



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2022

ORGANIZE, EDUCATE, RESIST!

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council was founded in 1871. Every day, our Council works to build a society based on social, economic, racial and climate justice. We have survived through tough times and won victories that have made real improvements in people's lives. None of those victories came easily — we combined skillful strategic thinking with membership engagement and a conscious alliance policy. In the next three years, we will need to draw on all our experience and resilience to weather new challenges.



LABOUR COUNCIL'S ROLE FOR 2020-2022

June 7th, 2019 was the first anniversary of the Conservative party's victory in Ontario. Across much of the world, the rise of right-wing governments is deeply troubling, and threatens to reverse many of the gains that working people have made in recent decades. While Doug Ford's rhetoric is cloaked in fake populism, it masks an objective that is just as revolutionary as the Harris regime of the past: to permanently change how our province functions. The corporate elites largely support "structural adjustment" to limit wages, privatize public services and assets, and open up commercialization of all aspects of society. But austerity measures always land hardest on vulnerable and marginalized communities.

Although we win some battles, there will be further attempts to undermine labour rights while forcing municipalities, school boards, healthcare and social service agencies to share the dirty work of cutting programs and turning on their own employees. Labour must relentlessly challenge the rationale for austerity; there is ample money in the system if tax fairness were in place. Just by collecting taxes at the same rate today as in 2000, we would have an extra \$56 billion a year that could be used to address urgent needs like child care, pharmacare, public transit, tuition fees and effective action on climate.

It is crucial to build a resistance movement that can challenge every element of this destructive agenda as it rolls out, in solidarity with each other's fights, and not just wait for the next provincial election. We have already seen Ford's government change course on some issues in the face of determine resistance.

But it is also vital that labour has a clear vision for our country's largest urban centre in the lead up to the next election. ORGANIZE, EDUCATE, RESIST! was the slogan of our movement in response to the Harris Conservatives. We must embrace and popularize that approach across York Region and in Toronto for the next three years.

Over the next three years, Labour Council will continue advocating for justice and building the resistance movement in Ontario. Council's efforts will concentrate on five key areas:

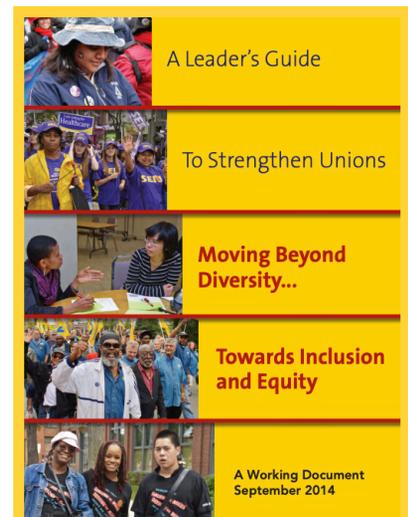
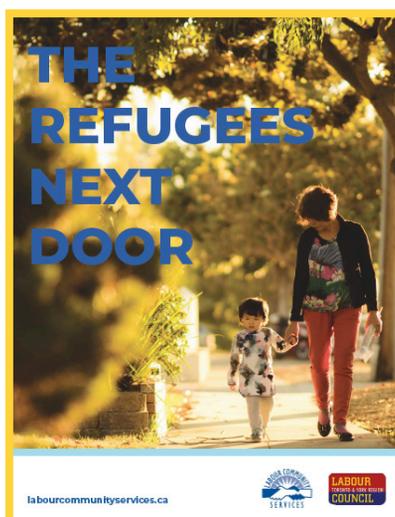
- 1. Defend and fight for good jobs and public services**
- 2. Deepen equity and forge solidarity**
- 3. Tackle climate change**
- 4. Take political action/transform politics**
- 5. Develop diverse leadership**

2. DEEPEN EQUITY AND FORGE SOLIDARITY

The politics of division is a key element of anti-union forces in our country and across the world. Far-right hate groups are inflaming Islamophobia, anti-Black racism, homophobia, and intolerance against any equity seeking groups. To deepen the equity agenda in the labour movement and defeat the politics of division, Labour Council will relentlessly advance policies for inclusion and respect, challenging both ourselves and others with the goal of ensuring that equity is a core practice of every organization in greater Toronto.

We will:

- Work to **strengthen the collective support** for partners engaged in tackling economic inequality and discrimination, including the Urban Alliance on Race Relations
- Ask affiliates to **support Labour Council's diverse worker networks** to reach workers in key newcomer communities as well as support them as leaders in our movement
- Celebrate the activism and leadership of workers from diverse communities within labour and allied movements.
- Ask every union to become engaged in Labour Council's **campaign against systemic racism**
- Ask every union to **promote the Refugee Project** of Labour Community Services
- Support the **expansion of Community Benefits Agreements** to ensure diverse communities get access to solid careers in trades and other occupations
- **Embrace the recommendations** outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Report and the Task Force on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.



3. TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

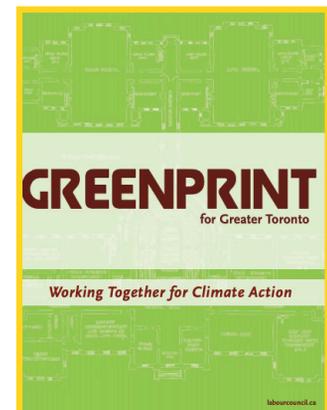
We are in a climate emergency. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has declared that our world has only a limited amount of time before passing the tipping point of permanent harm. Our economy and society will be transformed by new technologies and the necessary actions to reduce carbon emissions. There is no contradiction between a strong economy and climate justice – in fact they are complementary. That message must become the norm in every public forum and the media.

Labour Council will be in the forefront of the movement for green jobs, fighting for equity and Just Transition in a sustainable economy. Our goal is to build a climate justice workers movement.



We will:

- Work to **counter the efforts to sabotage climate action** by polluters and conservative politicians, including their “carbon tax revolt” which is promoted by Conservative premiers and climate change deniers
- **Establish a climate justice labour network**
- **Provide educational material** to highlight the real cost of inaction by governments and businesses, and get young members engaged by using new, creative approaches
- Continue to **work in coalition** with key environmental organizations including youth and student-led groups
- **Work with affiliates, local governments and school boards** to adopt serious climate action policies
- Continue promoting the creation of **Joint Labour-Management Environment Committees** and ask affiliates to bargain for their establishment
- Help to popularize the key elements of a **Green New Deal for All**



Key Resources: *Greenprint for Greater Toronto*

4. TAKE POLITICAL ACTION / TRANSFORM POLITICS

The rise of right-wing populism across the world has been a dramatic setback for working people. South of the border, more states are adopting so-called Right to Work laws and restricting women's access to abortion. Our goal is to defeat right-wing politicians at provincial, federal and municipal levels. The resistance to Ford's policies helped stop the Scheer Conservatives, leading to a minority government. That opens up the opportunity for labour and popular movements to mobilize around key legislative goals as the NDP holds the balance of power in Parliament. Targeting politicians in their ridings helps spark conversations with members, builds experience, and weakens local support for the right-wing agenda while building support for progressives.

We will:

- Mount campaigns to **oppose regressive policies while raising consciousness** among working people about the class nature of politics
- Among union leaders and members, **deepen the understanding about how and why we carry out "political bargaining"** to achieve our goals of social and economic justice including by asking affiliates to engage with their membership on broader "political" issues
- Develop stronger **relationships with local elected officials** to help achieve our policy goals
- Work with allies to **challenge the austerity agenda**, and to make it clear that future governments must reverse the damage to local economies and public services
- Work relentlessly to **defeat the politics of fear and racism**
- **Expand our engagement** of affiliates and activists in York Region
- Build a lasting partnership with **Progress Toronto**
- **Engage affiliates to develop plans for 2022** provincial and municipal elections
- Encourage election participation and voting, while **promoting political engagement year round**





Our Leadership Institute provides a unique experience in shared knowledge and training

5. DEVELOP DIVERSE LEADERSHIP

Our society is experiencing major demographic and technological change. The Labour movement needs leaders dedicated to strengthening and transforming their organizations and building a movement that empowers working people in a rapidly changing world. That will require translating the lessons of past struggles and using “teachable moments” to develop keen, dynamic leaders capable of tackling the challenges ahead. The goal is to offer effective tools that ensure new, diverse labour leaders come to the fore equipped with the skills, knowledge and capacity needed for the third decade of the 21st century.

We will:

- Hold the **Labour Council Leadership Institute** on a regular basis
- Ask affiliates to **identify new, diverse activists**, and support capacity building including creating a mentoring process to pair up veteran leaders with those who are emerging
- **Recruit young workers** to join campaigns, delegates’ meetings, committees and diverse workers’ networks, and attend the Indigenous and Workers of Colour Conference (IWOC) and Bromley Armstrong Awards
- Explore ways of **incorporating culture and social events** to build deeper relationships
- **Conduct an affiliation campaign** to increase Labour Council affiliation by 25% and strengthen relationships with delegates
- **Partner with allied progressive organizations** in ongoing leadership development
- **Create a handbook of leadership case studies**
- **Challenge our committees** to provide analysis and strategic guidance on key issues

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Over the next three years there will be many battles. But we know that joining in struggle with others is a powerful antidote to apathy or fear. Out of knowledge, comes power. Out of struggle, comes leadership.

What becomes clearer every day is that solidarity among working people and our community allies is absolutely necessary. **We need to see ourselves as a collective movement.** We call on the next generation of leaders to step confidently forward, supported by veteran leaders to share the lessons of past struggles.

Working with allies, rooted in diverse communities and workplaces, our resistance to injustice will see us through the tough times ahead and continue labour's historic role of fighting for a better world for all.

