



**FAMILY &
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
FUND**

**FONDS
D'ÉDUCATION
FAMILIALE &
COMMUNAUTAIRE**

Report on 2025 Projects

About the fund

The USW Family and Community Education Fund (FCEF) is a grant program funded by the dues of local unions *at no extra cost to members*. These remittances are pooled to form a larger pot of money that can be accessed by contributing locals. If your local passes a motion to join the fund and contribute 1% of its gross total dues, you too can begin applying for project funding – just as hundreds of eligible Canadian locals have done. It's that simple! Many local unions already contribute but don't realize – check your monthly dues mailer; if you remit to the Family Education Fund, you're eligible to apply for project funding!



USW National Office

800-234 Eglinton Avenue East
Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K7
416-487-1571

Investing in each other allows us to grow

2025 was the biggest year yet for the Family and Community Education Fund (FCEF). We saw a 28% increase in project applications from 2024 to 2025! This means that more than ever, local union contributors are making use of the FCEF to put on educational, engaging activities for their members, families, and the wider community. From January to December 2025, the FCEF received 77 project submissions.

As always, applicants to the FCEF showed great creativity in their project ideas. District 3's locals 9338 and 7106 led mental health-specific programming that supported northern Manitobans impacted by wildfires. In District 5, NextGen members gathered to develop their activist skills and knowledge. We even saw members of Local 7135 in District 6 take part in the Hamilton Santa Claus Parade to outreach to the community on the advantages of union membership.

In total, we distributed \$1,231,999.15 to locals, committees and area councils that applied for FCEF funding to lead engaging, educational activities. Read on to learn more.



46

funded small
project submissions



25

funded large
project submissions



7

new contributors
plus one new FCEF logo



FAMILY &
COMMUNITY
EDUCATION
FUND

FONDS
D'ÉDUCATION
FAMILIALE &
COMMUNAUTAIRE

\$1,231,999.15

funds distributed



10

Steelworker Summer
participants plus one
program co-ordinator



1

Westray Scholarship
recipient



22

recipients of our new/
young/equity-deserving
activist conference bursaries



2

union events for which the
Family Care Reimbursement
Program was used



The FCEF's conference bursary has been expanded to include *new* activists. We define this as someone who's been a USW member for two years or less and/or who has never attended a USW conference. This means that long-time members are eligible for conference bursaries, so long as they meet at least one of the other criteria: aged 35 and under and/or is a member of an equity-deserving group (e.g. woman; Indigenous person; person living with a disability). This bursary program is only available for USW conferences taking place in Canada.

Project requirements

Projects must meet at least one of the fund's four pillars and include an active educational component to be eligible for funding. The FCEF's pillars are purposefully broad – almost any project idea you have will fall under one!



Worried your event idea isn't educational? Don't stress – the FCEF website contains educational activities you can add to your events, and we've got even more that we can send your way.

Are your members unfamiliar with their collective agreement? Design a trivia game that requires them to flip through it and answer questions!

Hosting a meeting or community event? Invite a guest speaker from a local organization and facilitate a reflective conversation with your members afterwards!

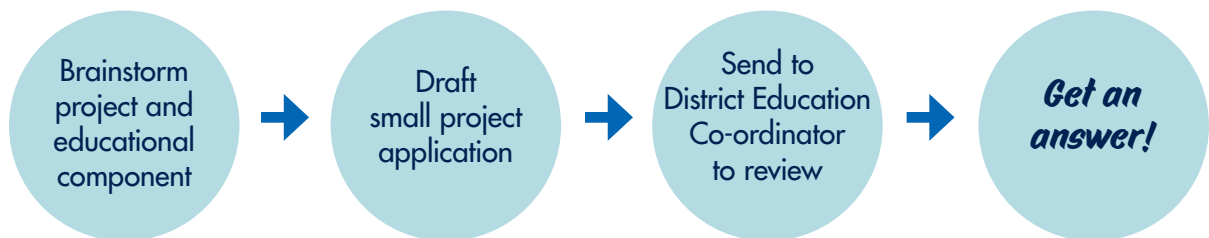
Unsure of how to include education in a family-friendly activity? Request free copies of our union-themed kids' books and read one out loud! usw.ca/add-edu-comp

Project review

The FCEF has two review streams: small and large. The small project cap was expanded at our 2026 Advisory Committee meeting. Now, projects seeking \$7,500 or less are sent to the applicants' corresponding District Education Co-ordinator for review at any time. We don't fund projects retroactively, so please give your Education Co-ordinator enough time to review your submission. Small project applications should be submitted at least two weeks before your event date!

Projects costing more than \$7,500 are reviewed four times per year by a Project Review Committee. The 2026 deadlines for large project submissions are: Feb. 10, April 20, July 28, Oct. 13. Applicants receive project results approximately two-to-three weeks after these dates. Large project deadlines are always posted on the FCEF website at usw.ca/FCEF.

Small project process (**\$7,500 and under**)



Large project process (**over \$7,500**)



Keep track of the FCEF's project deadlines and submit your application early so we have time to review it before your event date! The FCEF will not pay for the purchase of large assets, charitable contributions, or ticketed events. And make sure your project has an active education component and meets one of our four pillars!

A photograph of two children, a boy and a girl, standing at an outdoor event. The boy on the left is wearing a light green hoodie and dark pants, holding a chocolate ice cream cone. The girl on the right is wearing a grey and black hoodie and dark pants, also holding an ice cream cone. They are standing in front of a booth with a blue canopy. On the table in front of them are various items, including a sign that says "Welcome my", a jar of jam, and some boxes. In the background, there are parked cars and trees.

Projects

Because they're more engaging than standard union activities, FCEF applicants report that more members attend FCEF-funded events than would usually attend membership meetings or similar. Read on to learn about some of the unique, member-driven projects we funded in 2025. At this report's time of printing there is no cap on how many project applications contributors can submit annually, nor on the amount of funding applicants can request.

Examples of projects from District 3



High School – Union/Employment Standards Workshop, District 3

*Burnaby, B.C.
March 2025*

\$57,000 | Themes: Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging young activists; Supporting and engaging new activists

To inspire NextGen members and equip them to get out in the community and bring awareness to the value of unionization, District 3 trained young Steelworkers on how to connect with high schools to deliver education on workers' and unions' rights.



Labour Movie Screening and Discussion, Local 5917

*Saskatoon, Sask.
September 2025*

\$1,000 | Themes: Supporting Steelworker families; Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging new activists

Local 5917 rented a movie theatre to air the film *Westray* and host a discussion with labour activists on the occupational health and safety legislation that was borne of the Westray mining disaster.

Examples of projects from District 3



Surrey Pride Festival, Local 2009

*Langley, B.C.
June 2025*

\$5,000 | Themes: Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging young activists; Supporting and engaging new activists

As part of Surrey Pride, members of Local 2009 animated a USW information booth with outreach to community members on the union's activism, including for 2SLGBTQIA+ workers.



Desert Hills Pumpkin Patch, Local 1-417

*Kamloops, B.C.
October 2025*

\$2,329 | Themes: Supporting Steelworker families; Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging young activists; Supporting and engaging new activists

NextGen Committee members from locals 1-417 and 7619 hosted a family-friendly Fall event educating attendees on both labour issues and local community efforts to combat hunger.

Examples of projects from District 5



Operation "Bag of Essentials," District 5

*Que.
March 2025*

\$18,000 | Theme: Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging young activists; Supporting and engaging new activists

District 5's Women of Steel Committee ran a province-wide day of action packing bags of essentials for survivors of domestic violence and educating members on the topic.



50th Anniversary of Local 8284, Local 8284

*Québec City, Que.
June 2025*

\$16,714.16 | Themes: Supporting Steelworker families; Supporting and engaging young activists; Supporting and engaging new activists

Local 8284 hosted an all-day anniversary event for members and their families with an evening dinner and games teaching the union's history.

Examples of projects from District 5



Steelworker Family Day, Local 9344

*Sept-Îles, Que.
July 2025*

\$12,348.96 | Themes: Supporting Steelworker families; Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging young activists; Supporting and engaging new activists

Steelworker families from the Sept-Îles region enjoyed a fun, educational beach day and learned more about union values, USW leadership and the union's structure.



Learning from Others' Conflict, Local 6586

*Contrecoeur, Que.
December 2025*

\$5,000 | Themes: Supporting Steelworker families; Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging young activists

As part of a larger solidarity-themed meal, members of Local 6586 and the wider community participated in a union education quiz on labour disputes and Rio Tinto's recent plant closure, hearing directly from those affected.

Examples of projects from District 6



Grain Days, Local 5481

*Thunder Bay, Ont.
June 2025*

\$800 | Themes: Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging young activists; Supporting and engaging new activists

In recognition of the historical impact of the grain industry in Thunder Bay and the USW's ties to it, members of Local 5481 supported a community event celebrating those who grow, process and transport grain.



CFL Solidarity Event, Local 3505

*Brantford, Ont.
July 2025*

\$3,124 | Themes: Supporting Steelworker families

Steelworker families from Local 3505 participated in union trivia and learned more about their local's history before together attending a Ticats football game.

Examples of projects from District 6



Raising the Bar on Women's Health and Safety, South Central Ontario Area Council, Local 8300

*Cambridge, Ont.
November 2025*

\$5,000 | Themes: Promoting USW in the community; Supporting and engaging new activists

Female USW members from south central Ontario were introduced to the women's health and safety campaign Raising the Bar and learned about supporting those with symptoms of peri-menopause and menopause.



Backpacks for the Homeless, Local 9211

*Hawkesbury, Ont.
December 2025*

\$4,000 | Themes: Promoting USW in the community

As a display of allyship, Women of Steel activists from Local 9211 packed bags for community members experiencing homelessness and learned more about income inequality from a guest speaker.

FCEF Advisory Committee

The FCEF is guided by an Advisory Committee. It includes the FCEF and District Education Co-ordinators as well as representatives from across Canada. As of December 2025, our members were:

District 3

Warren Luky, Local 6166

Dayna Sykes, District Education Co-ordinator

Earl Graham, District 3 Co-ordinator

District 5

Claudia Rioux, Local 9421

Maude Raïche, District Education Co-ordinator

Mélanie Tremblay, D5 FCEF Co-ordinator Assistant

Dany Maltais, District 5 Staff Representative

District 6

Earl Samuel, Local 2784

Amanda Zakhour, District Education Co-ordinator

Anita Bryan, District 6 Co-ordinator

Canadian National Office

Alexandra Eshelman, Administrative Assistant to the National Director

Gabriele Simmons, FCEF Co-ordinator

Meg Gingrich, Assistant to the National Director

Etienne Ayuk, FCEF Support Staff

Note: bolded names = also members of the Project Review Committee.

Each District Education Co-ordinator reviews their district's small project submissions and votes on larger ones. They, along with local union members and national office staff bring their unique perspectives to reviewing applicants' projects.

FCEF resources

We want applicants to feel confident when they apply for funding and report on funded events. That's why the FCEF offers so many resources! The FCEF Co-ordinator is available to present to your local on the fund, help you draft FCEF applications and even assist you with running the educational components at your events. Reach her at fcef@usw.ca. Your District Education Co-ordinator is also a great contact for support.

Visit usw.ca/fcef to find project ideas and a sample project application; educational components; and to learn more about how to use our Family Care Reimbursement Program which reimburses members for family care costs incurred while attending authorized union events.

Doing an activity with or for kids? We've got union-themed children's stories and activity books that we can mail to you at no charge! Send us an email to see our complete collection.





Thanks!

Your continued support of the USW Family and Community Education Fund enhances union solidarity. Thanks to those who have applied for and received money to lead engaging, educational mobilization activities. Thank you also to those who've discussed the FCEF with others – every year, new locals join the fund because of word-of-mouth recommendations! For those who didn't apply for funding this past year, we hope you submit a project application soon. Your local's contributions support our union in running meaningful programs like Steelworker Summer and aid local union contributors in fostering closer ties with their members and the wider community. Remember, we're only a phone call away to support you with a project submission.

To our Advisory and Project Review Committee members, we're grateful for your commitment to bettering the FCEF, its reach and outcomes.

Not yet an FCEF contributor? Pass a motion and join today! Once your dues authorization form is received you can begin applying for funding. Visit our website for the requisite form.

In solidarity,

Gabriele Simmons

USW Family and Community
Education Fund Co-ordinator
fcef@usw.ca
416-544-5989 (office)

**Large project deadlines for
initiatives taking place in 2026 are:**

Feb. 10, April 20, July 28, Oct. 13.

**Requests for projects \$7,500 and under can
be submitted at any time to your district
education co-ordinator.**