



Tentative agreement reached in Community Social Services

Highlights include wage increases and a labour market adjustment review

Following a 13-day marathon bargaining session, the multi-union Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) has reached a tentative collective agreement with the employer.

The two-year proposed agreement achieves members' key priorities, including an across the board wage increase and health and welfare benefit protections. Highlights include:

- A wage increase for all employees:
 - 1.5 per cent on April 1, 2013;
 - 1.5 per cent on January 1, 2014;
 - An extra 1per cent wage increase for all step 1 employees on April 1, 2013; and
- A labour market adjustment review for all General Service and Community Living classifications.

Further details will be announced shortly. The proposed agreement covers community-based social services workers in community living and general services only. Aboriginal Service workers remain at the bargaining table.

“This was a very tough round of bargaining given government’s restrictive bargaining mandate,” says HEU secretary-business manager Bonnie Pearson, noting that CSS workers have been without a contract for almost a year.

“In the next few days the union’s Provincial Executive will be making a decision on recommendation to members.”

Pearson says community social services workers worked hard over the last three months to support the sector and their bargaining objectives.

“I want to thank everyone who participated in targeted job actions and who helped make sure our message about the critical need for more resources in this sector was heard by media and the public,” says Pearson, adding that HEU will continue to advocate for more funding to support the individuals and families who rely on community social services and the workers who provide them.

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Information regarding the ratification and voting process will be announced in the coming days, along with a detailed report on the contents of the tentative agreement.

There are about 15,000 unionized community social service workers who are represented by BCGEU, CUPE, HEU, HSA and six other unions, which together make up the Community Social Services Bargaining Association.

HEU represents about 1,500 workers in the sector.

Workers in community social services have been without a contract since March 31, 2012 and are among the lowest paid in the broad public service.

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