

Assisted by the provincial government, who provided facilitators and mediators, a committee with representatives from Management and Union met over the course of several months to create a new foundation for labour relations at the City of Edmonton. The result of these meetings was the Working Relationship Agreement, which consisted of 7 principles and was signed by both Union leadership and senior management.

These dedicated efforts resulted in more than just document to hang on a wall. Along with the WRA was the rollout of training across the entire City and for Union executives, City Leadership, and all employees. This was done to drive home a new way of doing business, along with a new conflict resolution model that started with informal consultation (as a way to address issues before they grew) and then escalated as appropriate.

In the year following, the number of grievances across the City was significantly reduced. This was a direct result of a larger number of issues being resolved at the informal consultation stage of the dispute resolution process. There were several critical elements that allowed the WRA to start building this success:

- Recognition by both the City and Unions that each side still had responsibilities. The preamble of the WRA states "A commitment to collaborative relations in no way diminishes the right and responsibility of managers to manage in the best interest of the organization or the right and responsibilities of unions to represent the best interests of their members."
- A commitment by both sides to building a relationship based on mutual respect, fair treatment, and ultimately trust.
- High levels of support from senior managers, Union leadership, and City Council.

This positive relationship continued for many years, owing to a continual willingness to work