

2011 OFL CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 21-25, 2011

POLICY PAPER:
**THE POWER OF
DIVERSITY IN THE
21ST CENTURY**

**DEFENDING THE
NEXT GENERATION**
GOOD JOBS
PUBLIC SERVICES
SECURE PENSIONS
STRONG
COMMUNITIES



**ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF
LABOUR**

The Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) represents 54 unions and one million workers.
It is Canada's largest provincial labour federation.

General inquiries regarding this document should be directed to:

Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) | Fédération du travail de l'Ontario (FTO)

15 Gervais Drive, Suite 202, Toronto, Ontario M3C 1Y8

Telephone: 416-441-2731

Fax: 416-441-1893

Toll-Free: 800-668-9138

Email: info@ofl.ca

TDD: 416-443-6305

Web: www.OFL.ca

Follow the OFL online:

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**THE POWER OF
DIVERSITY IN THE
21ST CENTURY**

P O L I C Y P A P E R



TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3	PEOPLES/WORKERS OF COLOUR	12
ACTION PLAN	5	VISIBLE MINORITY TERM	16
1. Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Actions: Unpacking White and Mainstream Privilege	5	ABORIGINAL PEOPLES	17
2. Employment Equity	7	Boiled Water Watch	19
3. Violence Against Women	8	Shannen's Dream	20
4. Pay Equity	8	LGBT WORKERS	22
5. Early Learning and Child Care	8	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES	23
6. Harassment and Bullying	9	Income Sources	23
7. Card Certification	9	Labour Force Status	23
8. Workers Under 30	10	Mental Health	26
9. Persons with Disabilities	10	Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)	26
10. Accessibility	10	WORKERS UNDER 30	28
11. Mental Health	10		
12. Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)	10		
13. LGBT	11		
14. Economic Justice and Under Representation	11		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Traditionally, Canada has been viewed globally as an effective champion of equity. Unfortunately, there are a growing number of examples where federal and provincial policies and legislation have considerably undermined equity protection. These cuts by governments have impacted not only the equity groups but also workplaces like settlement agencies and the people using them as well as the workers in these agencies. **Those workers are our members.** They have been terminated, laid off, had hours cut back and asked to do more for less pay and benefits. Most of these workers are from equity-seeking groups. How is the Ontario labour movement reacting? How are we defending these members who are in crisis?

At the Ontario Federation of Labour's (OFL) Biennial Convention, it is the mandate for delegates to be able to reflect the concerns of the province's labour movement, addressing provincial policy through policy paper discussion and resolutions, elect its Officers and finally determine the plan of action for the Federation. The Convention delegates determine the directions of the OFL, its affiliates and labour councils in Ontario.

The Convention plan of action must incorporate a serious renewed commitment to putting human rights, equity issues and under-representation at the forefront of all future OFL actions if we are to strengthen our labour movement municipally, provincially, federally and internationally. Commitment to the power of diversity is core to the work of our movement.

We also have to sincerely commit to long-term consistent relationships with community and faith organizations. Not only organizations like the Ontario Health Coalition and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, but organizations like No One is Illegal, The Workers' Action Centre, Asian Canadian Labour Alliance, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Latin American Trade Unionists Coalition, Ontario Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Urban Alliance, Colour of Change and Chiefs of Ontario etc.

We are living in a time where public services are being attacked. Privatization of all services is the ulterior motive of political right wing leaders at all levels of government.

Finally, it is important to note that a “public sector recession” is underway. In July, 71,600 public sector jobs disappeared. Many of those jobs were lost in education (-30,000), a sector that always experiences a decrease in July due to lay-offs of non-tenured teachers and support staff. Job losses were also observed in health and social assistance (-39,400) and in public administration (-11,800).

As well, labour needs to collectively evaluate everything about our own union structures, policies and future actions. Business as usual is not enough! Rallying of the working class is needed to build alliances, new solidarities and hope for working people and society in general.

What engrained obligations, succession planning, vision and responsibilities does, labour has to put in place so that our organizations and our community relationships remain respectful, sustainable and forward thinking. Labour’s role isn’t to overshadow or be front and centre at all times. Sincere and respectful recognition that other primary voices from community partners and coalitions are needed.

How do we reach our unengaged membership who, in many cases, are active community members and totally disinterested in their unions and labour issues? Sensitivity to class, race and cultural differences is imperative to our continued existence and success. How else will we survive and thrive?

The continued and viable existence of the labour movement depends on how we integrate equity into everything we do. If we are dealing with women’s issues, women from designated groups must be included not as an aside or an afterthought, but as systemic fixtures. If we are talking about health and safety, WSIB and good jobs for all, workers of colour, workers with disabilities, LGBT workers, Aboriginal peoples’ issues and workers under 30 must be integrated fully into any resources or actions formulated

by labour. In examining these tough issues, we must be sensitive. Let’s avoid getting wrapped up in stereotyping. Let’s dispel myths and broad generalization about any under represented or equity-seeking groups.

The labour movement should be a place where cultural, religious and linguistic differences are accepted and practiced freely without retribution. The Ontario Federation of Labour and its affiliates have believed that the fight for gender, racial and economic justice is the core of labour ideology. Defending equality, justice and collective rights and responsibilities is second nature to labour activists. These values are grounded firmly in the belief that equitable and fair economic opportunities, participation in the political process, equal access to and fair treatment from our institutions and the right to live in affordable and safe communities are human rights.

The labour movement needs to move more decisively to close the gap between what we say and what we do about equity in our movement and communities. **Walk the walk as well as talk the talk.**

The impact of under-representation of equity-seeking groups, systemic discrimination, oppression, class struggles, racism and sexism weakens our solidarity. It creates barriers to equal and fair participation and total inclusion. The following paper will incorporate the issues and concerns of women, LGBT workers, Aboriginal peoples, workers of colour, persons with disabilities and workers under 30.

Many unions are being proactive in building stronger membership through extensive and accessible membership training and education programs in Canada. Members and their families can choose from a wide variety of free educational opportunities including online labour education, in-class courses and programs through the mobile training unit. Courses include computer training, English as a Second Language (ESL); Skills Upgrading or Ontario Secondary School Diploma credits delivered in conjunction with local school boards; and other courses such as First Aid, and Women’s Self-Defense. These unions are committed to ensuring each steward has the knowledge they need to face their challenges in the workplace.

ACTION PLAN

1. ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIONS: UNPACKING WHITE AND MAINSTREAM PRIVILEGE

Except the victims, the general public may be taken aback by the extent to which racism and discrimination are alive and well and wreaking its deeply harmful effects on Ontarians and on the very fabric of this province. Labour must reaffirm its commitment to anti-discrimination and anti-racism more effectively. Labour must address these urgent issues as a major priority in its action plan for the next two years. It is time to rebuild and strengthen the labour movement with unity inclusion and political will. **United we Stand Divided we fall.**

The following actions are recommended:

- a) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the provincial government to immediately process and develop the methodology for the collection of race-based data in all key domains.
- b) That the OFL and its affiliates develop mandatory anti-racism training and policies for their organizations.
- c) That the OFL, its affiliates and labour councils adopt internal action plans which include guidelines for:
 - identifying and eliminating existing systemic barriers which prevent the full participation of under-represented, equity-seeking groups;
 - recruitment strategies;
 - hiring practices and goals for contract positions;
 - permanent and full-time positions;
 - equity and diversity education that reviews all course and curricula for race, gender, sexual orientation, disability and class biases;
 - equity research;
 - organizing plans;
 - collective bargaining strategies;
 - an annual monitoring mechanism.

- d) That the OFL and its affiliates provide staff and financial resources to support the activities of the OFL Equity Executive Board vice-presidents and their committees.
- e) That the OFL encourage affiliates to include workers under 30 and all other equity groups in all training and educational initiatives for union staff and organizers in all regions of Ontario.
- f) That the OFL and its affiliates pressure the media to be representative of the communities they serve and to challenge stereotypes and attitudinal bias.
- g) That the OFL its affiliates and the CLC challenge the international, economic and political structures which foster discrimination and systemic racism leading to low wage, precarious part-time substandard working conditions and low standards of living for predominantly workers of colour and Aboriginal peoples. Challenge corporation's use of immigration, migrant workers and child labour as sources of cheap labour.
- h) That the OFL work with its affiliates and the CLC to support efforts to combat global discrimination and racism including systemic and environmental discrimination and racism.
- i) That the OFL and its affiliates continue to promote labour's position on the rights of Aboriginal peoples to self-government through member education and political lobbying.
- j) That the OFL and its affiliates provide ongoing support to the Aboriginal peoples' struggle to settle land claims and treaty negotiations.
- k) That the OFL and its affiliates support women, women of colour and Aboriginal women in their fight against racism, sexism and multiple discrimination and produce a book and other resources regarding their stories.
- l) That the OFL and its affiliates work on a collective public campaign about the positive role of unions in society.
- m) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the government to give migrant workers status upon arrival for all temporary foreign workers.
- n) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby for the elimination of placement and recruitment fees for all migrant workers.
- o) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the government for a fair and transparent appeals' mechanism against deportation/repatriations.
- p) That the OFL and its affiliates call for the reform of labour laws to provide better coverage for all (TFWP) workers. Temporary Foreign Workers Program.
- q) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the government to provide migrant workers equal access to all social entitlements including EI, CPP, welfare and health care.
- r) That the OFL is calling on all affiliates to immediately sign on to the KI Statement of Support in this First Nations' struggle against the exploitation of its land by mining companies and the refusal of the provincial government to take its responsibilities seriously for the protection of these lands and sacred and ceremonial areas.
- s) Given that First Nations are the most economically challenged communities in Ontario, the OFL and its affiliates give financial and other support to the extent possible to enable the community to carry on its fight for justice.

2. EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Since the Abella report, there are important changes in the demographics of Canada's labour market.

Between 1981 and 1996, there has been a threefold increase in Canada's visible minority population. People of colour now constitute 13.4% of the population. Of the recent immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1990 and 2000, 73% are people of colour. Along with the demographic change has also come the changes to the structure and conditions of work: contingent and precarious employment including part-time, contract, temporary and own account self employment have grown from 33% in 1989 to 37% in 2001 according to Mary Cornish, Fay Faraday and Jan Borrow (October 2009) from the paper titled **Securing Employment Equity by Enforcing Human Rights Laws**. Persistent occupational segregation and unemployment continue to exist for all designated groups.

The following actions are recommendations:

- a) That the OFL and its affiliates develop employment equity policies that are suited to local demographic characteristics by conducting comparative research to analyze which province-specific practices are most effective.
- b) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the provincial government to establish the Anti Racism Secretariat outlined in the *Human Rights Code Amendment Act* and ensure that adequate resources are assigned and the mandate to advance racial justice are a prerequisite throughout Ontario. In order to challenge systemic discrimination, the Secretariat must have the power to investigate, enforce and monitor compliance.
- c) That the OFL and its affiliates develop employment equity policies with clear guidelines and targets that cannot easily be ignored and, preferably, enshrined in legislation.
- d) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the provincial government to ensure that positive reinforcement be built into the system for monitoring employment equity results. Achieving compliance and detailed annual reports on employment equity achievements should be mandatory.
- e) That the OFL and its affiliates create effective materials to provide employment equity information by involving all parties in the consultation and collaboration process on employment equity programs for monitoring employment results and for achieving compliance.
- f) That the OFL encourage its affiliates to establish employment equity training that includes socio-political context and reaches the work force including labour organizations at all levels. It should cover all aspects of workplace relations and should be a component of all union training programs.
- g) That the OFL and its affiliates work with local communities to develop the specific attributes of employment equity policies and to ensure unimpeded access of the particularly disadvantaged groups.
- h) That the OFL and its affiliates encourage the labour movement to continue to develop programs designed to increase the leadership skills and potential of women from the designated groups particularly women of colour and Aboriginal women.
- i) That the OFL and its affiliates call on the Ontario government to amend the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to include racial, sexual and psychological harassment as sanctioned grounds on which workers may refuse work. The amendment would rely on an effects-based approach that would also include an obligation by employers to have policies and transparent complaints system to deal with racism and discrimination.

- j) That the OFL and its affiliates work with the OFL Equity Committees to develop a survey for affiliates to use as a model to gather employment equity data that would include representation of elected officers and staff policy and procedures within affiliates, and the results would be reported at the 2013 OFL Convention.

3. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Eradicating violence against women in the long term will require courage, creativity, thoroughness and coordinated action between community and union activists. We all need to engage thoughtfully with survivors about their experiences and what their needs are in order to discuss potential solutions and share best practices. A world where everyone knows that violence against women is an unacceptable abuse of human rights would be an achievement in itself and a significant step towards ending violence against women.

The following actions are recommended:

- a) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the governments at all levels to add workplace violence and bullying to the *Employment Standards and Labour Relations Acts*.
- b) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby ministries and local authorities to improve services particularly emergency and long term housing, medical care and social and economic support to help women escape violent situations expeditiously to secure justice and to recover from abuse.
- c) That the OFL and its affiliates challenge the court system on the authorities' failure to secure rights for women.
- d) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the media to promote progressive messaging about violence against women particularly around **The Stolen Sisters**.

4. PAY EQUITY

Pay equity is not a privilege or a frill. It is the law. The right of those doing “women’s work” to be paid the same value of those doing “men’s work” is a fundamental human right of Ontario women which is guaranteed by provincial human rights law and by international commitments made by Canada to ensure women’s equality in employment. Ontario’s *Pay Equity Act* must be reformed to also address and eliminate wage discrimination based on race. We must continue to stand with women in the federal sector to continue to fight for pay equity in the absence of comprehensive legislation.

The following actions are recommended:

- a) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby for Pay Equity Enforcement and renewed government funding for Pay Equity Proxy Adjustments.
- b) That the OFL and its affiliates work with NGOs and community organizations to address the needs for non-unionized women to benefit from pay equity legislation. Often disadvantaged not only by gender but also by race, ethnicity and disability, non-organized women have for the most part been unable to effectively access the benefits of the legislation. This problem cries out for a strengthened law with monitoring, not no law as some critics maintain. Special supports must be given to non-organized women such as funding for pay equity legal clinics.
- c) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the federal government for Federal pay equity legislation.

5. EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

For three decades the OFL, our affiliated unions and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care have organized and mobilized for the creation of a system for child care that is universally-accessible, high-quality, not-for-profit, regulated and publicly funded; that would meet the

needs of children and parents to provide decent wages and working conditions for workers in the sector. Nationally, working with the CLC and national groups, we have mobilized for a national system of early learning and child care.

In this time of economic upheaval, child care, like no other public investment, is critical in times of serious economic uncertainty. Child care is good for the economy – whether a good or bad economy. Child care gives families the ability to weather the storm of keeping jobs, looking for work, attending community colleges and universities and participating in re-training.

The following actions are recommended:

- a) That the OFL, its affiliates and allies continue the fight to sustain universal public not-for-profit child care system for Ontario that is comprehensive, accessible and affordable for all.
- b) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the Ontario government to build a non-profit system of early learning and child care that would meet the needs of children, parents, workers and their communities by:
 - Placing a cap on parent fees to make child care affordable.
 - Directly funding child care centres to provide stable funding.
 - Significantly increasing the salaries of child care staff to ensure educated and committed staff can continue working in child care, including funding for pay equity adjustments.
 - Committing to long-term funding for more child care spaces.
 - Preventing the corporate takeover of child care.
- c) That the OFL and its affiliates continue to work with the Canadian Labour Congress and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada in lobbying for a national child care system.

6. HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Harassment cuts across socio-economic classes, ethnicities, professions and social spheres. For example – the impact of discrimination and harassment on lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered youth: 30% of suicides are LGBT, 43% of trans-identified people attempt suicide, 26% of LGBT youth are told to leave home and LGBT youth are more likely to become homeless (Information taken from PFLAG Canada website).

The following action is recommended:

- a) That the OFL encourage all affiliates to produce an anti-sexual and anti-racism harassment policy that includes a vision statement (setting out the organization's commitment to maintain a fair and equitable environment free of sexual, racial or gender-based harassment and stating that the organization will not tolerate any sexual, racial or gender-based harassment) and describe explicitly how internal complaints will be handled.

7. CARD CERTIFICATION

In the past 15 years, right-of-centre provincial governments have changed legislation in ways that it makes it more difficult to unionize.

For many years, equity groups have organized their workplaces because becoming a union member usually meant better job security, an increase in their pay and benefits resulting in a better standard of living. Ontario's current labour law makes it very difficult for Ontarians to organize. The Harris government abolished the majority card certification process immediately after taking office in 1995.

In 2004, the McGuinty government introduced Bill 144 that restored automatic card certification but only to the construction sector. Since Statistics Canada shows that women, Aboriginal peoples and workers of colour demographics will be significant.

The following action is recommended:

- a) That the OFL and its affiliates lobby the provincial government to re-establish all Ontario workers' rights to automatic card certification.

8. WORKERS UNDER 30

The following action is recommended:

- a) That the OFL produce a report modelled after the American AFL-CIO report **Young Workers: A Lost Decade**. The report should be based on a provincial survey that examines workers under 30 from all equity groups, economic standing, attitudes and hopes for the future. The report should also examine what the present labour movement can do around succession planning for the future.

9. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The following action is recommended:

- a) That the OFL, its affiliates and allies work closely with the disabilities communities to ensure that the Ontario government is more proactive in dealing with issues of concern.

10. ACCESSIBILITY

Before the October 2011 election, the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance* (AODA Alliance) called on all political parties to commit to:

- Generally strengthen implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005* (AODA) and the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001* (ODA).
- Develop needed new Accessibility Standards.
- Implement Key Recommendations of the 2010 Charles Beer AODA Independent Review.
- Improve how the Ontario public service addresses accessibility.
- Fully implement compliance and enforcement of the AODA.

- Ensure Taxpayers' money is never used to create or buttress disability barriers.
- Ensure accessibility of provincial and municipal elections.
- Review all Ontario laws for accessibility barriers.
- Launch better public education for accessibility.
- Effectively enforce the Ontario Human Rights Code.

This should be the action plan for the government elected on October 6 to implement accessibility in our province.

That the OFL will work with all OFL committees to develop and disseminate information to assist affiliates to fulfill their obligations under the accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

11. MENTAL HEALTH

The 2007 OFL Convention called for actions which are still valid today:

- Put a stop to further divestment and bed closures until a full assessment of provincial needs is completed.
- Undertake a full assessment of needs in order to develop policies and allocate resources to offer a continuum of needed services to Ontarians. This must be done with the full involvement of both those affiliates in mental health services and users of these services in the broader community.
- Providing needed services in the not-for-profit public sector across Ontario.

12. ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (ODSP)

Support the principles of redesigning the Ontario Disability Support Program outlined by the ODSP Action Coalition as well as supporting their Disability Declaration.

13. LGBT

The labour movement laid the foundation for basic rights at the bargaining table by winning contract language in the areas of anti-harassment and benefits. Our affiliates built upon that foundation through court challenges that won the rights for benefits and pensions. Working with community coalitions, we added to our list of victories with the passage of provincial and federal legislation that provides for legal recognition of same sex relationships, and the inclusion of lesbians and gay men in federal hate crimes legislation and marriage rights.

The following actions are recommended:

- a) That the OFL encourage its affiliates to establish Solidarity and Pride Working Groups or committees to meet and work together to further the LGBT agenda.
- b) That the OFL encourage its affiliates to negotiate collective agreement language prohibiting discrimination, setting up harassment protection, providing benefits for partners.
- c) That the OFL and its affiliates develop and deliver educational courses making sure that LGBT issues are integrated in human rights courses and union education courses.
- d) That the OFL and its affiliates produce resource materials including posters, buttons etc, promoting LGBT rights and opposing homophobia and transphobia.
- e) That the OFL and its affiliates working with the CLC lobby the federal government and provincial government to launch a human rights public education campaign.
- f) That the OFL and its affiliates, together with the CLC, lobby the federal government and provincial governments to amend human rights legislation to include gender identity/expression as a prohibit ground.

- g) That the OFL and its affiliates working with the CLC lobby the federal government for inclusion of trans-identified in hate crimes legislation.
- h) That the OFL and its affiliates support the LGBT movement's court challenges financially and through direct interventions at the Supreme Court level.
- i) That the OFL and its affiliates hold a LGBT conference or regional symposiums within the next two years.

14. ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND UNDER REPRESENTATION

With a right wing agenda affecting everyone municipally, provincially and federally, and as Ontarians need both community and labour activists, the concern about poverty, homelessness, hunger, unemployment, inadequate child care, steep university and college tuition fees, lack of timely and accessible health care, the privatization of public services are issues that affect us on a daily basis. How do these dismantling issues affect our allies, neighbours, friends, co-workers and members who are from the equity groups?

PEOPLES / WORKERS OF COLOUR

From the 2006 Census, actual barriers to accessing good paying permanent jobs are indicated. There is a rapid increase in the number of peoples of colour in Canada. The census data also shows that there is ongoing discrimination in the workforce.

It is a fact, according to Statistics Canada, that people of colour will make up 1/3 of Canada's population – one in 3 Canadians – by 2031. Their population will also continue to be younger than the rest of the population with 36% under age 15 by 2031 and only 18% predicted to be over 65. It is also a fact that enough is not being done to address systemic barriers to the hiring, retention and promotion of Aboriginal and peoples of colour throughout Ontario's workplaces including the labour movement. Individual and systemic racism have clear and negative impacts on life opportunities for both of the above groups in Ontario.

In 2001, the unemployment rate among adults with disabilities was 10.7% compared to 5.9% of adults without disabilities. 47% have personal income below \$15,000 compared with 25% of adults without disabilities.

The median income for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in 2005 was \$14,517 about \$11,000 lower than the figure for the non-Aboriginal population which was \$25,955.

According to the report titled **Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market** co-written by Grace Galabuzi and Sheila Block, skin colour still blocks people of colour from the best paying jobs this country has to offer. It finds that even in the best of economic times, the pay gap between racialized and non-racialized Canadians is large. Workers of colour earn only 81.4 cents for every dollar paid to non-racialized Canadians. They also continue to experience higher levels of unemployment and earn less income than non-racialized Canadians. Their work is more likely to be insecure, temporary and low paying. The Census data showed that between the years 2000 and 2005, workers of colour contributed to the economic growth but didn't reap the benefits.

Included are the following tables:

TABLE 1 - Employment, Unemployment and Participation Rates Canada 2006

	RACIALIZED			NON-RACIALIZED		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Participation rate	73.1	62.0	67.3	72.2	61.5	66.7
Employment rate	67.3	56.2	61.5	67.7	57.8	62.6
Unemployment rate	7.8	9.3	8.6	6.3	6.1	6.2

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census. Catalogue Number 97-562-XCB2006013

TABLE 2 - Employment, Unemployment and Participation Rates by Racialized Group Canada 2006

	Participation Rate	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Total racialized population	67.3	61.5	8.6
Chinese	62.0	57.3	7.5
South Asian [1]	68.5	62.6	8.6
Black	70.7	63.2	10.7
Filipino	76.6	72.8	5.0
Latin American	71.9	65.4	9.0
Southeast Asian [2]	68.9	63.1	8.5
Arab/West Asian	64.1	56.3	12.1
Korean	54.8	50.1	8.5
Japanese	61.6	58.5	5.1
Visible minority, n.i.e.[3]	71.1	65.6	7.8
Multiple visible minority [4]	72.7	66.5	8.5
Non-racialized [5]	66.7	62.6	6.2

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census. Catalogue Number 97-562-XCB2006013

[1] For example, 'East Indian', 'Pakistani', 'Sri Lankan', etc [2] For example, 'Vietnamese', 'Cambodian', 'Malaysian', 'Laotian', etc [3] The abbreviation 'n.i.e.' means 'not included elsewhere'. Includes respondents who reported a write-in response such as 'Guyanese', 'West Indian', 'Kurd', 'Tibetan', 'Polynesian', 'Pacific Islander', etc. [4] Includes respondents who reported more than one visible minority group by checking two or more mark-in-circles, e.g., 'Black' and 'South Asian'. [5] Includes respondents who reported 'Yes' to the Aboriginal identity question (Question 18) as well as respondents who were not considered to be members of a visible minority group.

TABLE 3 - Labour Force by Occupation Canada, 2006 (per cent)

	RACIALIZED		NON-RACIALIZED	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
All occupations	7.7%	7.0%	45.0%	40.3%
Management	8.2%	4.6%	55.1%	32.1%
Business, finance and administrative	5.4%	9.8%	23.2%	61.6%
Natural and applied sciences and related	15.8%	4.8%	62.4%	17.1%
Health	4.3%	12.0%	15.6%	68.1%
Social science, education, government service and religion	4.2%	7.3%	27.7%	60.8%
Art, culture, recreation and sport	5.2%	5.2%	39.6%	49.9%
Sales and service occupations	7.4%	9.1%	35.1%	48.4%
Trades, transport and equipment operators and related	9.5%	0.9%	83.6%	6.0%
Occupations unique to primary industry	3.3%	1.8%	74.4%	20.5%
Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	14.0%	11.2%	52.7%	22.1%

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census. Catalogue Number 97-564-XCB2006009 and authors' calculations.

Ethno racial group members, other than Aboriginal peoples make up over 13% of Canada's population (Ontario 19%, by 2017 this will rise to 20%) 29% in Ontario. By the year 2017, well over half of Toronto's overall population will be people of colour. Between 1980 and 2000 in Toronto, while the poverty rate for non-racialized (i.e. white, European or Caucasian heritage) population fell by 28%, the poverty among peoples of colour rose by 361%. 32% of children from these families and 47% of children in recent immigrant families in Ontario live in poverty. These statistics show that more and more people of colour in Ontario have a higher risk of being poor. They face stress, unsafe working conditions, polluted neighbourhoods, under-housing and homelessness. Assistance rates and minimum wage do not provide sufficient income to afford a healthy diet. (*Colour of Poverty Campaign*)

OPSEU has just completed a final report from Phase 2 of the Social mapping that was designed to help OPSEU

build a stronger union that understands and responds to its membership's full diversity. Here are some of the key findings:

- Good equity policies on the books but few mechanisms in place to monitor enforcement.
- A lack of equity structures at the local level and in the OPSEU regions reduces the ability to attract new members into union activism.
- Little focus on workplace-based equity issues.
- Difficult for members to participate in education and meetings where long distances were involved.
- OPSEU website is difficult to navigate; important messaging opportunities are lost.
- Activism in the locals is rewarded yet equity activism is not.
- Leadership does not reflect the general membership, particularly young racialized members and women.

TABLE 8 - Average Employment Income by Racialized Group

	Men	Women	Total
Arab	34,171	21,874	29,441
Black	31,233	25,336	28,231
Chinese	38,342	27,745	33,081
Filipino	33,141	26,960	29,491
Latin American	31,187	20,802	26,241
Japanese	60,004	32,647	45,116
Korean	30,474	21,122	25,929
Visible minority n.i.e.	35,414	25,938	30,666
Multiple VM	37,995	27,081	32,528
South Asian	36,904	24,081	31,102
South East Asian	34,270	23,325	28,937
West Asian	30,173	21,234	26,279
Total Racialized	35,329	25,204	30,385
Non-racialized	45,327	28,584	37,332

Source: Statistics Canada – 2006 Census. Catalogue Number 97-564-XCB2006009

VISIBLE MINORITY TERM

According to the report of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues (Mission to Canada, October 13-23, 2009) certain minority communities such as Black Canadians feel strongly that the catch-all terminology of “visible minorities” under which their data is captured leads inevitably to the neglect of their specific identities and situations. It has served to obscure and dilute the differences and distinct experiences of respective minority groups. Unpacking the visible minority data is the first step towards recognition of diverse experiences and challenges enabling more targeted policy responses.

It should be noted that the OFL was one of the first organizations to review the terminology “visible minority” based on a 2009 OFL Convention emergency resolution. The United Nation’s anti-racist watchdog had argued that it is inappropriate for the federal government to use this terminology because any distinction based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin is discriminatory. The Ontario Federation of Labour working group made up of affiliates and community representatives recommended that for all future OFL resources and documentation to use the terms “workers or peoples of colour”. It was approved by the OFL Executive Board in 2010.

In preparation for its ensuing “grilling” at a UN committee hearing scheduled for early 2012, the Harper government spent an unreported amount of money to hire academics to research the term’s history, held workshops, canvas provincial and territorial governments and prepared a report on the use of the term in Canada. The report’s conclusion: *“While other terms were considered in the research, no other term fully encompassed the goals of addressing labour market disadvantage faced by groups designated by the (Equity Act)”*.

It is a known fact that “non-caucasians” and “non-whites” will become the majority in Toronto and Vancouver within the next 20 years, according to a Statistics Canada Report. In those regions, the “visible minority” will become the visible majority. Maybe it’s time for a new term - not because the UN says so, but because “visible minorities” seems to have lost its relevance.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Ontario has the largest Aboriginal population of all the provinces and territories in Canada. In 2001, one in five Aboriginal people in Canada lived in Ontario.

The report entitled “Taking Responsibility for Homelessness: An Action Plan for Toronto” reports that there are over 40,000 Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. Of the 20 largest First Nations communities in Canada, five are in Ontario, including the two largest in the country, Six Nations of the Grand River, located near Brantford, and the Mohawks of Akwesasne, which straddles the borders of Quebec, Ontario, and New-York State, about 75 kilometres west of Montreal. See demographics table that gives a snapshot of Aboriginal peoples in Ontario.

Aboriginal Industry Identity

Industry characteristics of the Aboriginal identity population	Ontario			Canada		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total experienced labour force 15 years and over with an Aboriginal identity	111,160	55,64555	510	497,280	253,825	243,455
Agriculture and other resource-based industries	4,760	3,885	875	39,705	32,005	7,700
Construction	8,605	7,830	770	43,880	39,175	4,705
Manufacturing	12,510	8,750	3,760	39,770	28,985	10,785
Wholesale trade	3,015	1,985	1,030	11,995	8,290	3,700
Retail trade	11,885	4,740	7,145	51,465	20,905	30,565
Finance and real estate	3,625	1,310	2,315	14,970	5,400	9,565
Health care and social services	13,070	2,295	10,775	58,160	10,080	48,075
Educational services	6,350	1,820	4,530	32,955	9,165	23,790
Business services	17,800	10,175	7,625	69,900	40,950	23,950
Other services	29,535	12,85516	680	134,480	58,865	75,615

Demographic Snapshot of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

Aboriginal Peoples in Ontario		Non Aboriginal Peoples	Comparison
Total population	188,314	11,097,235	Aboriginal population about 1.7% of population of Ontario
Percentage under 19 years	38.4%	26%	48% more Aboriginal people under 19 years
Percentage over 65 years	4.6%	13%	65% fewer Aboriginal people over 65 years
Percentage living off reserve	78%	N/A	21.5% living on reserve
Percentage who were living at same address for at least one year	79.3%	86.2%	8% fewer Aboriginal people living at same address for at least one year
Percentage of lone-parent families	9%	4.9%	84% more Aboriginal lone-parent families
Percentage who graduated from high school	12%	14%	14% fewer Aboriginal people graduated from high school
Percentage who earned a university degree	5.5%	17.5%	68% fewer Aboriginal people earned a university degree
Percentage employed	55.1%	63.3%	13% fewer Aboriginal people employed
Percentage unemployed	14.7%	6%	145% more Aboriginal people unemployed
Average individual income	\$21,822	\$33,027	Aboriginal peoples' income \$11,205 less
Percentage considered low-income	50%	33.8%	48% more Aboriginal people considered

Aboriginal communities have a higher percentage of youth. The labour force participation rates and employment rates for Aboriginal communities are lower than for the region as a whole. The unemployment rates for Aboriginal communities are consistently higher than for the region as a whole. Youth in Northern Ontario's Aboriginal communities have especially low rates of labour

force involvement. The average income of individuals in Aboriginal communities in Northern Ontario is lower than the regional and provincial average 35.

The Census (2001) indicates that the employment rate for Aboriginal peoples in Ontario 15 years and over was 55.1% and the unemployment rate was 14.7%. This com-

compares to an employment rate for non-Aboriginal people 15 years and over of 63.3% and an unemployment rate of 6% 51.

The average annual income of Aboriginal peoples in Ontario 15 years and over is about \$11,000 less than that of non-Aboriginal people. The Census indicates that the average income for Aboriginal peoples in Ontario 15 years and over was \$21,822. The average income for non-Aboriginal people 15 years and over was \$33,027.52. About 50% of Aboriginal peoples 15 years and over 33.8% of non-Aboriginal people 15 years and over in Ontario were considered low income.

Too many times, the lack of infrastructure in the form of educational institutions, lack of employment opportunities, lack of culturally appropriate protection services, the child welfare system, or lack of social, mental, physical and cultural health services in their communities forces Indigenous youth to leave their homelands, which, in turn, causes loss of connection with our families, our culture and our land.

BOILED WATER WATCH

The lives and culture of Aboriginal peoples are tied to the land and to the waters. They are concerned with water depletion and pollution.

Canada is often seen as a country with plentiful supplies of safe drinking water. So it came as a surprise to many when a report by the Canadian Medical Association Journal in April 2008 found that there are more than 1,760 boil water advisories across Canada. Boil water advisories are often the result of chlorination or disinfection systems not working. They are meant to be temporary measures advising the public that their water is unsafe to consume without boiling it first. For many people in this country, boil water advisories remind us of the Walkerton water tragedy that killed seven people and the need for strong national water quality standards and for *publicly supplied* water services.

Even more shocking is the fact that many First Nations communities within Canada today have, for many years, lived with and suffered from unsafe drinking water in their daily lives. The situation in which many First Nations has more in common with the Global South than the rest of the country. Access to safe drinking water is a health and safety issue of critical importance to all Canadians. However, for many Aboriginal, Métis and Inuit communities, unsafe drinking water is a persistent reality of their daily lives. As of 31 December 2008, 106 First Nations communities were under drinking water advisories; some of them are on long-term drinking water advisories, lasting several years. Furthermore, the Polaris Institute in collaboration with the assembly of First Nations and the CLC released a report in 2008 that showed the glaring injustice. Funding to correct the water issue will be spread over two years and 14 communities were chosen across Canada.

Drinking water in First Nations communities was brought to the forefront in October 2005 when nearly 1,000 residents of the Kasheshewan Reserve (Northern Ontario) were evacuated after the drinking water in their community has tested positive for elevated levels of *Escherichia coli* (E.coli). This deplorable event has highlighted the unacceptable health risks posed by unsafe water quality in many First Nations communities in Canada. For Aboriginal people, those events reinforced long-standing and widespread concerns regarding the quality of drinking water on reserves.

For a country that is supposed to be rich with fresh water, Canada has some disappointing statistics. According to Health Canada, 97 of these water advisories were in First Nations reserves. However, many Aboriginal reserves have been affected by them for a long time. Lansdowne House has had this water problem for up to 13 years.

In March 2006, the federal government put into effect a plan to help improve Aboriginal water quality. The *Plan of Action for Drinking Water in First Nations Communities* was developed to address the concerns highlighted by the Walkerton Ontario crisis in 2000. In 2005 Kasheche-

wan Reserve evacuated 800 residents because of E.coli contamination in their water. By January 2008 it was reported that the 193 water systems that were classified as high risk were down to 58.

According to a study conducted in the summer of 2007 by Ekos for Health Canada, many people in the communities are not convinced their water is completely safe to drink. Of the 1,502 surveyed Aboriginal residents, only 63% said they drink their tap water.

This situation would not be accepted anywhere in main stream Canada. How would one feel if they had to buy or be provided bottled water for 10 years with no options.

How can there be outrage over cases like North Battleford and Walkerton but no outrage when almost 100 First Nations communities cannot drink their water. Canada who promotes itself on being a human rights advocate should be ashamed that communities are being neglected while they live in Global South conditions. Clean water is such a basic human right that it is unthinkable that communities are told to manage without it. Labour must work with Aboriginal communities across the country to bring awareness and expose this violation of First Nations' human rights.

SHANNEN'S DREAM

Shannen Koostachin of Attawapiskat First Nations lead a movement called the Attawapiskat School Campaign for "safe and comfy" schools and quality culturally based education for First Nations children.

She never went to class in a proper school and the portables became more run down over time. The heat would often go off, the children would have to walk outside in the cold to go from one portable to another and the doors were warped. The children of Attawapiskat launched the Attawapiskat School Campaign to reach out to non-Aboriginal children all across Canada.

In May of 2010, Shannen Koostachin passed away in an automobile accident. With the support of her loving family, friends and community, Shannen's Dream is

a campaign named in her memory to make sure all First Nations children across Canada have "safe and comfy schools" and receive a good quality education that makes them proud of who they are.

Provincial/Territorial education laws apply on and off reserves but the federal government is supposed to pay for education on reserves. If the federal government provides less money for schools and education then the provinces/territories typically do not top it up. This means Aboriginal children and youth across Canada get inequitable education just because they are Aboriginal and living on a reserve. A First Nations child's education is funded between \$2,000 - \$3,000 less than another child in a nearby provincial school. Unlike provincial schools, the federal government does not provide any funding for libraries, computers, software and teacher training extracurricular activities, First Nations data management systems, 2nd and 3rd level services (including core funding for special education, school boards, governance and education research), endangered languages, principals, directors, pedagogical support and the development of culturally-appropriate curricula.

According to the federal government, as of 2010, 48 new schools are needed in First Nations communities nationally, and an additional 29 schools are in need of expansion and major renovations. Health concerns in First Nations schools include: overcrowding, extreme mould, high carbon dioxide levels, sewage fumes in school, frozen pipes, unheated portables, students suffering from cold and frost bite and schools being abandoned despite a lack of alternative infrastructure. A priority campaign to resolve the funding inequalities and give First Nations children a chance to get a good education is a priority for the OFL and its affiliates.

Several of our affiliates are proactively addressing the changing demographics in Ontario. For example, the Society of Professional Engineers is addressing equity issues through a steering committee for a Canada-wide labour market study of engineers and technologists/technicians conducted by Engineers Canada and the Ca-

nadian Council of Engineering Technologists and Technicians. The study was funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada.

Key deliverables of the survey include:

- current demand forecast
- demographic and supply forecast
- analysis of attitudes and policies towards licensure, certification, continuing competence and work task boundaries
- challenges and barriers faced by various equity groups (e.g., women, Aboriginals)
- the global competitiveness of Canada's engineering profession

Another positive example of community centred actions can be seen with OSSTF who is in the process of developing Common Threads v Aboriginal Perspectives in Education. As the original inhabitants of Canada, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples have a variety of inherent Aboriginal and treaty rights. Since the history of Canada begins with them, Aboriginal peoples are unique in Canada's mosaic.

These rights, however, have often been denied by governments or misunderstood by the majority in society or by the media. Our education system has also had difficulty in adapting to meet the needs of Aboriginal students.

For all of these reasons, the fifth Common Threads Project will be a departure from the previous format of travelling overseas and researching a topic leading to a better understanding of how global citizens can tackle a common problem. We propose to produce a resource which will resonate with students and educators and address a number of challenges faced by Aboriginal communities in Canada.

The material will explore the various issues in a cross curricular format providing background context and examples of successful strategies to overcome these challenges. Travel will include trips to various First Nations or Métis communities and schools in Southern and Northern Ontario.

The Common Threads team will work with members of our OSSTF/FEESO Aboriginal Education Work Group and will consult widely with respected organizations within the Aboriginal communities.

LGBT WORKERS

The Ontario Federation of Labour's Solidarity and Pride Committee has been working on the issue of discrimination on the basis of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-identified issues. Unions have a legal and moral responsibility to defend all members. Unions have a demonstrated history of defending and bargaining for equality rights. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-identified people are workers, trade unionists and part of our movement. They are particularly vulnerable to discrimination and harassment on and off the job. Unions have a responsibility to fight for human rights for all: **an injury to one is an injury to all.** Lesbians, gays bisexual and transgendered people are our co-workers, friends, family, neighbours and elected officials but they are still subjected to discrimination, societal rejection and hatred. Peoples of colour, who are LGBT and two-spirited peoples face combined oppressions of racism and homophobia or sexism.

Since taking power in 2006, the Harper government cut the Court Challenges program. Advocacy groups attempted to re-open the equal marriage issue and voted against legislation that would have added trans-identified human rights to the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and federal hate crimes laws. The Conservatives appointed a Refugee and Immigration board member with a public record of homophobic statements and stifled any mention of gay rights in a 2009 study guide for new citizens.

In Ontario, the LGBT community, unions and progressive movement continue the mobilizing for inclusion of gender identity/expression as a prohibited grounds within Ontario's Human Rights Code.

By promoting gender diversity, equality and inclusion, all people would be freer; non-trans-identified people will benefit from gender diversity and gender equity as much as trans-identified people. Unions have the social weight to help embattled minorities win legal protections. Unions have the power to confront discrimination and promote social acceptance.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Council of Canadians with Disabilities in their June 22, 2011, document *Low Household Income and Disability: Income Sources, Employment and Employment Discrimination* give a clear and concise portrait of Canadians with disabilities. The document notes:

“Disability was defined as any long-term or recurring difficulty in activities related to hearing, seeing, communicating, mobility, agility, learning or similar activities or conditions or health problems that reduces the amount or kind of activity people can do at home, work, school or other activities such as transportation or leisure. Based on PALS, 16.5 of adults or almost 4.2 million Canadians have at least one disability.

INCOME SOURCES

Working-age people with disabilities living on a low income receive 37.5% of their total household income from government transfers (\$5,825 on average), while their counterparts without disabilities receive 14.4%, or an average of \$3,084, from these sources.

Nearly half 48.2% of people with disabilities living below the low-income-cut-off (LICO) received provincial social assistance in 2005 and more than one in five (22.3%) received the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan Disability Benefit.

LABOUR FORCE STATUS

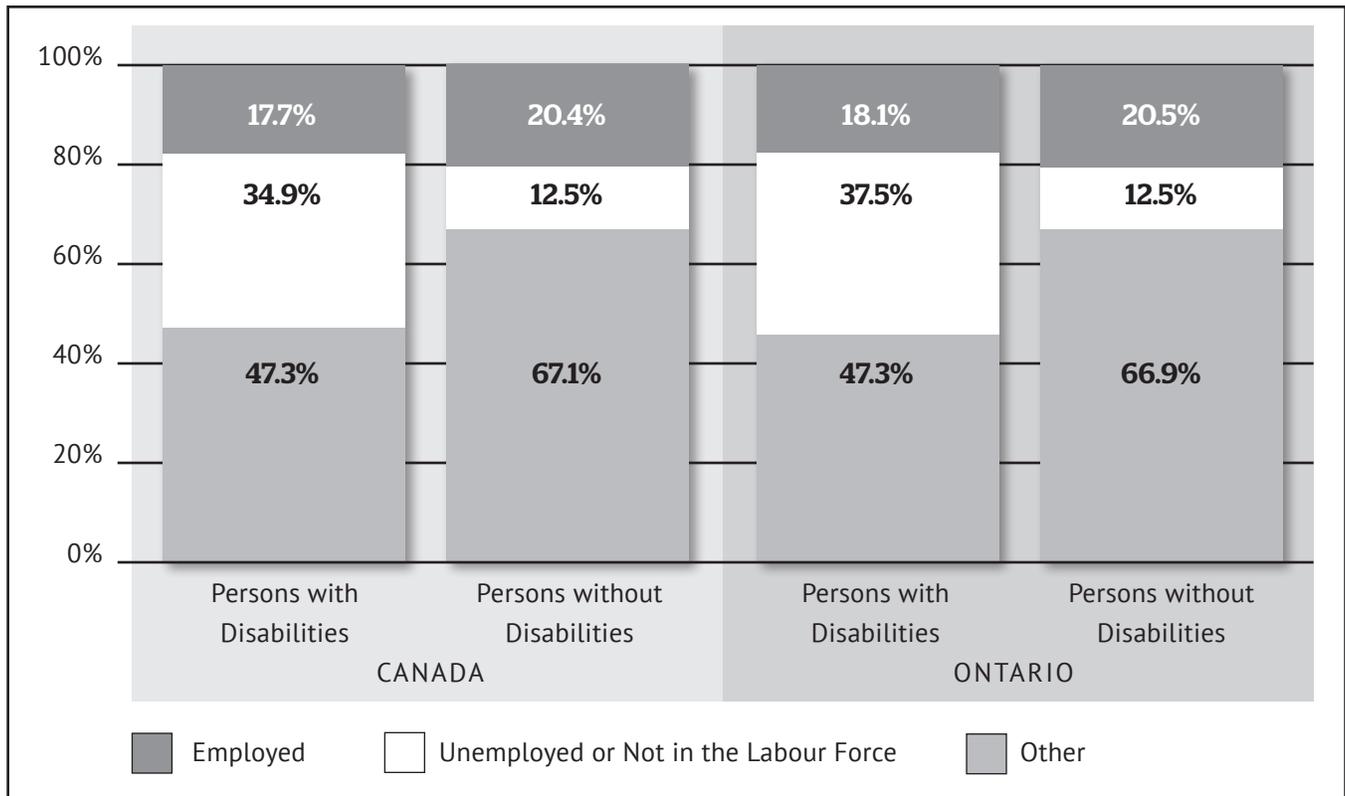
According to Statistics Canada, people with disabilities are persistently less likely to be employed than people without disabilities; in 2006, 51.3% of working-age people with disabilities were employed compared with 75.1% of people without disabilities.

According to PALS, 33.4% of people with disabilities on low income had not worked within the 12 months before PALS was conducted and either worked before 2005 or had never worked. In comparison, this was the case for 23.7% of people without disabilities living in low-income households.”

The 2009-10 Annual Report of the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities which was released in December 2010 notes:

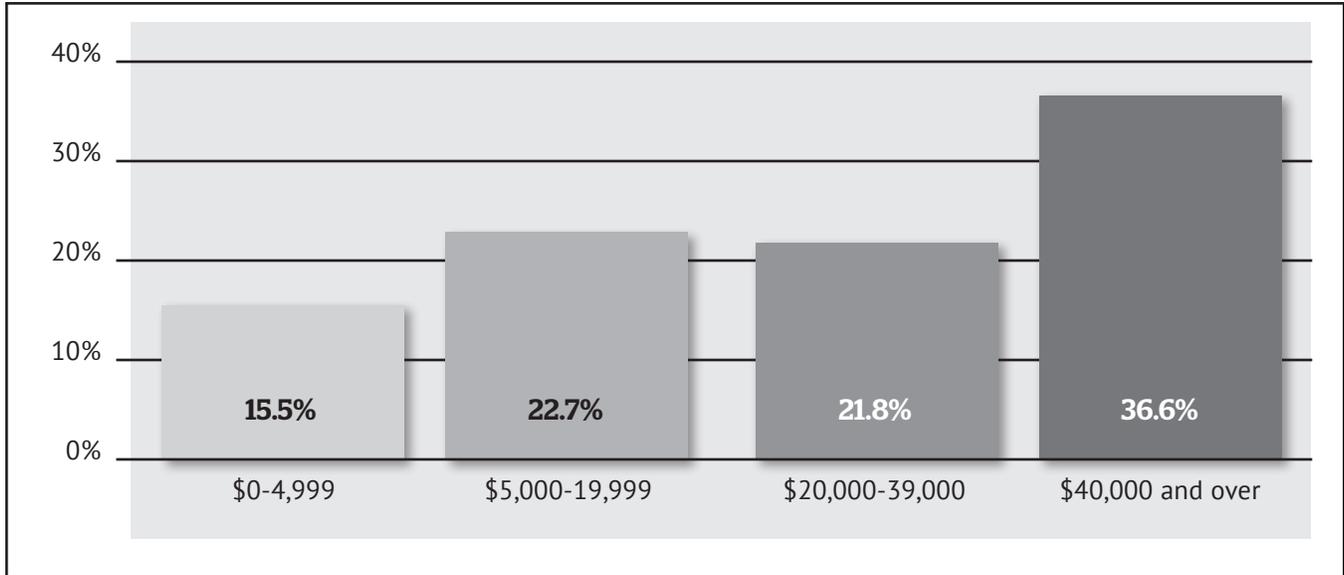
“A disproportionately high number of people with disabilities in Ontario, as in the rest of the country, have no employment earnings. In 2008, 62% of people with disabilities in Ontario reported employment earnings, compared to 86% of people without disabilities. For those who work, average earnings are lower among people with disabilities as compared to the rest of the population. In 2008, the average earnings of people with disabilities in Ontario who are employed was \$37,700, while people without disabilities earned, on average \$45,500.”

Labour Force Activity



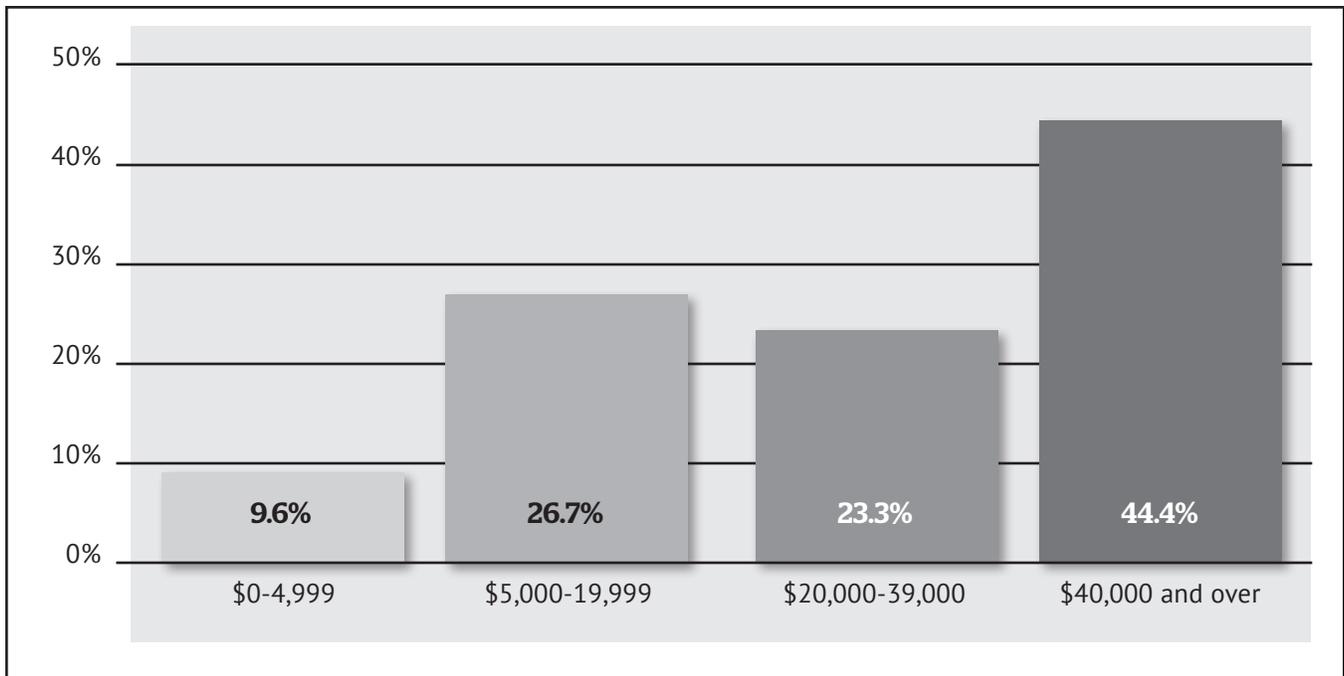
Source: Statistics Canada, 2008. Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 2008

Distribution of Earning for People with Disabilities in Ontario



Source: Statistics Canada, 2008. Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 2008

Distribution of Earning for People without Disabilities in Ontario



Source: Statistics Canada, 2008. Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, 2008

MENTAL HEALTH

When Ontarians are dealing with a physical challenge such as a broken limb they often receive sympathy and understanding from their friends and fellow workers. The same is often not the case for Ontarians dealing with the challenges of mental health. The challenges of mental health should be a serious concern for all Ontarians. In information developed for the recent provincial election, the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Alliance included such alarming statistics as:

- 20% of Ontarians will experience a mental illness or addiction during their lifetime.
- 3% of Ontarians will suffer a severe and persistent disability as a result of their mental illness.
- 80% of adults with a mental health issue experienced their first symptom before age 18.

This last point has been addressed further in the election work of the Ontario Action Network for Child & Youth Mental Health.

- Over a hundred Ontario children and youth kill themselves every year.
- 40% of identified children and youth are not getting the help they need.
- There is no single coordinating body of government responsible for child and youth mental health services.
- For 17 of the past 20 years funding for child and youth mental health services have not increased to match surging demand.

The OFL and some of its affiliates have been involved in the Ontario Action Network to ensure that there is both the political will and the necessary resources to address this important issue.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM (ODSP)

The present social assistance system in Ontario was a creation of the conservative government of Mike Harris. The *Ontario Works Act (OWA)* was proclaimed on May 1, 1998. On June 1, 1998, the *Ontario Disability Support Act (ODSP)* was proclaimed. The purpose of this act is to provide income support for people with disabilities and employment support for people with disabilities who are seeking work. People with disabilities and permanently unemployable people under the *Family Benefits Act* which was repealed were transferred to ODSP.

In their June 2011 *Discussion Paper: Issues and Ideas* the Commission on the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario provided the following portrait of ODSP recipients based on information from November 2010 (unless otherwise noted):

- In March 2011, 391,443 people (or 281,946 cases which means the number of individuals and families) accessed ODSP. This represents 2.9% of the Ontario population.
- 44% of primary applicants (who applies for ODSP either as individual or on behalf of family) have a physical disability, 38% have a mental disability, and 18% have a developmental disability.
- Primary applicants are split almost equally between men and women.
- The average age among primary applicants is 46.
- 35% of ODSP cases live in the GTA; about 7% live in Ottawa; 11% live in Northern Ontario.
- ODSP cases are made up of 77% singles without children, 9% sole-support parents with children, 8% couples without children and 6% couples with children.
- Sole-support parents make up 9% of ODSP cases; 88% of sole-support parents are women.

- Just over half of the children in families receiving ODSP are led by sole-support parents.
- 2% of primary applicants are newcomers who have been in Canada for five years or less. Among newcomers receiving ODSP, refugee claimants and sponsored immigrants represent less than 1% of primary applicants.
- 30% of primary applicants have completed grade 12-13; about 18% have post-secondary education; the remainder has Grade 11 or lower.
- 11% of primary applicants have some earnings from employment.

The ODSP Action Coalition, a provincial organization, has played a valuable role in ensuring that the perspectives of ODSP recipients are heard by the Ontario government.

In September 2009, the ODSP Action Coalition released their *Disability Declaration*. To quote from their June 2011 presentation *Dignity, Adequacy, Inclusion: Rethinking the Ontario Disability Support Program* to the Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario:

“If we were redesigning an income support program for persons with disabilities we would start from these principles:

- persons with disabilities have the right to be treated with dignity;
- income support levels should adequately support the needs of people with disabilities;
- the capacities of persons with disabilities to participate and contribute to economic and civic life should be recognized and nurtured; and
- provincial income support programs should be aligned with other programs and policies of government (provincial and federal) to the greatest extent possible and without disadvantaging the people they are intended to serve.”

This is a position which should be supported by the OFL and the Ontario labour movement.

WORKERS UNDER 30

According to the Canadian Labour Congress, young workers continue to bear the brunt of unemployment in Canada. The release by Statistics Canada of its Labour Force Survey for July 2011 showed that there were 1,351,900 unemployed Canadians in July and the unemployment rate had decreased from 7.4% to 7.2% between June and July. Among 15-24 year olds, unemployment was much higher, at 14.1%. Young workers continue to have an unemployment rate twice the level observed for all Canadians.

The proportion of young workers working part-time also increased significantly during this period – from 46.7% to 47.4%. For this age group, 22,200 full-time jobs were eliminated, while 24,600 part-time jobs were created. Summer students also continue to suffer. Students aged 15-24 – and who are going back to school in the fall – experienced an unemployment rate of 17.4% in July. This is 0.5% higher than July of last year when their unemployment rate was 16.9%.

The American AFL-CIO produced a report entitled **Young Workers: A Lost Decade**, which illustrates that young workers have more trouble than ever getting ahead financially. It is even harder for younger workers of colour, young workers without post secondary education and young women. The chance of securing permanent full-time jobs with benefits is a major worry for one in three young workers.

The Ontario Federation of Labour held “Aggregate Meetings” of all affiliate young worker committees in 2010 and 2011. These meetings came about because of a resolution at the 2009 Convention which called on all affiliates to enable young worker committees to meet together to exchange ideas, discuss challenges they encounter and learn from the experience of other affiliates. These meetings were an important factor in encouraging Young Workers to get involved and share ideas on the future of the Labour Movement in this province.

COPE343

2011 OFL CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 21-25, 2011

