

Pride and Indigenous Heritage Month Requires Real Solidarity



June 4th, 2026

Over the last number of decades, strong movements for the recognition and honouring of Indigenous rights and the expansion of the rights of 2SLGBTQQIA+ community members have won crucial changes to laws and advanced our collective understanding within cultures.

Trade unionists, including here in Toronto and York Region, have played key roles in these movements as members of these communities, organizers, supporters and allies. We have fought together for progress on many fronts and while imperfect at times, the labour movement pushes from inside and out for greater representation and freedoms. We connect lived reality at work, at home and in the community with the fight for justice on every front – like anti-discrimination laws, employment equity, land back to Indigenous peoples, gender-affirming health care, safe affordable housing, decent jobs, liveable wages, retirement security and much more.

Yet currently, politicians, corporate landlords, bosses and the ultra wealthy are trying to roll back these rights – using a staggering cost of living crisis to increase the suffering of workers and their families and turn people against each other. This month, we clench our fists and we say to our neighbours that your fight is my fight. We will not be convinced to turn our backs on each other, instead we will continue to learn from each other's fights.

Indigenous peoples of Canada and right around the globe have a lot to teach trade unionists about tenacity and perseverance, about never giving up even against all odds and fighting hard for our innate human dignity and the world around us. As do members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities who continue to fight against anti-trans hatred and an attack on all areas of trans rights and the rights of gender-diverse peoples.

At the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, we have a vision for equity and justice that is centred on the rights and freedom of all. Indigenous and 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, including those who are also trade unionists have fought hard to have rights recognized. At the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, each year we organize the Indigenous and Workers of Colour Conference and work to centre the experience of Indigenous peoples in our work. We also organize for Pride and support diverse leaders in unions and in our communities. When we say solidarity, we mean it deeply.

The Toronto and York Region Labour Council encourages local unions and members and workers of all stripes to make our solidarity real this month. This can include:

- Recognizing the efforts of Indigenous members of your union and work to grow a better understanding of Indigenous communities, culture and how the colonial legacy continues to inform our laws, distribution of land and governments.
- Taking part in events for June 21 – National Indigenous Peoples Day.
- Reading up on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action and see which ones can be applied to our workplaces and efforts as trade unionists.
- Coming out to York Region Pride (June 13) and Toronto Pride (June 26-28) events, as member of the community or ally.
- Getting involved in the upcoming municipal election to support progressive 2SLGBTQQIA+, Indigenous and candidates of colour.
- Using your pronouns in meetings – this is an act of solidarity and inclusion. Up to 25% of Gen Z identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+ and will make up a growing number of the workforce.
- Not assuming you know someone's gender identity or sexual orientation. Sometimes we exclude the experience of others without even realizing it.
- Showing up when equity-seeking communities are facing hardship or attack. Solidarity means action.