

Committee Reports

Member Organizing Committee

The purpose of organizing is to bring strength and solidarity to all workers. We will work collectively and effectively, support and encourage, uniting all workers and promoting our Local in order to achieve this purpose.

The Organizing Committee plays a pivotal role in SEIU-West's operations. The only way to increase our strength, power, and influence with employers and in the broader political arenas is to organize new members and increase our membership. Organizing is essential to our ability to improve working conditions and get a better deal for our members.

With this in mind, our committee is committed to building a culture of organizing within SEIU-West that is member-driven and led. We participate in organizing campaigns, and develop policies around all aspects of organizing. In 2019/2020, this work became as important as ever with multiple campaigns, challenges posed by *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, and, of course, the barrier of the COVID-19 pandemic for most of 2020. As the chair of the committee, it is my honour to provide this report on the activities of the committee.

Committee Members:

Jason Monteith
Lois Camacho
Lou-Ellen Murray
Lynette Pinfold
Kate McDaid
Carol Thurston
Neil Colmin (Ex-Officio)

Highlights

- Development and oversight of strategy and tactics in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment; and in reaction to lockdowns and restrictions in conducting face to face meetings.
- Ongoing participating in campaigns including Greenfalls Landing, Spruce Manor, City Centre Bingo, Southwest Homes and Riverbend Crossing.
- New member organizing committee orientation
- Extensive organizing trainings

The Organizing Committee plays a number of roles for the union. Aside from these highlights, we also work to determine the union's approach in organizing campaigns, and specifically when other entities make decisions that affect the organization of our membership. It is an active collaboration with organizing staff to ensure that both the committee and the department are working together to expand our membership. While COVID-19 played a role in reducing the number of committee meetings in 2020/2021, we are happy to announce we are now meeting digitally. The sheer number of external organizing campaigns also limited the number of meetings as new members are the priority of the committee and meetings can come after them.

Committee Development

The Organizing Committee saw a lot of change in 2019/2020.



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Several committee members got a taste for organizing by directly engaging in field work with our staff. Several of us got to participate in the organizing conversations that led to a record organizing year for SEIU-West.

There are also a few fresh member organizers that joined the committee. We are working hard to ensure that our members are prepared to organize workers within the dynamics of the law and do so successfully that will result in yes votes, and continued engagement within SEIU-West. The amount of resources required to acclimate the committee to the realities faced when organizing is endless as every door can be different, and in the era of COVID-19 the door is digital. All organizers must be equipped to manage any situation, including the more hostile encounters.

The organizing committee welcomed Carol Thurston and Kate McDaid to the dynamic world of organizing, and Lois, Terrilyn St.Amour and Jason had the opportunity to experience first-hand some of the challenges workers face when forming a union at their workplace through the several campaigns that were held.

A few members have left the committee either as a personal choice or due to other obligations. Terrilyn St. Amour is one of these members. She is such a capable organizer that helped over 100 families experience the higher wages and better working conditions a union can bring. Their presence on the committee has been cherished and appreciated. Best wishes to Terrilyn on her pursuits.

Neil Colmin, Vice-President of SEIU-West, sits ex-officio for the president on the Member Organizing Committee. Neil has been through the many organizer trainings we offer and always provides helpful input. Neil has been a leader in community organizing and we look forward to continuing that tradition.

