



ANNUAL REPORT

2020
EDITION



OUR MISSION

The WRC's mission and priorities are twofold: 1) to help Alberta workers understand their rights in the workplace, and 2) to assist clients in navigating claims, complaints and appeals if those rights are not being upheld.

OUR WORK

The WRC is a charitable organization that provides support in three main areas:

- 1) Casework - our caseworkers assist clients in navigating claims, complaints and appeals.
- 2) Public Legal Education - our public legal educator hosts workshops on a variety of employment-related topics.
- 3) Workplace Sexual Harassment Advisory Program - provides education on preventing sexual harassment, and supported legal referrals.



MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM BOARD CHAIR

2020 was a challenging year for all individuals, but I am excited to be able to report on another year of successes for the WRC.

There were many challenges that the WRC staff faced in being able to continue to offer workshop and casework support in a fully virtual setting. The agency quickly transformed houses into home offices, and adapted materials and forms to be accessible online.

The agency also embarked on a new program to offer support and education to individuals who have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. This program is generously funded through the Federal Department of Justice and has a five-year funding guarantee. This program complements the WRC's existing core programs.

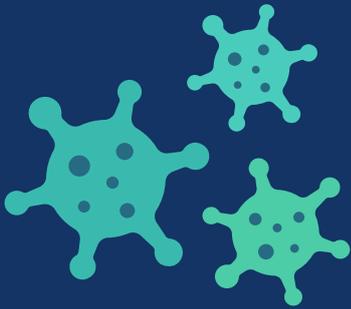
In 2020 the Board secured some grant funding to hire Prospector consulting to direct the Board through our new round of strategic planning. Given Covid restrictions strategic planning was placed on a brief hold, but planning is underway now. The Board looks forward to sharing the outcomes of this planning in the coming months.

I am writing this report as interim chair as our previous chair, Terri Giffin, completed her two-year term. We would like to thank Terri for her tireless dedication to the Board and the WRC. We wish her the best of luck on her next adventure.

Lastly, I would like to thank our funders, donors, and all supporters of the WRC in continuing to support us during this challenging year. The WRC would not be able to operate without the generous assistance from the Alberta Law Foundation, United Way of Calgary and Area, Department of Justice, Union brothers and sisters, and numerous individual donors.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

**Moved offices to our new location at 440, 999 - 8 St. Sw
Calgary, Alberta**



**Shifted services entirely online in
March 2020 due to Covid.**

**Engaged in a website redesign,
and added appointment
bookings online**



**Learned new legislation such as
CERB, CRB, and Provincial benefits
to assist clients at a rate of over
1,000 calls/month.**



WRC Staff

Chris Farness
Executive Director



Chris began working with the WRC in October 2013. Chris accepted the role of Executive Director in August, 2017. Before that, he had worked with the WRC as a Caseworker as well as Intake Coordinator. Chris has a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Victoria. After working for a number of social justice causes, Chris completed graduate school with an M.A. in Economics, Politics and Sociology from the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne followed by an LL.B. from the University of London.

Candace Martens
Public Legal Educator



Candace has been with the Workers' Resource Centre since January 2010. Candace has a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Calgary, and she completed a practicum with the WRC prior to being offered the Public Legal Educator position.

Jasvir Sandhu
Caseworker



Jasvir joined WRC in 2008. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and a minor in Sociology from the University College of the Fraser Valley.



Carolyn Krahn
Sexual Harassment
Legal Specialist



Carolyn joined the WRC team in 2017. She graduated in 2010 with a Master of Arts from the University of Victoria. Prior to joining the WRC, Carolyn worked in the areas of disability case management, education, and advocacy to create barrier-free inclusive environments for clients

Taylor joined the WRC on a full-time basis as Intake Coordinator in August, 2018 before transitioning to casework. Taylor holds a Master of Arts in International Relations, and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. Taylor has worked in the Labour movement, and was instrumental in assisting with the passing of Bill 23 while working at the Calgary and District Labour Council.

Taylor McMullin
Caseworker



Megan Nicolls
Caseworker



Megan joined WRC in April of 2019. Megan assists Alberta workers in navigating the benefits and appeal systems available to them under the Government legislation. Megan brings a breadth of experience to this role including experience from various industries such as: photojournalism, magazine and newspaper media, sales, marketing, oil & gas, insurance benefits administration, revenue management and real estate.

Teodora Jokic
Intake Coordinator

Teodora joined the WRC in April 2020. Teodora brought with her her extensive knowledge of government benefits due to her prior experience working for Alberta Works.



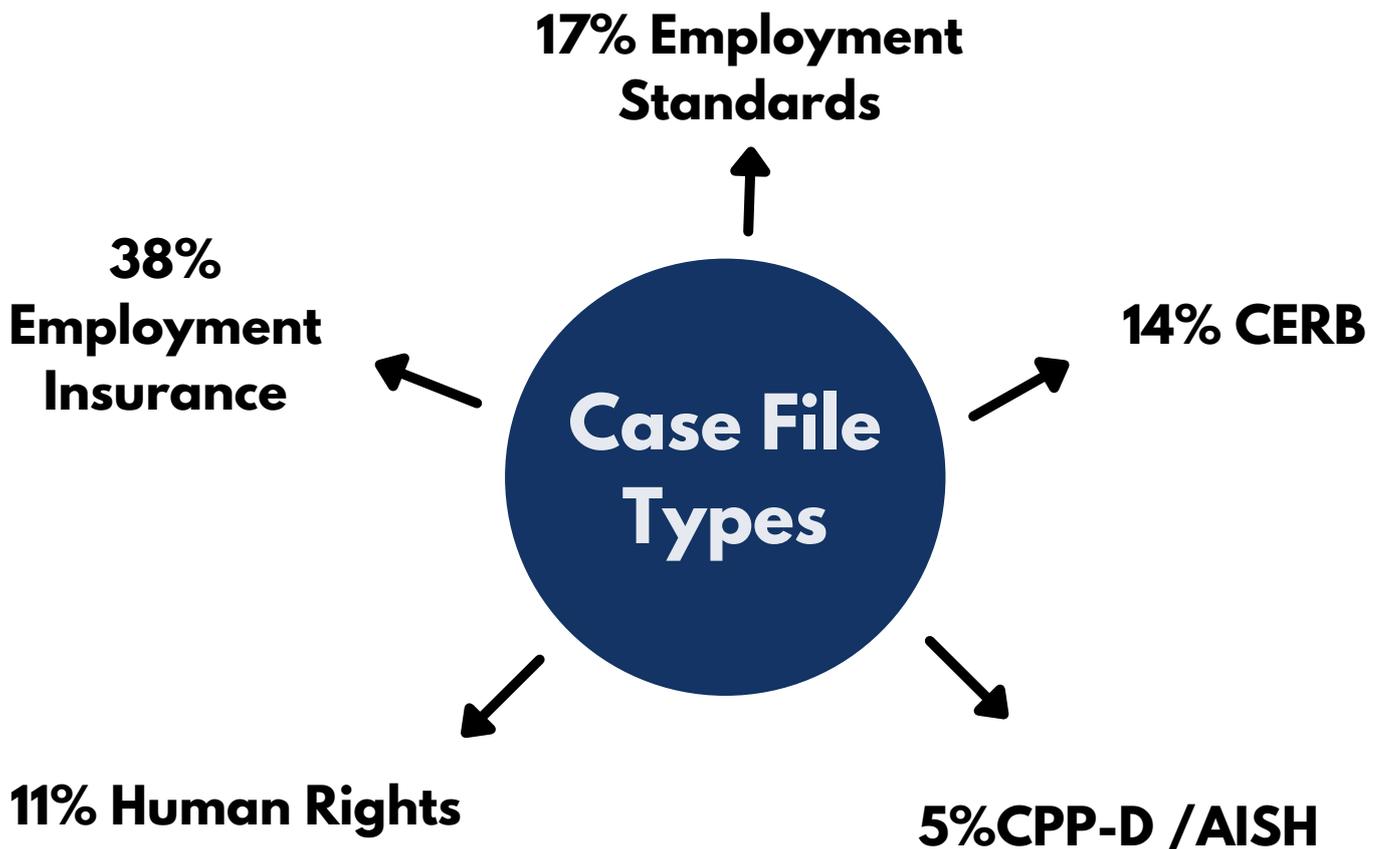
2020 CASEWORK STATISTICS

OVERVIEW

In 2020, the WRC filed 591 claims totalling \$3,990,224 in client financial entitlements.



Since 2006, the WRC has helped clients receive over \$52 million.



2020 PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The PLE Program is based on the philosophy that knowledge leads to empowerment. The more an individual knows about their rights in the workplace, the better they will be able to identify violations of these rights.

The PLE offers workshops on a variety of topics including: Employment Insurance, Employment Standards, WCB, Occupational Health and Safety, Changes to Legislation, and others.

The WRC believes that knowledge leads to the power to self-advocate, and understand individual ability to do so.

PLE Workshop Statistics

**88 Workshops
Facilitated**

.....

**431 Workshop
Hours**

.....

**1983 Participants
attended**

99%

of

**Participants state that the
WRC workshop they
attended increased their
knowledge about the
work-related benefits to
which they are entitled.**

SEXUAL HARASSMENT ADVISORY PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

In 2019, the WRC applied for a grant from the Federal Department of Justice to offer supports and resources centered on addressing sexual harassment in the workplace.

The WRC was awarded a five year funding guarantee to offer this program in early 2020.

Program Highlights:



Formed the Sexual Harassment Partnership group to offer collaboration and training opportunities.

Created resources and content that can be delivered in person or virtually.



WRC Success Stories

“ I helped a client that was having issues with an AISH appeal. He had immigrated to Canada a few years prior and was confined to wheelchair due to a childhood illness. He and his wife had a very young family he needed to support financially, but is unable to work due to illness.

I contacted his medical team, past and present, assisting him in tracking down medical documents for proof of injury. We were successful in his AISH appeal. He received a total of \$643,140.00 to be dispersed to him monthly over the next 33.5 years

”



WRC Success Stories

“ This client contacted the WRC for assistance with a CPP-D application. The client had attempted to apply on his own the year prior but was unsuccessful. WRC reviewed the client's denial letters and determined that he had been denied for formalities which the client had unknowingly overlooked in his application. WRC assisted the client with a second application, making sure all important information was provided to Service Canada, which was ultimately approved in a matter of two or three months (his benefit rate was approximately \$1200 per month with four years of eligibility - or \$57,600 in total gross benefits). The client has since expressed a sincere gratitude for the WRC's assistance, as he feared he would never receive the financial assistance from CPP-D that he required.

”

WRC Board Members

Terri Giffin **Board Chair**

Terri graduated from Dalhousie University with an Honours Bachelor of Science Degree, Psychology followed by her Masters Degree in Counselling Psychology from the University of Calgary. In more recent years, Terri has been actively involved with her children's schools, volunteering with the parent-teacher board, coaching children's soccer and, now, marathon training. Terri has worked in a variety of counselling settings, including with the Department of Social Services as a live-in-support worker with adolescent teenage girls in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Her work career, here in Calgary, has included: Counsellor at Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse; The Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter; and, The University of Calgary's Counselling Centre where she completed 1600 hours of supervised counsellor training. Also, during her counselling career, Terri has been involved in counsellor/volunteer training and public education/outreach.

Karen Craik **Vice Chair**

Karen Craik is a Registered Nurse and has had the pleasure of representing her members as Secretary Treasurer of United Nurses of Alberta since 1996. Karen was the founding Chair of the Calgary Workers' Resource Centre and served on the Board for many years. She has also served on the Board of Ovarian Cancer Canada and was a founding co-chair of the Ovarian Cancer Walk of Hope in Calgary. Rejoining the Board of the Workers' Resource Centre is like coming home. It is so important to support and educate workers' on their rights of Employment.

Alexander Shevalier **Treasurer**

Alex is President of the Calgary and District Labour Council. In that role, he represents the interests of affiliated unions before the City of Calgary, the school boards and the community. He is a member of UFCW 401. Alex serves as a Director at Public Interest Alberta and as a Director at Friends of Medicare. He sat as a Worker Representative on the Employment Insurance Board of Referees until it was dissolved in 2013. He served as a Vice-President of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 401; he also served as the Chair of the pride and solidarity committee at the Alberta Federation of Labour. Alex has taken numerous labour education courses.



WRC Board Members

Siobhan Vipond **Director**

Siobhán is a leading advocate for the rights of working people in Alberta. Siobhán is in her second term as the elected Secretary Treasurer of the Alberta Federation of Labour. The AFL represents more than 170,000 unionized workers in all sectors of the Alberta economy, and works to advance the rights of working people throughout the province. Prior to joining the AFL, Siobhán worked as a stage and film technician, and is a longstanding active member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). Siobhán was recently selected as one of the next generation of Albertan leaders to be a member of the 2015 Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference.

Abena Edugyan **Secretary**

Abena Edugyan has been working in health and fitness for the past 10 years, with the last six years dedicated to employee wellness. She has held roles as both a corporate wellness consultant working in Occupational Health and Safety and most recently as a wellness supervisor in Human Resources. Abena is also an Advisory Board member of the Alberta Centre for Active Living, providing guidance on the developments and issues related to influencing the adoption and maintenance of physical activity behaviour in communities and workplaces.

Noureddine Bouissoukrane **Director**

Noureddine joined the WRC's Board in 2019.

Laurel Jackson **Director**

Laurel joined the WRC's Board in 2019.

Our Funders

The WRC greatly acknowledges the support from our Funders:



United Way
Calgary and Area

Improving lives through the **power** of **communities**



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada

Alberta **LAW**
FOUNDATION

Our Donors

A heartfelt thank you from the WRC for those individuals who gave to us in 2020:



United Nurses of Alberta
Health Sciences Association of Alberta
United Utility Workers of Alberta
AB Regional Council Carpenters and Allied Workers
Calgary and District Labour Council
Amalgamated Transit Union 583
Building Trades of Alberta
Alexander Shevalier
CUPE 4731 and 1169

**Thank you to our many
anonymous donors through
www.canadahelps.org**



Workers' Resource Centre
440, 999 - 8 Street SW
Calgary, AB T2R 1J5

Ph: 403.264.8100
www.helpwrc.org