



GSU SSG

Government Services Union Syndicat des services gouvernementaux



**MEMBERS
HANDBOOK**

Keep this information with you

PSAC ID: _____

LOCAL: _____



www.gsu-ssg.com



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GSU-SSG

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WELCOME

WELCOME TO THE GOVERNMENT SERVICES UNION (GSU) A COMPONENT OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA (PSAC)

I am a GSU member? I thought I was a PSAC member! Well in fact, you are both. Confused?

Don't worry! GSU has created this guide to help you navigate through the different aspects of your union.

We hope that you will find the answers to your questions, and if not – we are here to help!

GSU National Council, April 2022



TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT RESPONSABILITIES, HERE'S A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT PSAC DOES VERSUS GSU

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA (PSAC)

Under PSAC, there are 15 unions, including GSU – that's what they call the PSAC Components.

The PSAC's ultimate role is to negotiate collective agreements for its components with the various employers, including the Treasury Board Secretariat. It is the PSAC's responsibility to negotiate:

- Wage increases,
- Job security
- Working conditions
- Benefits
- Pensions

GOVERNMENT SERVICES UNION (GSU)

Within GSU, there are 24 Locals that directly assist members with workplace issues.

Your Local, and GSU as a whole, is responsible to ensure that the collective agreements negotiated by PSAC are being enforced by the employers. Contact GSU for:

- Grievances,
- Workplace harassment
- Health and Safety issues
- Consultation with the employers
- Membership questions

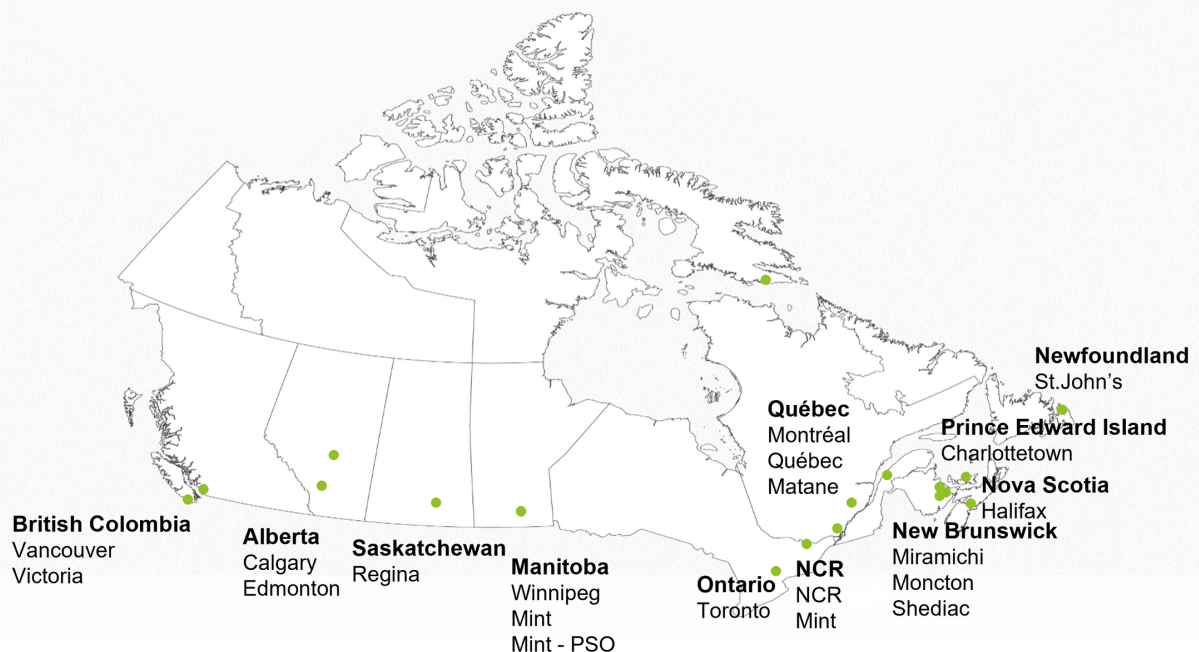
ABOUT GSU

CREATED AT A MERGER CONVENTION IN AUGUST 1999, **GOVERNMENT SERVICES UNION (GSU)**, IS ONE OF THE 15 COMPONENTS OF THE PSAC. A COMPONENT BRINGS TOGETHER MEMBERS WHO WORK FOR THE SAME GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT, AGENCY OR SEPERATE EMPLOYER. **PSAC**, IN RELATION TO GSU, ACTS AS THE **BARGAINING AGENT** – IN OTHER WORDS, THEY ARE THE ONE NEGOTIATING YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT.

GSU IS ORGANIZED INTO **24** LOCALS ACROSS CANADA AND REPRESENTS OVER **12 000** MEMBERS.

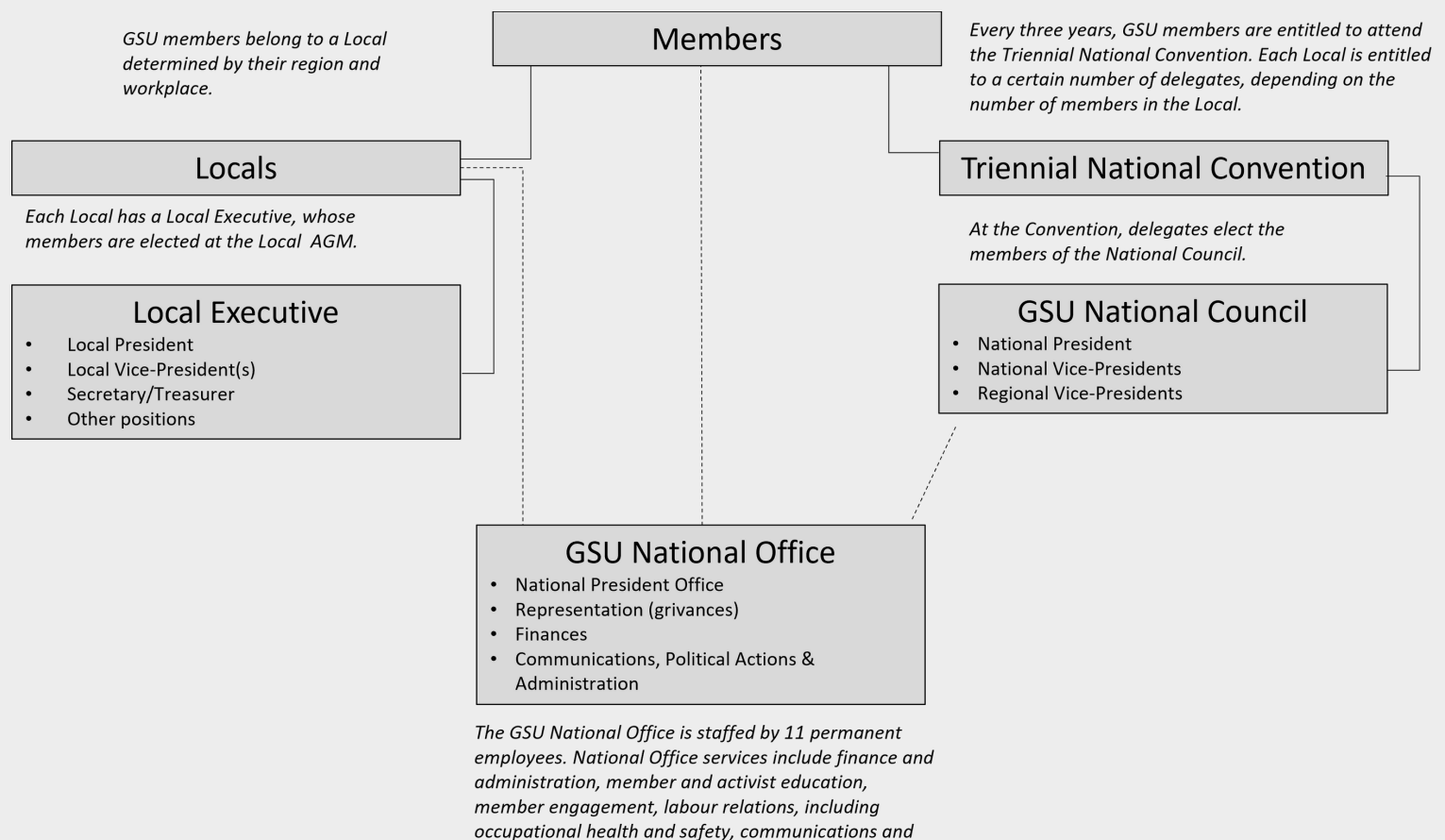
OUR MEMBERS WORK FOR PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT CANADA (PSPC), AS WELL AS SHARED SERVICES CANADA (SSC) WITHIN THE **PA, SV OR TC** GROUPS.

WE ALSO REPRESENT MEMBERS FROM THE **ROYAL CANADIAN MINT (RCM)**, IN BOTH OTTAWA AND WINNIPEG.



GSU'S NATIONAL COUNCIL IS ELECTED AT OUR **NATIONAL TRIENNIAL CONVENTION** FROM LOCAL DELEGATES AND IS COMPOSED OF **16 REGIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS, 3 NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENTS**, (ONE WITH THE EQUITY PORTFOLIO), AND THE **NATIONAL PRESIDENT**.

GSU NATIONAL OFFICE IS LOCATED IN OTTAWA AND PROVIDES MEMBERS, LOCALS AND ELECTED OFFICERS WITH ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION ON VARIOUS LABOUR RELATIONS MATTERS INCLUDING GRIEVANCES AND DISABILITY CLAIMS AS WELL AS FINANCIAL AND MEMBERSHIP SERVICES.



UNION MEMBERSHIP

THE RAND FORMULA AND WHY YOU
SHOULD SIGN YOUR MEMBERSHIP
CARD NOW!

THE RAND FORMULA – WHAT IS IT AND WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

The Rand Formula was named from a decision rendered on January 29, 1946 by Mr. Justice Ivan Rand of the Supreme Court of Canada while he was arbitrating the **Windsor Strike** (September 12 to December 20, 1945).

It provides a form of union security whereby an employer deducts a portion of the salaries of all employees within a bargaining unit, union members or not, to go to the union as union dues ("checkoff").

The original formula was based on the assumption that the union is essential for all workers and must be responsible for them. Two interrelated provisions following from this assumption guaranteed the union the financial means to carry out its programs and establish the financial penalties for employees and unions engaging in work stoppages or illegal strikes.

This is why, still today, **all** employees within a bargaining unit, like the PSAC, have to pay union dues even if they do not wish to become full members of the union.

SIGNING YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD

Being employed as a unionized employee, you can already take advantage of the **many benefits negotiated in your collective agreement** and are provided with a form of union security.

However, to formally become a PSAC and a GSU member, **you must sign a union card** – you will then become a full member or a **member in good standing**.

By signing this card, you will get to enjoy many more benefits such as attending conventions and conferences, access to educational courses, participating in a **strike** vote or running for a position within your Local, GSU or PSAC. In the event of a strike, full members are also entitled to strike pay.

Whether or not you choose to sign a membership card, union dues will be deducted from your pay – this is what we call automatic checkoff or the **RAND** formula. This is based on the principle that since all unionized employees benefit from the same collective agreement, they should also all contribute equally as well.

SO....WHY NOT SIGN A CARD NOW?
**SCAN THE QR CODE TO GET ACCESS TO THE
ELECTRONIC CARD**



UNION DUES

EVERY MEMBER PAYS UNION DUES,
REGARDLESS IF THEY ARE RAND OR
A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING

1

WHAT ARE UNION DUES?

Union dues are a **regular payment** of money made by members of unions, they are used to fund the different activities of the union. As stated before, dues are being collected, whether you are a full member or RAND.

Dues rates can either be a percentage of salary or a flat rate. Percentage rates are **always applied against the first step salary of the classification**, not on your actual salary. Dues are not applied against overtime, bonuses or retroactive pay.

2

WHERE DOES MY MONEY GO?

A portion of the dues goes to PSAC, another one goes to GSU and finally a portion goes to your Local. All **dues rates are adopted by the members** at a Local AGM, GSU Convention and/or PSAC National Convention.

Collective agreement negotiations, defending members rights in the workplace, union education, fighting for social justice – these are just a few of the many activities that your union dues allow GSU and PSAC to do.

3

HOW ARE DUES CALCULATED?

Currently, your PSAC dues rate is **0.9593%** and your GSU dues rate is **0.615%**, for a total of **1.5743% + \$1** that goes to the PSAC strike fund. The final amount will vary depending on your Local dues rate.

HOW ARE DUES CALCULATED

PSAC DUES RATE IS 0.9593% + \$1 THAT GOES TO THE STRIKE FUND (RATE FOR 2022-2024 CYCLE)

GSU DUES RATE IS 0.615% (RATE FOR 2021-2023 CYCLE)

LOCALS' RATE VARIES FROM ONE LOCAL TO THE OTHER

EXAMPLE 1: LOCAL HAS A FIXED RATE OF \$3.00

You are an AS-02. In 2020, the first step salary for an AS-02 is \$61,152

AS-02 of \$61,152 x 1.5743% (PSAC + GSU combined rate) = \$962.72 in dues for 12 months.

\$962.72 divided by 12 months: \$80.23
+ \$ 1.00 for PSAC strike fund
+ \$ 3.00 for the Local fixed rate
Monthly dues = \$84.23

EXAMPLE 2: LOCAL HAS A PERCENTAGE RATE (%) OF 0.235%

You are an AS-02. In 2020, the first step salary for an AS-02 is \$61,152

AS-02 of \$61,152 x 1.8093% (PSAC + GSU + Local combined rate) = \$1,106.42 in dues for 12 months.

\$1,106.42 divided by 12 months: \$92.20
+ \$ 1.00 for PSAC strike fund
Monthly dues = \$93.20

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

WE ALL DESERVE TO BE TREATED FAIRLY
AND BY THE RULES.

OUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT IS A WRITTEN CONTRACT BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYER OUTLINING YOUR RIGHTS AND YOUR EMPLOYER'S OBLIGATIONS. IT PROTECTS YOU IN YOUR WORKPLACE AS IT LAYS OUT YOUR WORKING CONDITIONS SUCH AS HOURS OF WORK, LEAVE AND BENEFITS.

THE PSAC IS THE BARGAINING AGENT FOR THE GSU AND ALL OTHER COMPONENTS. THIS MEANS THAT IT FALLS UNDER THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PSAC TO NEGOTIATE THE TERMS OF A COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT WITH THE DIFFERENT EMPLOYERS.

YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT IS THE RESULT OF YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN PSAC AND YOUR EMPLOYER. IT REFLECTS THE DIFFERENT DEMANDS MADE BY MEMBERS THAT WERE WON AT THE NEGOTIATING TABLE.

THE GAINS OF THE PAST SHOULD NEVER BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED, AND PSAC IS CONSTANTLY FIGHTING TO PRESERVE WHAT WAS WON IN THE PAST WHILE WORKING TO IMPROVE CURRENT WORKING CONDITIONS.

KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK IS THE STARTING POINT IN MAKING SURE YOUR EMPLOYER IS MEETING ITS OBLIGATION.

TO VIEW OR DOWNLOAD YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT, [VISIT GSU'S WEBSITE.](#)



THE GRIEVANCE PROCESS

If you believe your rights have been violated and that you are being treated unfairly, talk to your Local representative to learn more about your recourse options. Before filing a grievance or a complaint, you might have the opportunity to solve the issue outside of the grievance process through an **informal resolution** with your employer. If an informal resolution is not possible or unsuccessful, you can choose to file a **grievance**.

WHAT IS A GRIEVANCE?

A grievance is an allegation, usually by an employee, of misinterpretation or misapplication of the collective agreement provision or workplace practice.

CAN ANYTHING BE GRIEVED?

In essence, yes. As long as the allegations are not frivolous or vexatious, you can file a grievance if you feel like your rights are not being respected at work.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO FILE A GRIEVANCE?

The first and most important step in the grievance process is to contact your Local representatives. There are strict deadlines and they will guide you through the process and work with you to complete your grievance. It is crucial that you follow the recommendations of your Local representatives and work in collaboration with them.

WHY DO I HAVE TO WORK WITH MY LOCAL? WHY NOT HAVE LEGAL COUNSEL

For most matters and in accordance with the legislation and the collective agreement, the union must approve the grievance and represent you through the process. This process ensures the collective rights of the workers are respected.

Hiring your own lawyer would be unlikely to provide much benefit. Not only would you be responsible for paying your own legal costs, but the employer would have no obligation to respond to a unionized employee's privately hired lawyer on this basis, based on the provisions contained in the collective agreement.

CAN I CHOOSE WHO MY UNION REPRESENTATIVE WILL BE?

No. Members are assigned to locals based on their region and employer. Your local representatives are therefore familiar with your department because they are on the ground with you. They are best placed to provide advice and guide you through the process.

GETTING INVOLVED

THERE ARE DIFFERENT WAYS TO
GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR UNION.

1

LEARN ABOUT YOUR UNION AND WHO YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES ARE

This is the starting point – learning about GSU and getting to know your Local representatives will help you better understand how everything works!

Visit our [website](#), follow us on [Instagram](#) and watch videos on our [Youtube channel](#).

2

HELP YOUR LOCAL

Locals are always looking for help in the field, whether to share information, mobilize members, organize social events or to introduce new members from their work group to the Local executive.

Attend your Local AGM: Attending your Local AGM is a great way to learn more about the business of your Local. It is also the occasion for you to exercise your rights as a member by voting for your Local representatives, the budget of the Local and other resolutions.

Become a Shop Steward: Shop Stewards are usually the first point of contact for a member who is experiencing issues in the workplace. They are the presence at work, defending the collective agreement and members' rights. Locals are always in need of shop stewards.

3

RUN FOR AN ELECTED POSITION

As long as you have a nominator and a seconder, any member in good standing can run for an elected position, such as the Local President, of their local. Elections are conducted during the Local's AGM.

A member in good standing can also run for a position on the GSU National Council. Regional Vice-Presidents, National Vice-Presidents and the National President are elected during the GSU National Triennial Convention.

EDUCATION AND BURSARIES

EDUCATION

If you are a **member in good standing**, you have access to PSAC's Union Education program. This program gives opportunities for members to receive education on different topics, from workplace issues to broader social justice issues.

Talking Union Basics (TUB) is the PSAC's introductory course. With hands-on exercises on the collective agreement and issues in the workplace, along with an overview of the PSAC, this course will give you a good introduction to the PSAC and prepare you for more advanced union courses, such as Grievance Handling and Duty to Accommodate.

Some of the costs associated with courses, such as loss of wages while taking the course, is covered by the PSAC. A Family Care Allowance is also provided for members who need it. For more information about education visit: www.psac.com/education

GSU is also starting to have its own educational content. We've launch a series of **Lunch& Learn videos** in the Fall 2021. Visit our [Youtube channel](#) to watch or re-watch them!

BURSARIES

The Government Services Union offers **three** bursaries to **dependents of GSU members** attending post-secondary educational institutions: The A.F. Wood Bursary, the Jim Williams Bursary and the Bonnie Robichaud Bursary. The bursaries are worth **\$2,000** each.

The Government Services Union also offers **one** bursary to a GSU member in good standing attending part-time or full-time post-secondary education, the Bob Haywood Memorial Bursary. This bursary is also worth **\$2,000**.

Visit the [bursary section of our website](#) for more details and to learn how to apply.

MEMBERS' BENEFITS

AS A MEMBER OF GSU AND PSAC, YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A WIDE RANGE OF BENEFITS AND DISCOUNTS.



ORBIT HOME AND AUTO INSURANCE

Get discounted home and auto insurance programs specifically design for GSU members



BMO PSAC AFFINITY MASTERCARD PROGRAM

PSAC members get a special low 17.5% interest rate and contribute to the PSAC Social Justice Fund



COUGHLIN – PSAC GROUP LIFE INSURANCE PLAN

Life Insurance to supplement your own critical illness insurance and "free \$10,000"



UNION SAVINGS PROGRAM

Online discount plan that gives you significant deals on top brands and services



TRAVEL: VIA RAIL CANADA

As a PSAC member, you receive 10% discount for all VIA train tickets and routes



CONTACT...

YOUR LOCAL FOR

- Issues at work
- Grievances
- Local matters
- Membership application



GSU NATIONAL OFFICE

- Updating your contact information
- Finding what Local you belong to

PSAC REGIONAL OFFICE

- Union education
- Political action
- Strike coordination





Government Services Union
Syndicat des services gouvernementaux

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