



BULLETIN

November 8, 2022

Contract talks suspended for 17,000 unionized community social services workers

Collective bargaining resumed between the nine-union Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA) and the provincial Community Social Services Employers' Association (CSSEA) this past week to negotiate a new contract for 17,000 unionized workers in the sector.

However, on Monday, talks were suspended after the latest proposal put forward by the employers' association failed to meet the needs identified by workers in the sector.

Members have been clear about their priorities and what they want representatives at the bargaining table to bring forward. These priorities include a fair and equitable compensation package that will help lighten the pressure of rising costs, meaningful recognition of rights for Indigenous workers and the ability to address members' own health needs, including mental health supports.

Community social services sector workers support some of the most vulnerable members of our society. The bargaining committee is working hard to bring us all a contract that will take care of us as workers, and that enables us to provide quality care for the people that we support in our work.

As we are negotiating, the global health pandemic is entering its third year and your workplaces are critically short-staffed. During the pandemic, many members were required to remain at work. Now we are pushing for them to be considered as important at the bargaining table too.

Unfortunately, we are still not there. This past week, our discussions have been challenging and we are still not reaching an agreement on some of the most fundamental priorities that we believe will make the difference for members.

We are working towards true reconciliation which means that all Indigenous workers are respected, and their cultural needs are valued. We are seeking improvements that recognize the cultural capacity and competency that is required to support Indigenous families when working in Indigenous agencies. These improvements should reflect the value our members bring to communities. Government has expressed a strong commitment to reconciliation, and we believe this commitment should also be reflected in your Collective Agreement.

We are not prepared to bring an agreement back to members that does not value our work and addresses our basic needs and priorities. We are working towards an agreement that not only puts more money in members' pockets but enables you to take care of your health and have a safe workplace.

We are still fighting for a compensation package that protects against rising costs and addresses a root problem in our sector: recruitment and retention. If our communities are going to keep the skills and experience we already have in our sector and recruit the next generation, we need a compensation package that is attractive and competitive.

The employers' association have different ideas to address the systemic issues in the sector. But we have heard from members about the priorities that will make the difference in the workplace and at home and we continue to find way to ensure that these priorities are reflected in the agreement we bring back to members.

What comes next?

We will be back to the negotiating table at a later date to continue this fight. And we will keep you in the loop as we continue these discussions.