Women played an active role in the Calgary strike, primarily through the Women’s Labor Council.

Activists Jean McWilliam and Mary Corse established the council in spring 1919. Membership was open to union and non-union women workers as well as the wives and daughters of trade unionists.

The council provided crucial support during the strike. Soon after the strike began, members formed the Calgary Defence Committee to raise money and organize events. They collected hundreds of dollars in donations, at times enduring abuse and threats of violence while doing so. They also organized social events, such as dances and lunches, to bring people together and boost the strikers’ morale.

Council members pressured politicians and employers. Early in the strike, the council put together a petition calling for the fired postal workers to be reinstated. They also passed and submitted to the post-master general a resolution demanding that the postal service stop hiring young workers as scabs.

When police arrested the strike leaders in Winnipeg, Calgary women sent a telegram of support to the Women’s Labor League in that city and called for a national general strike. Though the Calgary strike ended on 25 June, the Women’s Labor Council continued to be a strong voice for working women in the years that followed.