

50 Years of Struggle: CUPE LGBTQ2+ HISTORY

Source: CUPE Equality History Timeline
<http://cupe.ca/cupe-equality-history-digital-timeline>

See also: Prabha Khosla, *Labour Pride: What Our Unions Have Done for Us*
(Toronto: World Pride Committee of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, 2014)

Early 1970s

CUPE members, including Toronto municipal and library workers, fight for inclusion of sexual orientation in employer anti-discrimination policies.

1974

New CUPE "Standard Agreement" (model collective agreement language) emphasizes equality.

1979

National Convention calls on all governments to extend human rights protection to include sexual orientation and disability.

1986

National Convention pledges to negotiate healthcare and other benefits for same-sex couples.

1986

Education Department launches new course, "Strategies for Equality."

1987

CUPE flight attendant with AIDS wins fight to keep job. CUPE publishes a pamphlet: AIDS, did you know?

1987

CUPE challenges denial of medical and dental benefits to same-sex spouse of Karen Andrews (Local 1996) at Supreme Court of Ontario. The court ruled against her in 1988, but the case was an important step toward winning same-sex health and pension benefits.

1989

Statement on harassment (later renamed the Equality Statement) is published.



1991

CUPE becomes the first Canadian union to introduce an ombudsperson program.

1991

HEU/CUPE wins same-sex spousal recognition for medical coverage. The BC Supreme Court rules in favor of HEU, ordering the Medical Services Commission to recognize same-sex partners as spouses and grant them medical coverage.

1991

National Convention votes to establish the National Pink Triangle Committee.

1991

CUPE Local 1 at Toronto Hydro wins health plan coverage and leave provisions for same-sex partners.

1991

CUPE produces a booklet, *Winning Out at Work*, on employment benefits for gay and lesbian workers and their families.

1992

CUPE and two employees launch a constitutional challenge against the federal government's definition of "spouse" as the opposite sex in the *Income Tax Act*.

1995

CUPE encourages locals to join gay pride parades.

1996

A new kit helps locals bargain and advocate for members with HIV/AIDS.

1997

CUPE launches new anti-homophobia workshop, *Out of the Closet and into the Classroom*.

1998

Four CUPE activists attend first International Conference on Trade Unions, Homosexuality and the Workplace in Amsterdam.



1998

Ontario Court of Appeal upholds CUPE's Charter challenge against the *Income Tax Act* definition of spouse. The ruling set a major precedent for equality in pension and other benefits for same-sex couples, and led to amendments to the *Income Tax Act* recognizing same-sex and common law couples.

2000

CUPE 4400 and transgender activist Martine Stonehouse are instrumental in getting the Toronto District School Board to become the first public school board in Canada to add gender identity protection for students and staff to its human rights policy.

2001

Local 3903 at York University negotiates up to eight paid weeks off for transition leave for transgender members and improved harassment and discrimination language. CUPE is also the first Canadian union to develop a kit of bargaining proposals and resources on transgender rights.

2001

National Convention establishes designated seats for up to three transgender members on the National Pink Triangle Committee and adds "homophobia" to the Equality Statement in the Constitution.

2002

National President Judy Darcy presents a brief to Parliament calling for full marriage rights for lesbian and gay couples.

2006

CUPE publishes Bargaining Equality binder with fact sheets, checklists and sample language.

2009

Fred Hahn is elected CUPE Ontario President, becoming the first out gay president of a large trade union in Canada.

2010

Equality issues are integrated in the new Steward Learning Series, with modules on disability, accommodation, homophobia, racism, gender and being an ally.



2010

CUPE Code of Conduct adopted. The document is aimed at ensuring all CUPE events are welcoming and safe.

2013

CUPE hosts its second HIV/AIDS strategy meeting; participants adopt a new HIV/AIDS policy.

2013

CUPE member Audrey Gauthier becomes the first openly trans person to be elected president of a local in Canada at CUPE 4041, representing Air Transat flight attendants based in Montreal.

2015

CUPE hosts its second National Human Rights Conference in Winnipeg, with approximately 500 participants attending.

2017

Gender identity and gender expression become protected grounds under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. CUPE members were among the trans activists and allies who won this through years of bargaining and political action.
