

# 2006 UPDATE on **Bargaining** #12

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March 17, 2006

## No point in continuing talks until employers make a meaningful offer

Community social services workers have stepped back from the bargaining table and won't return until employers are prepared to seriously address workers' key issues of wages, benefits and job security, the Union Bargaining Association (UBA) announced today.

"We have dedicated ourselves for the past six weeks to a sincere bargaining effort. But we are concerned that employers have simply been going through the motions of negotiating. We are not interested in participating in a charade," says Chris Mullen, UBA spokesperson.

"The employers' response to our proposals has been grossly inadequate.

"Employers know that their delivery of services is faltering because of BC government funding cuts. They know they are facing a crisis in hiring and keeping quality workers. Employers identified recruitment and retention issues as their number one concern, in their own pre-bargaining survey."

Some 148 agencies responded to the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) survey.

Their comments included: "can't find or keep new hires"; "unable to secure qualified employees at Step 1 salary"; "for

summer relief had to hire workers without a certificate"; and "60% of employees hired did not last six months - left for better paying jobs, #1 reason for leaving."

"Clearly, if you want to attract good workers to provide quality services, you have to give them incentive to stay," Mullen says. "Fair wages, benefits, and a pension plan provide that foundation.

"We are asking for respect in the workplace. That requires stability in scheduling, layoff and recall protection, recognition of seniority in the hiring process, and protection against bullying in the workplace."

The employers' proposal is for a four year contract with a total 6.5 percent wage increase – far less than other public sector tables are settling for. It does not include a pension, improvements to benefits, or address job security.

The UBA today launched a major public awareness advertising campaign. Radio and newspaper ads are running for the next week in communities around BC. **See the ads on [www.respectbc.ca](http://www.respectbc.ca)**

UBA membership meetings continue across the province until March 21. Our unions are also working on determining essential service levels, should members decide that strike action is necessary to back our demands.

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

Community  
Social  
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Union  
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Association

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