



## The Calgary Workers' Resource Centre

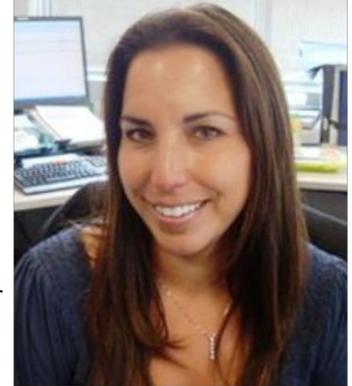
Building the individual and collective capacity of Calgarians to understand and achieve employment rights and benefits

### ANNUAL REPORT for 2012

#### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR — Christy Morgan

2012 was another challenging and exciting year for the Calgary Workers' Resource Centre (CWRC) and our clients. The CWRC's three Case Workers continued to provide clients assistance with a volume of new claims, complaints and appeals with an 87.46% success rate and the CWRC saw a 26% increase in client cases over this past year.

The work of the CWRC is vital in supporting a healthy community. We are very proud of the results our Case Work program has delivered: in 2012, CWRC clients became entitled collectively to more than \$2,358,757.75! This is the largest sum ever for CWRC!!! **For every dollar of core funding invested in CWRC in 2012 (not including funding allocated for Employment Rights, Obligations and Benefits Education Program), the CWRC generated a return of more than \$5.08 in financial entitlements for vulnerable workers in the community (e.g. in Employment Insurance, Disability benefits or unrecovered earnings etc.).** Those figures do not include the value of the organization's public education activities. Between 2006 – 2012, **over \$9,364,156** in entitlements have been secured! Without the aid of the CWRC, many workers and their families would have experienced greater levels of economic hardship. The Centre's staff of six deserves praise for their dedication, hard work and exceptional outcomes.



The CWRC Board of Directors worked diligently on a number of initiatives in 2012. Among other things, the Organizational Development committee undertook a review of the organization's strategic plan to ensure that it remains relevant in the face of trends observed by CWRC staff, and of socio-economic and political developments occurring throughout Alberta and beyond. The Human Resources Committee was able to secure the Executive Director's position, with the hiring of Leigh Golden.

Despite the challenges faced by the CWRC's small team, these are exciting times for the organization. The CWRC has won many important victories on behalf of individual workers and whole classes of workers over the years (for example, identifying jurisprudence which extended eligibility for regular Employment Insurance benefits to Temporary Foreign Workers), and has come to fulfill an increasingly important and prominent niche in Calgary's not-for-profit sector. We welcomed new staff to the organization and we look forward to being able to serve the community more efficiently. We have been very grateful for the generous support we have received from our funders (the United Way of Calgary and Area and the Alberta Law Foundation). In addition, we are very grateful for the support we have received over the years from our partners in Alberta's organized labour community (complete list on the back page of this report). As with most charitable organizations, our core funding grants do not cover all of our operating costs and the financial contributions provided by the labour community and individual donors have been invaluable.

The CWRC has consistently produced strong results on behalf of working people in Calgary who faced economic hardship as a result of job loss, injury, discrimination or violation of their rights under Alberta's Employment Standards legislation. In the coming years, the CWRC Board of Directors will seek out opportunities for the expansion and enhancement of our services, as it is clear that the clients we currently are serving are only the tip of the ice-berg. Ongoing support from current and emerging funders, donors, and community partners will be essential to enabling the Centre to fulfill on a wider scale its mission and vision of a society where the rights of workers are respected, leading to improved quality of life for workers and their families.

The Board of Directors deeply and sincerely thanks our hard working staff for all they do to assist the clients and broader community-at-large. Again, we would like to thank all of our funders, donors, members and community partners for their on-going support throughout these busy and economically challenging times. Your support means that Calgary is a better place for hundreds of individuals and families.

## Activities and Services in 2012

**CASE WORK:** The CWRC's Case Work program provides individual assistance to workers in the Calgary requiring information to understand and access the rights and benefits to which they are entitled under various employment-related legislations in Alberta. In 2012, the CWRC served a total of 916 individual clients (an 26% increase over 2011).

Clients sought information or assistance related to one or more of the following:

- Alberta Employment Standards (29%)
- Employment Insurance (61.2%)
- Workers' Compensation Board (11.5%)
- Human Rights in the workplace (12.9%)
- Workplace Health and Safety (0.4%)
- Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits (2.4%)
- Short/Long term disability benefits (1.6%)

The total exceeds 100% because many workers contacted us with issues that fell under several jurisdictions.

The CWRC helps Calgarians from all walks of life, though the majority of our individual clients are members of vulnerable groups—many of them with language or other barriers. In 2012, 45% of CWRC clients were permanent residents or citizens born outside Canada, 39% were from diverse ethnicities, 10% reported that they had a disability, 7% were youths 30 and under, 51% were women, 1% reported Aboriginal ancestry, and 41% were unemployed. The proportion of the CWRC clientele represented by Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) was 10%.

### In CWRC Case Work clients' own words:

"This program is very beneficial as the laws and procedures are specific and without specific knowledge of these laws I would not have received benefits."

"Keep continuing with the good job, and help as many as you can—thank you."

"The service was fantastic, I could not have done this on my own."

"This program showed me that I am not alone in Canada, there are great people here doing great job for people who are really in need."

The CWRC had a success rate of more than 87% based on the outcomes of the 265 cases that had been concluded and for which follow-ups had been possible by the end of 2012. These significant success rates resulted in financial entitlements in excess of **\$2,358,758** to our clients. Since 2006, CWRC clients have become entitled

to more than **\$9,364,156** as a result of the organization's support and interventions.

**PUBLIC EDUCATION:** The CWRC's Employment Rights, Obligations and Benefits Education workshops play a preventative role. Our workshops help participants understand their rights and obligations in the workplace and they enhance their awareness of the legislative context in which they work, as well as their capacity to self-advocate and engage in collective action.

A total of 81 workshops on employment rights and benefits were held in 2012 (a 23% increase over 2011). The workshops were attended by 929 individuals. These trends confirm the growing demand for public education on workplace rights and benefits. All workshops were organized in partnership with other organizations that primarily serve vulnerable populations. 9.6% of workshop participants were youths aged 25 and under, 5.9% were Aboriginal, 64% were immigrants, almost 0.5% were Temporary Foreign Workers, 1.2% reported having a disability, and almost 28% were unemployed.

- 96% of the workshop participants reported that the information presented helped them increase their understanding of various employment rights and benefits that they may be entitled to as workers.
- 97% felt more confident about how to access their entitlements and benefits.
- 95% also reported that they gained a greater awareness of the kinds of problems that workers could experience in Alberta.

### In CWRC Workshop participants' own words:

"Now that I learned all of my rights as an immigrant or a future employee, I now know where to go and what to do just in case I get an employment problem."

"The workshop was extremely beneficial. This would be a great help to me in the future."

"The program should be made mandatory to every immigrant."

"[The presenter] is very detailed in explanations of all rights and had answers to all questions."

**OUTREACH and PARTNERSHIPS:** As a result of the organization's aggressive outreach efforts, dozens of non-profit organizations, government agencies and labour groups referred clients to the CWRC in 2012, including the Alberta Human Rights Commission, Alberta Works, the Office of the WCB Appeals Advisor, the Employment Insurance Board of Referees, immigrant-serving agencies and the Calgary and District Labour Council.

## Activities and Services in 2012

In order to enhance the accessibility of its services, the CWRC and Calgary Chinese Community Service Association (CCCSA) renewed a partnership established in 2008 that enabled both organizations to collaborate on the delivery of bi-weekly employment rights and benefits clinics to workers of the Chinese community (including Temporary Foreign Workers) who have difficulties communicating in English. The CCCSA provides the space and volunteer interpreters for the clinics.

In 2010, the CWRC enhanced its accessibility to residents of the North East by partnering with the North of McKnight Community Resource Centre (CRC). Via this partnership, a Punjabi-speaking CWRC Case Worker works out of the North of McKnight CRC one day per week. Both agencies were very pleased with the outcomes of the partnership, which is ongoing.

The CWRC has been an active member of the Calgary Urban Aboriginal Initiative's (CUAI) human rights domain since 2007.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT:** The CWRC believes that in order to ensure that working conditions are fair and equitable for all, changes need to be made at the systemic level, in the policies, legislations, and everyday practices that affect the well-being of workers. To those ends, the CWRC engages in community impact-oriented initiatives and activities. In 2012, those activities included:

- Poverty Reduction Strategy for the City of Calgary
- Living Wage Action Team with Vibrant Communities Calgary
- Alberta on the Mac Project
- Social Policy consultation with MLA Woo-Paw

**LOOKING FORWARD:** Over the 2012 year, the CWRC entered into a partnership with the Alberta Workers' Health Centre. In late 2012, funding was secured and the proposal represents a collaboration of the Alberta Workers' Health Centre, Calgary Workers' Health Centre and the Edmonton Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative. It proposed three years of education, training and support aimed at reducing health and safety risks for Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW). The goal of this program is to achieve a level of value and success at the end of the three-year period such that it will be supported by industry participants. While we are in the beginning phase, we are thrilled to be a part of this work and look forward to future outcomes

**CWRC STAFF: Leigh Golden**—Executive Director: Leigh became Executive Director of CWRC in October 2012. Prior to becoming the Executive Director, Leigh worked as the Manager of Social Planning (Research and

Evaluation) for the Region of Waterloo and as a course instructor at the University of Guelph and Brock University. She holds a Doctorate Degree in Planning and Development (University of Guelph) and a Masters Degree in Education (Brock University).

**Jasvir Sandhu**—Case Worker: Jasvir joined CWRC in 2008. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and a minor in Sociology from the University College of the Fraser Valley.

**Debra Apperley**—Case Worker: Debra received her legal advocacy training from the BC Law Foundation in 2003 and worked as a legal advocate in Kamloops, BC for 5 years. She returned to Calgary and joined the CWRC team in 2008. For 20 years, prior to Debra's work as a legal advocate, she provided individual and group counseling to women and children who had experienced sexual violence.

**Crystal Chan**—Case Worker: Crystal is the newest Case Worker to join the CWRC team, joining in 2012. She has a degree in Sociology from the University of Calgary and a diploma in Social Work from Mount Royal University. Prior to working at the CWRC, Crystal was an AISH Generalist with the Government of Alberta and a Client Support Worker at Sunrise Native Addictions Service Society.

**Candace Martens**—Community Outreach and Public Education Worker: Candace received her Social Work diploma at Mount Royal College and then transferred to the University of Calgary to complete her Bachelors of Social Work Degree. In the fall of 2009, Candace did her final BSW practicum at CWRC and joined the CWRC team in 2010.

**Cesar Agudelo**—Intake Coordinator: Cesar graduated from the University of Calgary's Political Sciences program. Cesar has worked in non-profit advocating on behalf of marginalized societies. He has experience with refugee claimants, Temporary Foreign Workers and the education system as it affects immigrant children and youth. Since joining the CWRC in 2012, Cesar continues to help marginalized populations in his work as Intake Coordinator and as a volunteer in several organizations in Calgary

**Xavier Cattarininch**—Executive Director (until October 2012): Xavier joined the CWRC team in 2007. Xavier had many roles within the Centre including Case Worker, Interim Centre Director and Executive Director. The CWRC would like to thank Xavier for all of the expertise and knowledge he shared and all the work he did for the Centre, including being a part of hiring the excellent team working there now.

# THANK YOU

We would like to thank all the groups, organizations and individuals that supported the Calgary Workers' Resource Centre in 2012!!!

## Board of Directors:

**Christy Morgan** (Chair), Community Member  
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**Leonardo Castillo** (Director—Until September 2012), Community Member  
**Erica Walsh** (Director—Until May 2012), Community Member  
**Kerry Cundal** (Director—Until May 2012), Community Member  
**Monica Pauls** (Secretary—Until May 2012), Mount Royal University, Department of Child and Youth Studies

## Staff:

**Xavier Cattarinich** (Executive Director—Until October 2012)  
**Leigh Golden** (Executive Director)  
**Jasvir Sandhu** (Case Worker)  
**Debra Apperley** (Case Worker)  
**Crystal Chan** (Case Worker)  
**Candace Martens** (Community Outreach & Public Education Worker)  
**Cesar Agudela** (Intake Coordinator)

## Funders:

United Way of Calgary and Area  
Alberta Law Foundation  
Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission

## Donors:

Calgary and District Labour Council  
Canadian Union of Public Employees local 1169  
Health Sciences Association of Alberta  
Royal Canadian Legion Chapelhow Branch #284  
United Nurses of Alberta

Thank you also to the numerous individuals that made donations to the CWRC in 2012 (including those who donated anonymously through the United Way's Donor Choice program), and to the organizations we partnered with in the community.



(Left to Right: Candace, Cesar, Leigh, Jasvir, Crystal and Debra)

