account of all receipts and disbursements in detail. The treasurer and other signing officers must be bonded. Bonding insurance is provided through the CLC and is paid annually.

The treasurer should be familiar with:

- Labour council by-laws
- Parliamentary procedure
- Reports and record-keeping
- The labour council affiliates

The treasurer must ensure the following fees are paid:

- Bonding insurance
- Federation of labour dues
- Any and all other fees which may arise as a result of the council's participation in various organizations or institutions

The treasurer, as stated earlier, is responsible for ensuring the trustees have all necessary documents for their audits, which should cover January 1st to June 30th and July 1st to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

The treasurer should ensure that the Labour Council Online Financial Reporting System (LC-OFRS) is completed each month. This is an online tool provided by the CLC to provide labour councils with an easy and convenient way to produce and file their mandatory financial reports. Online training for the LC-OFRS is available and treasurers should contact their CLC representative to arrange.

## **Trustees**

There should be three trustees elected who are not members of the executive. Their role is to conduct audits of the books and accounts and to verify that expenditures are properly authorized and recorded. Reports to the labour council and to the CLC must be made twice per year. Assistance is available from the CLC representative, if necessary.

## **The Sergeant-at-Arms**

The sergeant-at-arms records the delegates' names and attendance at each meeting and may be assigned other duties by the president. The sergeant-at-arms is responsible for keeping the delegate book, recording delegate attendance, verifying quorums, and reporting on voting entitlements.

The sergeant- at-arms should be familiar with:

- Labour council by-laws
- Parliamentary procedure
- Rules of Order of the labour council
- The labour council affiliates



## Labour Council Delegate

Affiliated local unions participate in the work of labour councils by selecting delegates to act as their official representatives. Most labour councils have monthly general and executive meetings, the dates of which are established in conjunction with the affiliates in an attempt to avoid conflicting meeting dates, if possible. However, for larger labour councils, this may be difficult to do.

A labour council delegate has a very important role to play in representing their local within the labour council. The labour council is the voice of labour at the community level and delegates are their union's contribution to that unified voice.

Delegates will be given the opportunity and encouraged to report on any matters affecting the membership they represent. Also, they will be made aware of issues affecting other locals within the community. Delegates will be part of projects and campaigns organized by the labour council. These may range from organizing strike support to lobbying municipal politicians. Further, the labour council

may implement campaigns organized by the CLC, affiliates, or federations.

**A delegate's responsibility is to ensure the position of the local is represented, not just their individual position.**

Delegates will need to report back to their local on labour council actions and decisions. The delegate will be called upon, from time to time, to volunteer knowledge and abilities as an active participant in planning and organizing projects for the labour council, through the work of various committees.

You will find there is no better union education than joining and participating in your local labour council. You will get a feeling for the struggles and concerns of other unions and you will find out what is going on in your community.

Finally, labour council delegates will gain great satisfaction from being part of a group that is working toward a better society for all of us.

## Labour Council Staff

Some labour councils are also employers, as well as being trade union centrals. This occurs because of the size of the council or due to a council receiving funding to undertake projects. For example, many councils run labour community services projects with United Way funding.

In many cases, councils have been required to undertake a role unfamiliar to the officers elected to run the organization. The role of being an official responsible for running an organization like a labour council, as well as being a workers' representative and advocate, is a role which cannot be taken lightly.

Councils must have a very clear understanding before undertaking projects which entail the hiring of staff. In addition to staff matters, there are issues such as dealing with unions who may represent the staff, renting of office space, budget preparation and monitoring, project auditors, government auditors, negotiations, maintenance of funding levels, and reports to the executive and members.

Being an employer is not an easy role for most trade unionists. The CLC encourages those labour councils who desire to enter into funding arrangements with governments or other agencies to do so with a complete understanding and appreciation for what will follow. Before undertaking any project, the council should consult with its CLC representative.

Councils should also look at what information or training may be required by officers and/or staff responsible for the project.

Labour councils who employ staff, whether they are council staff or project staff, must ensure they “practice what they preach.” Employees must be treated fairly and with respect as workers. In most cases, a collective agreement will be in effect between the council and the employees’ union. There should be no question about the importance of respecting any such agreement.

Further, we must ensure all council officers and staff are aware of the CLC policy on harassment. This policy is to be followed in all activities of the labour council.

Finally, it is important for labour councils to deal with any problems quickly. Your CLC representative should be consulted early to assist, if necessary, when problems arise. It is much easier to deal with a problem rather than a crisis.

## Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Labour councils, depending on the community, will have the opportunity to appoint labour representatives to a number of boards or commissions. These appointments should be taken seriously. Furthermore, those who are appointed must understand the role which they are being asked to undertake.

Whether these appointments are to hospital, school, social services, or other boards or commissions which may exist in the community, the appointee is there on behalf of labour.

As such, they carry labour's message and philosophy to discussions, debates, and decisions made. It should also be made clear before any appointments are made, that there is a responsibility for labour appointees to report to the labour council on a regular basis. This is not an opportunity for individuals to voice their own agenda. It is, however, an opportunity for labour to keep on top of issues affecting the community and, more importantly, to ensure

labour's voice is heard on these issues. There are many times when labour is not asked to appoint representatives to various boards or commissions. At the same time, various business and other community groups are appointed on a regular basis. The labour council should be aware of community issues and be prepared to make representations to appropriate bodies if they feel they are being overlooked or purposely avoided for appointments to certain boards.

Labour councils should also keep abreast of the sensitivities or politics surrounding various appointments. When affiliated unions may be affected by decisions of various boards or commissions, the council must consult with these affiliates prior to making any appointments. There may be times when the best course of action is to delay or refuse to appoint labour representatives or to withdraw if an appointee is already in place.

## Labour Councils and Political Action

Political action is a mainstay activity for labour councils. Labour councils are comprised of local unions that are directly impacted by decisions made by all levels of government. Federal issues such as the Canada Pension Plan, Employment Insurance, and the regulation of communications and transportation industries impact workers. Provincial issues such as labour codes, health and safety, the delivery of health care, and education impact workers. Local issues such as contracting out and privatization impact workers.

Who we elect to the House of Commons, provincial and territorial legislatures, city councils, school boards, and regional districts determines whether workers' issues are at the forefront or relegated to the backburner of public discussion. It's as simple as whether public services are delivered and administered by its citizens or by for-profit corporations. Our elected officials determine whether union organizing and collective bargaining are rights or whether unions are sidelined and workers are left to fend for themselves.



But, political action is not only who we elect. It's also about raising issues, educating the general public, and lobbying for legislation that is good for working people and the unorganized. The time between elections is just as important as those short election windows. Labour councils need to actively promote ideas and issues to make our country, our province, and our community a better place to live for everyone.

### **Federal Politics**

The Canadian Labour Congress is an active participant in federal elections. The CLC campaigns on issues of importance to working people, such as pensions, pay equity, pharmacare, and the right to organize. Local labour councils also promote these issues. Working with local affiliates, labour councils are active in delivering messages, canvassing union members, and reaching out to the general electorate. The local labour council coordinates many activities that affiliates participate in, such as labour canvasses, phone banking, and recruiting volunteers. The CLC regional offices provide guidance and coordinate affiliate activities.

Union education is of primary importance as well. Local labour councils are involved in organizing public forums and information sessions for union members and the public. These activities create union activists who can deliver messages to voters on the issues the CLC is advancing during a campaign.

Creating a Canadian Parliament that represents the interests of working people is paramount. Having enough parliamentarians who promote workers' issues ensures access to decision makers and the votes to introduce and pass legislation. Labour councils have a major role in making sure elected MPs hear from labour between elections. Regular issue-based lobbying of MPs is a regular task labour councils undertake both on Parliament Hill and in each and every electoral district in Canada.

## **Provincial Politics**

Given that provincial governments enact laws and procedures regarding labour rights, health and safety, and employment standards, provincial politics is of great importance. Therefore, labour councils have a role to communicate and organize at this level. Federations of labour across the country coordinate the activities of

affiliates at this level. Labour councils have a unique ability to amplify the campaign messages of provincial affiliates and the federations.

As in federal elections, labour councils assist with local campaigns, such as labour canvassing, issue development, and public forums.

### **Municipal Politics**

Labour councils are a major player in local government elections. Local governments include city councils, school boards, regional districts, and park boards. The Canadian Labour Congress has implemented a four-stage plan to assist labour councils with their planning and execution of a successful municipal effort.

A first step for labour councils is to bring together a representative group of major affiliates to become part of the planning process. Affiliate buy-in and participation is absolutely necessary.

In phase one, labour councils take stock of their local circumstances. That includes an analysis of each governing body and the individuals who are seated at

each table. Discussions about the direction of councils and boards, how friendly they are to workers in their communities, and how effective each locally elected official are key points to address in this analysis. Additionally, realistic campaign targets are outlined. Candidate recruitment is also an important task undertaken by labour councils and affiliates.

In phase two, labour councils undertake an endorsement process. Many labour councils have candidates fill out questionnaires on issues and/or hold interviews to determine suitability and an adherence to and understanding of union principles.

Phase three is about GOTV (Get Out the Vote). During this phase, information is distributed to union members by community. The information communicates a list of endorsed candidates that voters can take to the polls on Election Day.

Phase four concentrates on the period after Election Day. Labour councils are asked to hold endorsed officials to account. This phase includes interaction between the labour council and elected officials on a regular basis.

The CLC initiates many campaigns that endorsed officials can help promote in their communities.

Federal, provincial, and municipal politics are ongoing tasks for all labour councils. Getting to know elected officials and working with them on issues are key to getting a worker's agenda implemented. This takes creating a positive relationship with all politicians in a region.

### **Issue Campaigns**

Labour councils have an important role in galvanizing public opinion in favour of creating a better place for workers and the public in general. Many of these issues cross partisan lines and have an impact on workers who are not organized and are important to labour's allies. Many national, provincial, local, and occasionally international issues garner public interest and comment. Labour councils have a voice and that voice should be used when appropriate.

Many affiliates also work hard on issues specifically important to their members. Labour councils should amplify the campaigns of affiliates and get involved.

Political action needs to be at the forefront of a labour council's activities. Working with local affiliates to promote issues and candidates is the council's role. Political action is not a one-off activity. It is ongoing and is a major component for all labour councils across Canada.

## Labour Council Committees

A committee structure is often an important aid to increasing participation in labour council activities. Committees can be valuable to the executive for implementing programs and developing policies. They are also a good “training ground” for delegates to learn new skills that may lead to them taking a greater leadership role in the future.

Each labour council will probably have a number of committees. These committees may be standing (permanent) or ad hoc (temporary) committees. Committees should exist for a purpose or to achieve a goal and should not be established blindly.

The following are often functions or mandates that are delegated to committees to perform.

- Membership (recruitment)
- Strike support
- Education
- Women's issues

- Human rights
- Labour Day & Union Label activities
- Community outreach/services

These committees can greatly assist the labour council in undertaking its very important role in the community. However, in order to be successful, the mandate and responsibilities of the committees must be understood by committee members. It should also be noted that the formation of committees doesn't normally happen automatically. It may be necessary for labour council officers to go out and recruit delegates ahead of time.

In many cases, you will find delegates who may appreciate being asked since they see such work as part of being included in the operation of the council. It is important to ensure that members of committees reflect the make-up of the council and the community.

Don't think that the formation of a committee relieves the labour council itself from the responsibility of dealing with those issues. For example, the formation of a Women's Committee does not mean that the labour council passes those issues off to the committee and never deals with



them at general or executive meetings.

Committees derive their power from the executive or through the general meeting. Their power to act on behalf of the labour council must be delegated from one of those bodies. Committees should report regularly to the labour council and bring recommendations on issues to the council or its executive for endorsement or discussion. They should not act in isolation.

While the number of committees depends upon the size and resources of each labour council, this handbook will outline some of the more important committee functions. It is also important to note that each committee should be chaired by a member of the executive. Labour council committees are responsible to the executive as well as to the membership of the council.

### **The Membership (Recruitment) Committee**

The role of the Membership Committee is to increase affiliate membership and participation in the labour council. This committee function is a very important one in terms of building the labour council, so the president of the labour council should chair it.

Because of the importance of this committee and the sometimes sensitive nature of its work, it is suggested it be formed from within the ranks of the executive.

This committee should identify all CLC local unions in their vicinity not affiliated to the labour council and approach them by letter or personal contact, inviting them to affiliate. Unaffiliated locals should be told of the benefits of affiliation, monthly meeting dates, and delegate entitlements. If the initial request is unsuccessful, a letter should follow within three months reiterating the benefits of affiliation. The labour council can also request to attend an executive meeting of the local union in question. Additional help can be obtained from the CLC representative or CLC Regional Director when making an approach or talking to the affiliates' union representatives.

The committee should keep on top of issues affecting local unions. Those locals who are not affiliated to the council should be offered assistance in times of need. The Membership Committee should follow up with these locals to encourage affiliation and participation in council activities.

In order to fulfill its mandate of increasing participation in the labour council, the committee should identify those affiliated local unions whose delegates are not participating in the activities of the labour council. A review should be made of delegate entitlement, with a view to advising the affiliate of the number of delegates to which they are entitled, and to encourage them to appoint delegates that will participate fully. This activity should be done with diplomacy and tact, as labour council delegates are often very active in their own local unions. Delegates may want to alternate every other meeting to ensure their local is represented at every meeting.

### **Education Committee**

The primary role of the Education Committee is to identify and allocate education opportunities to delegates of the labour council. Education opportunities are made available to union members from a variety of channels, e.g. CLC Pacific Region Winter School, B.C. Federation of Labour regional conferences, Summer Institute for Union Women, etc. These schools are provided to assist union officers, stewards, and activists with the tools they need to better serve their local unions as well as local communities.

The committee should work with their CLC representative on an ongoing basis to ensure appropriate course materials, brochures, facilitators, guest speakers, etc., are arranged and available for educational opportunities. The Education Committee may also want to survey affiliated unions and delegates in order to get a sense of their educational needs.

The Education Committee should also work with their CLC representative to ensure meeting rooms, refreshments, and technical needs are secured before hosting local education sessions.

Another important role the Education Committee has is to present education materials, research papers, and webinar information provided by affiliated unions and labour organizations (e.g. federations of labour) to delegates at labour council meetings. CLC representatives should work with Education Committees to ensure materials provided are up-to-date and appropriate.

The Education Committee should also make themselves aware of educational initiatives outside of the traditional labour movement. It is important to learn from other

groups and adapt training materials and tools to suit our movement. It is also good to be aware and interested in the types of “labour education” used to educate children in the local school system.

The CLC, as well as its affiliated unions, invests in training union activists and staff to be facilitators/speakers/instructors. There is a broad range of subjects available to labour councils for education. It is important for the Education Committee to work with their CLC representative to identify these people and partner with them where possible.

### **Strike and Dispute Support Committee**

Supporting local affiliates during job action (strike or lockout) is an essential duty for all labour councils. Labour councils are composed of affiliates and count on their participation. It is, however, important that labour councils not initiate this activity but respond or offer assistance to an affiliate. Affiliates determine what kind of activities work for them and these can go beyond picket support. Consultation is the key to effective strike and dispute support.

Labour councils may be asked to do a number of different things to amplify an affiliate's public campaign. The labour council executive will discuss options and recommend actions for delegates and other unions to undertake.

Examples are:

- Provide picket support by bolstering picket lines and increasing visibility.
- Distribute materials on behalf of an affiliate.
- Use social media tools to communicate actions to union members and non-union supporters.
- Coordinate activities with other unions to support the affiliate.
- Contact traditional media outlets if requested by the affiliate.
- Coordinate financial support if needed.

### **Women's Committee**

One challenge for the labour movement is to ensure the active participation of women at all levels of the movement. A labour council Women's Committee can be a great way to include and organize more women to be involved in the labour council's activities.

The committee can also be a valuable resource for the labour council by clarifying how every issue the labour council takes on affects women. Women's perspectives on all these issues must be integrated into our work. A Women's Committee can help the labour council see when some issues traditionally not given attention are really critical issues for the labour movement.

The executive should call a meeting of interested women and have a discussion, led by one of the women on the executive or an experienced female delegate, to consider if the group is interested in forming a Women's Committee.

A Women's Committee is a place for women to share experiences and learn from one another, strategize and organize around issues, educate themselves and the membership around issues affecting women, and provide support to one another.

A Women's Committee ensures a voice and a place for women workers. There are other ways of reaching out to include women in the labour movement, but the place where it starts is the Women's Committee.

There are many potential activities for a Women's Committee:

- Meeting regularly to share experiences and discuss issues
- Holding educational sessions specifically for women on skill building, i.e. parliamentary procedure, or on current topics like the effects of certain laws on women
- Educating the labour council membership on all issues affecting women
- Reviewing the structures and processes of the labour council to make it more accessible to women
- Organizing events around March 8th - International Women's Day, and December 6th - the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
- Providing education and policy direction on harassment
- Collecting and circulating information on issues and events
- Working with local women's groups on joint issues and campaigns
- Highlighting sexism and discrimination in workplaces and the community



- Organizing more women to participate in labour council activities
- Providing a vehicle for caucuses of target groups, i.e. women of colour, 2SLGBTQI+ women, women with disabilities, and Indigenous women's caucuses

Federations of labour's Women's Committees and the CLC Women's Committee, through the CLC Human Rights Department in Ottawa, can also provide valuable advice, resources, and support to assist your labour council Women's Committee. Contact your CLC representative for more information.

### **Human Rights Committee**

This is a critical time for the labour movement. We are fighting to maintain and build on many of our hard-won rights. A central part of this struggle is the fight for equality in the area of human rights. The labour movement has had a long, proud tradition of fighting for human rights and this continuing commitment is more important than ever.

These are some of the challenges facing the labour movement:

- Challenging racism and developing our anti-racism practices
- Fighting for women's rights
- Achieving rights for people with disabilities
- Supporting Indigenous rights
- Achieving equality for 2SLGBTQI+ people
- Lobbying for refugee and immigrant rights
- Carrying out international solidarity work around human rights violations
- Achieving real employment equity

Many Canadian workers are people who the labour movement doesn't traditionally reach and whose lives are directly affected by how successful we are as a movement in achieving our social justice goals. These issues are where the labour movement must do major work and education if we are to achieve positive change in our society.

Labour councils can meet this exciting challenge by setting up a Human Rights Committee.

The executive of the labour council should be prepared to concretely promote, support, and fund the Human Rights Committee. The executive may want to recruit delegates for the committee and call the first meeting. The Human Rights Committee can be an excellent resource for the labour council by providing education to the labour council membership on human rights issues and why it is so important that these issues be integrated fully into our work. A Human Rights Committee can also ensure a voice and place for affiliate members in target groups who are not always represented at labour council. It can be a place for these workers to share experiences, organize and strategize around issues, do education work for themselves and the membership, and provide support to one another. Here are some of the potential activities for a Human Rights Committee:

- Collecting and distributing information on issues and events
- Providing education to the membership on issues, i.e. “how to start an anti-racism campaign in your local”
- Working with community groups on joint issues and campaigns

- Strategizing ways to make the labour council structures and activities more inclusive and accessible to groups currently not attending or involved
- Organizing events around March 21st - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- Working with the Women's Committee and community groups on International Women's Day and December 6th events
- Organizing more members to participate in the committee's activities
- Providing a vehicle for caucuses of target groups, i.e. people of colour, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQI+ people, and Indigenous Peoples

Federations of labour's Human Rights Committees and the CLC Human Rights Committee, through the CLC Human Rights Department in Ottawa, can also provide valuable advice, resources, and support to assist your labour council Human Rights Committee. Contact your CLC representative for more information.

## **Labour Day Committee**

The primary purpose of this committee is to celebrate the achievements of unions and working people in trying to make our workplaces and our societies a better place.

Across the country, labour councils host and sponsor Labour Day events. These events range in size and type but may include community picnics or fairs (with affiliated union booths, tents, and entertainment), parades, marches, etc.

Historically, Labour Day events have been a successful way to educate union members and members of the community about working conditions, affiliate campaigns, information about what unions do, etc. Today there is no lack of issues. There are a number of other things that labour councils can do to celebrate labour's achievements. Labour Day Committees can issue press releases, hold a vigil or a picnic, host online forums, or promote digital campaigns.

This committee should work closely with their CLC representative to ensure proper insurance is secured before events are held. The CLC will have promotional materials available for labour councils to use both at physical events as well as on digital platforms.

At many of these events, labour councils may want to invite guest speakers. This committee should work with their CLC representative to ensure the best and most appropriate guest speaker is invited to your event.

### **Community Outreach Committee**

In recent years, the labour movement has sought alliances among progressive and like-minded organizations, within women's, Indigenous, anti-poverty and seniors' groups, environmental, political, and other groups. The main goal of these coalitions is to build consensus and support for legislative change and other actions that would benefit all Canadians. A Community Outreach Committee would identify potential allies within the community. Networking and developing a common understanding will lead to actions that will benefit the community.

In the past, much of this work was generally done by the officers on the executive of the labour council. For the most part, this will still be the case. However, outreach and networking are becoming increasingly more important as we move into a world with changing technology and workplace demographics.

The work being done in an effort to “outreach” should be seen as the responsibility of all delegates to your labour council.

The Community Outreach Committee should work with their CLC representative to identify potential allies in the region as well as set up meetings and introductions. This committee should also work with the Communications Committee to develop a useful set of tools (handouts, information, posters, etc.), which can be used for “outreach.”

Some examples of the types of groups and campaigns labour councils have had success working with and partnering in are Living Wage for Families Campaign, The Union Protein Project, United Way, and the \$10 a Day Child Care Campaign.

## Buying Union

Labour councils should seek union-made goods or services when purchasing swag, ordering food, or booking travel accommodations on behalf of the labour council. Participation in fall fairs, school fairs, and other public forums, for example, offers a means to promote the Union Label and “Buy Canadian” theme.



# Appendix Summary

This handbook is designed as a tool to assist labour councils.

Understanding the similarities, but also the differences, we know that various councils will use the handbook accordingly. It is hoped it will be used in the manner in which it was intended, i.e. as a guide and resource document.

In order to facilitate the use of this handbook, we have included several appendices on specific topics. The intent is for easy reference on relevant subjects.

For further assistance, contact your CLC representative or the CLC regional office listed at the back of this handbook.

## Appendix A

# Meetings

# Planning and Running an Effective Meeting

## Pre-Meeting Checklist

- Ensure meeting hall is available, ready for meeting, and set-up completed. Meeting spaces should be accessible and barrier-free. We welcome diversity at all of our meetings and should always be mindful of any barriers that may be present.
- Update delegate lists to ensure eligibility and update sign-in protocols.
- Remind delegates well in advance of meeting. Use a variety of tactics including email, text message, Facebook, and labour council website to reach out to delegates.
- Have printed or digital versions of:
  - o agendas, minutes, financial reports, correspondence list, committee reports
  - o sign-in sheets, affiliate/delegate lists
- Guest speakers/Presentations: Guest speakers or presentations are a great way to make your meetings more meaningful and informative. Guest speakers can also attract a larger audience to your meetings.

Work with your CLC representative to identify and contact appropriate guests whenever possible.

### **How to Effectively Run a Meeting**

**Stay on time:** It is important to respect the sacrifice all delegates are making to partake in labour council work and meetings. Making sure that your meeting stays on time (and on topic) is a great way to ensure everyone's voice is heard and valued.

**Ask delegates to type out any reports that may be lengthy.** This is a great way to keep speeches to a minimum while providing useful information that delegates can bring back to their union.

**Follow parliamentary procedures:** although following formal rules of order during all parts of your meetings is difficult, doing your best to follow them can ensure your meeting stays on track and on time. Work with your CLC representative to receive any appropriate training if needed.

**Have executive members ready to move, second, and speak to executive recommendations.**

## Guidelines for Effective Committees

### Some General Tips for Committees

**Developing a Strategy, Step-by-Step.** An effective labour council committee has or develops a task which is important and well defined, a task which can be performed better by the committee than by any available individual.

Committees are a small group of delegates who are interested in the job the committee has to do and who are carefully selected for their proven or potential ability to contribute to its purpose.

The labour council committee procedure is informal and democratic. It is led by a chairperson who does not attempt to dominate the group. Its discussions involve all the members of the committee and result in decisions acceptable to, or at least accepted by, every member.

The arrangements for its meeting are set up so that a time and place are suitable. Appropriate records are kept of the results of the committee's work.

The committee looks at itself from time to time to see if it is getting on with the job and working well and reports regularly.

## **Committee Reporting**

### **Introduction**

There must be preliminary planning and work before each labour council meeting. Some problems need action between meetings. Other things don't deserve the attention of the whole meeting and yet must be done. These are the reasons why well-functioning committees are so important.

But, in addition, the more people actively serving on committees, the stronger the labour council. This is because a person taking part in a particular activity becomes more interested in the labour council as a whole. Furthermore, with well functioning committees a labour council can get a lot more done to benefit the membership. The experience of many labour councils also shows that good committee reports and discussion on these reports can often make the difference between a lively, interesting meeting and a dull, boring one.

## **Committees at Work**

Most labour councils place a member of the executive on each committee and in many cases this person serves as chairperson. But there is no hard rule on this. It is also common that the labour council president is an ex officio member of every committee.

A chairperson is responsible for steering the committee. This person sees to it that the committee meets regularly, that the members are notified of meetings, and that reports are made at the proper times and places.

One of the big advantages of committee action is its informality. In small groups, the rules of parliamentary procedure can be ignored. Members enjoy a meeting where they can take an active part easily. This informality makes it possible for a committee to discuss a problem or suggestion thoroughly and reach a common agreement. However, the chairperson must keep the committee on track.

## **Preparing and Presenting Committee Reports**

The report to the regular labour council meeting should be made as short and interesting as possible.

Usually, the chairperson or a particularly interested member of the committee makes the report.

When the report is important or the committee is recommending action, it is good practice to put the report or recommendations in writing. Minutes of the committee are usually submitted as the report of that committee.

An outline of a general, short committee report could include:

- Names of the members of the committee
- Main activities of the committee – what the committee is doing
- Success the committee is having and why
- Problems the committee is having and why
- Summary-specific action recommended by the committee, or how members could help

Let different members of the committee stand up and present different parts of the report. Or draw up an attractive handbill report which can be distributed at the meeting or passed out to all the labour council membership.



## **Acting on Committee Reports**

The labour council meeting should have an opportunity to “receive” committee reports. This is usually done by a vote. When the report of a committee includes suggestions or recommendations for action, appropriate motions should be put to the floor for consideration. This can be done by committee members or as executive motions.

Specific recommendations made by a committee may be amended by the membership before accepting them. They might raise or lower the amount to be given for a contribution, or change the date of a special event, etc. (Amendments must, of course, be constitutional.)

## **Tips for Effective Committee Leaders**

Effective committee members must be skilled at working with other people. To carry out its role, a committee relies upon the pooled talents of its members. Executive members must constantly be on the lookout for labour council delegates who have skills to contribute. Once found, these brothers, sisters, and delegates must be provided with a welcoming, supportive environment which encourages them to apply and develop their skills.

Because labour councils are democratic institutions, most of the important decisions we make are made in groups or committees. Whether they are called committees, task forces, study groups, or fact-finding teams, executive members and delegates must know how to participate effectively to get the job done.

Committee meetings are working groups which come together to solve problems, make decisions, or put plans into action. Groups like these require organization and structure. The members will rely on each other, and especially on the committee leader, to keep the discussion moving and in focus.

This does not mean that a committee leader can resort to “laying down the law” or manipulating other members. The labour movement draws its strength from committed volunteer activists. If they and their ideas are not treated with respect, they will soon “vote with their feet” and disappear.

Effective committee leaders listen more than they talk. As trade unionists, we believe that it is ordinary working people who are best equipped to find solutions to the

problems which affect their lives. Seldom are there any “wrong” or “right” answers. Usually there are a number of approaches to a solution. The committee leader’s job is to stimulate thinking and ensure that each idea receives a fair hearing so that the group works as effectively as possible.

“Committee leader” doesn’t mean “group boss”. Skilled committee leaders don’t try to dominate the discussion or impose their own ideas. Instead, they concentrate on keeping the discussion moving and focused on the task at hand. At the same time, they strive to create a supportive environment within the group which encourages people to share their ideas.

The committee leader, then, must respond to two kinds of needs: the need to get the job done (“task focus”) and the need to strengthen and build the committee (“people focus”). But creating an effective problem-solving committee is not the job of the discussion leader only.

Each member of the committee has an obligation to contribute to the discussion in ways which help the discussion leader to keep the discussion moving and focused on the task at hand.

To meet those needs, skilled committee leaders and members of effective committees employ techniques like these:

- 1. Listen more; talk less.** Committee leaders may find it easy to dominate a discussion, but people resent it. They either clam up or get in a struggle for dominance with the leader. Either way, nothing useful is happening. So make your points clearly but briefly. When you start hearing your own voice more than any other, it's time to start listening.
- 2. Get things rolling.** Provoke thought by suggesting new, even jarring ideas, new attacks on the problem, or new solutions.
- 3. Draw ideas together.** Pull ideas and suggestions together to see if they can be blended into solutions. This helps keep the discussion on track.
- 4. Elaborate.** Expand briefly on useful ideas which might get lost for want of proper explanation. Better still, call upon the person suggesting it to elaborate. Again, if you're expanding on your own suggestion, be clear

but brief. Don't argue for your position under the guise of providing more information.

5. **Clarify.** Redefine or restate the problem when too many opinions have muddled the issue. Get the group back on track with a clear idea of what they have to accomplish.
6. **Seek information.** Pin the discussion down by asking for hard information about the problem. What is fact and what is speculation? Should more research be done? Poor information almost always means a poor decision.
7. **Give information.** Any committee member should offer new facts pertinent to the discussion. The leader should strive to bring out all relevant information, no matter how unwelcome or uncomfortable those facts may be. Giving information may also refer to relating personal experience to illustrate a point.
8. **Summarize.** Condense and lay out the main points of the discussion to ensure that everyone has the same understanding. This is often used before testing for consensus

## **To Build and Strengthen the Committee, the Committee Leader Should:**

- Encourage being friendly, warm and responsive to others, praise helpful contributions and make people feel they are valued and accepted as team members.
- Draw people out, make sure that everyone has a chance to contribute. Use statements such as “We haven’t heard anything from Carol yet,” or “Would you like to say something on this, Roger?”
- Test for consensus, tentatively asking for the group’s opinion to see if they are close to an opinion.
- Mediate, keeping harmony in the group, reconciling differences, and seeking compromise. Making everyone feels that they are a valued member of the group.
- Relieve tension, diverting attention or injecting humour if group members are reaching a hostile impasse. Drain off negative feelings by suggesting new approaches.

Some people come to the labour council already skilled from experience in their local union. They are confident and eager to get on with the job. These people may require little from the committee leader beyond a clear explanation of the tasks to be accomplished.

Others may have plenty of skills but lack confidence or motivation. Still others may be eager but unskilled. In all cases, the effective labour council committee leader looks on each new individual as a fresh opportunity, first to develop a skilled and committed labour council activist and second, to learn as much as possible from each new individual in order to increase the effectiveness of the committee.

In other words, the committee leader must involve the follower in a learning process. The committee leader must be able to diagnose each individual's learning needs and then provide a supportive environment in which new skills can be learned and practised.

It is important to remember that people may be more skilled in some areas than in others or may have greater or less interest in one area or another.

The committee leader must remain flexible in their approach to deal with different individuals and situations.

The effective committee leader develops people by providing a learning experience which they can control as they develop confidence and skills.

Effective committee leaders in labour councils are committed leaders. They develop people by entering into a learning process with them. They allow people to take charge of their own learning and to function as autonomous individuals. These confident, self-directed people will then be available to assume leadership roles, where they will encourage and develop others.



## Problem Solving in Groups

Trade union activists spend a lot of time working in groups. Working in groups to solve problems can be exciting and rewarding. As we bounce ideas around, one thought stimulates another until the group working together becomes far more original and imaginative than any individual member working in isolation. By pooling our talents and our intelligence, we develop more creative solutions and ensure solid commitment to them.

Effective group leaders promote critical thinking and decision-making within the group by working through a systematic problem-solving process. The use of a systematic approach is not only effective in revealing the widest range of possible solutions, it also ensures that the group will develop an action plan to put its solutions into effect and that it will monitor events to see whether their plan solved the problem.

The problem-solving model suggested in this manual has six steps.

## Clarify the Problem

Get all the facts. Poor information may lead the group to define the problem incorrectly. At best, they'll be wasting time; at worst, the problem will intensify.

Use the 5 W's.

- Who is involved?
- Where will it take place?
- What caused it? Why is it a problem?
- When did it happen?
- Remember, the only bad question is the one which wasn't asked. Separate fact from opinion. Two people may view the same event and come away with completely different impressions of what happened. Do your sources know or do they think they know? Where possible, double-check your sources. Postpone solutions. Don't jump to a conclusion. The quick, easy answer is always tempting, but experienced leaders know that it can cause more problems than it solves. It's better to put off the choice of a solution until the group has explored the widest possible range of options.

1. **Generate Alternative Solutions.** “Find as many ideas as possible.” A useful technique is called brainstorming.
2. **Remember:** Defer judgment on whether ideas are good or bad. All ideas are accepted, no matter how absurd. Group members should piggyback on each other’s ideas. Try to view the problem from as many angles as possible. If brainstorming, state ideas briefly. Keep a fast pace. Write down all suggestions.
3. **Evaluate Alternative Solutions.** “Find the good ideas.” Select those ideas which hold the most promise of a solution. The group weeds out these suggestions which may have sparked creativity but which cannot be seen as serious alternatives. An idea is retained for consideration if only one member wishes to discuss it seriously.
4. **Choose the Best Alternative.** “Find the best idea of the lot.” Some groups try to rank-order possible solutions as a way to sort out the best alternative. Options which lose support are dropped from the list as discussion focuses on more promising suggestions. This narrows the group’s attention to the most effective options,

conserving time and energy. If possible, the group should reach agreement by consensus. Groups larger than 12-15 members may require a vote. It is especially important that anyone directly affected by the decision be committed to it.

5. **Implement the Decision.** It is important to determine WHO does WHAT by WHEN. Problem solving implies change and change demands action. The group should develop an action timetable and assign responsibility for specific tasks.
6. **Evaluate the Solution.** How well did your solution work? How do you know? Your group must decide upon a way to measure the effectiveness of its solution. Specific criteria should be established, which will serve as benchmarks for measuring success. This is a step which is often overlooked. It's easy to congratulate ourselves on our successes, but it's hard to claim failures as our own and learn from them. However, no problem-solving exercise is complete without a reliable way of measuring how well the solution succeeded in addressing the problem.

# The Art of Strategic Thinking

## What is Strategy?

A strategy is a broad plan which combines separate actions in such a way as to reach the objectives sought. A strategy is like a road map. We need to know where we are and where we want to end up. Our strategy tells us how to get there.

A strategy suggests immediate action projects but also provides a long-range perspective that will carry us through years of hard work, setbacks, and short-term successes.

## What Makes a Good Strategy?

1. A good strategy is planned well in advance. It anticipates what is likely to happen. It also considers what isn't likely to happen but might happen anyway.
2. A good strategy is flexible. It leaves room for alternative plans should the impossible occur.
3. A good strategy builds on the experience of people. It uses their skills to the best advantage.

4. A good strategy involves people. It takes into account that how we get there is as important as the ultimate destination. People learn as much from the process as the content of a campaign.
5. A good strategy is realistic. It develops out of an analysis of what the membership can and cannot do. It takes into account what resources the labour council has.
6. A good strategy includes activities that build spirit and keep people interested and involved along the way.
7. A good strategy has depth. It includes not only good ideas, but also steps to carry out those ideas.

### **Developing a Strategy in Committees, Step-By-Step**

1. Set achievable, realistic goals.
2. Identify appropriate activities.
3. Identify resources (human, monetary, material) available and needed.

4. Divide tasks and responsibilities.
5. Set up a communication/decision-making system.
6. Set deadlines.
7. Evaluate.
8. Report back to the executive and the labour council.

Strategies don't always unfold according to plan. Sometimes we just need an opportunity to rejuvenate and remind ourselves of the bigger picture. Sometimes we are making mistakes and need to give ourselves a chance to learn from them. There are many good reasons to build checkpoints into our strategy, points at which we assess our strategy and make changes if necessary.

## **Appendix B**

# **Important Dates for Labour Councils**



- Black History Month (February)
- Women's Memorial Marches (February 14)
- World Day of Social Justice (February 20)
- B.C. Pink Shirt Day (February 27)
- International Women's Day (March 8)
- Agriculture Safety Week (3rd week in March)
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21)
- World Water Day (March 22)
- World Health Day (April 7)
- Day of Pink (2nd Wednesday in April)
- Anniversary of Toronto Typographical Union Strike (April 15)
- Earth Day (April 22)
- Administrative Professionals Day (April 26)
- Day of Mourning (April 28)
- Asian Heritage Month (May)
- May Day (May 1)
- Mental Health Awareness Week (May 1 week)
- North American OH&S Week (May 5-11)
- World Fair Trade Day (2nd Saturday in May)
- International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) (May 17)

- Anniversary of Winnipeg General Strike (May 19)
- World Hunger Day (May 28)
- National Indigenous History Month (June)
- Pride Season (June onwards)
- Anniversary of On-to-Ottawa Trek (June 3)
- World Environment Day (UN – June 5)
- Collective Bargaining Rights Day (June 8)
- UN World Day Against Child Labour (June 12)
- UN World Refugee Day (June 20)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21)
- International Day of the World's Indigenous People (UN – August 9)
- Labour Day (1st Monday in September)
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30)
- UN International Day for Older Persons (October 1)
- Sisters in Spirit vigils (October 4)
- Trans Day of Remembrance (November 20)
- International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25)
- National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (December 6)
- World AIDS Day (December 1)
- UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3)

- Human Rights Day (December 10)
- International Migrants Day (December 18)
- Healthy Workplace Month
- World Mental Health Day
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
- Persons Day
- World Cities Day
- Veterans' Week

The following are annual events which the labour council should make efforts to include in their list of activities within the community. It's not necessary to strike a committee over the event but some committee work through an existing committee of the executive should be involved.

In addition to the suggestions below, labour councils can be active for each of the days by sending out emails to your delegates, being involved on social media, as well as sending out letters to the editor.

### **March 8th – International Women's Day**

International Women's Day is a day to celebrate our victories, mourn our defeats, and draw strength from one another to continue our struggle for gender equality.

Your labour council Women's Committee can act as the organizing committee for this day and work with local women's groups on the event.

Here are some suggested activities:

- Participate in your local International Women's Day parade and bring your union banners.
- Help organize a social event with labour and community groups, with the proceeds to go to a local women's group.
- Organize a public meeting or press conference with labour and community speakers to highlight critical issues facing women.
- Set up an educational for local activists on an issue affecting women.
- Request materials from the CLC, affiliates, federations of labour, and women's groups, either locally or from national groups for distribution to your membership and the general public.

The CLC Women's Committee, through the CLC Human Rights Department in Ottawa, and federations of labour's women's committees can provide valuable advice and resources to assist your work for this day. Contact your CLC representative.

### **March 21st – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

In 1966, the United Nations declared March 21<sup>st</sup> the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This is traditionally a day where the labour movement can promote and work on its anti-racism campaigns in our unions, workplaces, and in our communities. For labour councils, this is an opportunity to work closely with community groups to organize some way to mark this day and highlight the important need for anti-racism work in our society. A labour council Human Rights Committee can act as the organizing committee for this event.

Here are some suggested activities:

- Hold a public meeting with a panel to discuss what can be done about fighting racism.

- Set up an educational for local activists on how to deal with racism in the workplace.
- Hold some kind of vigil or social event with labour and community speakers.
- Request anti-racism materials, buttons, and posters from the CLC, affiliates, federations of labour, or community groups to distribute to your members and the general public.
- Send out a press release recognizing the day and labour's support for it.

The CLC Human Rights Committee, through the CLC Women's and Human Rights Department in Ottawa, and federations of labour's human rights committees can provide assistance to your labour council in marking this day. Contact your CLC representative.]

### **April 28th – National Day of Mourning**

The CLC has declared April 28 every year the National Day of Mourning to remember workers killed and injured on the

job and also to reinforce our commitment to continue the fight for a healthy and safe workplace. The CLC Canadian Council called on local unions and labour councils to observe the National Day of Mourning and has asked them to urge municipalities to co-sponsor the Day as an official annual event.

The following is an action checklist for labour councils and local unions.

- Approach your municipal (and/or provincial) government and ask them to co-sponsor the event with the local union movement.
- Decide which committee(s) of the labour council will organize and publicize the event; inform the local police of your plans (time, place, and likely attendance). Consider holding a parade leading up to the “static event.”
- Invite sympathetic community organizations to participate, for example:
  - o injured workers’ groups;
  - o labour participation committees of the United Way;

- o community health organizations;
  - o church groups;
  - o universities and colleges, e.g. health and safety class members;
  - o other public interest organizations active in the area, e.g. environmental groups.
- Alert all the local media beforehand – write to them about the event and follow up with a phone call.
- Hold a publicity campaign in the locality, with small ads and posters.
- Keep the event fairly short but interesting; hold it in a central or symbolic place, e.g. outside the town hall, in a public place near a hospital, or near the site of a major workplace accident. Also, consider holding the event at lunchtime to get good attendance.
- Try to provide a platform or microphone, and use union buttons, banners, flags, and posters.
- Hold a minute's silence as part of the program.



- If attendance is likely to be high, it is important to provide speakers who have something to say, whether or not they are dynamic, for example: a spouse of a deceased worker, a disabled worker, someone with a good track record in workplace or community health.

## **Workplace Observations of the Day**

The aim of the Canadian Labour Congress is to get universal, official recognition of the Day at all levels of government – municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal.

In addition, several local unions have taken the initiative to get recognition of the Day in workplaces.

Ideas include:

- Negotiate contract clauses laying down the duties of the employer and the rights of workers in connection with the Day.
- Including the Day in workplace health and safety training programs.
- Lower flags to half-mast at the worksite on the Day.

- Observe a moment of silence at 11:00 a.m.
- Hold special education sessions scheduled on the Day.
- Present awards to workers and others who have made special contributions to control the hazards “at the source.”

*Note: Special workplace inspections on the Day are not recommended since they could disrupt hard-won rights to regular, scheduled inspections by the joint health and safety committee or representative.*

## **Solemn Events and Social Events**

Some labour councils have organized “solemn events,” e.g. at lunch time on April 28, with further social events in the evening, e.g. with a respected health and safety speaker. The idea is to involve families and the public as well as the workers directly affected by workplace death, injury, and disease.

We try to stress:

- Action as well as mourning: “Mourn for the Dead; Fight for the Living” is our motto
- Prevention as well as compensation

- Public and community events as well as events for labour
- Where the National Day of Mourning falls on a weekend, some unions try to organize: Workplace observations on the weekday closest to April 28th
- Dignified ceremonies in the daytime on April 28th

### **School Activity**

It is likely that school activities will form a central part of the CLC's annual National Day of Mourning. Some unions are trying to interest school boards in putting on events in schools on April 28.

Ideas include:

- Presentations or videos by unionists
- Flags flown at half-mast and a moment of silence at 11:00 a.m.
- School inspection by the students (not to be confused with regular workplace inspections by the unionized staff)
- Stickers for certifying “safe and healthy” and “environmentally friendly” projects

## **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

On September 30th of each year, we mark the day by strengthening our resolve to fight for Indigenous rights and justice. 2021 marked the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation which is recognized by the Federal and some provincial and territorial governments as a statutory holiday. This day has also historically been recognized and commemorated across the country as Orange Shirt day, a day to remember and honour all the Indigenous children taken from their families and communities and sent to residential schools, where they experienced abuse, racism, violence and mistreatment. Labour councils will continue to support Indigenous workers and communities and pushing all levels of government to make concrete commitments and take action on reconciliation.

## **December 6th – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**

On December 6, 1989, fourteen women were murdered at the École Polytechnique in Montréal. This brutal act of violence was not an isolated act of hatred, but one extreme in the spectrum of violence that women in Canada face daily. The Canadian government was forced to declare this a day of

remembrance and action on violence against women after massive lobbying from the women's movement and other progressive social groups, including the labour movement.

This is a day for mourning and for positive action. Many communities across Canada hold candlelight vigils to mark the day and remember the women who have faced this violence. Some labour council meetings and schools have marked the day with a moment of silence and a speaker on the issue. Labour councils can work with local women's groups to plan events for the day.

In terms of taking positive action, donations can be made to support your local women's shelter or rape crisis centre. Or the labour council could hold an educational or event to highlight concrete ways individuals, particularly men and the labour council, can work toward stopping violence against women.

The CLC Women's Committee, through the CLC Human Rights Department in Ottawa, and federations of labour's women's committees can provide valuable advice and resources to assist your work for this day. Contact your CLC representative.

## Appendix C

# Possible Activities and Organizing Techniques

Here are some possible activities or organizing opportunities that labour councils can host or take part in.

### **Within the Labour Movement**

- Union meetings, i.e. speakers, material
- On-the-job canvass
- Telephone banks
- Direct mail
- Union publications
- Plant-gating – material distribution
- Bulletin board – lunchroom fact sheets
- Conferences, seminars, schools
- Union special events, i.e. picnics
- Demonstrations and rallies
- Information pickets
- Letter writing campaigns, such as letters to editor
- Lobbying MPPs, MLAs, MPs, councillors
- Petitions, card signing
- Press conferences and press releases
- Posters, signs, buttons, stickers, T-shirts
- Debates
- Letters from heads of unions to executive, union members

- Webinars
- Social media broadcasts and videos (i.e. Facebook Live events)

## **Within the Community**

- Forming coalitions of like-minded groups
- Networking – targeting areas, groups
- Canvassing
- Telephone banks
- Material drops
- Direct mail
- Paid advertising
- Lobbying
- Media events
- Press conferences and press releases
- Presentations to special targeted groups:
  - o Schools, colleges, universities
  - o Senior citizen groups
  - o Community groups
  - o Like-minded groups
  - o Cultural groups
- Parades, car caravans, vigils
- Information pickets



- Petition and card signing
- Letter-writing campaigns
- Radio/television phone-in
- Presenting briefs
- Picnics
- Webinars
- Social media broadcasts (i.e. Facebook Live events)

## **Appendix D**

# **Working in the Community**

## Laying the Groundwork for Change

Union members in Canada have always known that our job as advocates for working people and their families doesn't stop after work. There are changes that can't be made at the bargaining table and will require community support.

We can negotiate the best in wages and benefits for our members, but the greatest working conditions won't stop a company from moving a plant to the USA or Mexico, or prevent the government from shutting down a department or service. Sometimes, we have to reach out beyond our memberships to get the support we need. More and more, we have to make the general public aware of our goals and get them to support us. Our challenge is to implement labour's agenda, utilizing new strategies, tools, and tactics.

The labour movement has developed new styles of organizing for the changes we want. It takes our message beyond the traditional workplace and into union members' homes, phones, and computers.

In recent years, the Canadian Labour Congress has mounted organizing campaigns and community action efforts against privatization and transport deregulation, austerity-supporting governments, and conservative idealism.

At the heart of the CLC's community mobilization campaign on these issues is the labour council. Through you, local committees are formed to carry out the campaign in cities, towns, or regions across the country.

A national campaign structure exists to help labour councils. The national campaign supplies materials, research, public relations, high profile speakers, and organizing assistance through CLC representatives.

The labour council's role in a national campaign is critical. The campaign will depend on the members of your labour council to organize local events, petitions, lobbying, demonstrations, and other activities. The labour council will also have to work with other community groups, who may or may not be part of a national coalition, to help make sure that labour's voice is heard.

A typical CLC campaign usually has three objectives:

1. Persuade people who agree with you to “take action” in public and directly towards elected officials.
2. Change or neutralize the opinions of those who with our work.
3. Win over those who are undecided about the issue, and gain supporters for our campaigns.

We also want to persuade people who are in a position to help our cause. We need to reach the decision makers and those who most influence them.

The CLC, at the national level, targets national opinion leaders. Your campaign strategy should target your community’s opinion leaders so that the message overlaps.

The labour council must also target politicians who do not have to make a decision (vote) on the issue. It is easy for them to take popular positions if they know they won’t have to pay a political price later on. Try to get these people to take specific action on issues, especially if it affects their communities.

## Coalition Building

You've probably heard the saying: "Politics makes strange bedfellows." People will ignore their small differences and co-operate in a common cause if they think there is an injustice. This is especially true at the community level. A plant closure due to the Free Trade Agreement hurts local workers and puts pressure on public services because there are fewer tax-payers. Closures and cutbacks also have a spin-off effect on other industries such as retail stores and local services, especially in smaller communities, because there are fewer buyers and customers.

Why coalitions? There are many reasons. Often labour's view is seen by the public and politicians as self-serving. We need the strength of third parties to advocate the appropriate political response. Sometimes the issues involved are so big (e.g. GST) that labour cannot handle its defence alone at the bargaining table. Finally, labour has always taken the view that in numbers, there is strength.

How do we begin to build coalitions? Think about how everyone in your community will be affected by what you are

campaigning for or against. Then go to work, finding allies and forming coalitions. Stress the common concern and ignore past differences.

Demonstrate to those who should participate that it is in their best interest to do so. Build a case to demonstrate a potential gain or a loss to each potential member of the coalition. You'll be surprised by the positive response.

Remember, few people in your community will be interested in a campaign that does not seem relevant to them. This is the danger with national or provincial campaigns. Sometimes the issue seems too big or too distant to get people interested. Work with your CLC representative to find the best way to integrate your local story with national or provincial campaigns.

Take great care to promote your campaign in terms that will make it seem close to home. For example, a flyer or social media post announcing a public meeting to oppose an action of the federal government will be met with indifference unless it specifies how your community (mentioned by name) can do something real to affect federal politicians. Coalitions are an important part of CLC campaigns.

## Getting Started - What a Labour Council Needs to Consider in a Campaign

To organize a successful local campaign, a labour council needs to think about four basic ingredients before it begins.

**The Issue:** The labour council must first make sure that the issue has been identified and is clear to everyone involved. The issue may be national or provincial, but for a campaign to be effective, it must clearly affect people at the local level in some way. The issue must interest local people as well as give them some reason to get involved in the campaign.

**The Objectives:** The goals of any campaign, whether national, provincial, or local, are defined at the point at which planning originates. As local community organizers, labour councils must study the objectives and help reach those objectives in their own communities, in their own way.

This means involving others: union members, interested community groups, political parties, and politicians. Local objectives must be realistic in light of resources available, such as money and activists' time.



**Involving People and Evaluating Resources:** The bottom line in any community campaign is the involvement of people. It starts with the labour council forming a committee, involving labour council delegates, seeking other volunteers, and trying to spread the work as widely as possible. Again, available resources must be kept in mind.

**A Strategy:** A national or provincial campaign will have a strategy for the entire country or province. A local labour council campaign should have its own strategy for making these plans work locally. A campaign strategy will include people recruitment, finding allies, creation and distribution of materials, organizing events, getting the word out, creating a schedule, identifying revenue sources, and targeting local community decision makers.

### **Networking - Laying the Groundwork for a Coalition**

Networking means getting to know people in different organizations so that you have a network of people who will help you with a campaign.

It is one of the most important organizing activities of any campaign if coalitions are involved. It not only helps your campaign reach its objectives, it also gets your council known to more people in the community.

Here are some basic principles of networking:

Make a list of groups which may support a campaign. Divide your list into two categories: groups that **will almost certainly** support you and groups that would probably support you. Remember not all groups support labour's position on the range of issues all the time.

Go to your strength first. Concentrate right away on groups which will definitely support the campaign. Other unions, women's, environmental and service groups, teacher, worker, non-profit, and seniors' organizations should be consulted before approaching other groups which might not have positions on the issue. The more support you have, the more support you will get.

Ask around. Your campaign activists probably belong to other organizations besides their union.

Ask them to arrange a meeting with these other groups to discuss the campaign.

Ask all sympathetic supporters for suggestions on who else should be approached. Everyone should be a recruiter. A good motto is: “Each one reach one.”

Ask for a chance to speak. Ask for time at an organization’s meeting to briefly explain your campaign and answer questions. Come with literature and be as non-partisan as possible. If asked what kind of support you want, be prepared to tell the group exactly what you want.

Decide in advance just what is realistic in the way of support from each group or person. Asking for more than is usual for the group to give, either in activity or contributions, will turn it off.

Respect each group’s decision-making process. Don’t make any suggestions on how they should decide their position or support. If you encounter opposition at someone else’s meeting, be polite. Best response: “I respect your point of view and your decision-making process.

I appreciate being invited here to explain our campaign, but I am happy to listen to any other position. That's what democracy is all about."

**Politeness pays.** If invited to speak at another organization's meeting, always follow up with a brief thank you letter, whether or not you were able to get their support. Avoid getting involved in the internal politics of another union or group. You will only damage your own cause.

**Ask for an answer as soon as possible.** Most groups will probably decide whether to support the campaign after you have left the meeting. Make sure they know where to reach you. Ask them for an answer as soon as possible, whatever way they decide.

**Stay in touch.** If you win support from any group, don't take it for granted. Assign a person to stay in touch with and inform the group regularly. Key contacts in each supporting organization should be informed in advance of any campaign events.

**Advertise your allies.** Recognize any groups which lend support of any kind. Be generous in your praise of them. Mentioning the names of supporting groups and high-profile individuals gives your campaign more credibility.

# Appendix E

## Media

## Labour Council and the Media

Raising a labour council's media presence is one key component to raising a labour council's overall community profile and getting union issues into the public dialogue. In order for labour councils to get their message out and to create public awareness on workers' rights, health and safety issues, and political action, the media – in its variety of forms – is the conduit to the general population.

Traditional media outlets differ greatly from community to community. These include local print media, local radio, local news websites, and local television. The use of labour council websites, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media can effectively get labour's message to a wide audience and to specific target groups and communities.

The first task is to create a media directory. It's simply a listing of media outlets within a labour council's jurisdiction. The second task is to create a social media presence within the community. These are not difficult tasks and just require a little research and the ability to engage online.

## Create a Relationship

There are few, if any, journalists that cover the “labour beat” or tackle labour issues. Most journalists are general reporters who need to cover a variety of issues from local crimes and local government to interesting local stories. Find out who the local reporters are for each traditional media outlet. Find out who the community bloggers are. Find out who the local media columnists are. Get to know these people by making personal contact with them by sending an email or making a phone call to introduce the labour council.

Creating a relationship with a reporter, columnist, or media outlet does not mean creating a friendship. It’s a professional relationship with boundaries.

## Dealing with the Media

There are a few important aspects to dealing with the media. Here are a few pointers:

- Be responsive: Respect deadlines and return calls promptly.
- Be a good listener: Listen carefully to questions and ask for clarification, if needed.



- Be honest: Always tell the truth. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so.
- Be accessible: Be available whenever possible.
- Be aware: There is no such thing as an "off the record" conversation.
- Be respectful: Treat reporters with respect. They are community members too.
- Be prepared: Prepare for interviews by gathering facts and practising.
- Be friendly – to a degree: As stated above, keep it professional.
- Don't say "no comment": It's a meaningless comment and looks evasive.
- Don't be rushed: Take time to answer questions.
- Don't speak on others' behalf: Don't make careless accusations.

- Don't lose your temper: Remain calm and stay on message.
- Don't manipulate or bluff: It simply doesn't work.
- Don't be bothersome: Don't bother with meaningless and frivolous things.

### **What Makes the News?**

News is nothing more than a story or information that people find interesting. The more interesting, the more likely it will be reported. There are news values that gauge whether a story is likely to attract interest:

- Timeliness: It's happening right now or very recently. If it happened a long time ago, it's not newsworthy.
- Proximity: The more local, the better. Tie bigger issues to the community.
- Prominence: It happened to someone or something known to a lot of people.

- Significance: It has the potential to affect a lot of people
- Unusualness or bizarre: Something out of the ordinary.
- Human interest: It affects a local person and is relatable to others.
- Conflict: Anything that pits one side versus another.

## Media Relations Tools

### The Press Release

A press release presents a point of view on an issue. It puts forward the main points of a position. It can also alert the media of upcoming events.

A press release should only be one page long. It should be written in a manner that can appear directly in a news story, with quotes from a spokesperson. It represents facts. Press releases require a catchy headline.

### The Media Advisory

A media advisory invites the media to attend an event or press conference. Advisories should be sent out two days in advance of the event.

### The Press Conference

Use a press conference for important news only. Do not overuse this tool. Press conferences require proper sound equipment, an interesting venue, and good spokespersons.

There are many ways to conduct a press conference depending on the circumstances. These include whether the conference is outside or inside or whether the location relates to the news story.

Press conferences should not run longer than 20 minutes. Ten minutes is ideal with time for questions from reporters. Ensure there is someone to chair the conference. This person should not be a presenter.

Finally, take the time to practice.

## Other Important Tools

### Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor are fast, easy, and effective in getting a message out. These are particularly effective with local print or website-based media.

Letters should be short. They are usually 250-350 words. They need to be timely and deal with immediate issues. Use everyday words and short sentences.

### Opinion Pieces

Opinion pieces or op-eds are like guest commentaries. They are between 500 and 1,000 words and can delve more deeply into a specific issue. This tactic is useful and should not be used all the time. Try something a few times a year. Again, make it timely and relevant to local circumstance.

Finally, don't be intimidated by the media and use a variety of tactics and methods to get labour's message out. Labour councils need to be proactive and take the plunge. It's surprising how often labour's opinion is sought after. Create the relationship and use it.



