

WELCOME TO YOUR UNION

The BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU)



A GUIDE TO YOUR
EMPLOYMENT, WAGES,
BENEFITS, SAFETY &
RIGHTS AT WORK

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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 75,000 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 decades when provincial government employees first began organizing to improve their working conditions. Today, our members work in both the public and private sectors.

From better wages and working conditions to broader 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, EVP Sussanne Skidmore, President Stephanie Smith, Treasurer Paul Finch, EVP Kari Michaels and EVP Doug Kinna



UNIONIZED WORKERS EARN MORE

the union advantage

We owe our wages, benefits, safety and rights in the workplace to the strength of unions, and the hard work of over 75,000 BCGEU members across the province.

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.

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**



**UNIONIZED
WORKERS EARN
\$5.25
MORE PER HOUR
THAN NON-
UNIONIZED WORKERS**

Source: Statistics Canada
Labour Force Survey Data

\$24.15/HR

NON-UNIONIZED WORKERS
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE

\$29.40/HR

**UNIONIZED WORKERS
AVERAGE HOURLY WAGE**



STRONGER TOGETHER

your union needs you

The BCGEU can only protect and improve upon your working conditions if we remain a vibrant democratic union with informed members.

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 provide your contact details on the sign up page here:

my.bcgeu.ca/signup

ALL PERSONAL INFORMATION IS PROTECTED - SEE THE PRIVACY POLICY ON PAGE 11

To easily find your collective agreement and other resources, get news and updates, and communicate with fellow union members, visit the Member Portal:

1

GO TO THE
MEMBER PORTAL
TO LOG IN



2

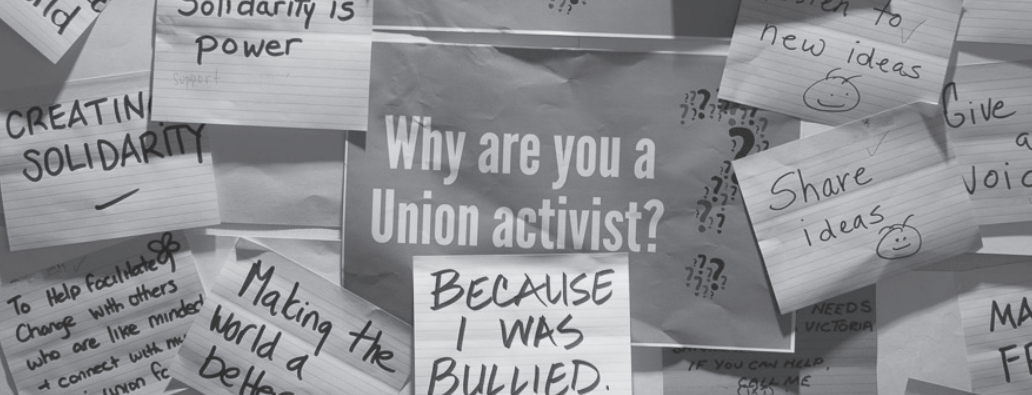


HAVING TROUBLE
LOGGING IN? GO TO
[MY.BCGEU.CA/SIGNUP](https://my.bcgeu.ca/signup)
FOR HELP

3

EXPLORE THE
MEMBER PORTAL,
LEARN AND CONNECT





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 a direct connection to the union, and represent members who are being unfairly treated 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 14



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

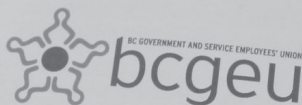
FOR LOGIN INSTRUCTIONS SEE PAGE 4

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 14) 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 the 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 14) 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. This introductory course introduces members to the BCGEU, explores our common values, our diverse community of members, as well as useful tools for taking action.

Get more involved with LEAP! Through this leadership, education, and activist program, learn the essentials of being a steward; become a community leader; train to be an occupational health & safety (OHS) representative; or hone your organizing and political analysis skills on the path to becoming an elected union leader.



Your union provides a paid leave of absence (LOA) from work to participate in most courses in the leadership stream and 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)
- your labour management committee if you work in the private sector (the president makes these appointments for public sector worksites)
- delegates to the BCGEU triennial convention, who in turn elect the president, treasurer, and four executive vice presidents





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 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, fight climate change, and advocate for good, 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 constitution of the BCGEU guarantees that democratic control rests with its members through five levels of governance.

1. TRIENNIAL CONVENTION

Our triennial convention is attended by delegates elected by members from locals as well as the provincial executive. Delegates at convention debate and vote on resolutions that help guide the direction of our union.

2. PROVINCIAL EXECUTIVE

The president, treasurer and four executive vice presidents are elected at convention. The president is the chief executive officer and highest elected official of the union. The treasurer is the chief financial and administrative officer and carries out the duties of the president when they are absent. The executive vice presidents report to the president, and they chair committees of the provincial executive. Component vice presidents are elected by representatives of each local and are automatically members of the provincial executive.

3. COMPONENT EXECUTIVE

A component vice president is the senior elected person representing the component, which is a particular occupational grouping within the membership. The component executive also includes the chair of each local and other members from within the component, as per the bylaws.

4. LOCALS

Each BCGEU component is divided into locals which are organized by geographic location (see page 15). The local is the fundamental unit of union structure.

5. CROSS-COMPONENT COMMITTEES (CCCs)

All BCGEU members, in all components, sponsor community events and educational programs through cross-component committees. CCCs are geographically organized but include representation from every component to ensure communication and information-sharing across union membership.

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 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 inland ferries, 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.

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

BCGEU Headquarters

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

Phone: 604-291-9611 / 1-800-663-1674

Fax: 604-291-6030 / 1-800-946-0244



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

102 - 4710 Lazelle Ave.

Terrace, B.C. V8G 1T2

Phone: 250-635-9126

Toll Free: 1-800-665-1664

For more detailed contact information visit: www.bcgeu.ca

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



www.bcgeu.ca

