

DECENT WORK CHECKLIST FOR ONTARIO'S NONPROFIT SECTOR

How to use the checklist

Use this as an initial and simple assessment to help you:

- Think about what "decent work practice" looks like for your organization
- Identify areas where you are achieving impressive decent work practices
- Identify areas you would like to improve

Decent work practices are not simply limited to financial rewards and benefits. A major aspect of sustaining a decent work environment is through organizational practices and cultures. And this tool has examples and ideas to put into action!

Ideas from the sector by the sector

The checklist builds upon definitions and dimensions of "Decent Work" developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO). It comes from extensive focus group discussions with front-line and management staff and board members in our local Toronto network of multi-service social-service organizations. Hard and fast industry standards in the area of decent work are not available for the nonprofit sector. Use this tool to create dialogue within your organization, not as a formal evaluation tool.

The reality of implementing decent work in the nonprofit sector

Sector employers are often operating in a climate of competition for scarce resources, funding restraints and other restrictive requirements. Plus, there are other pressures in the general labour market. We recognize there are some barriers to making decent work happen. However, we hope organizations use this tool to better understand some of these barriers restricting their efforts. Let's work together in our networks, and as a sector, to advocate for policy changes that allow us to implement decent work practices more fully.

Who to use this with

Ask an existing staff or union/management committee to carry out the assessment of workplace practices. Or form a "decent work" committee that includes program staff and managers. Then follow up with further planning and action in these areas.

Make the checklist your own

There are 8 areas and 26 indicators. Start with them and feel free to revise and add to them. We know there is no one-size-fits-all template that can reflect the diverse sizes and activities of nonprofit organizations. Share what you add or change- we would love to see how you are using the checklist! Monina Febria, Decent Project Lead at monina@theonnc.ca. This is a work in progress and we welcome your feedback. Thank you for helping to strengthen the sector, and the communities we serve, through decent work! Thank you to Toronto Neighbourhood Centres and other ONN supporters who helped us in developing and testing this checklist.

1) Decent Wages

Fair income is one common aspect of decent work. This involves not only thinking about salaries, but also income security: paid holiday, parental and sick leave, and steady work hours that allow for a predictable income. Support for fair income might mean promoting and adopting "living wage" policies, or other standards that promote income fairness within, and between, workplaces.

- Note: at the time of this document review, Bill 148 - Fair Jobs and Better Workplaces Act was in the legislature for debate so this does not reflect the proposed changes

INDICATOR A: Adequacy of Lowest Paid Positions in your organization	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Government mandated minimum wage (\$11.60/hr as of October 1, 2017)	Basic ✓		
Between \$11.60 and the goal of current "\$15.00 and Fairness" Campaign	Better ✓		
More than \$15.00/hr (e.g. "Living Wage" research has identified \$18.75 as the wage needed to live adequately in the City of Toronto, given current costs of living in our urban setting)	Best ✓		
INDICATOR B: Spread between the lowest and highest wages in your organization	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Highest paid staff are more than 5 times the average wage of lowest paid 10% of your organization's positions	Basic ✓		
Highest paid staff are paid no more than 8 times the average wage of lowest paid 10% of your organization's positions (i.e. at the WageMark proposed ratio see https://www.wagemark.org)	Better ✓		
Highest paid staff are paid less than 8 times the average wage of lowest paid 10% of your organization's positions (i.e. beyond below the 8:1 WageMark proposed ratio see https://www.wagemark.org)	Best ✓		

INDICATOR C: Annual salary increases for staff	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
No salary increases have been granted over the past year	Basic ✓		
A modest salary increase (below cost of living or approx. 2%)	Better ✓		
A salary increase at or above the cost of living	Best ✓		

2) Decent Benefits

In addition to extended benefits (such as holiday pay, parental and sick leave, which are governed by the Employment Standards Act), retirement income security and access to essential healthcare are two of the most central elements of the ILO's social protection pillar to improve the lives of many. These are especially important to the nonprofit sector as a key driver of dignity in the workplace and making our sector an employer of choice.

INDICATOR A: Key Benefits Provided for Full Time Staff	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Those mandated in Ontario's Employment Standards Act (e.g. new items proposed in Bill 148 legislation)	Basic ✓		
Paid sick leave	Better ✓		
Paid holiday time above 4% ESA minimum	Better ✓		
Co-pay (by employer) or sole pay health & dental benefits	Best ✓		
Some kind of employer/employee pension or retirement savings plan	Best ✓		
INDICATOR B: Pro-rated Benefits (or wages in lieu of benefits) Provided for Part-Time Staff	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Those mandated in Ontario's Employment Standards Act	Basic ✓		
Paid sick leave	Better ✓		
Paid holiday time above 4% ESA minimum	Better ✓		
Co-pay (by employer) or sole pay health & dental benefits	Best ✓		
Some kind of employer/employee pension or retirement savings plan	Best ✓		
INDICATOR C: Mental Health Supports	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Staff are provided with mental health days	Basic ✓		
Access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	Better ✓		
Access to supports to ameliorate workplace stresses	Best ✓		

3) Decent Contract Security

There is pressure in the labour market to increase the use of "precarious" part-time and limited-term job contracts to carry out work that used to be done by full-time permanent staff. In some instances, this is done to achieve flexibility, and is a necessary part of some staffing models (e.g. relief and emergency workers). However, this can also be a practice used to avoid the added costs associated with full-time and permanent contracts. The extent to which the nonprofit sector can resist these trends will determine whether or not we can continue to provide good jobs for many people in our workforce.

INDICATOR A: What is the ratio of your part-time to full-time staff positions:	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Part-time staff represent over one-third (33%) of our workforce	Basic ✓		
Part-time staff represent between 20% (one in five positions) to 33% (one in three positions)	Better ✓		
Part-time staff represent less than 20% (one in five positions) of our workforce	Best ✓		
INDICATOR B: Over the past 10 years the ratio of your contract (limited-term) to permanent staff positions has:	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Increased (i.e. there are now a greater number of limited-term or contract positions relative to permanent positions at our agency)	Basic ✓		
Stayed about the same	Better ✓		
Decreased (there are fewer limited-term or contract positions relative to permanent positions)	Best ✓		
INDICATOR C: Do your part-time staff receive increased salary to compensate for the lack of full-time hours?	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
No.	Basic ✓		
Yes, pro-rated benefits or pay in lieu of are added to wages.	Better ✓		
Yes, pro-rated benefits and higher wage levels are provided (e.g. adoption of "living wage" rates).	Best ✓		

INDICATOR D: Which contracts provide job security for project positions?	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Staff working on long term projects are provided one year contracts	Basic ✓		
Staff working on long term projects are provided contracts for duration of project	Better ✓		
Staff working on long term projects are given pathways to permanent employment when possible	Best ✓		

4) Decent Scheduling

Many programs in the nonprofit sector rely upon flexible and on-call scheduling to meet the needs of the people served. At the same time, staff's capacity to plan their non-work activities, attend to personal and family needs and attain a positive work/life balance, depends on having a reasonable capacity to plan ahead. Efforts to provide as much advanced scheduling as possible are critical.

- Note: at the time of this document review, Bill 148 - Fair Jobs and Better Workplaces Act was in the legislature for debate so this does not reflect the proposed changes to scheduling

INDICATOR A: For our program models that require changing shifts and schedules for staff, we set these schedules:	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Weekly	Basic ✓		
Monthly	Better ✓		
Quarterly	Best ✓		
INDICATOR B: For flexible programs, part-time staff can stipulate the days on which they are available to work (this enables them to coordinate with another part-time job, if they wish.)	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
No	Basic ✓		
Sometimes	Better ✓		
Yes, all the time	Best ✓		
INDICATOR C: To support work/life balance staff are allowed flexibility in their schedule, if it does not impact their work activities	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Not at all	Basic ✓		
Sometimes	Better ✓		
Yes	Best ✓		
Frequently/regularly	Best ✓		

5) Decent Opportunities for Advancement

Decent work also means thinking about the opportunities available for training, learning and advancement. This may include formal training and advancement opportunities, and having a workplace and sector culture that is focused on learning and the development of its employees.

INDICATOR A: Professional development and training opportunities are made available to staff, and we seek to spend a percentage of our organization's payroll budget on these opportunities (include PD funds plus time off for training).	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
0.5% of payroll	Basic ✓		
1.0% of payroll	Better ✓		
1.5% of payroll	Best ✓		
INDICATOR B: If you surveyed your staff, what percentage do you think would agree with the statement: "My organization encourages me to take on new challenges and pursue opportunities for advancement within my organization and externally"?	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Less than 40%	Basic ✓		
40% to 70%	Better ✓		
Over 70%	Best ✓		
INDICATOR C: Managers are promoted from within the organization	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Rarely	Basic ✓		
Sometimes	Better ✓		
Frequently	Best ✓		

INDICATOR D: Informal training sessions on various topics are offered in the organization (e.g. brownbag lunch series)	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Rarely	Basic ✓		
Sometimes	Better ✓		
Frequently/regularly	Best ✓		

6) Decent Processes for Resolving Conflicts

An environment where people can express their concerns, participate equally and feel included and safe in the workplace underpins all aspects of decent work. This includes strong employment standards, establishing codes of conduct, developing proactive policies for diversity and inclusion, ensuring the safety of workers, respecting the mental and physical health of employees and ensuring that employees understand they have the right to organize and speak up about workplace concerns.

INDICATOR A: Does your organization have <u>clear, accessible and confidential</u> grievance procedures, policies and practices in place to support staff in addressing and resolving conflicts with co-workers and supervisors?	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
If not unionized: policies are in place, but are not often used or followed in practice.	Basic ✓		
If not unionized: policies are in place, and are regularly used to identify and address conflicts.	Better ✓		
If not unionized: policies are in place, are regularly used, and staff have access to support or third party assistance as part of such processes.	Best ✓		
Under our union collective agreement	Best ✓		
INDICATOR B: Does your organization have policies to ensure the safety of workers? (i.e. case workers are paired when going to high risk clients)	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
There is a policy, but it is rarely followed.	Basic ✓		
There is a policy, but it is sometimes followed.	Better ✓		
There is a policy and it is always followed.	Best ✓		

7) Decent Workplace Culture of Participation

Effective leadership and a participatory work culture are crucial to decent work. The leadership norms and management styles practiced in workplaces impact the ability of workers to sustain their passion and commitment to work, and contribute their ideas and skills to advancing the broader mission of the organization. They also impact the ability of workers to balance work, family and personal time.

INDICATOR A: How many joint worker-management committees does your organization have (e.g. health and safety, advocacy, equity and inclusion, anti-violence)? Note: The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) sets out roles and responsibilities of workplace parties with respect to workplace violence and workplace harassment, including developing and implementing policies and programs and providing information and instruction on these.	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
No worker-management committees	Basic ✓		
One or two committees	Better ✓		
More than two committees (or for smaller organizations, a few committees that cover more than two areas of collaborative organizational planning)	Best ✓		
INDICATOR B: Does your organization have policies that focus on diversity and inclusion?	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
There is no such policy.	Basic ✓		
There is a policy, but it is not always followed.	Better ✓		
There is a policy and it is always followed.	Best ✓		
INDICATOR C: Have you surveyed your staff on issues of workplace culture and work satisfaction?	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
No	Basic ✓		
Yes, but not in the last year	Better ✓		
Yes, within the last year	Best ✓		

INDICATOR D: Does your organization involve/consult staff when developing program/project proposals?	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
Never	Basic ✓		
Sometimes	Better ✓		
Always	Best ✓		

8) Strategies to Promote Decent Work

Nonprofit organizations can face significant structural barriers to providing decent work. These can be a result of program models that require flexible, part-time or casual contracts, or program funders that do not allow their funds to be used for certain costs (e.g. identifying pension contributions as an "ineligible" expense). In the case of government-funded organizations, it is often the result of government restraint and flatlining of program funds for years at a time. Some organizations may be able to overcome aspects of these barriers over time (e.g. organizations do not accept low-wage contracts). However, to make systemic change for government funders include cost of living increases in their allocations, it will take concerted advocacy efforts collectively by our networks and the nonprofit sector as a whole.

INDICATOR A: Our organization has demonstrated some significant achievements to sustain and/or expand decent work practices.	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
We are aware of some good decent work practices in our organization.	Basic ✓		
We have documented case studies of our positive decent work practices, and have shared them with others.	Better ✓		
We are actively engaged in collaborative efforts to promote the importance of decent work, and build our sector's capacity to champion these values and practices.	Best ✓		
INDICATOR B: Our organization is aware of the pressures and challenges we face to sustain or expand decent work practices.	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
We have completed an assessment of our decent work practices (like this one).	Basic ✓		
We have identified key decent work challenges that as an organization we would like to address, and have developed a plan to tackle the ones within our control.	Better ✓		
We have plans to address key challenges within our control, and we are participating in collective efforts to advocate for the systemic changes that would remove some of the barriers our organization faces in providing decent work.	Best ✓		

INDICATOR C: Our organization has been actively speaking with our funders and seeking modifications to restrictions so that we can provide our staff with better wages and benefits.	Rating	Your Organization	Comments
No we have not discussed this issue with funders.	Basic ✓		
Yes we have discussed with funders, but with limited success.	Better ✓		
Yes we have discussed with funders and have been able to get some modifications.	Best ✓		