

DECENT WORK OVERVIEW

Decent work is a holistic approach to achieve fair, stable and productive workplaces. Decent work practices improve the quality of life for employees, while also supporting more effective and impactful outcomes for organizations.¹ The nonprofit sector can be a champion of decent work, leading by example, to improve employees' work lives, employment relationships, the work environment, organizational performance, and sector effectiveness.

Decent work in the nonprofit sector encompasses elements such as:

- Employment opportunities
- Fair income
- Health and retirement benefits
- Stable employment
- Opportunities for development and advancement
- Equality and rights at work
- Culture and leadership (inclusive work cultures and effective leaders)

The *ChangeWork* report shed light on the reality of precarious work, lack of access to benefits and pensions, underinvestment in training and development, and uncompetitive wages in the Ontario nonprofit sector. Many organizations focus exclusively on supporting the communities they serve and often little attention is paid to the role of nonprofits *as employers* in supporting the organization's health internally. Trying to meet program demands and balance budgets while also implementing decent work practices is difficult for nonprofits in a resource-scarce environment.

By championing good working conditions, social policies, and other aspects of decent work, however, the **nonprofit sector can lead the way** to ensure supportive work environments for employees and support a healthier and more effective organization and nonprofit sector more broadly. The health of the nonprofit sector as an employer directly impacts the effectiveness of organizations and their ability to meet their goals, missions, and mandates.

1. The decent work campaign is a global initiative that was established by the International Labor Organization (ILO).

SPOTLIGHT: WORKING IN THE SECTOR

Part-time and contract work

Just half the employees have full-time permanent jobs

Small organizations

Over half the organizations with paid staff have fewer than five employees

Significant employer

About one million people are employed in the sector – 14% of Ontario's labour force



ONTARIO NONPROFIT NETWORK

ADVOCATING FOR DECENT WORK

ONN advocates for decent work in the sector. Recent efforts have included:

- Introducing the decent work movement to nonprofit organizations, senior management and boards of directors across sub-sectors and regions in Ontario
- Raising the profile of decent work and influencing policy
- Launched a pension plan for our workforce: an affordable plan that provides retirement income security
- Drawing attention to the importance of pension plans for the sector's workforce. Our *Roadmap for a nonprofit sector pension plan* report outlined recommendations for the design of a pension plan for the nonprofit sector and our task force is working to implement the plan
- Supporting the Toronto Nonprofit Network to co-create *For Public Benefit* recognizes the nonprofit sector's contribution to Toronto's economy and identifies the supporting of decent work practices as a key objective
- The Decent Work for Women project to further explore the challenges and barriers for women working in the nonprofit sector and identify solutions to overcome these issues
- Developing decent work resources and tools for the sector including promising practices for decent work, a decent work charter and checklist to help organizations incorporate decent work

Over the next years, we will continue to work to:

- **Influence public policy:** Analyze legislation through a decent work lens and advocate the benefits of decent work to government, funders and nonprofit organizations
- **Influence decision makers:** Convene funders and boards of directors to discuss and identify their role in supporting decent work
- **Partner with sector leaders and associations:** Dive deep into the benefits and challenges with implementing decent work in various sub-sectors in the nonprofit sector
- **Expand the network:** Grow our decent work network of champions and advocates to speak, serve and educate the sector on decent work
- **Amplify the case for decent work:** Share the learnings of implementing decent work and highlight best practices, resources and champions within and outside of the nonprofit sector

We are grateful to our partner the Atkinson Foundation for its support of the Decent Work project.

Get involved

Our website has many resources: <http://theonncanada.ca/our-work/our-people/decent-work/>

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