



FBA members access \$1.25 million in education grants

The Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) has successfully distributed another round of education grants to more than 500 union members during the past year.

The monies came from the union-managed FBA Education Fund which provides skills upgrading and career mobility options for union members covered by the facilities subsector collective agreement.

Due to this successful uptake so far this year, the Fund is currently not accepting new applications for funding. While the application process is now closed, previously approved applicants can continue to send in receipts.

Since the Fund began in 2006, a total of \$8.75 million in educational funding has been provided to over 2,300 members from every occupational group in the FBA.

In the last round of bargaining, the unions secured \$1.25 million from health employers to continue its operations over the past year.

One of the Fund's biggest successes over the past few years has been support for pharmacy technicians. These members are facing a requirement to upgrade their qualifications by taking a set of bridging modules and exams.

Through the Education Fund, the FBA has funded upgrading modules for 488 pharmacy technicians. The FBA also secured job guarantees, known as conditional conversion opportunities, for pharmacy technicians willing and able to complete their upgrading.

Other examples where FBA members have used the Fund include: maintenance workers transitioning to become power engineers; payroll clerks obtaining their Payroll Practitioner Certification; buyers obtaining their Purchasing Management Certification, and care aides taking acute care skills courses.

Many members in the clerical job family have also upgraded their computer skills.

For FBA Education Fund information, contact your local shop steward, local executive or union servicing representative; email <jhumphrey@heu.org> or call the FBA Education Fund at 604-456-7146 or toll-free 1-800-663-5813, extension 7146.

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Facilities Bargaining Association background:

The Hospital Employees' Union is the largest of the Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) unions.

Other FBA unions, whose members are eligible to participate, include the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union, the International Union of Operating Engineers, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the United Steelworkers of America, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry; the Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada, and the British Columbia Nurses' Union.

Visit HEU's website for more information at <<http://www.heu.org/education/fba-education-fund>>.

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