

2006 UBA Backgrounder #3

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February 27, 2006

Some employers backing out of paying required wage increases

Pay equity increases due March 31

Previously negotiated wage increases are due at the end of March for many community social services workers. These pay equity increases were re-negotiated in 2004. The money restores what workers should have originally received in 2002, but did not when CSSEA delayed payments and then the government refused to fund the originally-negotiated increase.

Employers knew in 2004 that these wage increases would not be funded by government. Money was intended to come from the significant savings employers realized from the concessions they got under the 2004 settlement. But now employers are crying that they can't pay the increases they've twice agreed to. A number of employers have started to give workers layoff notices and have announced plans to cut programs and services.

"This is shameful. CSSEA, employers and the provincial government are again making frontline community social services workers subsidize our own jobs and the services we provide. This at a time when the government is running a significant surplus," says Union Bargaining Association (UBA) spokesperson Chris Mullen.

If you have information about impending layoffs or cuts to services and programs, please email us at info@respectbc.ca

Employers must take responsibility

CSSEA recently told employers to stop so-called 'gratuitous' practices. With the recruitment and retention crisis in the sector, some employers are paying more than the collective agreement allows, or offering perks such as extra vacation time, in order to attract and keep new workers.

Many employers obviously recognize the need for improved wages and benefits in this sector, but as a whole the employers' actions are throwing the system into chaos.

Regardless of intentions, such actions ignore both the collective agreement process and the fundamental need for increased government funding.

"It's time for employers to address recruitment and retention issues, respect the agreements they've negotiated, restore trust with workers, and rebuild services," says Mullen.

"It's time for employers and their agency CSSEA to take responsibility and push back at government for reneging on its responsibility to properly fund quality services and workers."

If your employer reduces your wages or benefits - talk to your union representative immediately.

Bargaining continues for a new collective agreement. Please check at www.respectbc.ca for regular updates.

B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

Canadian Union of Public Employees

Hospital Employees' Union

Health Sciences Association of British Columbia

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union

International Union of Operating Engineers

Construction and Specialized Workers' Union

United Steelworkers of America

National Automobile, Aerospace, Transportation and General Workers Union of Canada (CAW-Canada)

British Columbia Nurses' Union

Canadian Translators and Interpreters Guild

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