



CANADIAN FEDERATION
OF NURSES UNIONS
LA FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE
DES SYNDICATS D'INFIRMIÈRES
ET INFIRMIERS

POSITION STATEMENT

Human Rights and Equity

September 2022

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) promotes and supports human rights and equity for all. We support the principles of human rights as proclaimed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*,¹ the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*² and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which states that “the prohibited grounds of discrimination are race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability, and conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.”³ The CFNU and its members are committed to challenging the obstacles that prevent the actualization of human rights equity and inclusion within communities and workplaces.

The CFNU recognizes and values the importance of the inclusion of the voices of marginalized members who experience historic and systemic discrimination. Historically, labour unions have assisted workers in obtaining fair wages, safe workplaces, gender equality, improved work-life balance and more. Over time, this representation has developed to also provide representation to marginalized groups within unions. Equity is a union issue, and this recognition is an important step to ensuring inclusion. The engagement of workers based on race, ethnicity, sex, gender, gender identity or expression, age, sexuality, ability and indigeneity is integral to the long-term vigour of the Canadian labour movement.

CFNU POSITION

The CFNU is committed to holding equity-seeking caucus groups at our biennial convention and to working with the NEB to continue providing education, raising awareness and taking action on issues of equity and human rights in our organizations. In recognition of the unique composition of nurses' union members, the CFNU will not have a women's caucus at convention, but we remain committed to continuing our work to advance the issue of gender equity in our workplaces and our communities, including through our advocacy for pay equity. Furthermore, in acknowledgment of some of the workplace challenges faced by linguistic minorities, the CFNU will provide an opportunity for Francophones to meet at convention as a caucus. The CFNU will encourage and support all Member Organizations to establish similar processes and policies as the CFNU to ensure representation and inclusion of all members. The CFNU is committed to using the Equity Toolkit and the Cards Against Inequity as learning tools that can prompt discussion and education and encourage engagement.

Furthermore, Member Organizations will be encouraged to participate in Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) working groups/workshops and to promote campaigns developed by the CLC.

Protecting human rights and promoting equity means fighting for people's rights, free of fear and intimidation, and it means building awareness through grassroots and political action. The CFNU stands in solidarity with its members and believes that there is strength in inclusion and representation.

The CFNU and its Member Organizations are committed to opposing discrimination of all forms in our workplaces, in our organizations and in our communities and society, and as such we encourage members to take action and to:

- Promote human rights and equity through membership and staff education and training;
- Promote joint education initiatives with nursing organizations and hospital/health care associations;
- Urge employers to develop or improve anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and procedures;
- Urge employers to identify systemic issues and barriers in the workplace, and develop effective policies and procedures for their elimination;
- Leverage collective bargaining to include or improve human rights goals;
- Develop support mechanisms for individuals experiencing discrimination of any form in the workplace;
- Actively promote greater participation of equity-seeking members in our union activities, and provide leadership development opportunities;
- Use our collective voice to lobby for human rights, equity and inclusion;
- Participate with other groups with similar goals to improve benefits and conditions for disadvantaged people in Canada.

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights – United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

² Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-15.html>

³ Canadian Human Rights Act. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/>