



October 2020



The Union for Hospitality Workers
in the Greater Toronto Area

Newsletter

Message from President

Dear Local 75 members,

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented effect on our industry. We have been among the fastest and hardest hit, but in the midst of this crisis, we are collectively staying strong and **we will overcome this pandemic**. As the GTA's hospitality workers' union, we are a proud local of 8,000 members **with a diverse leadership** and are a part of UNITE HERE International Union – together we are over 300,000 strong.

So far, we have been able to weather this storm because we have a solid foundation. Through our most recent round of bargaining, we won an industry-leading, city-wide standard – the best contracts in the history of our local and in the hospitality industry. We fought hard to gain unprecedented wage increases, increases to pension and health & welfare contributions, improvements to workloads, increased job security and much more. Although many of our members are laid off at this time, our wage increases are locked in, so no one will miss out once they return to work.

The key priorities for our local include income security for our members, a safe return to work, and the protection of our jobs. We have reached out to government officials at all levels to ensure they are aware of the unique challenges faced by hospitality workers at this time. These actions have proven to influence the measures taken by the government during the crisis. Therefore, we must continue the fight so our industry can recover strong, leaving no hospitality worker behind.



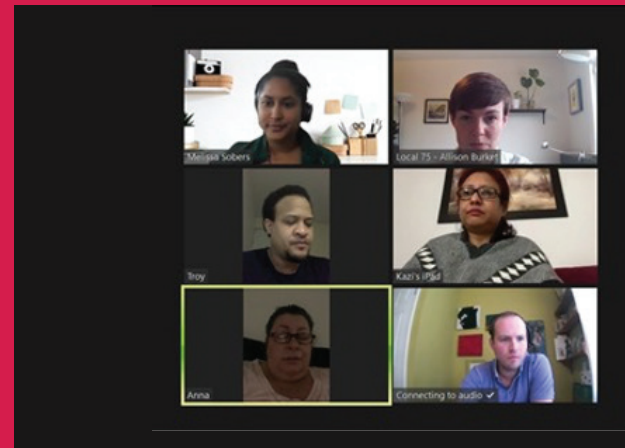
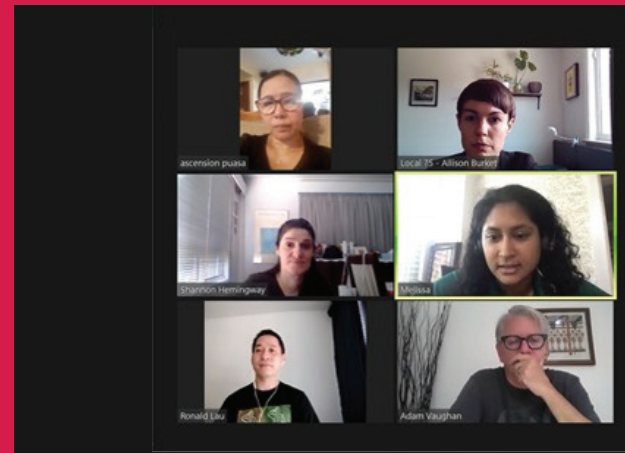
— President Guled Warsame



Local 75 lobbying the government to put workers first

We are committed to ensuring you have income security throughout the pandemic, so we're pushing the government to make that happen! We're meeting with city council members, MPPs and Federal MPs about the concerns of hospitality workers during this pandemic. Our lobbying efforts resulted in:

- CERB extension.
- Extension of the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). We still need to push the government to mandate ALL employers to participate in CEWS for workers that benefit from the program.
- EI improvements.



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Subsidies in steep decline as companies abandon emergency wage relief



Local 75 in the news

As part of our larger campaign to highlight the concerns and hardship of hospitality workers during the pandemic, Local 75 has been repeatedly featured in the news to discuss the needs of our members. Mahbubul Haque and Leonora Mulholland from the Fairmont Royal York discussed the issues of CEWS with the Globe and Mail. Secretary-Treasurer Shelli Sareen was featured on CP24 as she spoke about the importance of Labour Day in the context of Covid-19.



"Just wanted to say how grateful we, at the King Edward Hotel, are for the Hospitality Training Action Centre. As a member of Local 75, I have encouraged fellow members to participate in courses. Many have taken advantage and said how rewarding it was for them."

— Roy Daye, King Edward HotelCentre



Local 75 launches Hospitality Training Action Centre in partnership with the Ontario government

Ontario's Ministry of Labour recognizes our local and gave us funding to launch the Hospitality Training Action Centre (HTA75), a virtual learning platform to support laid off hospitality workers. It provides free resources from experts on financial training, health & safety, digital skills upgrading, and much more. New courses are continuously being designed to ensure our members get the training, advice and information needed to navigate this new landscape of employment.



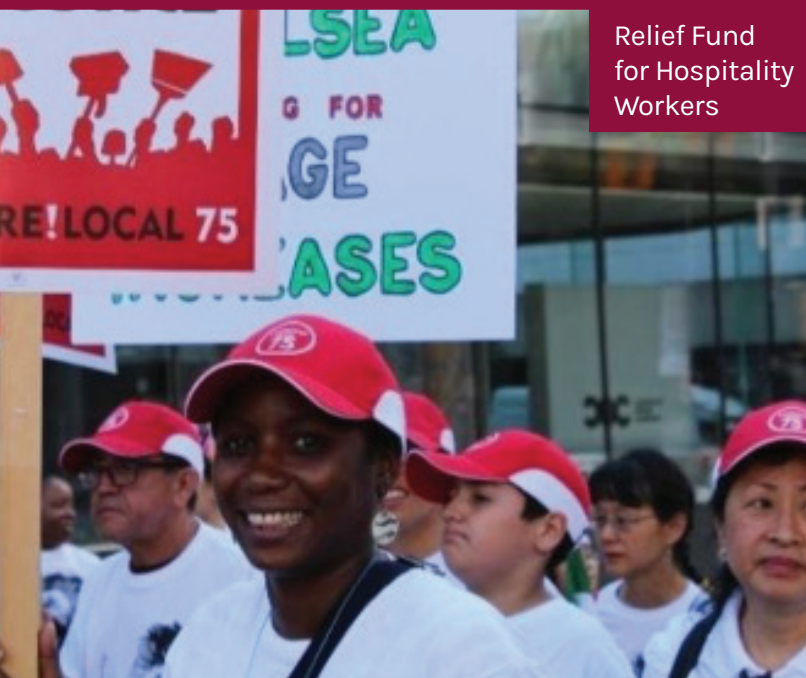
"It's remarkable that we established our own Training Action Centre, exclusively to support Local 75 members, during a pandemic. I've taken a number of courses through HTA 75 and found them to be extremely useful in expanding my skills. I encourage all my brothers and sisters across Local 75 to take advantage of the many resources available to us through HTA 75."

— Yosief Ogbasellasi, Sheraton Centre



Local 75 negotiates continued benefits coverage throughout the pandemic

Our joint union-management Board of Trustees of the UNITE HERE Health and Welfare Plan, which includes Local 75 officers, is working hard to make sure our members and their families enjoy the best coverage in the sector!! Thanks to these efforts, our members have continued coverage of health and welfare benefits throughout the crisis regardless of hours banked. When the pandemic hit, the industry completely shut down, and employer contributions stopped. Because of the increases on employer contributions that we negotiated during bargaining over the years, Local 75 now has one of the best-funded health & welfare coverage plans in the country.



Relief Fund for Hospitality Workers

Local 75 fundraises for hospitality workers hardest hit by the pandemic

Thanks to the generosity of many donors and UNITE HERE International, Local 75 was able to raise over \$70,000 in Hardship funds. This money was distributed to our members and their families who were hardest hit during the pandemic.



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St. Regis workers and members of bargaining committee excited to announce their industry-leading contract!



Fairfield Ratification Vote

More local 75 members secure industry-leading standard during pandemic!

Local 75 was able to secure collective agreements during the pandemic, some achieving even more than the city-wide standard, such as at the St. Regis and One King West. Workers at the St. Regis hotel had fought hard to achieve the standard and become the first St. Regis in all of North America to achieve the use of carts for the Housekeeping department. In August, workers at the Fairfield Inn & Suites officially became members of Local 75 and ratified their first-ever collective agreement, meeting Local 75's standard of enhanced job security language, substantial pension increases, workload reductions and a 14.5% wage increase. Workers at the One King West also just ratified the best deal in the hotel's history!

Local 75 secures extended recall rights

In light of prolonged layoffs due to Covid-19's damaging effect on our industry, Local 75 has managed to negotiate extended recall rights at multiple properties. We are continuing the fight to ensure all hospitality workers have job security through extended recall rights, either through government policy or negotiated agreements.



Local 75 takes action at the Fairmont Royal York

After bringing hundreds of laid off hotel workers back onto the payroll through CEWS, the Fairmont Royal York announced, with less than a week's notice, that it was ceasing its participation in the program to bring back furloughed workers. On September 22nd, right before the Federal government's speech from the throne, the workers banded together with Local 75 members from across the GTA to demand answers from the hotel's owners, the largest of which is Kingsett Capital. This sent a powerful message to both the hotel owners and the government regarding the pitfalls of CEWS and its use in the industry.



Local 75 working hard to make sure we return to work safely

The health and safety of our members is one of our top priorities. We are monitoring the health and safety protocols being practiced at our various properties to ensure workers know their rights and that the return to work is safe for all parties involved.



President
Guled Warsame



**Secretary-
Treasurer**
Shelli Sareen



Vice President
Valrie Lue

Local 75: the strongest hospitality union in the GTA

We fought hard to secure our city-wide standard. Our contracts include additional wage increases of around 3.75%, pension and benefit improvements and other enhancements that are set to take place over the next year or so until our contracts expire. These enhancements will be critical to our members as we start to move towards returning to work following a period of layoffs.

We urge you to stay alert and contact your union organizer if anyone asks you to sign a card supporting another union, which could jeopardize your contract and put a stop to all the upcoming wage increases and other improvements we fought so hard to secure! Jeopardizing your contract with Local 75 means you would have to negotiate a new collective agreement during a time of unprecedented instability, which is not in the best interest of workers under any circumstances.



Stay connected

Stay plugged in to Local 75's mobilizing efforts through text updates, social media and our newsletter to keep up with the latest Local 75 news:



Follow Local 75 on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram:
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Sign up for our online newsletter and text message updates to stay up-to-date at:
uniteherelocal75.org



Local 75 Covid-19 Response Hotline!

Please call the **Toll-free Hotline** at **1 877-354-1616** between **10:00 AM and 3:00 PM** Monday, Wednesday and Friday for questions and assistance.



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