

WELCOME TO OUR UNION

The BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)



A GUIDE TO
**THE ADVANTAGES OF
UNION MEMBERSHIP,
WORKERS' RIGHTS &
SAFETY** AT WORK

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STRONG LEADERSHIP

welcome message

BCGEU President **Stephanie Smith** and Treasurer **Paul Finch** are pleased to welcome you to the BC Government and Service Employees' Union. You join 79,000 other members who are part of the most diverse and fastest growing union in B.C.

Our union works hard to improve the lives of working people and to give you a strong voice in your workplace, and in your community.

Our roots go back over 100 years when provincial government employees first began organizing to improve their working conditions.

Today, our members work in the broader public and private sectors.

From better wages and working conditions to efforts to promote social justice, the BCGEU has a proud tradition of advocating for workers' rights.



STEPHANIE SMITH



PAUL FINCH

Pictured above: BCGEU EVP James Coccola, former-EVP Sussanne Skidmore, President Stephanie Smith, Treasurer Paul Finch, EVP Kari Michaels and EVP Doug Kinna



WHAT WE STAND FOR

our mission

The BCGEU is a democratic, member-run organization that represents the economic, social and political interests of its membership. Article three of our constitution sets out our mission to:

- Unite all employees in B.C. in a democratic organization that acts on their behalf.
- Achieve the best possible standards of compensation and working conditions for members.
- Represent and negotiate on behalf of members for the purposes of negotiating their conditions of employment, and to represent members on matters concerning their general welfare.
- Promote the interests of members and working people everywhere, directly or indirectly, through social, cultural, economic, financial and educational activities.
- Organize the unorganized.

In addition to these, we seek to participate in the broader labour movement by affiliating to local member councils. While it is in the core mandate of our constitution to represent the political interests of our membership as a whole, we do not affiliate to political parties.



STRONGER TOGETHER

connect with our union

The BCGEU can only protect and improve upon your working conditions if we are in contact with you and your co-workers.

In order to communicate with you directly about worksite elections, contract negotiations, and other decisions that impact your work, we need your personal email and cell phone number. **Please take the time now to check that your contact details are up to date** by logging into your account* on the BCGEU Member Portal (<https://my.bcgau.ca>).

On the Member Portal you can also easily find your collective agreement, get news and updates and take advantage of the store discount program:

1

GO TO THE
MEMBER PORTAL
TO LOG IN



2

EXPLORE,
LEARN AND
CONNECT



3

GET DISCOUNTS
ON GOODS AND
SERVICES



*SIGN UP AT [MY.BCGAU.CA/SIGNUP](https://my.bcgau.ca/signup) IF YOU DON'T HAVE AN ACCOUNT



UNIONIZED WORKERS EARN MORE

the union advantage

We owe our wages, benefits, safety and rights in the workplace to the strength and hard work of unions.

BCGEU members pay dues to the union in return for a wide range of benefits and membership services—from skilled negotiators that help you get the best contract possible to free educational programming. Dues can be voted on and set at the BCGEU convention every three years.

Because of the union advantage in average wages, union dues pay for themselves as a small percentage of the higher wages we are able to negotiate. They are also tax deductible.

1.85% of earnings go to union dues but these are **tax deductible**



B.C. UNIONIZED WORKERS EARN

\$5.46

MORE PER HOUR

THAN B.C. NON-UNIONIZED WORKERS

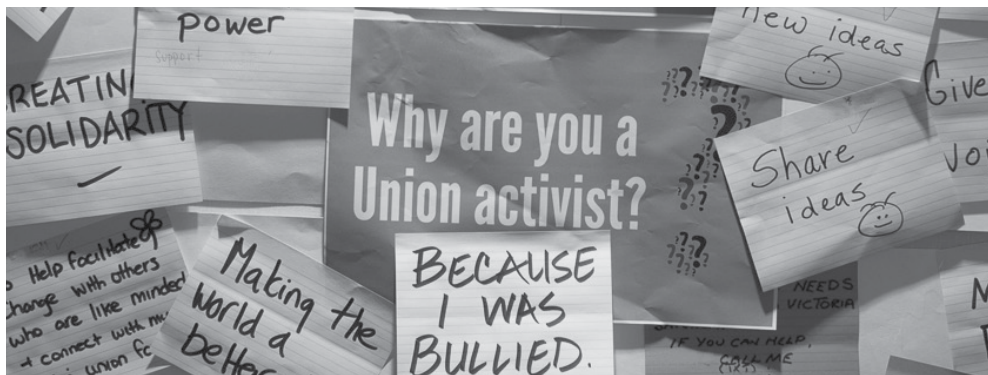
Source: [Statistics Canada, Table: 14-10-0134-01, 2018.](#)

\$25.18/HR

B.C. NON-UNIONIZED WORKER'S
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE

\$30.64/HR

B.C. UNIONIZED WORKER'S
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE



WORKSITE SOLIDARITY

shop stewards

BCGEU shop stewards are the backbone of our union. They are volunteers, and anyone at your worksite that is a member of the union in good standing is eligible to be elected as a shop steward.

Stewards are representatives of the union at the worksite, and represent members who are being treated unfairly at work.

If you feel you are being treated unfairly, or you are asked to attend a meeting with your employer that may be disciplinary, ask a shop steward to attend with you.

One tool for solving conflicts at work is to **file a grievance**. This is a way of acknowledging an existing conflict at the workplace, and committing to solving it through an impartial third-party process. If you need to file a grievance, a shop steward can advise you on whether you have grounds to file, and will help you fill out the paperwork.



Shop stewards are responsible for making sure the collective agreement is enforced at the worksite.



If your worksite has no steward, or they are on leave, contact your area office for help.

FOR AREA OFFICE CONTACT INFORMATION SEE PAGE 19



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING POWER

your collective agreement

We all deserve to be treated fairly and by the rules. Your collective agreement is the employment contract between you and your co-workers, and your employer.

BCGEU members work hard and demand good wages and benefits for that work. That's why it's important to read and understand your collective agreement.

To view or download your collective agreement, visit the Member Portal at:

my.bcgau.ca



On the homepage, look for *Collective Agreements* in the left-hand column

FOR LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS SEE PAGE 4

Many BCGEU members also have pension plans. To find out more about your plan or get contact information, visit the Member Portal and click *My Pension* under Resources.



Sometimes collective agreements can be lengthy and hard to understand. Talk to your shop steward if you'd like a brief orientation to your agreement, or to get answers to any questions you may have.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE YOUR SHOP STEWARD'S CONTACT INFORMATION, CALL YOUR AREA OFFICE (DETAILS ON PAGE 19) AND THEY CAN CONNECT YOU



YOU HAVE THE
RIGHT
TO REFUSE
UNSAFE WORK

WORKSITE SAFETY

your safety at work

Every year, too many people are injured or killed on the job. Workplace safety is a key priority for our union, and every worksite should have a BCGEU Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) committee.

For information about your OHS committee, call your local area office (details on page 19) or visit the Member Portal at:

my.bcgeu.ca



On the homepage, look for *Tools for OHS* in the left-hand column

FOR LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS SEE PAGE 4



Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work

If you believe that performing a job or task puts you or someone else at risk, **you have the right to say no**. You must immediately notify your supervisor or employer, who will then take the appropriate steps to determine if the work is unsafe, and remedy the situation.



ADDED VALUE FOR YOUR UNION DUES

living, working, leading

BCGEU Learning offers **free** education opportunities to members for living, working, and taking on leadership roles within the union.



Start with STEP UP, an introductory course that explores our common values, our diverse community of members, as well as useful tools for taking action to address workplace issues.

Then LEAP! Our Leadership, Education and Activism Program teaches members how to be leaders in the workplace, in the labour movement and in the community. Train to represent members as a steward, organize workers for collective action, and ensure workplaces are safe and healthy. Advanced courses focus on communications, team-building and organizing skills, as well as critical analysis to understand the political, economic and social forces that impact our members.



Courses are delivered at area offices throughout B.C. Visit the Member Portal to view upcoming opportunities in your newsfeed.

FOR MEMBER PORTAL LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS SEE PAGE 4

"My journey began with someone encouraging me to step up and become a shop steward to improve my working conditions." - BCGEU President Stephanie Smith





EVERY VOICE COUNTS

union democracy

Your union is a democratic, politically representative organization.

The core of our work is in bargaining good collective agreements, winning fair wages and benefits, and keeping you safe at work. Your union also advocates for the broader political interests of the membership as a whole in society.

As a member in good standing, you are entitled to vote for:

- shop stewards at your worksite
- the executive members that run your local
- the local chairperson in charge of your local
- your bargaining committee (in some sectors, your local chairpersons vote for the bargaining committee)
- delegates to the BCGEU triennial convention, who in turn elect the president, treasurer, and four executive vice presidents
- labour management committees





GROWING OUR POWER

investing in the future

The BCGEU is leading the way in the labour movement when it comes to responsible investing.

The BCGEU actively manages an investment portfolio on behalf of members to ensure we have the resources necessary to support workers fighting for better and stronger labour conditions. Maintaining the security of these funds in an ever-changing economy is critical, and so we have a strong investment policy in place to manage their growth and sustainability.

For example, ahead of the 2015 global oil price crash, we divested the union's strike and general fund investments from fossil fuel equities. This move de-risked our portfolio and significantly increased their value beyond what would have been possible by saving your member dues alone. Looking ahead to the future, this means our union can fight with greater certainty at the table for better pay and protections.

For the last two years, our union has also used its **investor power** to push companies to improve corporate governance, human rights and labour practices, and to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

We believe that together *we can and must* call on some of the largest companies in the world to do better. Not only does this work help us make sure our investments are financially healthy, it allows us to pursue our values as a labour union.



the world around us

The BCGEU is working to make life better for all working people, in communities across B.C. and around the world.

Through BCGEU Strategic Partnerships, members build alliances with other organizations that share our priorities to advance our rights and to realize the shared goals of working people. Through this work we are active in campaigns to win a much-needed national child care system, promote a better public health care system in the face of pressures to privatize care, and to address the housing affordability crisis.

We work in coalitions to promote environmental justice, protect B.C.'s natural resources, address climate change, and advocate for sustainable, family-supporting jobs in the resource sector through a just transition.

Through the Diane L. Wood International Solidarity and Humanity Fund, BCGEU members contribute to solidarity projects with other unions and human rights organizations around the world. How workers are treated by a company or government in one country has an impact on workers here in Canada.

As a union we understand that advancing the interests of all working people, especially Indigenous peoples and nations participating in reconciliation, is essential to our collective progress.

privacy policy

The BCGEU is committed to protecting the privacy, confidentiality, accuracy and security of members' personal information.

The BCGEU privacy policy outlines the union's operational practices concerning the collection, use, disclosure and protection of personal information to meet the requirements of the British Columbia *Personal Information Protection Act*.

Copies of the privacy policy are available at BCGEU headquarters and area offices. You can also find the policy on the Member Portal at:



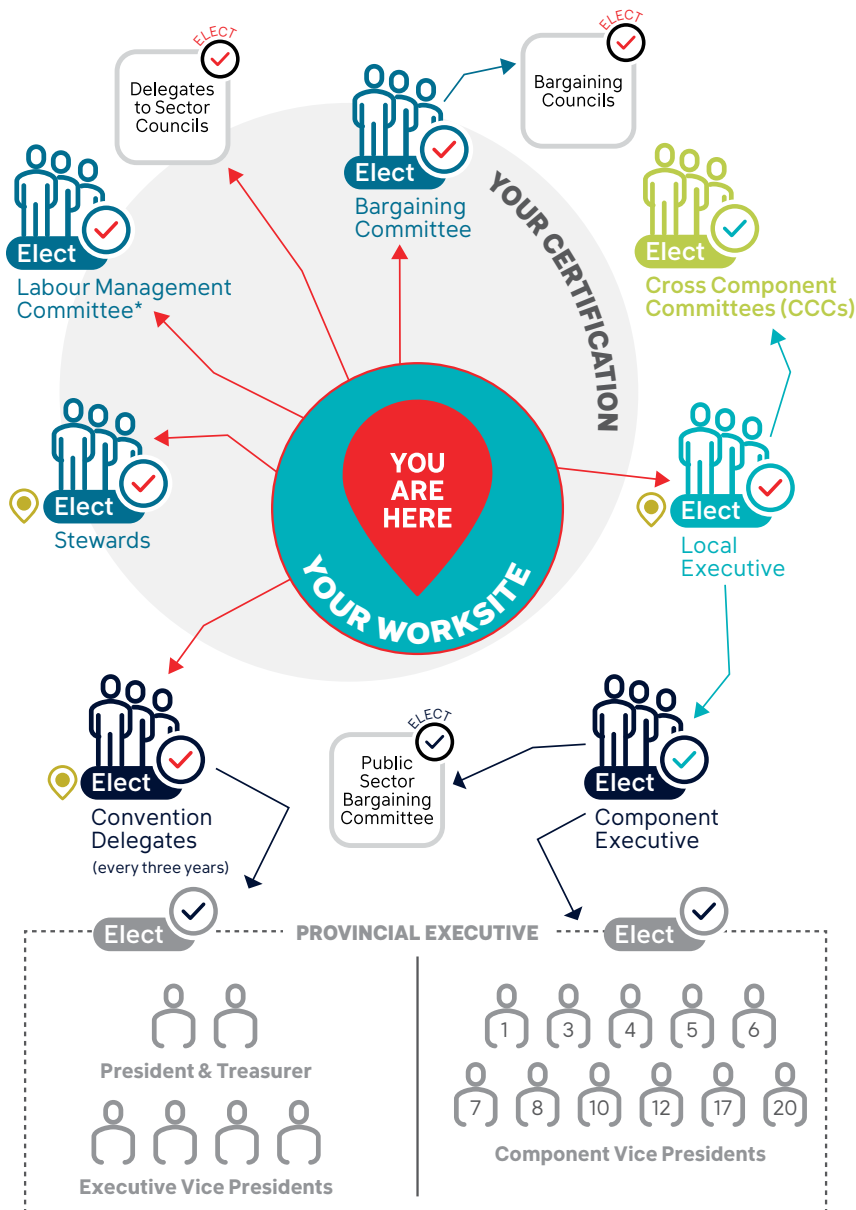
On the homepage, scroll to the very bottom of the page and click on the link *See Privacy and Terms*

FOR LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS SEE PAGE 4



Your information, it's personal and we'll protect it.

UNION STRUCTURE



The BCGEU is made up of 11 components covering nearly every economic sector in the province.

COMPONENT 1

Corrections and Sheriff Services

Safeguarding British Columbians' safety and security at provincial correctional centres and courthouses.

COMPONENT 3

Community Social Services

Providing community-based social services and resources to vulnerable families and individuals across the province.

COMPONENT 4

Health Services

Providing nursing and personal care, dietary and rehabilitation as well as medical lab services in health care and related services.

COMPONENT 5

Retail Stores and Warehouse

Distributing and retailing liquor and cannabis responsibly while providing revenue to support quality public services.

COMPONENT 6

Social, Information and Health

Providing a range of technical, social, cultural, educational, information technology, research, policy, health care delivery and associated support functions primarily to the B.C. government.

COMPONENT 7

Education, Scientific, Technical and Administration

Teaching and supporting students and providing library, technical and legal services.

COMPONENT 8

Community Health Services

Supporting seniors, people with disabilities, and those in mental health group homes or facing addictions in the community.

COMPONENT 10

Operational Services

Maintaining our highways and bridges, operating the Canada Line and staffing tree nurseries.

COMPONENT 12

Administrative Services

Providing essential administrative and support services in provincial government ministries, authorities and entities.

COMPONENT 17

General Services

Working in local governments, hotels and casinos, credit unions, the BC Housing Management Commission, and at BC Place in Vancouver.

COMPONENT 20

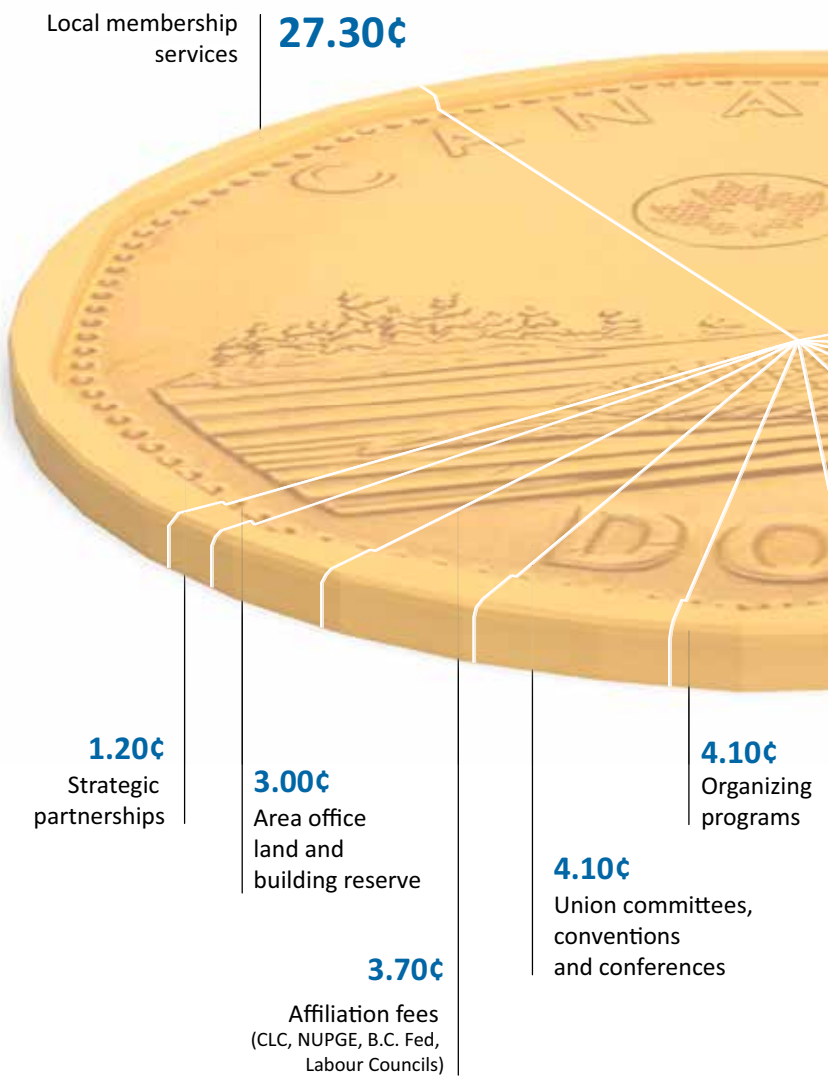
Environmental, Technical and Operational

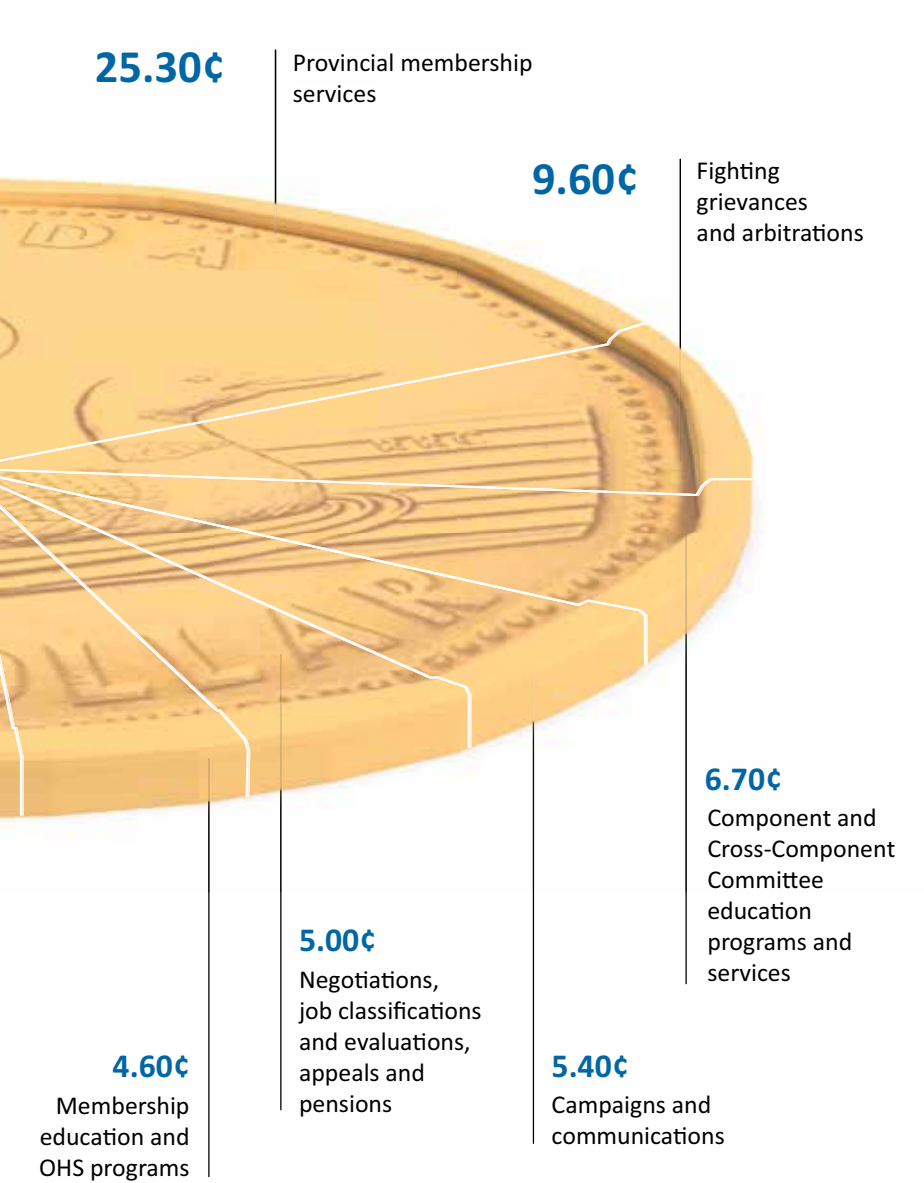
Protecting and regulating B.C.'s natural resources, infrastructure and environment and operating inland ferries.

For more detailed information
about a component visit:
**[www.bcgau.ca/
components](http://www.bcgau.ca/components)**

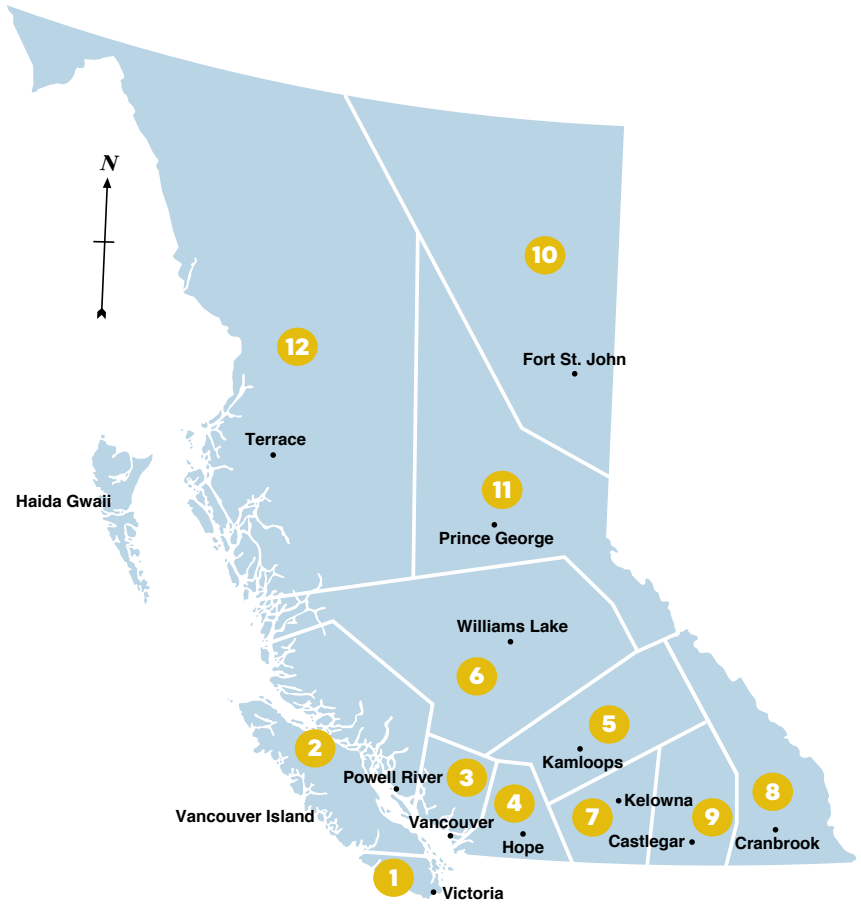
HOW YOUR DUES DOLLAR WORKS FOR YOU

Members can have confidence that the full value of their dues go to service their needs and interests.





BCGEU AREAS



- 1 Victoria and South Vancouver Island
- 2 North Vancouver Island and Powell River
- 3 Vancouver and Sunshine Coast
- 4 Surrey, Langley and Fraser Valley
- 5 Kamloops and Thompson Region
- 6 Williams Lake and Cariboo

- 7 Kelowna and Okanagan
- 8 Cranbrook and the East Kootenays
- 9 Castlegar and the West Kootenays
- 10 Fort St. John and Peace River Region
- 11 Prince George and North Central B.C.
- 12 Terrace, Haida Gwaii and Northwest Coast

BCGEU AREA OFFICES

Victoria – Area 1

2994 Douglas St.
Victoria, B.C. V8T 4N4
Phone: 250-388-9948
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1033

North Island – Area 2

106 - 1650 Terminal Ave. North
Nanaimo, B.C. V9S 0A3
Phone: 250-824-0825
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1997

Lower Mainland – Area 3

130 - 2920 Virtual Way
Vancouver, B.C. V5M 0C4
Phone: 604-215-1499
Toll Free: 1-888-238-0239

Fraser Valley – Area 4

8555 - 198A St.
Langley, B.C. V2Y 0A9
Phone: 604-882-0111
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1103

Kamloops – Area 5

158 Oriole Road
Kamloops, B.C. V2C 4N7
Phone: 250-372-8223
Toll Free: 1-800-667-0054

Cariboo – Area 6

107A 1st Ave. North
Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 1Y7
Phone: 250-392-6586
Toll Free: 1-800-667-9244

Okanagan – Area 7

1064 Borden Ave.
Kelowna, B.C. V1Y 6A8
Phone: 250-763-6405
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1132

East Kootenay – Area 8

46 - 7th Ave. South
Cranbrook, B.C. V1C 2J1
Phone: 250-426-5459
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1203

West Kootenay – Area 9

2316 Columbia Ave.
Castlegar, B.C. V1N 2X1
Phone: 250-365-9979
Toll Free: 1-800-667-1061

Peace River – Area 10

10147 100th Ave.
Fort St. John, B.C. V1J 1Y7
Phone: 250-785-6185
Toll Free: 1-800-667-0788

Prince George – Area 11

500 Quebec St.
Prince George, B.C. V2L 0C6
Phone: 250-563-1116
Toll Free: 1-800-667-8772

Northwest – Area 12

4600 Lazelle Ave.
Terrace, B.C. V8G 1S5
Phone: 250-635-9126
Toll Free: 1-800-665-1664

BCGEU Headquarters

4911 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3W3
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