



# FIX EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Thousands of us across Canada have lost our jobs. Many of us rely on the Employment Insurance program (EI) to survive during these hard economic times. But over the years the Federal government has weakened the EI program and made it harder for workers to access. And when we do receive EI we struggle to survive on low benefit rates. The EI program is failing us and our families. We need to urge our government to fix the EI program now.

## WE NEED MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE EI PROGRAM

**FACT** Most unemployed workers are in crisis without any income

In Toronto, only 1 in 4 unemployed worker is receiving EI benefits at any given time. With a huge increase in temp, part-time and contract jobs, we need the protection of an EI program now more than ever.

**FACT** The government used our EI fund to pay off their debts

While our benefits were being cut, the EI fund rose to \$57 billion. The government used this fund to pay off their debt and balance the budget (\$54 Billion between 1994 -2007) instead of improving EI benefits. We need the EI surplus to extend EI coverage for those on EI and for those who need it but can't access it. It belongs to us!

**FACT** Women, newcomers and youth are hit hardest by gaps in EI

Women are less likely to qualify and receive EI benefits compared to men, and are more likely to receive lower benefit amounts than men. People new to the labour force need 910 hours to qualify. This is a huge barrier for youth and newcomers. As workers we all pay into the program equally-no one should be left out.

## JOIN OUR FIGHT TO IMPROVE EI. WE CAN DO IT TOGETHER!



A movement is building across the country to pressure the Federal government to fix the EI program so that workers and our families have a real safety net to rely on when we lose our jobs. Find out how you can get involved.

# WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

## QUALIFYING HOURS

**Workers should need only 360 hours to qualify for EI benefits in all regions of Canada.**

Many of us work part-time, contract or temporary jobs and find it hard to get enough hours to qualify for EI. Permanently lower the number of qualifying hours so more of us can access the EI fund.

## MORE WEEKS ON EI

**Increase the number of weeks we can receive EI. All workers should receive at least 50 weeks of EI across Canada.**

And when the unemployment rate goes above 6.5%, we should get an additional year of benefits to help us survive.

## WE NEED A RAISE IN BENEFITS

**Increase benefits to at least 60% of our earnings.**

When times are hard our employer might reduce our hours first. Benefits should be calculated on our 12 best weeks of earnings (within the previous 52 week period), not our last 26 weeks. And when workers receive termination or severance pay our EI benefits should not be affected. Eliminate the two week waiting period – why force us further into financial crisis when we lose our employment?

# TAKE ACTION

**Join our campaign!** Join community organizations, labour groups and individuals from across Canada who are putting pressure on our government to improve the EI program. Check out our local coalition website for more info: [www.goodjobsforall.ca](http://www.goodjobsforall.ca).

**Contact your MP.** Call your MP or attend your MP's summer activities and let them know that the EI program needs major improvements that will benefit many individuals and families in our communities. [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)

**Help spread the word.** Are you interested in helping to get the word out, signing petitions in your community, leafleting with community groups across the city? Contact us and we'll help you get connected!



**Good Jobs for All**  
A COMMUNITY-LABOUR COALITION

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(416) 441-3663  
[www.goodjobsforall.ca](http://www.goodjobsforall.ca)