



FYI



| PLEASE POST |

Date: December 18, 2019

To: All Employment and Assistance Workers (EAW)

Re: Classification Appeal Update

Following up on our bulletin earlier this month, thank you to the EAWs who have sent in work examples and information, either directly or through the representatives at the worksites we are visiting as part of this appeal process.

On December 10, 2019 representatives from the BCGEU (union) and BC Public Service Agency (PSA) visited the Abbotsford office where, after an office tour, we met with two long term EAWs, a supervisor and two excluded managers to discuss the work generally and changes in the work since 2007. Another long term EAW who is a subject matter expert in ICM demonstrated the systems you work with, and we had additional discussions and demonstrations with an EAW working on Employment Plans, one who does Specialized Intake dealing with youth in transition, and another who has only recently completed EAW training. We are continuing to receive additional interview notes and work examples as a follow-up from others at the office.

On December 11, 2019 we visited the Strathcona office. We had a general tour of the office, and met with two EAWs, the supervisor and excluded manager for a longer discussion about EAW work and the challenges the EAWs face at this office, particularly due to the intensity of the homelessness, addiction and mental health crises at this Downtown Eastside location. We were able to speak to another ICM Super-user who also discussed the Bus Pass program with us. We also spoke with an EAW trainer, were able to watch and listen while several clients received assistance, including an in-person intake, and observed the pilot project POC Q system being used. We spoke with another EAW from this office who has had a variety of liaison roles. As with Abbotsford, we are also continuing to receive follow up work examples and information.

So far, the office visits are providing us with very helpful information about EAW work duties, challenges and working conditions. We are still making arrangements for visits in late January or early February to Surrey North, the Lower Mainland Contact Centre and Nanaimo. Although we will be trying to observe and/or receive information about as many of the different streams of EAW work as possible, we recognize that duty rotations require EAWs to be knowledgeable and current with all EAW job duties and responsibilities, and the job evaluation will encapsulate the whole EAW job.

As mentioned previously, we will also be open to receiving additional information from the representatives after the onsite meetings, whether specific examples we have requested, or information that an EAW believes we should take into consideration. As outlined earlier, due to the precedential *Costa* decision, the focus is to examine job responsibilities from the date of appeal in 2011, and there is no mechanism to look at earlier work.



Thank you to those EAWs who have already begun to share information in advance of the onsites, who participate at the worksites, as well as those who are continuing to provide us with further examples after the office visits. We will review all information that we receive.

Some of you have asked about the appeal process and timelines. Under the collective agreement, once appeal onsites are complete and all information has been provided, the PSA has 60 days to provide a response after which, if necessary, the union has 60 days to respond, with further steps also available after that initial exchange. It should be noted, however, that either party may request to extend the timelines. It is premature to speculate as to whether any timelines may need to be extended for this appeal, but given the volume of information being submitted, and in order to give all information the attention it requires, extensions may be necessary to ensure that due diligence is performed.

From previous bulletins:

Please note that as the Public Service Job Evaluation Plan (PSJEP) only allows us to evaluate work responsibilities, we examine and evaluate based on the actual work being done, not the performance of individuals. Although EAW representatives have stepped up to participate in this process, the final outcome will not be based solely on their particular information but from all the information gathered from all EAWs who participate as well as observations from the onsite visits.

The onsite visits will form the basis for an updated PSA written rationale for all factors relating to the EAW position. As mentioned in an earlier FYI bulletin, the test for changing a factor rating is whether the work being evaluated has changed materially or significantly enough to change one or more factors from the current level, in comparison to benchmark jobs. As in all appeals, factor ratings can go up or down, or stay at the same level. The main comparisons would include the original 1998 FAW or other benchmarks. In the case of the EAW, the 2007 *Costa* arbitration decision on four factors is also a precedent that must be taken into account. We are unable to compare to other existing jobs that have not been agreed between the parties, including the recent Community Outreach Worker.

Any further steps in the appeal process after receiving the PSA's rationale, if necessary, will be made in consultation with the EAW representatives and current et al appellants.

Please note that we have created a section on the Component 6 Resources webpage where we will post updates as the appeal progresses. There you can now find the *Costa* decision, a link to the FAW benchmarks and some FAQs about the plan and appeal process in general.

Note: any communications about the appeal should now be directed to our new EAW specific email address: ClassificationAppeals.EAW@bcgeu.ca

In solidarity,

Judy Fox-McGuire – Component 6 Vice-President
Jennifer Jordan – Staff Representative, Negotiations

Reminder: BCGEU members are getting a new Member ID card in the near future; make sure your mailing address is up to date. Go to www.bcgeu.ca/card-questions-for-details.

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