

2006 UPDATE on **Bargaining**

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You can't eat 'pie in the sky'

Workers need real money, benefits and job security

The employers' bargaining agent has tabled a counter-proposal that falls far short of addressing community social services workers' demands. Here's what the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) is offering now:

- Wages in the first and second years - unchanged offer of 1.5% increase each year.
- Wages in third and proposed fourth year - an increase of just .25% (to 1.75%) per year.
- A 1% increase for paraprofessionals, effective April 1, 2009.
- They've actually *lowered* their original offer of a \$3,700 signing bonus to \$3,410.
- A \$500 one-time signing bonus for casual employees.
- A one-time \$2.3 million RRSP payment for regular workers - about \$325 per Full Time Employee (FTE).
- The proposal to eliminate superior benefits is withdrawn.
- CSSEA's offer does not restore sick time.
- No premium pay on statutory holidays for casuals.
- Still no movement on key issues including layoff and recall, hours of work, scheduling, postings and promotions.
- 2010 bonus payment. This is a 'pie in the sky' offer where community social services workers would share in a piece of the pie if the BC government posts a \$150 million dollar surplus in the 2009-2010 Olympic fiscal year.

Regarding the 2010 bonus offer, Union Bargaining Association (UBA) spokesperson Chris Mullen jokes that "We are thinking about tabling a counter-proposal that we all share in the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, as a more likely bet."

On a serious note, he reports that, "CSSEA sounds these days like it is taking its marching orders from the BC Liberal government, rather than its member agencies who say that wages and working conditions need to be addressed to deal with the acute problem of recruiting and retaining quality workers in this sector."

CSSEA's offer of a 6.5% wage increase over a four year contract does not keep up with projected cost of living increases. They are also offering less than what is being offered in other public sector negotiations.

On other public sector bargaining fronts:

The BC Government and Service Employees' Union has stepped back from negotiations after the government failed to adequately address workers' key issues of privatization and contracting out, and wages.

The 25,000 direct government workers represented by the BCGEU have voted 80% in favour of taking strike action, if necessary. (These do *not* include community social services workers.)

And BC doctors have a tentative agreement that gives an average of \$60,000 per doctor. This follows an average \$50,000 per doctor in the deal the government imposed (overturning arbitration) last time.

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

Professional Employees' Association

Christian Labour Association of Canada