



USW Family & Community Education Fund

Report on 2020-21 Projects

USW **FAMILY & COMMUNITY**
EDUCATION FUND



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Strongest together, no matter the distance

We've always known that Steelworkers are resilient. Our individual and collective strength has been especially apparent this past year as we have collectively struggled through the COVID-19 pandemic, climate disaster, and numerous local and global injustices. In these extraordinarily difficult times, the need to come together has never been clearer. As always, the Family & Community Education Fund (FCEF) has been available to support locals, committees, and area councils in finding creative ways to assist and engage their membership and to build community within our union and beyond. This past year, the FCEF distributed \$504,794.76 to such initiatives.

We were encouraged to see that contributing locals quickly adapted to pandemic-related restrictions and public health guidelines. This past year, the FCEF funded a range of projects like an online webinar series for injured workers in northwestern Ontario, a local's strategic planning retreat in Drummondville, Que., and a drive-through Labour Day celebration in Thompson, Man.! Read on to learn more about these and other dynamic FCEF-funded initiatives from across our union.



Steelworker families



USW in community



Young activists



New activists

About the USW Family & Community Education Fund

The USW Family & Community Education Fund (FCEF) is a grant program created at the 1989 United Steelworkers National Policy Conference. It's funded through locals' dues – hundreds of locals across Canada contribute! The fund pools contributors' resources, resulting in a larger pot of money that contributing locals can access, no matter their membership size. Once a local passes a motion to join the FCEF and contribute 1% of their existing dues, it can begin applying for funds. It's that simple!



The projects

The FCEF funds projects that include an active education component and meet one of our four pillars:

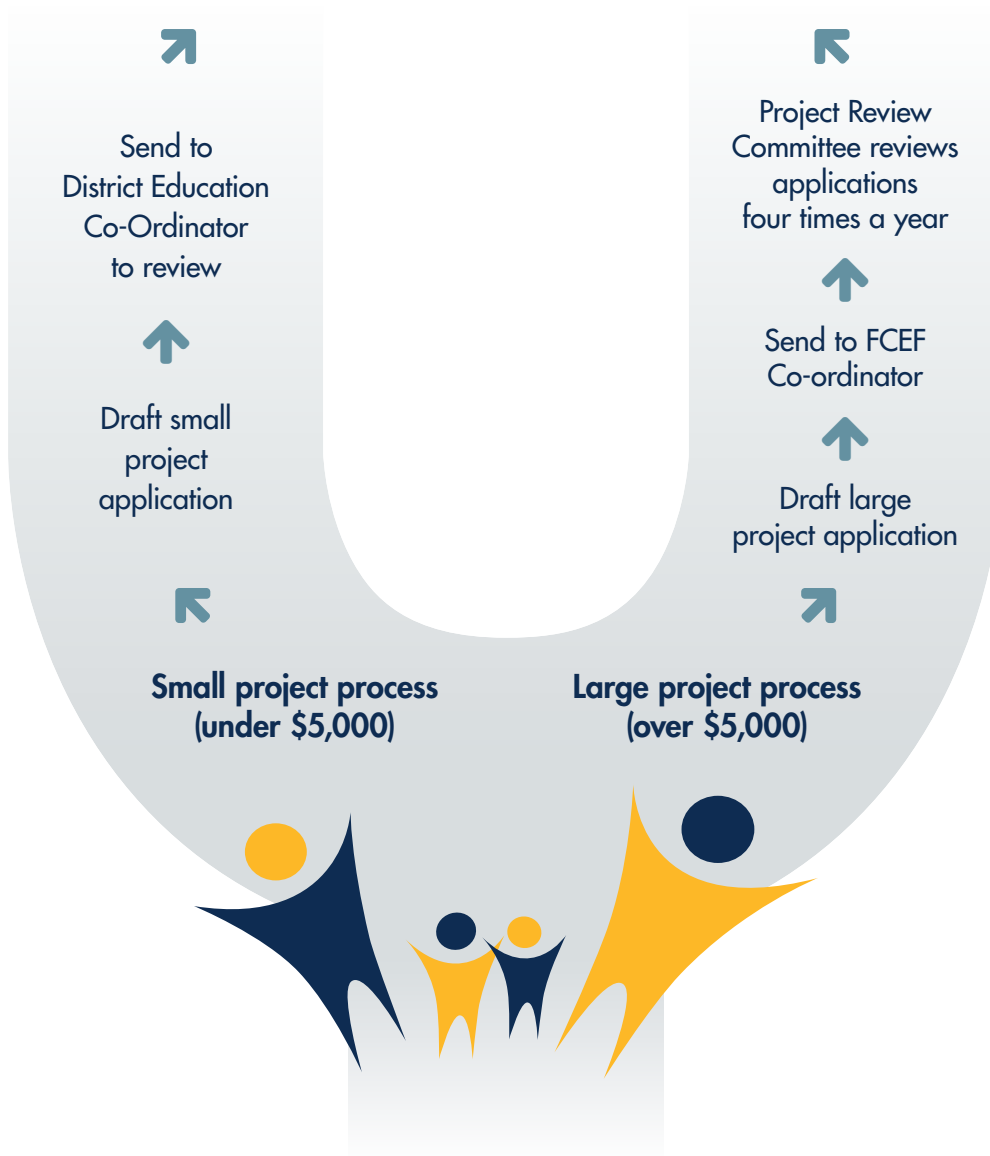
- Supporting Steelworker families
- Promoting USW in the community
- Supporting and engaging young activists
- Supporting and engaging new activists

We require that *active* learning components be included in funded events because we know people learn best by *doing*. Without realizing it, we participate in active learning every day – through dialogue with friends, trivia nights, self-reflection and more. It's not complicated to include an education component in your project submission; just build in a straightforward activity that gets participants engaged and thinking, like a scavenger hunt, Jeopardy! game, or panel with a question-and-answer period. Knowledge is power; as we learn more, we become better unionists, community members and political activists.

The review process

The FCEF funds projects of all sizes and has two review streams. Projects under \$5,000 are sent to their corresponding District Education Co-ordinator for review at any time. Projects costing more than this are reviewed four times per year by a Project Review Committee. The committee is made up of the Administrative Assistant to the National Director, Fund Co-ordinator, and a member representative and Education Co-ordinator from each district. Visit the homepage of the FCEF website for large project deadlines: usw.ca/fcef

Get an answer!



The FCEF's strategic direction is set by its Advisory Committee. It's made up of the FCEF and District Education Co-ordinators as well as representatives from three districts and the USW Canadian National Office. Our 2020 members were: **Warren Luky***, Local 6166, District 3; **Marco Ouellet***, Local 7401, District 5; **Bob Yates***, Local 4610, District 6; **Dayna Sykes***, District 3 Education Co-ordinator; **Maude Raïche***, District 5 Education Co-ordinator; **Jackie Edwards***, District 6 Education Co-ordinator; **Alexandra Eshelman***, Administrative Assistant to the National Director; **Gabriele Simmons***, FCEF Co-ordinator; **Earl Graham**, District 3 Staff Representative; **Guy Gaudette**, District 5 Staff Representative; **Anita Bryan**, District 6 Coordinator; **Mark Rowlinson****, Assistant to the National Director; and **Adriane Paavo**, Department Leader, Education and Equality.

Note: *= also members of the Project Review Committee.

Note: **= retired May 2021, replaced by **Meg Gingrich**, Assistant to the National Director.



"When you look at the FCEF-funded events that Steelworker locals put on, you'll be amazed at the creative ways they're helping members and supporting their wider communities. The FCEF is a help to our districts' locals because it provides money to bolster the good work that so many of our members are already engaged in, so look at the FCEF-funded events your union siblings are hosting and get inspired!"

Bob Yates
Local 4610



"The FCEF is a great national initiative that helps our membership participate in community building and educational activities throughout Canada. The best part is that it allows our locals to host events and celebrate their successes in their own unique ways, while at the same time making connections with the next generation of labour activists."

Warren Luky
Local 6166



"The Education Fund offers financial support to all eligible union locals that want to increase their visibility and maintain close ties with their communities."

Marco Ouellet
Local 7401



FCEF annual highlights



Online-only projects proposed



22 projects funded



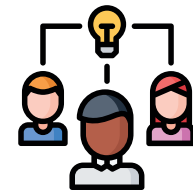
**Family Care Reimbursement Program
removing barriers to participation**



**Locals join the FCEF
USW Local 4120 / USW Local 9548**



**Children and youth
programming**



**Brainstorming tool –
project templates**



**New Fund Co-Ordinator
Gabriele Simmons, USW Local 1998**

Annual highlights

The FCEF has been busy this past year. Here are some major fund milestones:

- End of the open period when any local, contributing or non-contributing, could apply for funding (July 2020)
- First-ever submissions for online-only projects received
- Eric Delparte, first Fund Co-ordinator, returned to his home local to support bargaining and election preparation
- New Fund Co-ordinator hired: Gabriele Simmons, a member of Local 1998
- Call for children and youth education programming proposals released to increase the FCEF's collection of education resources for the youngest Steelworkers
- Family Care Reimbursement Program launched, which reimburses members of contributing locals for family-care costs like child care incurred while attending authorized union events. To learn more, visit page 20 of this report or usw.ca/fcef-care
- Project templates added to FCEF website, to help locals brainstorm event ideas (visit usw.ca/fcef and look for the Project Ideas section)
- Two new local unions joined the fund – welcome, locals 4120 and 9548
- 22 projects funded

A photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The laptop screen is the central focus, displaying a dark blue background with white text. The text is arranged in two paragraphs. The background of the photo is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with windows and some greenery.

Projects

Through extraordinarily difficult times, our members came together to build community, deepen solidarity and learn with one another inside our locals and beyond. This year's projects were especially creative in embracing new ways of gathering (hello, Zoom!). These initiatives' success are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our USW activists and leaders.

The FCEF accepts project submissions year-round from contributors, and multiple submissions from applicants are always welcome. For assistance filling out your application form, reach out to the FCEF Fund Co-ordinator or review the resources on the FCEF website.

Examples of projects from District 3

Local 6166 Labour Day 2021

- Theme areas: Promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists.
- Summer 2021
- Thompson, Man.
- \$4,642
- 400 participants
- In recognition of Labour Day, Local 6166 held a marquee drive-through event with fun trivia games and food. Participants learned about new education legislation in the province and interesting USW facts.

Local 7884 50th anniversary and Labour Day celebration

- Theme areas: Supporting Steelworker families, promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists.
- Summer 2022
- Elkford, B.C.
- \$31,937.50
- 1,000 participants
- Aligning with Labour day 2022, Local 7884 will host a multi-day 50th anniversary celebration of the local and its many accomplishments. Participants will learn more about the USW, the gains made by Local 7884, and more in a fun tradeshow-style exhibition. Community BBQ and bouncy castles included!



Examples of projects from District 5

Sept-Îles region sledding day

- Theme areas: supporting Steelworker families, promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists.
- Winter 2020
- Sept-Îles, Que.
- \$5,000
- 700 participants
- Steelworkers and community members participated in a Family Education Day at a local sledding hill. Participants took part in an educational scavenger hunt, learned more about the work of our union, and wrapped up the day with a bonfire and maple taffy.

Local 7885 strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis

- Theme areas: supporting and engaging new activists.
- 2022
- Drummondville, Que.
- \$10,000
- 20 participants
- The local union executive will gather to strategically plan how best to engage its membership and bargain for workplace improvements for the years to come. Participants will set short- and long-term goals for their units and wider local as well as create evaluation tools to track their successes.



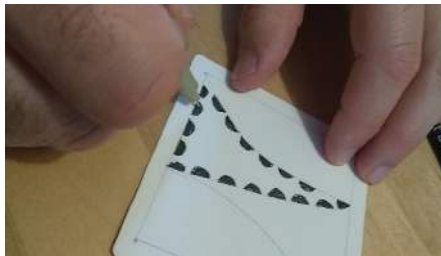
Examples of projects from District 6

Northwestern Ontario Area Council injured worker webinar series

- Theme areas: supporting Steelworker families, promoting USW in the community.
- Fall 2020 – Spring 2021
- Northwestern Ontario
- \$3,000
- 125 participants
- This 30-week online outreach series engaged injured workers from across Northwestern Ontario who are on short- and long-term disability leaves, including Steelworkers. Participants learned about a range of relevant topics and support services and provided peer support to one another.

Local 4120 online beginners' Zentangle program

- Theme areas: supporting Steelworker families.
- Spring 2020
- Guelph, Ont.
- \$5,000
- 125 participants
- Steelworkers and their families met online to take part in a virtual Zentangle class, which taught them a fun, creative and simple drawing activity to help promote their positive mental well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Local 9350 health and wellness programming

- Theme areas: supporting Steelworker families, promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging young activists.
- Spring 2021
- Timmins, Ont.
- \$3,500
- 182 participants
- Steelworkers and their families enjoyed this virtual wellness series teaching them yoga. Alongside community members, USW participants learned gentle stretching and breathing exercises as well as mindfulness techniques on Zoom.

Local 8782 Dream It, Be It, career support for girls online gathering

- Theme areas: supporting Steelworker families, promoting USW in the community, supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists.
- Spring 2021
- Jarvis, Ont.
- \$5,000
- 70 participants
- Teen girls signed up for this virtual day-long gathering that encouraged them to pursue their career goals and reach their full potential. Alongside other female-identifying mentors, Steelworker panelists introduced participants to core topics the USW fights for like workers' rights and reducing workplace harassment.



Local 13173 history project

- Theme areas: supporting Steelworker families, supporting and engaging young activists, supporting and engaging new activists.
- Summer 2021
- Port Hope, Ont.
- \$5,000
- 180 participants
- Local 13173 is 75 years old this year, so its president conducted a research project uncovering its history to share with current members. Past executives were interviewed and their stories will be told at an in-person presentation and celebration post-COVID-19.



Examples of national projects

Be More Than a Bystander

- Theme areas: supporting Steelworker families, promoting USW in the community.
- 2021-2023
- National
- \$333,000
- 5000+ participants
- This national initiative will train spokespeople from within our union to deliver presentations on the realities of gender-based violence. This project is in partnership with the Canadian Football League Players' Association (CFLPA) and the Ending Violence Association of B.C. and will teach individuals how they can be more than bystanders to violence and harassment.





Family Care Reimbursement Program

This year, the FCEF unveiled its Family Care Reimbursement Program, an initiative that reimburses members of contributing locals for the family-care costs (like child care) they incur while attending authorized union events.

Members can claim caregiving fees for the following family members who reside with them: a child under 17 years of age; a person with a disability; and/or an adult who is dependent and requires care. Family-care costs will be reimbursed at a rate of up to \$19.50 per hour for the length of the union meeting/event plus travel time. Overnight care is eligible too!

Taking part in union activities helps members learn new skills, build social networks, and gain experience that can qualify them for new roles in our union and in the workplace. With supports such as the Family Care Reimbursement Program, more Steelworkers will be able to participate more fully in the life of the union, sharing their activism and leadership to improve outcomes for all. When promoting engagement opportunities like membership or committee meetings and/or conferences to your members, let them know about this unique opportunity available to them! For more information, visit the Family Reimbursement Program's webpage: usw.ca/fcef-care

Family Care Reimbursement Program



USW locals must be FCEF contributors



USW members attending meetings or events → apply for family-care cost reimbursement



Apply → claim caregiving costs for family members who live with you:

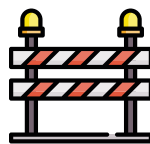
- child under 17 years of age /
- person with a disability /
- adult who is dependent



Up to \$19.50/hour for duration of meeting or event + travel time



Overnight care eligible



Removing barriers to member participation in union events



Opportunities • Learning • Engagement • Leadership • Activism



Union meetings • Conferences • Committee work • Authorized union events

Priorities for 2021

The network of locals who contribute to the Family and Community Education Fund is vast, but not everyone uses the FCEF to its full benefit. This year, we wanted to further expand the fund's outreach to support even more Steelworkers and community members. We also wanted to amplify what the fund can make possible and encourage more locals to begin contributing to the FCEF and accessing its funds.

We realize that some locals may not engage with the fund because of structural barriers like a lack of familiarity or time. We're working hard to reduce these barriers through increased outreach to locals and area councils, by creating resources to aid contributors with developing project applications, and through more active engagement with members and local executives.

Our number-one goal is that every contributing local applies for and makes use of FCEF funds. The FCEF Co-ordinator can help with any and all parts of the application process, from helping to draft applications to helping create fun educational components. Connect with her today!

For more information on how your local union can join the fund or apply for project funding, please visit usw.ca/fcef.



Thanks

It was only in 2019 that the Family and Community Education Fund was reinvigorated, but we've already seen a noticeable increase in its usage and new contributors. Despite an exceptionally challenging year, many locals continued to plan and host events to support their members and maintain connection. We are grateful to those who made these initiatives possible, as well as to those who attended them. Often, we hear from contributing locals that FCEF-funded events attract far more members than things like membership meetings. In running an FCEF event, you've opened the door to a subset of members who might not otherwise have gotten involved in our union. To those who were unable to submit applications to the FCEF this year, we appreciate your role, and your continued participation in the fund. Remitting to the FCEF creates a larger pot of money that contributing locals can access. While you may have not sought funds this past year, you have unlimited opportunities to do so in the future. And, for those whose in-person projects were postponed by the pandemic, our thanks for keeping members safe and contributing to our well-being.

As always, thank you, to the members of our Advisory and Project Review Committees. Your guidance and attention enable the USW to more deeply support our members and communities.

In solidarity,
Gabriele Simmons
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