

2025-2027
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Solidarity in Uncertain Times



TORONTO
2025
CUPE·SCFP

We are living in a critical moment. The advent of a second Trump presidency and a Liberal government even more beholden to Bay Street means our hard-won rights and our public services are under threat. Now is our time to stand together to safeguard our collective future through worker solidarity, strategic bargaining, and political action. Over the past two years, across Canada, CUPE members have continued to lead with bold and courageous worker solidarity. Now more than ever, we are ready to continue moving forward in the fight for public services, equity, and justice.

Indigenous Reconciliation

Each and every one of us has a role to play in the ongoing work of reconciliation in Canada. As Canada's largest union, we embrace our responsibility to play a leading role in bringing forward healing, transparency, trust, and mutual recognition in communities across Canada. We must centre reconciliation to successfully build a prosperous economy and healthy democracy that respects the rights of all people. As part of our ongoing commitment to truth and reconciliation, over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Support locals to continue building relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations in their regions and engage with Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers;
- Engage a third phase of our Water is Life campaign to focus on integrating the work of municipal workers, allied organizations such as Eau Secours, and Indigenous land defenders to strengthen efforts to defend water and land rights;
- Continue to identify and strategize on the role CUPE can play in the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, as well as the recommendations from the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*;
- Support efforts to maintain the general exemption in the Canada - US-Mexico Free Trade Agreement (CUSMA) that preserves Canada's right to fulfill its legal obligations to Indigenous peoples, in line with Canada's commitments under UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- **Develop and implement an Indigenous education series to deepen our understanding of Indigenous culture and issues. The series will be grounded in lived experienced and informed by Indigenous leaders and experts.**

Defending Public Services

Public services are the bedrock of our communities, ensuring fairness and well-being for everyone, no matter their background or socioeconomic status. But those same services are under attack by right-wing governments that are underfunding and privatizing services, while telling frontline workers to do more with less. CUPE members know that defending and strengthening public services is not just about protecting good jobs – it's also about protecting our collective future. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Campaign for increased federal financial transfers that will keep our health care universal, accessible, comprehensive and publicly-delivered;
- Promote **and build public support for federal and provincial** investment in public post-secondary education, skilled trades training, professional programs, and research and innovation to ensure all people in communities across the country can access the education and training they need;
- Defend against privatization and advocate for dependable, sustainable funding that strengthens the public, not-for-profit delivery of services and **health** care;
- Push governments at all levels to **protect our jobs**, reverse contracting-out **and dependency on private health care agencies** and expand in-house delivery of services that provide better quality and accountability;
- Promote climate-resilient public services, including investments in green infrastructure, public transit, and emergency preparedness that protect communities in the face of increasing catastrophic weather events;
- Push for fair wages, adequate staffing levels, **safety** and respect for the workers who keep public services running, to ensure public sector jobs remain good, full-time jobs for the next generation;
- Highlight the vital role of CUPE members during major events - such as municipal services during the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) World Cup international soccer tournament – to bolster national-level support and recognition;
- **Call for better staffing levels and fight cuts that put workers at an increased risk of violence;**
- **Provide tools, training, and resources for locals to be able to document the escalating violence and support advocacy for safer workplaces;**
- **Defend the services that library workers provide such as safe shelter, literacy, and inclusion against cuts, privatization, and violence;**
- **Provide opportunities for presidents to strategize on emergent issues;**
- **Champion CUPE's skilled trade workers and lobby for their inclusion in national conversations on training and apprenticeship.**

Energy

CUPE's longstanding involvement in the energy sector across Canada positions our union to lead on a just, sustainable energy transition. There is an acute need for worker-led strategies to deliver climate solutions as well as good-paying, union jobs in the energy sector. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Champion affordable, publicly-owned electricity and utility systems.
- Advocate for public investments in public renewable energy, energy sovereignty, and public control over critical infrastructure;
- Call for the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous communities where renewable energy projects may impact Indigenous rights;
- Respect all energy projects, labour laws and workers' rights and safety;
- **Demand that energy and mining corporations pay fair tax and royalty rates and invest these back into public services.**

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming work and services, but proper oversight is sorely lagging. ~~AI has a role to play in making our jobs safer and more efficient —and it's here to stay. But~~ The rewards of increasing involvement of AI in our workplaces are being outpaced by the risks: climate impacts, increasing surveillance, **discrimination, profit from public knowledge, and loss of jobs**. Workers need strong leadership to ensure we are not left behind. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Develop worker-led, worker-focused standards for **ethical implementation** of AI in workplaces and public services;
- Protect workers from surveillance, automation risks, and job displacement.
- Engage in policy debates to ensure transparency, accountability, and worker rights in the AI era;
- Develop additional tools and resources for bargaining tables.
- Encourage divisions to create AI committees to discuss the benefits, threats, and future of work with AI;
- Educate members on the racist and systemic bias inherent in AI and algorithmic systems **and the political and environmental implications of AI;**
- **Review and update the existing AI bargaining guide for new issues.**

The Economy

In response to the economic threat posed by Donald Trump's tariffs, the Liberal government is pursuing an aggressive agenda of privatization and tax cuts for the very rich in Canada. This strategy is misguided and puts the burden of the current economic crisis on the backs of workers. Publicly owned infrastructure and strong public services support a healthy economy and provide a strong foundation for all workers. It generates economic activity that can sustain communities through economic downturns and can bring in much needed revenue. Grounded in the principles of the Montreal Declaration, CUPE will continue to advocate for an economy that works for people, not profit. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Advocate for increased public investment in universal, public services and programs that keep our communities afloat during economic crises;
- Promote a robust industrial strategy that supports workers, sustainable resource management, and economic resilience;
- Advocate for increased investments in the care economy, creating better working conditions for care workers and improving access to quality care services for all. Care work includes long-term care and care for the elderly, social services, **developmental services, library workers**, early childhood education and child care;
- Educate members on the Liberal government's decision to more than double military spending over the next four years **through cuts to public services, and advocate for planned defense-related infrastructure spending to be invested in public infrastructure that will have broad benefits for Canada's economy; ~~Defense-related infrastructure spending must have broad benefits for Canada's economy, such as investments in education, high-speed rail, and transportation infrastructure that connects northern and rural communities.~~**
- Champion increased government and employer investment in training for workers to help displaced and underemployed workers get access to the skills and certifications that they need;
- Advocate for the protection of workers' rights, public services and infrastructure, Indigenous rights and the environment in interprovincial and international trade deals;
- Confront the threat of a race to the bottom in labour standards and health and safety protections in response to US tariffs;
- Promote the role of public ownership and crown corporations in fulfilling social and economic goals, as well as generating revenue for public services.
- Recognize that growing wealth and income inequality is a real threat to economic and social prosperity, and therefore advocate for increased corporate transparency and accountability, call for the reversal of Liberal tax cuts that benefited the very rich, and promote international collaboration to directly tackle tax evasion by large multinational corporations.

Peace and International Solidarity

CUPE's foundation is built on our commitment to solidarity, peace, and global justice. Our fight for workers' rights and a better life for everyone goes well beyond our regional or national borders. We are committed to building a stronger movement of workers united against capitalist exploitation by fostering international solidarity between our union and unions, grassroots organizations, and movements across the globe. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Connect with workers around the world to learn and share our struggles and victories;
- Continue our commitment to support workers around the world fighting against unjust laws and unfair working conditions;
- Support migrant workers and CUPE members with temporary work permits who face exploitation in Canada because they have precarious immigration status without access to permanent residency;
- Hold Canadian governments, and corporations, and military organizations accountable for harmful foreign policies and their complicity in violations of labour, human and environmental rights around the globe;
- Oppose trade and military aid to countries that violate labour and human rights including Canada's complicity in human rights violations and genocide abroad;
- Support all frontline workers in conflict zones around the world, with special attention to health care and emergency services workers;
- Create awareness about how pension funds are financing privatization abroad, and share with members our need to invest in our labour values and respect human rights and the health of the planet;
- Encourage and promote participation in CUPE's international solidarity courses.
- Continue to support community groups doing the important on-the ground work that aligns with our shared values.

Political Action

Political activism is central to our history as a union. With a resurgent right in Canada and a federal NDP in the process of rebuilding after a difficult election cycle, CUPE and the labour movement have a pivotal role to play in the political arena at all levels of government. Over the past three years, we have watched provincial and federal governments back down when workers stood in solidarity and demanded better. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Bolster member engagement in the political process and on political developments as they unfold – including in between elections;
- Implement a Big City strategy coordinating locals across the country to win progressive change;

- Work with rural and northern communities across Canada to create a comprehensive political strategy that incorporates their unique needs;
- Amplify working-class voices in Canadian democracy by producing a report that analyses electoral reform options (like proportional representation, mixed member proportional, ranking, etc.), including impacts on representation and policy outcomes to inform our advocacy;
- Educate members about the risks of federal and provincial (where applicable) strategic voting;
- Ensure our locals, **district councils**, and divisions are strong and ready to take on the political fights ahead by supporting capacity building within our ranks and increasing our financial literacy;
- Play an active role in rebuilding Canada's NDP through member engagement and education;
- Re-educate ourselves and others on the foundational relationship between labour and the NDP and the need for the federal progressive party to reflect workers' voices;
- Encourage and support progressive candidates to run across the country;
- Combat misinformation and disinformation in our communities by fighting book bans, educating on the importance **of in-school and public library workers**, encouraging progressive voices on school councils, and promoting inclusivity of all sexual orientations and gender identities;
- Train, educate and build member power between elections to grow our capacity for daily political action. Build on the momentum of the Unpaid Work Won't Fly campaign by lobbying governments to ban the abuse of unpaid work once and for all;
- **Work to combat legislative loopholes, government and employer actions that undermine workers' rights, the right to protest, and the right to strike;**
- ~~Work to close all legislative loopholes and employer abuses that undermine workers' rights.~~
- Lobby for improved labour legislation, such as single step certification, that will level the playing field for unions and help build union density;
- Fight for strong pension plans for all our members;
- Fight to protect and strengthen the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP) and campaign against the attack by the Alberta government to separate from the CPP plan, which will weaken the plan. The CPP belongs to workers and retirees, not to the government;
- **Commit to lobbying governments to protect the climate for future generations;**
- **Call for stronger federal and provincial health and safety laws to protect workers against violence and harassment in the workplace and enable unions to advocate for workers who want support;**
- **Develop a local political action guide as a resource for locals to enhance their political action activities and to mobilize members;**
- **Create a campaign to call on governments that we are behind in our commitments to truth and reconciliation;**
- **Campaign with health coalitions and public health care allies to protect workers from all forms of violence in the workplace.**

Human Rights

CUPE is proud that our membership reflects the diversity of the communities where we live and work. Our strength is born from the diversity of our membership, our firm roots in working class communities, and our commitment to equity. As Canada's largest union, we have a responsibility to fight back against all forms of discrimination at a time when right-wing governments are rolling back protections, letting workers struggle, attacking trans and queer communities, and denying systemic racism. The working class cannot flourish while we face discrimination in our communities. We will build and strengthen our **intersectional** solidarity against the rise of hate. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Fight to ensure public services are safe and accessible for trans and non-binary people;
- Continue implementing our Anti-Racism Strategy to combat racism in our communities and in our workplaces;
- Integrate equity and human rights priorities into collective bargaining strategies;
- Advocate for an end to closed work permits that tie migrant workers to their employers and lead to exploitation, and support the status for all campaign to end precarious immigration status;
- Fight against environmental racism, a form of systemic racism where the burden of environmental hazards and climate change disproportionately affect Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities;
- Fight for environmental justice, ensuring all future workers have safe work and good, full-time jobs;
- Advocate **with people who use drugs** for an end to the toxic drug crisis by calling for safe supply and **increased** resources for safe consumption sites;
- **Call on the federal and provincial governments to stop the targeting of migrant workers and condemn mass deportations in the US;**
- **Support local anti-hate groups in the fight against bigotry and far-right hate groups;**
- **Conduct detailed accessibility audits with people with lived experience to mitigate barriers that workers with disabilities could experience at union events;**
- **Fight for an end to the use of the notwithstanding clause.**

Environmental and Climate Crisis


The environment and climate crisis are among the most fundamental and urgent social, economic, and political challenges of our time. Communities and workplaces are already feeling the impacts of wildfires, floods, and increasingly unpredictable weather. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Continue our fight against climate change with worker-led solutions;
- Advocate for a just transition to a zero-carbon **and lower greenhouse gas economy** with programs that secure training, re-skilling, and job placement for workers in affected industries;
- Continue to support workplace environmental committees and green bargaining language to integrate climate concerns into collective agreements;
- Strengthen our capacity through our own committees to adopt sustainable practices;
- **Train CUPE members to fight for a just transition and help mobilize members for political party candidates who will push for climate friendly policies;**
- **Build solidarity with allied groups to work on environmental and climate justice.**

Affordability

Across Canada, working families are facing profound affordability pressures, from skyrocketing housing costs to the rising price of food and other essentials. Corporations have taken advantage of the current economic crisis, padding their profit margins by dramatically increasing prices and exploiting precarious workers. As the cost-of-living continues to outpace livelihoods in Canada, those most in need are being pushed further behind. We must remain steadfast in our fight for economic fairness for all. Over the next two years, CUPE will:

- Fight for real wage increases for our members nationwide.
- Promote the importance of strong, well-funded public services to make everyday life more affordable;
- Expand our housing advocacy by recognizing housing as fundamental to economic security and social equity;
- Seek creative worker friendly solutions to the reality that many workers struggle to qualify for mortgages that would allow them to purchase a home close to work and family;
- Advance a comprehensive housing strategy for public and non-market, rent – geared-to-income housing, co-op housing, rental controls, tenant protections, and accessible housing options;
- Oppose the financialization of housing and prevent further concentration of housing ownership by lobbying for federal regulations to limit the number of housing units owned by real estate investment trusts;

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- Expand public universal health care so more people have access to more public health care services;
 - **Lobby** for investments **and solutions** in K-12 public education that address understaffing and violence in the workplace;
 - Advocate for strong universal pensions to end the reliance on home-ownership as retirement security;
 - **Make life more affordable for workers by investing in resources to organize and grow union density in Canada.**

CUPE