

WORKERS' RESOURCE CENTRE

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Helping Workers.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Terri Giffin

I am thrilled to have had the privilege of becoming Board Chair in 2018. It has been an exciting year filled with both challenges and successes.

2018 was a year of change for the WRC. Some of the most exciting of these include our increased expansion throughout the Province - with a physical presence in Red Deer, Lethbridge as well as throughout the City of Calgary.

We are very grateful to our funders who work with us diligently to ensure that our much needed programs are available to the community. We would to thank the Alberta Law Foundation, United Way of Calgary and Area, our partner organizations and all those who gave donations to allow us to continue this great work.

The WRC Board of Directors will be working over this year to seek out opportunities that will support the further expansion and enhancement of our services as it is clear that the clients we currently serve are just a small fraction of the community in need. There has been an increasing trend of clients served who reside outside of the Calgary area.

Ongoing support from our 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 an improved quality of life for them and their families.

It is truly exciting to see the benefits of the WRC's work assisting all Albertans, and ensuring that Albertan workers receive the entitlements that they are due.

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I would like to thank everyone involved in the success of the WRC, and look forward to all of our future endeavours together.

CASEWORK PROGRAM



OVERVIEW

In 2018, the WRC had a **94% success rate** on combined casework of 487 open cases, while serving a total of 911 individual clients..

The WRC assisted clients in receiving over **\$4.3 million** in financial entitlements.

The WRC generated a social return on investment of **\$11.37** for every dollar invested into the Casework Program.

Since 2006, the WRC has helped clients gain access to over **\$42 million**.



DEMOGRAPHICS

The WRC helps all Alberta workers; however, a majority of our clients come from vulnerable populations. In 2018:

- 14.8% of our clients were born outside of Canada
- 21% of our clients were people of colour
- 16% of our clients were people with a disability
- 46% of our clients were unemployed



CASE FILES

In 2018, clients sought assistance or information related to one or more of the following issues:

- Employment Insurance: 41%
- Employment Standards: 30%
- WCB: 11%
- Human Rights: 13%
- CPP-D/AISH: 4%
- STD/LTD Benefits: 3%
- Other: 3%



ROADMAP

In 2018, the WRC expanded its physical presence to the Red Deer and Central Alberta area through its partnership with the Central Alberta Legal Clinic.

Plans to expand further were developed in 2018, and came to fruition with a partnership agreement between the WRC and Lethbridge Legal Guidance.

The WRC is excited to offer its services to all Alberta workers - and further expansion is currently being planned.

PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION

The Workers' Resource Centre offers Public Legal Education workshops to help educate Alberta workers of their rights in the workplace. The WRC works in partnership with other community organizations to provide free legal education across the Province.



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



WORKSHOP CONTENTS

The PLE Program offers workshops in a variety of subjects, including:

- Alberta Employment Standards
- Employment Insurance
- Alberta Human Rights Act
- Worker's Compensation Act
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Changes to Alberta employment legislation



THE NUMBERS

Since 2007, the WRC has facilitated over 1070 workshops to over 12,000 individuals.

In 2018, the WRC offered 103 workshops to 1,088 participants, totalling over 355 hours of education.



THE RESULTS

In 2018, 98% of our workshop participants reported that the PLE Program increased their knowledge of their employment-based rights and benefits to which they were entitled - as well as their capacity to access those rights and benefits.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES



After becoming severely handicapped, I applied for AISH, as I was no longer able to work. My application was denied. I learned about the services of the WRC and made an appointment with them. My Caseworker looked through my denial and showed me that an appeal wasn't necessary as there was missing information. Together, we contacted AISH and explained the situation - including a clear reason why I could not return to work. Because of the clarity and completeness of this information, I was able to avoid the lengthy appeal process and AISH approved my claim. I am now receiving \$1,588 every month until I turn 65 in seven years. Because of the WRC, I will receive **\$133,392.00 in benefits** that I would not have without their services.

After many years of work, I suffered from a serious and permanent illness that left me unable to do what I had done for so long. I was left unable to provide for myself and my family. I was referred to the WRC where I was told that I may be able to get help. And I did. After meeting with my Caseworker, she informed me that there were benefits and program that I was entitled to. After a few appointments, I had been signed-up for the Alberta Adult Health Benefit, which gave me access to the medicine and treatment that I could no longer afford. We also applied for CPP-Disability. This was eventually approved. Because of this, I will receive **\$128,400.00** in CPP-D benefits between now and when I turn 65.



I had worked for the same company for over 23 years, when I found out I was being terminated without notice, or termination pay. I contacted the WRC for help getting my money, as my employer refused. The WRC contacted my employer, who told them he wasn't going to pay me anything. My Caseworker explained to him that this was not an acceptable way of dealing with employees, and told him about the Employment Standards process. After speaking with my Caseworker, my employer finally settled, and paid me **\$8000** without having to go through the lengthy Employment Standards process.

OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

OUR COMMUNITY

The Workers' Resource Centre is happy to partner with community-serving agencies across Alberta - working together to ensure the rights of workers are protected.

NORTHEAST FAMILY CONNECTIONS



The WRC works with North East Family Connections to provide in-person casework, ensuring our services are available to the Northeast Calgary community.

CALGARY CHINESE COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSOCIATION



The WRC works with CCCSA to provide in-person casework, ensuring our services are available to the Calgary Chinese community.

CENTRAL ALBERTA LEGAL CLINIC



The WRC works with the Central Alberta Legal Clinic to provide in-person casework, ensuring our services are available to Central Alberta workers.

OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS



The WRC also partners with dozens of other community-serving agencies throughout Calgary in less formal collaborations under the umbrella of Vibrant Communities Calgary.

LETHBRIDGE LEGAL GUIDANCE



The WRC works with Lethbridge Legal Guidance to provide in-person casework, ensuring our services are available to the Southern Alberta community.



OUR STAFF



CHRISTOPHER FARNNESS

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.

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.



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.

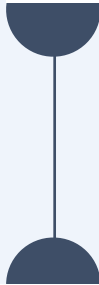
OUR STAFF



CAROLYN KRAHN

Casework

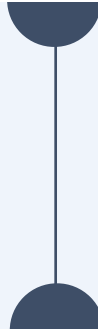
Carolyn started in 2017 as the Intake Coordinator before transitioning into casework. She holds an MA in English literature, and her previous work focused on: disability casework management, government-led funding for clients, and individual client needs assessment.



TAYLOR McMULLEN

Casework

Taylor joined the WRC on a full-time basis as Intake Coordinator in August, 2018. 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.



MEGAN NICCOLLS

Intake Coordinator

Megan started in 2019 as the Intake Coordinator. Megan is a photojournalism graduate, but her career path has taken her from insurance administration to marketing and the oil & gas industry. Megan is happy to join our team helping workers.

OUR BOARD

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.

ALISON GRITTNER

Secretary

Alison Grittner's passion for redressing the connection between social justice and space has lead her on a unique professional path that sits at the intersection of architecture, research, history, and ethnography. Since completing her Master of Architecture in 2012, she has dedicated her skills and knowledge to researching, evaluating, and designing spaces that address the specific needs of those whose needs are traditionally overlooked in our environment: women, youth, seniors, Indigenous Canadians, persons with cognitive challenges, persons with mobility limitations, and the LGBTQ2S+ community. j

OUR BOARD

TRAVIS ASPLUND

Director

Travis Asplund has been working as a Paramedic in Calgary for 9 years and as an EMS for 15 years. He is serving as a Board Member for his union, the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA), Calgary District. In his role within HSAA, Travis is the chair of HSAA's provincial Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) committee that represents more than 23,000 members. OHS has been his passion and it is OHS issues in his workplace that were the catalyst for his involvement in the union. It was also his involvement with HSAA that led Travis to the opportunity to work with the Workers' Resource Center (WRC).

SIOBHÁN 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

Director

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.

OUR FUNDERS

Alberta **LAW**
FOUNDATION



United Way
Calgary and Area

OUR DONORS

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING DONORS
FOR THEIR
GENEROUS FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN 2018:

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



IBEW 254
OPCMIA Local 222
COPE 397
CUPE 38
CUPE 4731

Anonymous Individual Donors



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