

# Contracting Out At The City

## Effects On Workers' Health

The Wellesley Institute engages in research, policy and community mobilization to advance population health.

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Contracting Out At The City | Report

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## Introduction

Contracting out jobs is a cost-cutting strategy used by many governments. However, important questions have surfaced about the immediate and longer-term health and social costs for workers whose jobs have changed as a result of outsourcing.

There is limited exploration of what impacts outsourcing may have on workers in public sector settings outside of the health care system. In hospitals and other health care facilities cleaners, housekeepers and other support staff have faced contracting out. Research on the impacts of outsourcing has mainly focused attention on the risks and benefits to the general public, but the research that investigates the impacts of outsourcing on workers reveals negative health outcomes.

The evidence examining the pros and cons of the contracting out of public services has been limited in local discussions. There has been an absence of local evidence, grounded in the experiences of community members in the GTA. As outsourcing and contracting out surface again in municipal discussions in Toronto, this study investigates its impact on workers.

The Wellesley Institute aims to improve health and health equity in the GTA. To broaden the discussion of the pros and cons of contracting out to include health, and to facilitate the development of policies that provide opportunities for good health for all, we aimed to capture the experience of GTA public sector workers who have firsthand experience of contracting out. This qualitative study offers a snapshot of the health and social impacts of contracting out two years after it occurred, from the perspectives of men and women employed as cleaners and housekeepers for the City of Toronto. It provides their insights into the immediate and longer-term health and social impacts of contracting out. It offers the perspectives of those affected, as well as a discussion about extension of this policy both within the City of Toronto, and for other governments.

### Context: Toronto

In Toronto, policy discussions on outsourcing cleaning services in police stations began with an external consultant study in 1997 that estimated \$2.5 million in savings from contracting out (1). An updated report in 2011 by the Toronto Police Services (TPS) Board argued that by contracting out temporary and part-time employees TPS would save an estimated \$1 million annually, due to wage reductions, and stood to save more with gradual staff turnover (2). Changes in the collective agreement in 2012 provided the City with greater scope to contract out.

The City contracted out cleaning services at select police service locations. It awarded a private company a one-year contract with the possibility of renewal for two additional two-year options. Contracted out cleaning services began at 25 TPS locations on March 26, 2012.

A Request for Proposals (RFP) for food services in child care centres was posted in April, 2012. The RFP was for preparing lunches and snacks to be delivered to 21 of the 52 city-operated child care centres. Two subsequent RFPs followed in February 2013 and in May 2014. As a result, catering services at 40 of the 52 city-operated day care centres were contracted out. Unlike the process for the cleaners, the outsourcing of food services in the city-operated day care centres changed the organization of the work at these day care centres. Housekeeping positions were replaced by lower paid Food Service Worker (FSW) positions (see appendix A and B for job descriptions).

All City of Toronto employees affected by these decisions were covered by a collective agreement. They

were either members of the full-time or the part-time bargaining units. As a result, any layoffs that resulted from contracting out were subject to layoff and recall provisions of the collective agreements. Layoff and recall rights are based on seniority; higher seniority workers who are faced with a layoff notice can displace or “bump” lower seniority workers in other positions, within the constraints outlined in the collective agreement. Consequently, layoffs can have a ripple effect beyond the immediate departments that are directly affected.

The contracting out of cleaning work at police stations and housekeeper work at daycares had an impact on cleaners and housekeepers in other work settings across City of Toronto operations. The implementation of the contracting out policy resulted in transitions from permanent and temporary full-time to part-time job status; the bumping of staff with less seniority at work sites throughout the city; and layoffs.

There were 56 employees who received layoff notices as a result of the contracting out of cleaning services at police stations. Of these employees, 15 were permanent cleaners who were redeployed to another location/setting and 41 were temporary full-time cleaners (38 heavy duty and three light duty).<sup>1</sup> Of the 41, 24 transferred to the part-time unit and the three light duty cleaners and 14 heavy duty cleaners were laid off.<sup>2</sup> There were 13 employees who received layoff notices as a result of the decision to contract out housekeeping services. Of these 13 employees, seven were laid off and six found positions with the part-time bargaining unit.<sup>3</sup>

For temporary full-time cleaners and permanent full-time cleaners with less than 10 years of seniority, the contracting out of their work resulted in a move to the part-time bargaining unit<sup>4</sup> or accepting a layoff. A reduction to part-time status meant a loss of guaranteed hours (up to 35 hours per week), a loss of some benefits, and loss of recall rights. Cleaning positions that were contracted out were then filled by cleaners working for a private agency.

The decision to contract out housekeeping services at daycares included work reorganization for the 13 permanent housekeepers affected. Catering was outsourced and food preparation duties were eliminated from the housekeeping role. Catering is now provided by an external company and delivered daily. For the housekeepers this changed job duties and led to a shift in their job classification to Food Service Worker (FSW). FSWs are a lower paid classification within the City structure, requiring fewer skills and less training than housekeepers. As a result, the staff who had been employed as housekeepers and who did not take a layoff saw a reduction in their hourly rate of pay. None of the permanent housekeepers had enough seniority (15 years or more) to be redeployed. Of these 13, seven individuals were laid off with the remaining six still employed by the City of Toronto.<sup>5</sup>

## Our study

We conducted a qualitative study with 18 women and men who were employed as cleaners and

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1 Personal Communication: Nancy Murphy, First Vice President, CUPE Local 79 (November 14, 2014).

2 Of the 17 cleaners, 14 were heavy duty cleaners and 3 were light duty cleaners. See appendix C and D for job descriptions.

3 Personal Communication: Nancy Murphy, First Vice President, CUPE Local 79 (November 14, 2014).

4 If a worker had started with the city through the part time unit they had the option of returning to it. A return to the part time unit would allow the worker to maintain their rate of pay, but they would lose recall rights to a full time position and would move to a different benefits plan.

5 Personal Communication: Nancy Murphy, First Vice President, CUPE Local 79 (November 14, 2014).

housekeepers with the City of Toronto in 2012 and who experienced a change in their job status as a result of outsourcing. Using a grounded-theory approach we conducted interviews with workers to explore the health and social impacts of changes in their work lives as a result of contracting out.

Participants in this research were recruited through community based and labour affiliated organizations (e.g. Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 79) engaging in research and advocacy work related to labour issues. Flyers about the study were shared with key agencies that made the information available to individuals through their professional networks. In addition, participants were encouraged to share information about the study among their social and professional networks to allow for snowball sampling to occur. Snowball sampling is a sampling technique used in qualitative research with typically “hard to reach” populations (3). Upon learning about the study through organizations and/or other cleaners, participants self-identified as interested and willing to participate. All participants gave written informed consent to take part in the study. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Qualitative data management program Nvivo 10 was used for sorting, coding and analysis. Interviews were conducted between December 2013 and August 2014. Ethical approval was received from the Research Ethics Board at Ryerson University (REB No. 2013-273).

The interviews covered the following topics: history of work at the City; changes in employment as a result of outsourcing; current employment situation; work conditions; current physical, mental and economic well-being; changes over the past year in terms of physical, mental and economic well-being; impact of work on relationships, and social and community activities. In addition, basic demographic information was collected on each participant (age, sex, ethnicity and racialized status).

Data analysis involved open coding and focused coding. Our framework for open coding was informed by the topic categories identified in the interview guide (see appendix E) as well as concepts and themes that emerged over the course of the interviews, allowing us to integrate ideas and descriptions based on respondent’s accounts in their own words. In the process of data collection, saturation was met with clear, consistent thematic patterns and concepts sufficient to inform and shape the theoretical analysis.

Two members of the team independently conducted coding. Once the transcripts were coded, we reviewed patterns and observations that emerged through the initial coding, and established a list of focused thematic codes that were then applied (recoding) across the interviews. A second more focused coding allowed us to take these earlier ideas and refine them through a process of sorting and synthesizing into categories that reflect salient themes and give theoretical direction to the analysis. In the process of reviewing, comparing and recoding categories across interviews, patterns and trends surfaced that help to test out and refine the analysis. The process of constructing and refining focused codes allowed us to consider codes and categories as theoretical tools, situating their relationships to one another and constructing analytic units that correspond to specific observations about the conditions, contexts, and consequences for workers as a result of contracting out. Theoretical memos were used to explore these concepts in detail. These constitute the basis for sections discussed in the findings.

In this report we focus on themes that emerged related to changing working conditions, financial insecurity, and the health and social impacts for cleaners and housekeepers affected by the policy of contracting out at the City of Toronto.

## Findings

### Demographics

The majority of participants were current City of Toronto staff and only two individuals were previous City employees who were laid off.<sup>6</sup> A total of 18 individuals were interviewed (14 cleaners and four housekeepers). Participants had, for the most part, established work histories with the City ranging from under one year to 14 years, with an average tenure of eight years. There were more male participants than female, with men accounting for 12 of the 18 participants.<sup>7</sup>

All of the 14 cleaners had been temporary full-time employees, one of the housekeepers was permanent full time and the remaining three housekeeping staff were part time. Two of our participants were workers who had been laid off.

We did not interview anyone who had been laid off and rehired to work for the external contracting company. While participation in the study was open to individuals who had worked for the City and now worked for the private sector, we were unable to recruit individuals with this employment trajectory (see challenges and limitations). As a result, our study offers a piece of the story of the impacts of outsourcing.

The following section details the study's findings and common experiences that came out of the interviews. Interviewees discussed how changes in their working conditions, including changes in seniority, hours, and for some, rates of pay all had impacts on their financial security. Workers talked about the financial strain they faced and the job insecurity they experienced with their new contracts. Discussions around job insecurity led into the final discussion around the health and social impacts of contracting out. Interviewees discussed how changes to benefits entitlements, ongoing job insecurity and financial strain contributed in some way to negative physical and mental health impacts as well as poor social impacts for themselves and their families.

### Changing Working Conditions

Many cleaners and housekeepers affected by contracting out faced limited labour market options. There were significant differences in pay scales, union protection, and benefits between their jobs and equivalent private sector employment (2). Participants spoke of not being able to take a layoff, fearing the economic uncertainty was something they could not afford. In addition, the workers we spoke to had, on average, eight years of seniority working with the city, with some having up to 14 years. Cleaners who chose to accept a part-time position maintained a similar pay scale but were no longer guaranteed hours. For those who received sufficient hours, staying with City employment and its higher pay scales allowed for earnings close previous income levels. However, schedules and hours varied depending on where people worked. Those working in the police stations, for example, reported having more consistent, regular hours, with schedules available in advance. Cleaners in other locations reported more variable schedules, with some changing on a weekly basis or with minimal notice.

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<sup>6</sup> One of these individuals had returned to work for the City and one had taken work with an agency independent of the City of Toronto.

<sup>7</sup> We have limited the demographic characteristics to report on, to ensure that participants' anonymity is as protected as possible.

One heavy duty cleaner spoke about the unsettling nature of working without clear schedules:

We're not guaranteed anything. I mean being a part-time B, they call it flexibility, they call it operational needs, but for us on the frontlines it's very unsettling. Because we don't know from one week to the next where we're going to be, what shift we're going to work, or how many hours we're going to work. It's very unsettling. [Cleaner 6]

For housekeepers the transition to food service worker (FSW) meant a lower wage coupled with fewer hours. This translated into significantly reduced take home pay. This change was significant; for one interviewee it resulted in a cut to her work hours and her biweekly pay by nearly half:

[w]e lost a couple of bucks an hour off our salary, and if I was a housekeeper and I'd worked a full week, I'd be getting 40 hours all week. Now I'm only getting 25 hours... twenty to 25 hours [a week] I guess right now. So the pay cheque, I'm basically getting one week's pay. [Housekeeper 2]

The impact of the reduction in earnings was amplified for some who found themselves essentially "on call," which left them afraid to refuse to take on an unscheduled shift for fear that they would not be called again.

For workers previously employed with temporary full-time status, the shift to part time status included a loss of recall rights and the ability to move from the part time unit to a permanent full-time position. For most workers, the loss of seniority meant a loss of employment security and the loss of opportunity. Individuals with considerable seniority at the city as temporary full-time staff had believed in the past that they were building work histories that could one day translate into a permanent full-time position.<sup>8</sup>

The choice to stay with the City, despite the reduction to part time hours was, for many, influenced by the hope that as full-time staff retired, there could be future employment opportunities for which they would be considered. In reality few participants reported encountering such opportunities over the two year period since contracting out was introduced. In fact, some experienced the shift to part-time status as a career limiting move they had not previously anticipated. One cleaner commented on the challenges he has experienced in trying to move from a part-time position to a more stable, permanent post:

[t]he building I'm at now, management there likes me, the supervisor ...likes me and they think I do a good job.... My supervisor likes me. So I have all these people on board... And they wanted to AR [promote] me to a building operator. And, based on my part-time status, I heard that human resources crushed it because I'm a part-timer, 'cause they would have to convert me back to a full-time job... A full time temporary job, right, so I can't get the job based on me being a part-timer. [Cleaner 10]

The contracting out process transitioned the majority of workers out of temporary full-time status to the part-time unit.<sup>9</sup> With this change they maintained some seniority rights (such as rate of pay) but lost recall rights to the full-time unit.

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8 Section 6 of Article 2 of the collective agreement says that if, following movement into the full time unit, the temporary employee has been continuously employed in the same position for longer than one year, the status of the position will be reviewed with Local 79 and the City and if the position is considered permanent, the position will be posted in accordance with Article 15.

9 Individuals who moved to the part time unit were eligible for this option based on their work history with the city. If an individual began their career at the city in the part time unit, they were eligible to return to this unit.

The possibility of recall to a job within a two year period complicates the decision-making process for laid off workers. The potential for recall within 24 months was discussed most openly by housekeepers. While their jobs were lost in 2012, those who remained on the recall list could not receive their severance pay until after the 24 month period in which they retained recall rights. To maintain the possibility of recall to a previous (or equivalent) position, these staff members were without financial support that typically accompanies the process of being laid off.

In addition to a loss of hours, work settings and work conditions changed for many cleaners. For some, this meant new challenges in meeting the same demands as a full-time job within a framework of fewer hours, and at times with less staff on shift.

While most of the cleaners fared better than the housekeeping staff, with respect to their work conditions, many still felt that they were expected to complete the tasks they used to do as a full-time cleaner within part-time hours and pay. As a result, some employees faced the difficult decision of working extra unpaid hours to reconcile the gap and complete the work, or to leave the work incomplete and face the possible consequences of an unfinished job. The impact of these changing work conditions on workers' well-being came through in many of the interviews.

So take away five temporary fulls, you put in five part-timers, then you reduce their hours to 32, where they originally had this much, you know, eight hours to do it and seven hours, now six, how can you complete a service level agreement...? Where you get more crushed. So now guys are getting stressed, right, you know what I mean...And, you know, the workload's always increasing, always increasing, like the City's always increasing...  
[Cleaner 2]

Complicating the situation for many workers was their commitment to the people and the agencies they served. Cleaners working in the police stations spoke explicitly about the pride they took in their work and the sense of commitment to supporting the work of the police. Although cleaners had lower earnings due to fewer hours, their hourly rate of pay was described as fair or good. Nonetheless, people spoke about the frustration of working close to full-time hours without the recognition and the benefits.

You know, I understand if there's money to be saved everywhere and they've got to do what they've gotta do, but it's just, yeah, the person working beside you is a full time, works 40 hours. They just keep you down a few hours but it's still full time, 35 hours a week is, I mean a lot of people work, it's 32 hours a week and that's 35, that's a regular work week. So they've chose to leave it at 35 and then say you're not full time... [Cleaner 4]

Nonetheless, cleaners working in the police stations believed that they were fortunate compared to others working as cleaners for the city. They benefitted from greater consistency in their schedule, which translated into more stable hours.

They were also conscious of the cleaners working for the outsourced cleaning company and recognized there was a considerable pay and stability gap between them and the outsourced workers. They raised questions about declining standards resulting from the process of contracting out, not necessarily of the workers' job performance but of the company's commitment to meeting city standards for their positions.

For housekeepers, there was a substantive scaling back of duties, which reduced their hours but also raised new issues in meeting the needs of the daycare setting (and client population). With the shift in

roles and responsibilities away from food preparation and towards the distribution of pre-packaged meals for children in the daycare, some housekeepers found themselves working to reconcile recurring mismatches between the meals provided and the needs of children.

Because the hours for the housekeeper position were reduced and the role reconfigured as a food service worker (FSW), workers have little flexibility to respond to such mismatches. With no control over what gets delivered, and with limited inventory,<sup>10</sup> workers need to respond quickly in order to ensure that children's dietary needs are met or wait for more catering to arrive. The participants we spoke to routinely put in extra unpaid time in order to build that comfort zone into their work, anticipating that meal options were limited and that they may need to improvise.

Behind the commitment to getting the job done was a persistent fear among cleaners and housekeepers that the failure to complete tasks within the time allowed could result in further loss of hours (and pay) or lead to a transfer to another even less stable work environment. For many participants this was articulated in contrast to what drew them to work at the city originally: perceived job security and stability. What emerges from the interviews is a recurring sense that cleaners and housekeepers find themselves stuck in a holding pattern, working to adapt to the challenges of a reduced post with little sense of job security, and a sense of few options to reconcile what they see as the problem areas in their employment. The impacts of this are acutely felt on an individual level with ripple effects throughout their life outside of work.

## Financial Strain and Insecurity

The biggest thing is not knowing at any time. If you read the collective agreement a little bit, they can say, well, we don't need you and there's no recourse. There's no recourse, which is an awful way to live your life. That's the biggest thing that sits in the back of my head all day and all day long. [Cleaner 1]

The changes that came with contracting out had impacts beyond the everyday work conditions for cleaners. Most striking was the persistent sense of insecurity that participants expressed and the implications this has for their continued work life with the city, as well as their health and social functioning outside of work.

In their everyday lives, job insecurity has translated into an inability to plan either in the short term or for the future. Depending on the consistency of schedules (which varied among participants), this could compromise their ability to meet routine family obligations (organizing child care pick up or drop off, caring for elderly parents).

The loss of hours and/or a reduced rate of pay meant workers struggled to meet some basic living costs, including paying rent, making car payments, or affording the costs of commuting (which increased substantially for some workers as they were relocated at job sites throughout the GTA). People spoke frequently of not taking vacation time or spending vacation pay for fear that their jobs would abruptly end or they would be faced with unexpected costs.

Financial insecurity also affected workers' ability to plan for the future, limiting the ability to plan for retirement or save for large-scale items. This sense of vulnerability is noteworthy for its persistence over

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<sup>10</sup> Prior to contracting out, there was an onsite food inventory that housekeepers helped to manage. Under the new arrangements in day cares, one meal per registered child is delivered with no leeway to accommodate for preferences.

time. The decision to contract out cleaners and housekeepers was implemented in 2012. Two years later, workers continued to describe their status as one of risk and uncertainty:

I can't book a vacation because I don't know if I'll have a job next week. At any time right now they can come and say we don't need you anymore. [Cleaner 1]

I'm disappointed, like I can't plan anything; I can't save for my future. Like I said, I can't do OMERS.<sup>11</sup> So I don't know what's going to happen to me when it's time to go and I have nothing [Housekeeper 3].

The lack of stability in hours, coupled with the belief that they could lose their jobs at any time, left cleaners and housekeepers in a persistent state of vulnerability. Workers were acutely aware that the change in conditions worked to the advantage of management while placing the workers themselves in a precarious position. The sense of powerlessness is pervasive, as workers note they have been left with no recourse.

I never felt comfortable. You've always got something, like, hanging over your head, thinking about it 'cause you don't know if you're going to be working in two months or not, you know what I mean, leading up to that time. [Cleaner 10]

Any time they want, they can cut [hours]... or we don't need you tomorrow; you stay home. Or on call...going to call me, oh, you come tomorrow four hours, or six hours. Part time is like that. But temporary full time, you have to make eight hours. [Cleaner 3]

The shift from full time to part time has been more than a simple reduction of daily or weekly hours and income. The stability of work life is lost for most. The routine conditions of their jobs in terms of hours are no longer guaranteed. In addition, there are fundamental changes in their benefits earned in terms of vacation, health benefits and pensions. For those workers who moved from the full-time unit to the part-time unit there was less vacation accrual and a lower maximum vacation. There were also reduced pension benefits and slower accrual of pension benefits, which have a major impact on long-term financial security. This change would have the greatest impact for older workers.

## Health and Social Impacts

Fifteen of the participants moved from the full-time bargaining unit to the part-time bargaining unit. This had an immediate and tangible impact on the range, availability and cost of health benefits.<sup>12</sup> Health benefits are mandatory for the full-time unit and are 100 percent paid for by the employer. For the part-time unit health benefits are voluntary and they are cost shared between employees and the employer. The fewer hours the employee works, the larger the share of the benefit costs they have to carry.

## Benefits

For cleaners and housekeepers the health impacts of the contracting out process were initially discussed

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11 The Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) is a pension plan for local government employees across Ontario.

12 See Appendix F for a comparison of the health benefits under the two collective agreements.

in terms of changes to benefits such as vacation, sick days, and health benefit coverage (e.g. prescription drugs, dental coverage, supplementary professional care). Changes to their benefits may also be linked to the changes to the collective agreement in 2012, as well as differences in benefits between the bargaining units.

Interviewees described different experiences with their benefits following changes to the collective agreements and the contracting out of city jobs. To maintain 100 percent employer paid benefits part time workers needed to have worked 512 hours within the previous eight pay periods. To achieve this, a worker would have to average 32 hours a week. Those who maintained this minimum received full benefits, with certain health services delisted or reduced as a result of changes to the 2012 collective agreement. Workers who did not work enough hours to receive full benefits had to share the cost of their benefits through payroll deductions. However, workers did not have an option to opt in or out of benefits in accordance with fluctuations in their hours.

If their hours were reduced due to, for example, schedule changes, statutory holidays, vacation time or sick days, their benefits coverage was reduced and they had to pay the difference to maintain coverage. One interviewee explained:

I could have started paying for my benefits but the hours dipped to 35. So for a start, you know, you generated enough. But then the supervisor at the location cut our hours again to 32 so it was cut even again, so then if I could have benefits fairly at 32, but if the statutory holiday rolled around I would end up having to pay for my benefits because you drop below that minimum. [Cleaner 2]

If workers experienced a temporary reduction in their hours they would have to cover the difference but could return to full coverage after eight weeks of meeting the minimum requirement for hours worked. Due to limited work hours, all of the housekeepers had to cost share the benefits if they were to continue to receive them. The significance of lost or reduced benefits was touched upon repeatedly in the interviews as people lost the security of access to health related benefits; or the cost of these benefits increased. This change in benefit eligibility and costs had an impact on both the employees themselves and their families; amplifying both the costs and consequences of reduced access to benefits.

Contributions to the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS pension plan) are also dependent on how many hours an employee works. Most respondents worked enough hours to pay into the plan, but the reduction in their earnings meant that their pension entitlements and future retirement security was reduced. Alternately, a handful of workers were not working enough hours to contribute to OMERS at all, compromising their future financial security even more.

## **Sick Days**

Workers expressed a range of concerns about taking a day off for health reasons, including not being paid for sick time as a part-timer or being identified as problematic, which could place them at risk of losing hours in the long term.

The fear of being scaled back to even less hours with less stability in their schedules or earnings led workers to work throughout periods of illness and bank any sick time earned, viewing it as financial security that they may need to rely on should more job cuts occur.

Even if workers take unpaid sick time, it affects their hours which, in turn, affects their benefits coverage. There was confusion among some respondents about how many sick days one could take before their benefits were affected. None of the housekeeper respondents said that they were entitled to sick days, making them especially vulnerable. One housekeeper had to make the difficult decision to go for a medical appointment at the expense of one day's pay, while others reported feeling unable to refuse the offer of work even when sick:

If you call me for tomorrow, how [am] I going to say I sick? If you call me tomorrow, maybe no pay I will think. After I have 45 days, something like that. The new job they cancel it. They no give me no more. (Housekeeper 4)

Some interviewees described reduced access to sick time due to scheduling practices where workers were effectively penalized by being removed from the schedule of shifts and not paid for any sick days that they take.

If I'm sick I get paid, right, where I am, 'cause I'm sort of scheduled to work. But if you're working in a facility where you're not truly scheduled to work, it only goes out two weeks so they can just rub you off the schedule and so you're not scheduled anymore so we're not paying you, and that's just... To me that's not the way you do business and then you want people to care and really give, you know, their full work back to you. [Interview 1]

It is in the discussion of benefits, particularly around sick time, that workers emphasized practices that they believe are unfair. The real or perceived risk of penalties, due to taking a sick day, brings to the surface that workers feel vulnerable and disrespected. Even when workers were knowledgeable about the time they were entitled to under the collective agreement, they expressed concern about actually making use of sick days when the situation warranted it. Similar observations surface in relation to vacation time.

## **Vacation**

All of the participants described the difficulties of managing the changes to their vacation entitlements. Temporary full-time workers are allowed to take paid vacation. As per the collective agreement, part-time unit B employees can choose from one of three options for how they want to receive their vacation pay: paid out bi-weekly as part of their paycheque; bank it and receive a lump sum payment semi-annually; or bank it and receive the pay at the time vacation is taken.

At the time of interviewing the housekeepers, they were all on leave because the child care centres were closed for two weeks. Since these workers chose to receive their vacation pay with every pay cheque instead of banking the money, they did not receive any pay during this period. When asked why they chose not to bank the pay for vacation time, many interviewees said they could barely make ends meet due to their reduced paycheques and therefore required the extra vacation pay.

Interviewer: So if you wanted to take vacation at any point would you be able to or...?

Respondent: Well, I can't afford it.

Interviewer: Right. But like if you wanted to take a week off and stay at home would you be able to do that?

Respondent: Yeah, I could apply for a vacation period, a vacation time. They would give it

to me, so long as nobody else has that week... But because I don't have a bank, a vacation bank to draw from, it would be at my own expense. (Housekeeper 4)

Many of the participants expressed hesitation to actually take the time. One heavy-duty cleaner did not have a set schedule but received a bi-weekly schedule in advance. He said that if he were to take vacation, he would be worried about having a job to return to the following week and did not want to leave with that risk. There was also some confusion about the amount of vacation time people are entitled to take. While most respondents said that they could take two weeks off, others were not so sure and answers ranged from eight days to three weeks. One respondent did not even know if he was entitled to any vacation days.

I was aware that after nine years I will be able to get a four-week holiday, and now I don't know. I must have holidays, but I'm not aware of it. (Cleaner 9)

These uncertainties are important to note because they suggest a climate in which workers are somewhat uncomfortable checking and confirming the time that they are entitled to under their collective agreement, as well as a real reluctance to take vacation time earned.

In addition to the financial implications of taking a vacation, respondents described ripple effects in their personal life and their ability to spend time with family members.

## **Mental Health**

Outside of health benefits, the health impacts of job insecurity are most clearly and consistently discussed by participants in terms of their ongoing mental health. All of the 18 men and women interviewed spoke of increased mental health issues as a result of the contracting out process. Initially people spoke of their reactions to their initial layoff notice as being one of shock; calling to mind periods of crying and shaking. Participants attributed these reactions to the stress of their environment, the changes that their jobs were undergoing, and the uncertainty they were experiencing moving forward.

Over time these immediate responses have given way to a more generalized and persistent sense of anxiety and, for some, depression. Two years later participants used the language of stress, anxiety and depression to describe their present day experiences. For most this was connected to an ongoing fear or dread of job loss. People reported ongoing nervousness and worry about their futures and what one respondent called "the sense of the unknown" that has had an immediate effect on their daily activities, disrupting sleep patterns and contributing to a sense of emotional or psychological burn out.

I feel lots of anxiety. There's nights I can't get to sleep. 'Cause you're constantly thinking what's your next move, what's your next ... you know, you're trying to think, what am I going to do next. So you get this anxiety sometimes where you can't sleep. And I'm sure all of my co-workers think that. [Cleaner 8]

Others linked their stress to the additional financial burdens of lower incomes, and the extra work that they felt pressure to do, effectively completing the tasks of a full-time worker within a part-time schedule. Further intensifying anxiety for some is their uneasiness around taking time off, either for illness or even for breaks during their shifts. At the same time, workers reported more intense physical health needs, many of which they attributed to stress. High blood pressure, skin rashes and headaches were all raised by participants and linked in explicit ways to feelings of pressure and anxiety around their jobs. For one participant recently diagnosed with diabetes, the ability to successfully manage his disease was negatively

affected by the ongoing uncertainty and pressure he felt in his job:

And in this time that we got this layoff my health failed a little bit in the sense that I was diagnosed as diabetic, okay? And 'til this day it still affects me. My readings are high constantly. And I can't get them at an even keel... The way sugar works, your reading... If you're --under pressure, you feel nervous; it keeps ... it goes high... No matter ... on my medication. I've watched my diet, I've lost lots of weight and still I can't get my readings to be... 'cause I'm always nervous. Always ... you don't know the unknown. [Cleaner 8]

The sense of powerlessness and uncertainty that people describe in their interviews goes beyond their work life and is described by participants as impacting their home lives and life in their communities. One cleaner noted:

The way it works with family; if you are doing fine, your family are going to be fine and if you are having issues, your family is going to feel it too.

The impacts of outsourcing on families are first noted with shifting schedules, which for many staff means complications in ensuring drop off and pick up of children at school and at daycare. For parents the costs associated with hobbies and extracurricular activities raise new financial concerns; parents must consider where they can compromise while trying to support their children's interests. Others struggled with covering the costs associated with caring for elderly family members. In a practical sense the inevitable costs associated with raising children or caring for sick or elderly family members requires workers to continue working while sick and remain vigilant about putting in enough hours to secure benefits coverage. With lower earnings, workers reported having to cut back or compromise on shared social events including public or religious holidays and celebrations with family and friends.

Well I can't do most of the things that I want to do in life. So that affects the social life and when things like Christmas comes around, I can't do anything. So that's to me emotionally frustrating; you feel crappy that you can't do anything with anybody. (Housekeeper 3)

For others holidays were another reminder of their powerlessness in planning for time with friends and family:

When you have family time together, like, holidays where you spend with your family, my constant battle with my wife is, "we don't know when you're going to work and when you're not going to work." 'Cause you have Christmas, holidays and stuff like that. They never can plan something, a party, or we're going to a wedding or something like that 'cause my schedule's unknown. [Cleaner 10]

The mental health pressures articulated around the stress and strain of workers' positions and working conditions are both understandable and a cause for concern. Two years after contracting out, the uncertainties of work life are a persistent source of strain.

## Discussion

In our qualitative study we heard from 18 men and women whose jobs were affected by the introduction of policies to contract out services by the City of Toronto. For individuals whose jobs were affected by the policies of contracting out and outsourcing, the health and social impacts are noteworthy. Job insecurity

fuels a persistent sense of uncertainty and powerlessness in the lives of these workers two years following the implementation of this policy. Many of the patterns we have observed in our small qualitative study are well supported by existing research on outsourcing and on work and health more broadly.

## **Changing Working Conditions**

In one of the few systematic reviews of the impacts of contracting out, Vrangbaek and colleagues (4) consider both positive and negative effects for employees internationally. While they are able to document both positive and negative effects, negative impacts dominate, including poorer work conditions, decreased salaries (and reductions in benefits and entitlements) as well as reduced job satisfaction for workers whose jobs have been contracted out.

In the studies focusing specifically on cleaning staff in public sector jobs in Canada and the UK, contracting out results in reduced hours, inferior cleaning materials, high turnover resulting in understaffing and inadequate training programs and inexperienced staff, and poorly cleaned facilities. Research with hospital housekeepers and other support staff provides evidence of a deterioration in working conditions, including many of those elements well-documented in the wider outsourcing research (an intensification of work duties, understaffing, high employee turnover) (5, 6). In addition, following outsourcing, workers reported difficulties making ends meet, struggling to pay bills and often resorting to working multiple jobs (7).

Research on cleaners and contracting out in British Columbia, where cleaning in the health care sector has been mostly outsourced, shows pay rates for newly privatized workers dropped to 26 percent below the national average (8). For workers with dependents, reduced wages and hours resulted in difficulties covering living costs, especially when it came to paying rent (8). As a result, as many as 30 percent needed to take on more than one job resulting in negative health impacts and reduced family time.

Subsequent research on the outsourcing of hospital support jobs in Vancouver saw a dramatic reduction in salary and benefits as a result of the introduction of outsourcing (7). Support workers who had been laid off and then rehired by the contracting company saw their wages fall by nearly half (4).

More recently, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) used census level data to look at the discrepancies that emerge when comparing public sector cleaners and cleaners working in the private sector. Their analyses demonstrate that earnings for cleaners in the private sector are lower than those in the public sector, ranging from 14 percent lower to 35 percent lower, depending on the level of specialization of the cleaner position (2). It has been suggested that the changes to cleaner positions internationally have created a shift from low skilled jobs that provide a livable wage to undervalued jobs in which work duties have intensified (9, 10).

The contracting out of cleaners' jobs brought to the forefront the issue of fair wage policies and an interest in the social impacts of lower wage jobs at the City of Toronto. After the Toronto city council's discussion on the impact of contracting out cleaning jobs in 2012, the City took steps to reduce negative impacts of contracting out on workers. Several policy changes were made. The City's Fair Wage Schedule was updated in 2013 to reflect prevailing market rates. This meant hourly rates of \$12.43 and \$14.10 for light duty and heavy duty cleaners, respectively. City council also directed that the Fair Wage Schedule was to be revised every three years. This was a change from previous ad hoc policies on increasing rates; the rates had not been increased since 2003/04.

The policy changes further revised requirements for companies bidding for City custodial services contracts in order to enhance job quality for those working for contractors. During the RFP process proponents must provide information that confirms their membership and certification with specific industrial standards organizations; a statutory declaration that confirms their compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act; and copies of their health and safety policies. The successful bidder must also receive City of Toronto site-specific certification within six months of beginning the contract and must complete vulnerable sector screening checks as required.

Finally, city council directed Social Development, Finance and Administration staff to report on a job quality assessment tool that includes a living wage standard and considers skills and training opportunities, working conditions and other determinants of job quality. The report is expected to go to city council in 2015.

Our research gives a sense of the working conditions and vulnerabilities that emerge for workers who for the most part remain within the public system. While we are unable to comment on the experiences of individuals who work for private sector firms, we know from the considerable and growing body of health and social research that public sector workers benefit from better working conditions, marked by greater stability and living wages.

Still even for these workers there is a notable decline in their working conditions following contracting out. They are faced with unstable schedules, more compressed demands in terms of duties (less time, but the same amount of work), and a lack of opportunity moving forward. For the housekeepers, the shift in conditions is more severe, evidenced by a transition of their role to FSW status accompanied by a loss of hours and a decline in pay.

Together these adjustments to working conditions introduce a climate of instability and precariousness that workers had not experienced in public sector employment. The participants who took part in our research experienced a clear and pervasive sense of job insecurity more than two years after the introduction of a policy of contracting out. These longer-term impacts of contracting out have been under-examined in existing health research.

## Health and Social Impacts

The literature on the health and social impacts of contracting out has focused heavily on the health implications for others (the general public), rather than for the workers themselves; for example, research has focused on the potential links between the outsourcing of cleanings and housekeeping, and the decline in the quality and maintenance of cleaning and the rise of new infections, including MRSA and other nosocomial infections (7, 11, 12).<sup>13</sup>

The physical demands of the work for cleaners in health care settings has been raised as an occupational health and safety issue that may be more pronounced in the aftermath of contracting out. Stinson and Cohen (8) note that hospital cleaners and support staff reported substantial physical demands associated

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13 In British Columbia, the Center for Disease Control has cited the insufficient training offered to contract cleaners as an important factor in the rise of *C. difficile* infections. While in Scotland, fears of a relationship between outsourcing and the rise of HAIs led the Scottish Parliament to the decision to ban the practice of contracting out of cleaning and catering services in hospitals, cited in Zuberi D. *Cleaning Up. How Hospital Outsourcing is Hurting Workers and Endangering Patients*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press; 2013.

with the work that put them at risk for injuries as well as illness. These workers are responsible for cleaning up a range of hospital facilities including operating rooms, patient rooms, and washrooms, and may come into contact with bacteria and bodily fluids. Prior to contracting out of these services, public sector workers in British Columbia routinely underwent specialized training. However, studies conducted since contracting out identified that speed in completing tasks was often prioritized over safety (8) and training was condensed or compromised due to time constraints or staff shortages (6, 7) ultimately increasing risks for workers. These studies point to increasingly challenging work conditions with growing physical risks for these workers (6, 8, 12), including exhaustion, high stress, work related injuries and illnesses.

While limited, the research on the health experiences of workers whose jobs have been contracted out suggests that cleaners' positions may exact a heavy wear and tear on employees' health, marked by high levels of injury (including repetitive strain injuries) and musculoskeletal disorders (7, 9). Importantly, such research begins to give a sense of the physical aspects of this work, which become amplified in the context of intensified work conditions, chronic understaffing and high staff turnover.

Mental health symptoms are also reported with complaints of emotional strain and distress, in addition to anxiety and depression. In their study of housekeeping and food service workers in British Columbia, Stinson and colleagues (8) report declining emotional well-being evidenced by self-reported depression, anxiety, powerlessness and anger about the changes in working conditions following the contracting out process. Ferrie and colleagues (13) offer similar observations and note a rise in the use of primary health care services to address minor psychiatric issues. Workers who have gone through a contracting out process also perceive greater job insecurity, stress and vulnerability as a result of the outsourcing process (4, 5).

What characterizes job insecurity is a pervasive and continued sense of uncertainty about the future and perceived powerlessness (14). New research emerging from the United States points to the alarming health burden that job insecurity can create for workers. In contrast to individuals who lose their positions, people who remain employed but believe themselves to be at risk for job loss report worse health outcomes than those workers in secure employment (15). The international literature on job insecurity and health is extensive and unambiguous; there are clear, adverse health outcomes associated with job insecurity (16, 17). In particular some critical trends and observations are worth highlighting.

In the short term there can be a range of reactions across a spectrum of emotional, physiological and behavioral responses. Research has documented increased psychiatric morbidity, particularly following situations such as privatization(13), outsourcing and contracting out (18). Symptoms include self-reported stress, anxiety and depression, as well as psychosomatic complaints, along with a diminished sense of well being and life satisfaction and an increased use of medical consultations (13, 14, 16). Similar observations are noted for workers who survive job losses during periods of economic recession (19).

There is a growing body of work that goes beyond the impacts of job insecurity and financial strain on individual physical and mental health to also investigate other ripple effects of contracting out on people's day-to-day lives. When individuals are experiencing pervasive job insecurity they may be less likely to create clear boundaries between their home and work life; consumed by fears of job loss, they are more likely to believe that they "cannot afford to have a life" (20). In addition, health and wellness initiatives for employees are less likely to be used by those individuals who are feeling the stress and strain of job insecurity and the failure to draw on support mechanisms may actually exacerbate the level of work-related stress experienced by those individuals.

In such scenarios workers are more likely to continue to work despite experiencing ill health (21). This type of work behaviour is described in the literature and in our research as linked to job insecurity. Workers in our study express two primary concerns related to taking sick time: that they would not be covered financially if they took a sick day, and/or that they would be penalized if they did take time off, losing shifts in upcoming schedules.

These trends in the research literature on job insecurity echo our findings in this brief qualitative study. What this evidence points to is an added dimension of precariousness that we believe needs greater attention. In our sample of cleaners and housekeepers what emerges is a new vulnerability. These public sector jobs have been transformed from secure, permanent and full time positions to jobs that display the signs of “permanent temporariness” common to contingent work (22, 23).

While there is limited evidence on the health impacts of contracting out, there is a growing body of health and social policy research on the rise of precarious employment in Canada. The Poverty and Economic Precarity in Southern Ontario (PEPSO) study helps to illustrate new forms of precarity and the adverse affects of precarious employment on health and well-being, including employment strain, increased stress and limited community participation (24). Lewchuck and colleagues (25), in a study of 404 workers in Toronto, showed a complex association between work and health, in which elements of the employment relationship and household insecurity contributed to varying health outcomes. For example, contract workers from various sectors in the city reported poorer overall health than full time wage earners despite being marginally younger and better educated – both conditions that normally result in better health outcomes. This research helps to highlight the complicated relationship between work and health for people across job categories.

Our study contributes to this work by taking a closer look at public sector jobs that have been affected by outsourcing. Public sector jobs have, traditionally, been viewed as more secure and less precarious, benefitting from greater stability and protections. The invisibility of job insecurity for some workers makes it a challenging form of precarious work, not easily identified and not easily addressed through institutional policies and practices (26). In addition there may be distinctive forms of insecurity that surface for sub-groups of precarious workers based on gender, racialized group and ethnicity, or demographic characteristics such as age.

In light of the range of work trajectories that contracting out can introduce, these workers comprise a group that has maintained employment with the City, which includes fair wage policies and a unionized setting.<sup>14</sup> The job insecurity that our participants report is striking – in part due to its continued existence two years after the introduction of the outsourcing policy at the city of Toronto.

## Challenges and Limitations

This brief qualitative study helps to shed light on the experiences of men and women whose jobs were affected by the decision to outsource City of Toronto services. While we believe that this data offers insights into the health and social impacts of contracting out, there are challenges and limitations that warrant highlighting.

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<sup>14</sup> The only person in our study who was not currently working for the City found employment in a unionized setting outside of city-operated services.

Our sample reflects a small convenience sample and we are mindful that it is limited. We would encourage further research and assessment of this policy. This should include strong representation from a cross-section of participants. For individuals who make up the cleaning, housekeeping and food service worker workforce, we would encourage strong representation from women, individuals from immigrant populations, and other key demographic characteristics such as age.

People who are currently experiencing job instability due to outsourcing and contracting out may be considered a hard to reach population. Recruitment in our study was restricted to those individuals who willingly volunteered. These were individuals who were more likely to be engaged with labour organizations and/or currently working for the City of Toronto. We were made aware in the process of recruitment that some people who had volunteered to publicly discuss their stories via YouTube videos, as part of the The Justice and Dignity for Cleaners Campaign (11), experienced repercussions in their work life. We learned from participants that other cleaners were hesitant to be part of our study for fear that we would require them to be part of a video, sharing their personal stories. Despite our efforts to allay any concerns, we are aware that our participants may reflect a particular subset of those affected by contracting out. Those who were fearful or reticent about taking part may have been vulnerable in different ways, or alternately, they may have felt little or no impacts related to contracting out.

We were limited in our ability to access workers who had been laid off and did not find other work with the City. As a result we are left with many unanswered questions about the range of work trajectories for cleaners and housekeepers after their employment with the City. None of our participants were laid off from the city and then hired by the contracted out firms, a pattern common in studies of other public sector employees who have been affected by contracting out. We are also unable to comment on the experiences of workers who were hired by the external contractor but did not have a work history with the City prior to the introduction of the contracting out. The boundaries of our research design meant that we were restricted to individuals who had been working for the City in 2012 and whose jobs were affected by the policy of contracting out. Future studies with a broader study design and recruitment strategy could conduct comparative analyses of those who worked for the City and those who worked for the private contractors who took on this work.

During the study it came to light that cleaning staff working with one company who had won a contract had unionized in an effort to address working conditions and wages (27). However, we are unable to offer commentary on the health and social impacts related to their employment or the policy of contracting out.

Finally, this study is a first step in exploring the impacts of a municipal policy of outsourcing on public sector employees. We did not conduct a survey/inventory of health and social experiences and symptoms. A brief assessment would be advised for inclusion in the Quality Jobs Assessment proposed by the City of Toronto to analyze the physical and mental health risks of future outsourcing or contracting out, as well as an examination of the social determinants of health that intersect with work/life experiences. In addition, a multifaceted approach to research moving forward is advised, drawing upon multiple research methods to ensure a comprehensive assessment and analysis of work practices in action.

## Conclusions

Outsourcing or contracting out has been introduced as a policy that can reduce costs and create efficiencies within the public sector through reductions of staff costs and a more flexible mix of staffing. Our brief qualitative study of workers whose jobs were affected by contracting out in Toronto in 2012 has presented a number of negative impacts. For workers in our study, the policy of contracting out brought a greater sense of insecurity to their work lives at the City of Toronto. An aspect of greater insecurity that these workers experienced was one that has not been explored in the research literature on contracting out. Despite maintaining public sector employment and the protection of a union, these workers experienced increased insecurity and related health impacts as a result of contracting out. This insecurity continues two years after the contracting out policy was introduced.

As municipalities such as Toronto explore the use of outsourcing and contracting out there is value in learning how these policies impact workers' everyday lives. The issues raised in this study surface broader issues about sources of work related stress and the vulnerabilities experienced by people in relation to their work lives. The lack of access to health benefits was a major source of stress for the workers in this study. Some were required to cost-share and were worried about their ongoing eligibility. There are many other workers – private and public – who are in similar precarious situations and may lack health benefits altogether or have inadequate coverage through their employers. This can contribute to poor health and adds to the argument that publicly-provided health benefits should be available to all people with low income.

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## Appendix A: Day Care Housekeeper Job Description

le #10-CSA19487, Day Care Housekeeper, Children's Services

<http://wi2.toronto.ca/intra/hr/hrjobarchive.nsf/131e7f3ad2cadba...>

Appendix C



### Temporary Career Opportunity In the Toronto Public Service

File #: 10-CSA19487

Posting Date: February 24, 2010

Closing Date: March 10, 2010

Job Title: Day Care Housekeeper  
Salary Range: \$23.68 - \$25.97 per hour  
Wage Grade: 5

Division: Children's Services  
Section: Dietary Services  
Job: Blake Street Child Care Centre  
Location: St. Mark's Child Care Centre  
No. of Vacancies: Two (2)

Hours per Week: 40  
Classification: OC/PN: TF0082  
Job Type: CUPE Local 79

Duration: Approximately one year

Toronto Public Service  
Service • Stewardship • Commitment

#### Eligibility to Apply:

- All employees are invited to apply for this position.
- Priority will be given to applicants covered by the Local 79 collective agreement.

#### Major Responsibilities:

Reporting to the Dietary Supervisor, the Day Care Housekeeper is responsible for the preparation and cooking of all food served in Child Care and Satellite Centres in accordance with preplanned menus designed to meet children's nutritional needs:

- Prepares food according to daily menu, including cleaning, cutting, mincing, pureeing, portioning, measuring, mixing, and assembling foods or ingredients
- Cooks and bakes food
- Loads cart and delivers food to dining area
- Checks daily menu, and children's special dietary needs (e.g., allergy charts) to ensure proper food is prepared. Plans and prepares foods for special events/functions and holidays
- Assists child care staff with meals and other food related activities (e.g., serving snacks, etc.)
- Maintains proper storage of food by receiving food and other supplies, ensuring correct quantities are delivered; storing supplies, rotating food stock to ensure quality; ensures that existing supplies are utilized, according to nutritional standards, before menu cycles change. Signs and records receipts
- Orders food supplies, adjusts standard divisional quantities ordered or menus, to meet children's specific nutritional needs. Inventories food supplies
- Checks refrigerator, freezer and dishwasher temperatures, and all other equipment to ensure proper functioning. Reports any problems or necessary repairs to Supervisor
- Directs and participates in the cleaning/sterilizing of the kitchen area, equipment and storage areas; loading/unloading of the dishwasher; washing and storing of dishes, utensils, pots and pans etc.
- Answers phone, takes messages and locates staff

#### Key Qualifications:

**Your application must describe your qualifications as they relate to:**

1. Experience in food handling and cooking for large groups.

**You must also have:**

- Ability to read and write and follow verbal and written instructions in English.
- Ability to maintain effective working relationships with staff and clients.
- Physical ability to lift moderately heavy objects.
- Ability to perform various cleaning responsibilities.
- Ability to maintain food and cleaning supplies.
- Fundamental knowledge of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, WHMIS, and any regulations that apply to this work.

**Candidate/Eligibility List Information:**

- A candidate list will be established.

**Notes:**

- Applicants are required to demonstrate in their applications/resumes that their qualifications match those specified in the job posting. Failure to do so will result in elimination from the competition. Additional information submitted after the job call closing date will not be accepted.
- Assessment may include an interview, written and/or practical test. Location of assessment to be determined.
- If selected, permanent employees will retain their permanent status. At the end of the temporary assignment, employees will return to their permanent base job classification.
- If selected, temporary and part-time employees will be reassigned to the temporary position.
- Information about how to prepare for a City job competition is available on the [Inside Toronto](#) intranet site. If you do not have a computer, you can use the computers in the learning kiosks located at City Hall, Etobicoke and Scarborough Civic Centres.
- Committed to employment equity, the City of Toronto encourages applications from Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, members of visible minority groups and women.
- Accommodation will be provided in all parts of the hiring process as required under the City's Employment Accommodation policy. Applicants need to make their needs known in advance.

**How to apply for this opportunity:**

Interested candidates should forward their application, resume and cover letter, quoting this **File #10-CSA19487**, using only one of the following methods: **On-line:** Click on the **Apply for this position** button at the bottom of this posting; or **Mail/hand deliver to:** Human Resources, Metro Hall, 5th Floor, 55 John Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3C6; or, **Fax to:** 416-392-5050. Applications, resumes and cover letters must be received by the closing date stated above.

**Your SAP employee number must be included in your application or cover letter or resume.**

## Appendix B: Food Service Worker Job Description



### Union Job Profile

Job Title: Food Services Worker	Job Code:
Affiliation: Local 79 Part-time Unit B	
Department CNS	
Division: Homes for the Aged	Date Prepared: December 31, 2004

**Job Summary:**

To participate in the preparation, rethermalizing, delivery and serving of food and perform cleaning duties.

**Reports To:**

Various

**Direction Received:**

Cook

**Direction Exercised:**

N/A

**Machines And Equipment Used:**

Institutional and/or regular cooking equipment, cleaning equipment and supplies, various office equipment, fridge, stove, knives, slicer, steamer, oven, cash register.

**Job Functions:**

- Receives, checks, records, sorts, stores, issues and retrieves food, cleaning, paper and other supplies to and from proper storage areas. Lifts and carries items. Maintains storage areas. Takes temperatures of refrigerators and freezers and reports temperatures that are not in the proper range. Rotates food according to expiry dates. Informs supervisor regarding stock.
- Prepares food and beverages by cleaning, peeling, mincing, cutting, chopping, mixing, portioning, measuring ingredients, packaging and labeling etc.
- Fills steam tables. Steams, deep fries and rethermalizes food.
- Loads carts with dishes, utensils, containers and trays necessary for service and delivers to dining and service areas.
- Delivers food supplies and food to dining/serving and preparation areas and/or units. Collects and disposes of/or saves leftovers and waste from these areas.
- Serves food according to portion control guidelines. Checks food for temperature, freshness and correct diet. Prepares dining areas by setting tables, filling condiment containers and delivering food to tables.
- Clears tables at completion of meals and wheels all dirty dishes and flatware, pots and pans to washing area.
- Cleans and sanitizes kitchen equipment and appliances such as: meat slicers, mincers, choppers, mixers, ovens, deep fryers, steamers, skillets etc. Washes, cleans and sanitizes all kitchen counters, tables, bins, refrigerators, freezers, garbage containers, dining room furniture, shelves, windows, walls, carts, trolleys, and any equipment used in the preparation of food and in serving areas. Selects and mixes all required cleaning solutions.
- Washes all dishes, flatware, pots and pans using dishwashers, and /or sink. Ensures temperatures are at appropriate ranges for these activities.
- Sorts and disposes of garbage according to the recycling program in effect. Bags, removes and transports garbage to disposal areas. Maintains garbage cans and bins in a clean and sanitary manner.
- Cleans floors by sweeping, wet and dry mopping, or any other appropriate procedure for specific type of floor surface.
- Notifies supervisor of necessary maintenance repairs and any unsafe conditions.
- Moves furniture to acquire access to areas or to arrange areas for special functions.
- Cleans, irons, sorts, stores and distributes linen.

The above reflects the general details considered necessary to describe the principle functions and duties for proper evaluation/pay equity of the job and shall not be construed as a detailed description of all the work requirements inherent in the job.

### **Food Services Worker**

- Operates tuck shop and /or cafeteria for clients and /or staff, using cash registers. Receives payment for items sold and totals daily receipts. Delivers funds to supervisor.
- Locks doors, windows and/or rooms to ensure area is secure.
- Attends staff meetings, committee meetings and in-service training as required.
- Answers telephones and takes messages.
- Assists in the monitoring of client activities. Provides information/works with appropriate staff for the well-being of the residents.

## Appendix C: Heavy Duty Cleaner Job Description



### Union Job Profile

Job Title: Cleaner Heavy Duty	Job Code:
Affiliation: Local 79 Part-time Unit B	
Department: Various	
Division: Various	Date Prepared: December 31, 2004

**Job Summary:**

To perform heavy cleaning duties inside and around City facilities.

**Reports To:**

Supervisor

**Direction Received:**

Foreperson Facilities

**Direction Exercised:**

N/A

**Machines And Equipment Used:**

Various heavy and light cleaning equipment, various small hand tools and hand cart, city vehicle, fork lift, garage sweeper, power washer.

**Job Functions:**

- Cleans, washes, strips and waxes floors and stairs.
- Vacuums and cleans carpeted areas.
- Sets up, moves and takes down furniture, tables, chairs etc. for functions.
- Cleans, polishes and dusts washrooms, locker rooms, offices, windows, air ducts, etc.
- Monitors and secures facilities and reports any damage, vandalism etc.
- Performs maintenance duties i.e. change A/C filters, grease motors, change belts.
- Cleans and stores equipment and machinery used.
- Shovels snow, salts walkways and lots, cuts grass.
- Maintains light fixtures and replaces bulbs and related appliances.
- Loads and unloads supplies and replenishes.
- Directs the parking in City of Toronto garage and entrance at City of Toronto properties.
- Defrosts refrigerators.
- Stocks and maintains cleaning cart.
- Picks up garbage and recyclable and removes to designated areas.
- Performs storekeeping duties.
- Delivers clean linen, gowns and clothing to resident rooms. Labels and de-labels residents clothing.

## Appendix D: Light Duty Cleaner Job Description



### Union Job Profile

Job Title: Cleaner Light Duty	Job Code:
Affiliation: Local 79 Part-time Unit B	
Department: Various	
Division: Various	Date Prepared: December 31, 2004

**Job Summary:**

To perform light duty cleaning in City facilities.

**Reports To:**

Supervisor

**Direction Received:**

Foreperson Facilities

**Direction Exercised:**

N/A

**Machines And Equipment Used:**

Various light cleaning equipment, various small hand tools, various kitchen and laundry equipment.

**Job Functions:**

- Cleans, dusts, washes and disinfects furniture, equipment, appliances, windows, washrooms and kitchens.
- Polishes and cleans and applies suitable oil, polish, solutions etc.
- Replenishes paper, soaps etc.
- Cleans spots on walls and carpets, mops, sweeps or vacuums floors, ceiling corners, furniture etc.
- Empties and cleans wastebaskets.
- Sets up, moves and takes down chairs etc. for functions.
- Defrosts and cleans refrigerators.
- Stocks cleaning cart and maintains cleanliness.
- Picks up garbage and recyclable and takes to designated areas.



## Appendix E: Interview Guide

Demographics: Can you tell me a bit about yourself? (Probe for age, ethnicity/national origin etc.)

Can you tell me about your work as a cleaner with the City?

- When did you first start working there?
- What details can you tell me about the work?
- When did your job change? How did it change (probe for details on the contracting out process, how it was done, what happened from their perspective)

Where are you working now?

- When did you first start working there?
- Can you tell me about your first shift? (Or first week of work?)
- Can you describe a typical shift?
- When you compare this work to your work at the City, what changes have you experienced in your work
  - How many hours would you typically work in a week? Is this more or less than what you did before?
  - Can you tell me about the work that you do? Can you talk about some of the activities? What are the work conditions like?
- Do you work any other job on a part time or as-needed basis?

Sometimes changing jobs or employers can have an impact on people's lives. It can improve financial circumstances or it can create more of a strain in making ends meet, or how people are feeling physically or emotionally.

When you look back over the past year...

How often did you feel things were tough financially or that it was difficult to make ends meet? Can you tell me about this more? (Probe for specific ways that things became more difficult: unable to pay bills on time, ability to pay rent, able to support family or social activities in concrete ways)

When you think about changes in your employment have you noticed any concerns related to your physical health? Can you give an example?

Thinking over the past year, have you had any concerns about your emotional well-being or mental health? These could include feeling depressed or anxious, or experiencing a great deal of stress. Can you describe how you have been feeling in terms of your emotional health and well-being?

How else has the change in jobs affected your health and well-being?

How does your current job affect your family life (relationships with child, spouse, and extended family)? Can you describe?

In what ways is your social and community life (i.e. participation in religious, social, cultural and political activities) affected by your current job? (Probe: any difficulties in taking part with activities?)

If you had to describe the best/worst thing about your current job, what would it be?

Is there anything else that you would like to add that we have not touched on?

Thank you

## Appendix F: Differences Between Local 79 Full Time and Part Time Collective Agreements

	Full-Time	Part-Time
<b>Vacation Pay and Vacation Leave</b>	<p><u>Article 10</u></p> <p>Vacation entitlement accumulates based on hours worked and is the equivalent of the accumulation on length of services in the full time unit: up to the maximum of 5 weeks after the hourly equivalent 17 years:</p> <p>While the full time unit has the following accumulation:</p> <p>4 weeks after 9 years 5 weeks after 17 years 6 weeks after 22 years 7 weeks only in the 30<sup>th</sup> year</p>	<p><u>Article 11</u></p> <p>After 12 months, PT employee is entitled to two weeks vacation annually.</p> <p>After that point, vacation accumulation is based on hours worked rather than length of employment</p>
<b>Extended Health/Dental/Group Life Insurance</b>	<p><u>Article 12</u></p> <p>Employer pays 100 per cent in the full time unit. Eligibility is based on hours worked rather than length of service as in full time unit.</p> <p>Extended health benefits available to FT but not PT workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out of country emergency medical coverage</li> <li>• Semi-private hospitalization coverage</li> <li>• Orthotics/orthopedic shoes</li> <li>• Private duty nursing</li> </ul> <p>Dental benefits available to FT but not PT workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orthodontics</li> <li>• Caps/crowns</li> <li>• Fixed bridges/bridgework</li> <li>• Gold fillings inlays/onlays</li> </ul> <p>Life insurance benefits for FT is 2 times annual salary</p>	<p><u>Article 12</u></p> <p>Participation is voluntary in these plans for part-time employees: and the employer pays only a portion of premiums: ranging from 0- 75 per cent for employees who are working less than 80 per cent.</p> <p>Life insurance benefit is \$3,000 for PT workers</p>
<b>Pension Plan Article 37 (P)</b>	<p>Pension benefit is based on best 5 consecutive years of earnings</p> <p>Credited service is pro-rated to full time</p>	<p>Membership in the pension plan is voluntary</p>

<b>Holiday Pay</b>	Receive holiday pay	<u>Article 10</u> Receive holiday pay if you have worked 8 shifts in the previous 2 pay periods (4 weeks)
<b>Illness or Injury Plan</b> <u>Article 44 (PT)</u> <u>Article 11 (FT)</u>	<u>Article 44</u> Illness or Injury Plan effective January 1, 2010  Need to complete 910 aggregate paid hours for 35 hour a week positions or 1,040 aggregate paid hours for 40 hour a week positions in the previous calendar year to qualify for IIP hours. Chart below details maximum number off IIP hours employees are entitled to.  Illness leave applies to employees who have completed more than 455 regular paid hours for 35 hour a week positions or 520 regular paid hours for 40 hour a week positions but less than the 910 hours and 1,040 hours respectively each calendar year. Employees entitled to a max of 2 shifts of illness leave per calendar year.	Ineligible if haven't worked at 50% in previous year
<b>Loss of Seniority rights moving from FT to PT</b>  <u>Article 14</u>	<u>An</u> employee covered by a Full-Time Collective Agreement who has been laid off in accordance with the provisions of that agreement, and who is subsequently employed under the provisions of this Collective Agreement, shall <b>not carry his/her seniority accumulated in the Full-Time Bargaining Unit to the Unit B Part-Time Unit.</b>	See specification in previous column.