



# Newsletter

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## Education Fund open for applications in mid-October

The Facilities Bargaining Association's Education Fund Committee is pleased to announce that plans for the \$5 million fund to support health care workers upgrade their skills is well underway and that union members will be able to apply for support from the Fund by mid-October.

### *What is the Education Fund?*

The Education Fund was established in March 2006 as part of the 2006-2010 Health Services and Support Facilities Subsector collective agreement covering 40,000 health care workers in hospitals and care facilities.

Under an agreement with the provincial government and health employers, the \$5 million Fund is administered solely by the Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA), which represents the 10 unions in the sector.

Through access to training money, the Fund will provide union members in the sector with career mobility opportunities in health care.

The Fund is administered by a six-member committee composed of four representatives from the Hospital Employees' Union, and one representative each from the BC Government and Service Employees' Union and the International Union of Operating Engineers.

### *Who will staff the Fund?*

The Education Fund Committee has hired Mary Waddington as the coordinator for the Fund. She will be responsible for processing applications sent in by union members seeking funding assistance.

Waddington, who began work in August, has a strong background in the community college sector, worked for the provincial Ministry of Advanced Education and has successfully coordinated large projects with other committees. Since starting in August, she has made important contributions to the committee's work in a number of areas.

In addition to the coordinator position, the Committee is hiring an administrative assistant. This person will work directly with union members who are seeking support from the Fund. Duties of the position include processing approved applications, setting up and managing computer

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systems and providing clerical assistance.

Both the coordinator and the administrative assistant will be working out of the HEU Provincial Office in Burnaby.

### ***How do members get information on the funding criteria and process?***

By mid-October union members will be able to access information on how to obtain funding assistance. This will be provided in a Q&A format and will contain such information as:

- Criteria and funding available for short- and long-term training
- Dates and locations for information sessions that will be held around the province on how to apply to the Education Fund for funding support
- Information on how to obtain additional funding support from other sources (i.e. Human Resources Development Canada [HRDC] and tailored credit union student loan)
- Sample budget planning (while attending programs/courses)
- Advice on how to fill out the Education Fund application form

To ensure that the monies in the Fund can be stretched, the Committee has been in touch with Human Resources Development Canada. They've agreed to provide income support for members who want to move into a position that is considered to be in a "skill shortage area". This will help us to assist even more members who want training.

### ***Where do members access information on the Fund?***

Information on the Education Fund will be available from:

- your union web site
- your local union executive/steward
- union bulletin board
- information sessions in your local area (watch for details beginning in early October)

### ***Will funding be available for courses that begin before mid-October?***

Courses that begin September 1, 2006 or later will be considered for Education Fund assistance. Watch for details.

September 11, 2006