



Building Strong Locals

This checklist will help you assess where your local is at and where it could be. The goal, over time, is for all locals to “work even better”. It is useful to set priorities, review where you are at on an annual basis, revise and set realistic goals for the coming year.

The checklist below is not meant to be rigid, and it is not a step-by-step progression. For example, your local may be active in the Living Wage Campaign, but it may not have a shop steward structure in place (or vice versa). Each local has its own strengths and challenges. Priorities for change will flow from your current reality.

Strong locals:

- Involve and engage their members
- Provide good leadership
- Defend members’ rights and resolve disputes
- Are active in union and community campaigns

CHECKLIST

Check boxes and assess where your local is at each year.

1. Strong locals involve and engage their members. They are:

- Open, welcoming and inclusive
- Democratic and accountable
- Skilled in two-way communications
- Creative in finding ways to increase membership participation

Locals that work well:

- Welcome and orientate new members to the union
- Hold regular membership and executive meetings
- Communicate regularly with members, face-to-face communication is a priority
- Circulate educational and other opportunities, and encourage members to attend

Locals that work even better:

- Educate, train and mentor new or inexperienced members, particularly youth, to grow their skills and develop as leaders
- Reach out to members from equity-seeking groups, younger members, various occupational groups and all groups that make up multi-employer locals
- Seek out members' ideas for making meetings appealing and accessible, and survey members on their interests and skills
- Find creative ways to engage members, such as cultural activities, environmental or literacy projects, celebrations and socials that involve members' families
- Send full delegate complements to educational events, bargaining conferences and the HEU convention
- Engage members in broader HEU campaigns
- Encourage members to participate in, discuss and approve how their local rebates are spent

2. Strong locals provide good leadership. Their leaders:

- Work as teams, and continually renew themselves
- Responsibly handle financial and other local affairs
- Communicate regularly and consistently
- Value education and leadership development
- Walk the talk on diversity

Locals that work well:

- Have a full complement of trained leaders – executive
- Committee members and a chief steward, as well as a sufficient number of stewards, and occupational health and safety stewards
- Hold regular meetings of the executive, stewards and committees
- Have leadership teams that communicate well internally as well as with each other
- Listen to all viewpoints and make collective decisions
- File quarterly financial reports
- Work well with regional vice-presidents and servicing representatives.

Locals that work even better:

- Reflect the membership's diversity in their leadership
- Consider the union's strategic directions in decision-making
- Are involved in the union, regionally and provincially
- Continue to build their leadership capacity through training and education
- Recruit, develop and mentor new leaders and youth
- Consider equality and diversity in everything they do – from communications, events and meetings, to deciding on priorities and strategies, as well as attendance at conferences and educational events

- Develop budgets and propose motions on spending, fulfill administrative responsibilities (i.e. keep meeting records and sign-in books, send contact information and updates to Provincial Office, annually review *By-Laws*)
- Delegate tasks and share responsibilities among the leadership team and with other members

3. Strong locals defend members' rights and resolve disputes. They:

- Solve problems and grievances effectively
- Focus on member workplace concerns and issues
- Make health and safety a priority
- Ensure those who need to know, including members, are kept informed

Locals that work well. How they do it:

- Process grievances effectively
- Conduct health and safety inspections
- Work closely with servicing representatives
- Communicate regularly about grievances and health and safety issues to keep leaders and staff in the loop

Locals that work even better:

- Let members know about grievance outcomes and monitor success
- Hold regular meetings of steward teams, health and safety committees and labour management committees – and keep minutes
- Resolve health and safety issues
- Know their role in member-to-member conflict situations – and what to do if issues arise – how to resolve any conflicts, and celebrate the role of stewards at local events

4. Strong locals are active in union and community campaigns. They:

- Promote the union's campaigns and defend public health care and workers' rights
- Are active on social justice and other important community issues,
- Communicate to members regularly about HEU campaigns and other issues that affect them
- Develop activism through membership education and training on community issues

Locals that work well in campaigns are even better. How they do it:

- Participate in labour councils and in the local labour movement
- Are active and involve members in broader union campaigns, such as the Canadian Labour Congress pension campaign
- Participate in political action
- Have strong community connections and work in coalition with school boards, municipal and provincial elections, health boards, goodwill committees, and on issues such as violence against women