

BULLETIN

DATE: July 5, 2022

CSS Bargaining Update: challenging discussions going into the summer

The Community Social Services Negotiating Committee was back at the bargaining table June 22 - 24. We continued to work through a number of significant items, including further discussions on the monetary priorities put forward by community social service workers from all three sub-sectors -- Community Living Services, General Services and Indigenous Services.

Discussions around compensation and wages at the bargaining table have been challenging. We continue to remain focused on advancing the priorities of members from all unions from the Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) including equitable wages and improved working conditions.

We are taking a scheduled break from the bargaining table but have more meeting dates scheduled over the summer. The committee is still in active negotiations and continues to move forward on the issues members have identified as priorities.

Essential services negotiations are underway

Everyone's job is important. But under the *BC Labour Relations Code*, some work can be designated as 'essential'. This is **different** from when the government determined what jobs were essential during the COVID-19 pandemic. Deciding what work is essential is a standard part of the bargaining process and it is done in a way that ensures the safety of you and your clients while identifying the minimum level of work that is required to do so in the event of a job action.

This does not necessarily mean that we will take job action, but this is part of how we are preparing for any scenario for you and your co-workers.

The process of identifying essential services levels is done through negotiations between designated union representatives and employer representatives in a clearly defined process. If you are being approached by your employer to sign-off on anything or discuss essential services, please advise your employer that you're not authorized to sign-off and talk to your shop steward or someone from your bargaining committee.

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Section 72(2) of the *Labour Relations Code* defines essential services as “**facilities, productions and services**” that are “**necessary or essential to prevent immediate and serious danger to the health, safety or welfare of the residents of British Columbia.**”

There is a provincial CSSBA Essential Services committee with representatives from each union who will coordinate essential services negotiations for their union. Each of these representatives will receive the proposals from the employers and then coordinate and distribute to the local union representatives. The committee then reports to the Lead Negotiator of the CSSBA Negotiating Committee, and they will ensure that the negotiating committee is informed and up to date on the progress of essential services negotiations.

Here is the CSSBA Essential Services committee:

BCGEU – Shelly Appleton and Deb Wilson
CUPE – Michael Reed and Sheryl Burns
HEU – Robbin Knox and Christina Lloyd Jones
HSA – Colin Brehaut
CSWU – Shelley Moore
CLAC – Aleasha Wegner
USW – Marty Gibbons
BCNU – Carolin Bleich and David Ling

Sign up/sign up your coworkers

For community social services, we are still actively at the negotiating table and our bargaining process is ongoing. However, you may have heard that there are other bargaining tables that have already taken a strike vote. Solidarity is a key value of the union movement and although we continue to have positive, but challenging negotiations, we also support other members of the public sector who may be at different stages of the bargaining process.

We will continue to keep you informed every step of the way, which is why it is so important that we have your up-to-date contact information including your personal email and phone number, **so make sure your shop steward or your union local has your contact information.**

Please check with your coworkers to make sure they are also receiving these email updates and to please share this bulletin with them.

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