

Tentative deal reached for community social services workers

Bulletin issued by the Community Social Services Bargaining Association

The Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) is pleased to announce that after four weeks of negotiations, and a 95-hour push over the last six days for a deal without concessions, tentative agreements have been reached for General Services and Community Living with the Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA).

The tentative agreements are for three-year terms and provide significant compensation increases in terms of low-wage redress for all members, while meeting the government mandate of improving the services British Columbians count on.

“We are very pleased to have reached tentative agreements that support and work towards fair compensation for the critical work community social services workers do throughout the province,” says Andrea Duncan, BCGEU, chair of the negotiating committee.

“Our sector has been in crisis for well over a decade and we have been doing the very best we can with incredibly limited resources. These agreements reflect a new government mandate to improve services for some of B.C.’s most vulnerable citizens, and a significant step towards acknowledging the value and dedication caring professionals bring to this important work.”

Highlights of the agreements include:

- General wage increases of two per cent (2%) in each year, plus significant money for low wage redress to address recruitment and retention issues in the sector.
- Strong improvements to occupational health & safety including a Provincial Occupational Health and Safety Council.
- The restoration of statutory holiday pay for part-time and casual employees.
- A non-provincially funded child care commitment from government to look at fair compensation for early childhood educators.
- An improved process to assist the parties in better labour relations.
- Enhancements to health and welfare benefit plans to start closing the gap with the health sector.
- The renewal of the Labour Adjustment Education Fund and funding for health and safety and violence prevention training.

“Dedication and hard work and the cooperation between all the unions to fight for the rights of their members means the very best service can be provided to the people of B.C.,” says Kerry Hammell, HSA bargaining committee member.

Specific details on the new collective agreements, including a comprehensive report, will be available in the coming weeks. The CSSBA and the CSSEA will be meeting in the next week to conclude negotiations for Aboriginal Services.

To keep members up to date on negotiations, we have updated the *CSS Fair Deal* website where members can find bargaining updates and resources <<http://www.cssfairdeal.ca/>>.

Before ratification votes are held HEU’s Provincial Executive will review the agreement and make a recommendation to members.

The Community Social Services Bargaining Association is made up of 16,000 members working around the province and represented by the following unions: BCGEU, CUPE, HEU, HSA, CSWU, UFCW, USW, SEIU, CLAC and BCNU.

If you would like to receive HEU CSS bargaining updates directly, please send your name, work site and contact info to <members@heu.org>.

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