

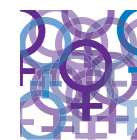
Tips for building a local women's committee:

- Choose one or two target workplaces where women work
- Approach stewards and women members to work together
- Draw up a list of workplace issues important to women members for example, equal pay and family friendly policies
- Organize a lunch-time meeting at women's workplace
- Organize a visit from The Provincial Women's Committee and Equity Committees and Caucuses
- Make sure workplaces are receiving relevant OPSEU publications (In Solidarity, Regional or Local Newsletters)
- Ensure members have basic information about how OPSEU works and contact information for the LEC
- Prominently display information about equity committees and caucuses
- Invite any interested women to an orientation session organized by women to ensure a consistent and clearly inclusive message for all members
- Personally invite members to a Local meeting and make sure equity issues are embedded in the meeting agenda
- Promote education courses of interest to women members and assist members to negotiate time off to attend Local and Regional educationals



OPSEU's Provincial Women's Committee

Building a Better Union



OPSEU
SEFPO
Provincial
Women's
Committee



OPSEU
SEFPO
Provincial
Women's
Committee

Contact:

The OPSEU PWC website:
[www.opseu.org/content/
about-provincial-womens-committee](http://www.opseu.org/content/about-provincial-womens-committee)

Phone:
416.443.8888 or 1.800.268.7376 ext 8790

Mailing address:
c/o Equity Unit, 100 Lesmill Road, Toronto, Ontario M3B 3P8



About the committee

To gain equality and achieve their goals, women must work with and through their unions. History demonstrates that by organizing into unions, working people have achieved better wages, working conditions, benefits, job security, human rights and equity protection.

The OPSEU Constitution guarantees the foundation - A Provincial Women's Committee (PWC). Delegates in each region elect a representative to serve on this committee.

Each union local is also encouraged to set up an active women's committee (LWC). Its job is to highlight issues of particular concern to female OPSEU members.

Committee mandate

The PWC is an advocate for women within the union, and especially at the local level. We often act as advisors, mediators and investigators under OPSEU's Harassment and Discrimination Prevention policy. The PWC also initiates campaigns in the workplace and community for women's rights.

Equality for women and other equity-seeking groups is a central thrust of all our work, both in the workplace and our communities.

PWC events

Biennial OPSEU women's conference

OPSEU and the PWC organize a biennial women's conference. About 150 women from across Ontario and from different sectors of the union are invited to attend this weekend conference which is often full of inspiration, education and debate about women's issues in the labour movement and around the world.

Held over the weekend and in Toronto, the Conference includes guest speakers, entertainment, and educational workshops. Past years' themes have included: Globalization, Women and the Economy, and Food as a Human Right.

Women's breakfast at Convention

Every year around April or May, OPSEU holds an annual Convention where elected members debate and vote on OPSEU's key policies, projects and annual budget.

At the Friday morning at Convention women are invited to attend a breakfast that honours outstanding OPSEU women activists in each region. One woman is also chosen to receive the Bread and Roses award for her overall contribution to the women's movement.

Local women's committee

Listed below are 10 things that a local women's committee can do:

Participation

- Encourage more women to participate in union activities
- Seek out women who will run as stewards and officers
- Identify and dissolve the barriers that block women from participating. This means everyone, including racialized, First Nations, Métis and Inuit women, lesbians, bisexual, transgender/transsexual women, gender variant and disabled women and those with families
- Conduct a social map or survey of the workplace to identify where women are working and issues that are important to them

Education

- Inform members about OPSEU's policy against Harassment and Discrimination.
- Organize educationals at lunch or after work on issues like "bargaining for a family-friendly workplace" or health and safety.
- Identify and inform members of community resources such as resources for survivors of violence, childcare, and community clinics for women

Political Action

- Work with the PWC rep in the region on campaigns and educationals
- Support women in other workplaces and other unions on issues such as sexual harassment and violence; pay equity, gender discrimination in the workplace; and work/life balance
- Develop strategies to encourage your community to support public services

PWC key issues



Pay equity — PWC actively supports the view that it is a fundamental human right of women workers to be paid wages that are free of the systemic gender-based discrimination that values and pays women's work less than men's work of comparable value.

Childcare — The PWC supports the right to universally accessible, high quality, not-for-profit, regulated child care in the province of Ontario.

Women in unions — To obtain changes for women requires significant changes in the workforce. The PWC holds the view that women's collective action, through the labour movement, is key to advancing women's rights overall.

Aboriginal women — The PWC supports a National Inquiry into the more than 1,200 missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

Sex workers — The Committee supports the full decriminalization of sex work.