



The Calgary Workers' Resource Centre

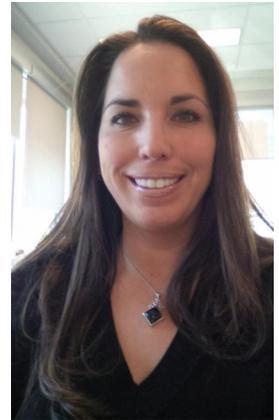
Building the individual and collective capacity of Calgarians to understand and achieve employment rights and benefits

ANNUAL REPORT for 2013

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR — Christy Morgan

2013 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% success rate.

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 2013, CWRC clients became entitled collectively to more than \$2,915,221! This is the largest sum ever for CWRC!!! **For every dollar of core funding invested in the CWRC in 2013 generated a return of \$6.24 in financial entitlements for vulnerable workers in the community (e.g., in EI or disability benefits or recovered earnings etc.)¹**. Those figures do not include the value of the organization's public education activities. Between 2006 – 2013, **over \$12,279,377** 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 seven deserves recognition for their dedication, hard work and exceptional outcomes.



The CWRC Board of Directors worked diligently on a number of initiatives in 2013. Among other things, collaborating with the Alberta Workers' Health Centre and the Multicultural Health Brokers to create the NewAlbertaWorkers (NAW) program to educate Temporary Foreign Workers and other New to Alberta Workers about their rights under Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Code.

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 two 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 iceberg. 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 thank 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.

¹ Not including the funding allocated for either the Employment Rights, Obligations and Benefits Education Program or the Improving the Workplace Health and Safety of Temporary Foreign Workers in Alberta project as this funding is primarily used for education/outreach and not Case Work.

Activities and Services in 2013

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 2013, the CWRC served a total of 863 individual clients.

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

- Alberta Employment Standards (28%)
- Employment Insurance (62%)
- Workers' Compensation Board (12%)
- Human Rights in the workplace (14%)
- Canada Pension Plan Disability benefits (2%)
- Short/Long term disability benefits (2%)

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 2013, 35% of CWRC clients were permanent residents or citizens born outside Canada, 25% were from diverse ethnicities, 8% reported that they had a disability, 2% were youths 30 years of age and under, 50% were women, 1% reported Aboriginal ancestry, and 53% were unemployed. The proportion of the CWRC clientele represented by Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) was 13%.

In CWRC Case Work Clients' own words:

"[CWRC staff] made this whole process easier by explaining what I need to do as well as providing forms that had to be filled out and checking in after the fact to ensure I received everything I was entitled to."

"Thank you! You helped us understand and guide us where to go and what to do."

"It helped me understand more about my rights as a worker."

"It help me to understand the laws and regulations in Canada. We are not alone. There are people who care."

The CWRC had a success rate of more than 87% based on the outcomes of the 298 cases that had been concluded and for which follow-ups had been possible by the end of 2013. These significant success rates resulted in financial entitlements in excess of **\$2,915,221** to our clients. Since 2006, CWRC clients have become entitled to more than **\$12,279,377** 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 in our community. 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 76 workshops on employment rights and benefits were held in 2013. The workshops were attended by 1157 individuals. These statistics 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. 7% of workshop participants were youths 25 years of age and under, 3% were Aboriginal, 75% were Immigrants, almost 0.5% were Temporary Foreign Workers, 4% reported having a disability, and almost 18% were unemployed, based on self-reporting of the participants.

Of workshop participants:

- 96% reported that the information presented helped them increase their understanding of various employment rights and benefits that they may be entitled to as workers.
- 96% felt more confident about how to access their entitlements and benefits.
- 93% reported that they gained a greater awareness of the kinds of problems that workers could experience in Alberta.

In CWRC Workshop Participants' own words:

"When I get employed I know what my rights are and how to protect myself."

"I know more about my rights and duties and where I can go if I have a problem."

"The way the facilitator disseminated the whole information was fabulous."

"Awesome. Keep it going and educating more people like us."

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 2013, 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.

In order to enhance the accessibility of its services, the CWRC and Calgary Chinese Community Service Association (CCCSA) renewed a partnership established

Activities and Services in 2013

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 2013, those activities included:

- Action Coalition on Human Trafficking (ACT) Alberta
- Metro Calgary Alliance for the Common Good (MACG)

LOOKING FORWARD: In 2014, we will launch the NewAlbertaWorkers (NAW) program—a new initiative aimed at educating Temporary Foreign Workers and other New to Alberta workers on their health and safety rights and responsibilities in the workplace and providing resources and support for accessing information and using these rights. We will continue to provide quality Case Work and Outreach services to workers in Calgary. We will help Calgarians understand and access the rights and benefits they are entitled to as workers under a variety of employment-related legislations in Alberta. And we will engage in dialogue with governments and other stakeholders in an attempt to promote policies and legislation that will improve the working conditions of workers in Alberta and beyond.

CWRC STAFF:

Leigh Golden—Executive Director: Leigh became Executive Director of CWRC in 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.

Candace Martens—Community Outreach and Cultural Broker: Candace received her Social Work Diploma from Mount Royal College and completed her Bachelor's of Social Work Degree at the University of Calgary. In the fall of 2009, Candace completed her final BSW practicum at CWRC and joined the CWRC team in 2010 as the Community Outreach and Public Education Worker. In 2013, Candace moved into the role of Community Outreach and Cultural Broker for the NewAlbertaWorkers program.

Crystal Chan—Case Worker: Crystal joined the CWRC team 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.

Cesar Agudelo—Case Worker: 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, TFWs and the education system as it affects immigrant children and youth. Cesar joined the CWRC team in 2012 as Intake Coordinator and moved into the role of Case Worker in 2013.

Jacobet "Edith" Wamabyi—Community Outreach and Public Education Worker: Edith has a Master's Degree in Health Sciences, Bachelor's Degree in Education and Diploma in Community-based Project Planning and Management. Prior to joining CWRC in 2013, Edith worked with community agencies conducting educational workshops on social determination of health. Edith has international experience from Kenya in health promotion and community mobilization for social change.

Chris Farness—Intake Coordinator: Chris graduated from the University of Newcastle with an M.A. in International Relations, the University of London with an LLB and the University of Victoria with a B.A. in Political Science. Prior to joining the CWRC time in 2013, Chris worked in immigration, settlement and community economic development in Calgary and internationally.

Debra Apperley—Case Worker: Debra was a Case Worker at CWRC from 2008 until October 2013.

THANK YOU

We would like to thank all the groups, organizations and individuals that supported the Calgary Workers' Resource Centre in 2013!!!

Board of Directors:

Christy Morgan (Chair), Community Member
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Lawrence Connell (Secretary), Community Member
Devin Yeager (Director), United Food and
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Tom Langford (Director), University of Calgary
Lucille Fedkiw (Director), International
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Lisa Hari (Treasurer—Until May 2013),
Community Member

Staff:

Leigh Golden (Executive Director)
Jasvir Sandhu (Case Worker)
Candace Martens (Community Outreach & Cultural
Broker)
Crystal Chan (Case Worker)
Cesar Agudela (Case Worker)
Edith Wambayi (Community Outreach & Public
Education Worker)
Chris Farness (Intake Coordinator)
Debra Apperley (Case Worker—Until October
2013)

Funders:

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

Donors:

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Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 4731
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United Nurses of Alberta
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 401
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1118
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 583
United Utility Workers' Association
Building Trades of Alberta
Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union
Local 397

Thank you also to the numerous individuals that made donations to the CWRC in 2013 (including those who donated anonymously through the United Way's Donor Choice program), and to the organizations we partnered with in the community.



Back Row: Candace, Edith, Chris, Cesar
Front Row: Jasvir, Leigh, Crystal



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