



Community social services strike action likely in August

Majority of essential services levels now established

After numerous delays, community social services workers in B.C. can expect job action to commence in August. The long process of determining what services will be maintained as essential during a strike is finally drawing to a close.

Essential services levels have now been set at 97 per cent of the 220 agencies that make up B.C.'s community social services sector.

The B.C. Labour Relations Board (LRB) extended the original July 22 deadline for finalizing essential services levels, for a second time, to August 5. Your bargaining committee – the Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) – shares the frustration felt by our members at these repeated and unnecessary delays.

The CSSBA strike coordination committee met last week to finalize job action preparations. We are currently securing appropriate spaces in communities around the province to serve as strike headquarters, which will handle the scheduling of employees working essential services shifts during job action.

Sensing that job action is now imminent, and all but inevitable, the Community Social Services Employers Association (CSSEA) has approached your bargaining committee with a proposal to return to the bargaining table. We have agreed to meet on August 9 and have been clear that in order to reach a deal the employer must move significantly on our key issues – namely job security, fair work practices, and the continuing bleeding of jobs and decimation of services in the sector.

A return to the bargaining table will not delay job action in August if the employer fails to meet our key demands.

During a strike, there is lots of information circulating. To keep updated, members are encouraged to:

- stay in touch with your union local and strike coordinator;
- ensure your contact details with your union are up-to-date – especially your email and phone numbers;
- check your union website regularly, and sign-up for relevant email alerts;
- refer to the (CSSfairdeal.ca) website, which will serve as an information hub during the strike; and
- join relevant Facebook groups – like “BC’s Community Social Service Workers” – which give members the opportunity to ask questions and share opinions and are a useful way of getting timely updates on strike developments.

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