

SUMMER 2022

THE AGORA

The Government Services Union Quarterly Newsletter

*Time for a
fair contract!*

In this issue

- Bargaining update
- Essential Services 101
- Time to Mobilize



My friends,

Summer is finally here and with it a wind of hope that the worst of Covid is behind us. In-person meetings are resuming and I am more than happy to finally get to meet you in "real life".

I was able to meet with all National Council in April — the first time since my election in October — for a two-day retreat and Council meeting. I had the opportunity to meet with the local executives of 10011 — Quebec, 10060 — Matane, 60011 — Miramichi, 60018 — Shediac, 60009 — Moncton, 90031 — Charlottetown, 20001—Victoria and 20008—Vancouver. I am hoping to visit all Locals by the end of 2022.

There has been a lot of change in the National Council in the past three months as we said farewell to three outstanding members: Shanny Doucet—RVP for New Brunswick & PEI, Jeannette Filion—RVP for the Royal Canadian Mint and Michèle Parent—RVP for Western Quebec stepped down from their roles. I want to thank all three for their dedication over the past years and welcome Mike LeBlanc (RVP NB&PEI), Jeff Tessier (RCM) and Sébastien Sinclair (Western Quebec) to the GSU National Council.

The last two years have been difficult for many, especially in terms of mental health, and the current inflation brings additional challenges. Therefore, more than ever, we must unite before the employer and mobilize to ensure that our members obtain the work contract they deserve, commensurate with the efforts and concessions made over the past few years. The next few months will be crucial, and I am confident that together we will reach our goal.

Finally, I will have the chance to meet some of you during our Local Presidents' Conference in Toronto at the end of September and I am looking forward to talking to you. Meanwhile, I wish everyone a great summer and hope you will all get some time to take care of yourself and your loved ones.

With you and for you,



Bruce Roy, GSU National President



The Government Services National Council

The Agora is published by the GSU National Office. Address any comments to info@gsu-ssg.com

Visit GSU's website: www.gsu-ssg.com

Editor
Dominique Barrette

Editorial Assistant
Diane Rancourt

National Officers
National President
Bruce Roy
National Vice-Presidents
Martine Babcook
Kevin Hanson
National Vice-President, Equity
Kelly Bush

Regional Vice-Presidents
Leanne Moss | Newfoundland & Labrador
Anthony Drozdowski | Nova Scotia
Mike Leblanc | New-Brunswick & PEI
Mélanie Hamel | Eastern Quebec
Sébastien Sinclair | Western Quebec
Steve Colterman | NCR
Paul Paquette | NCR
Nicole Rousseau | NCR
William Tait | NCR
Azra Jusuf | Ontario
Sue Soubra Boone | Ontario
Heather Rawlins | Alberta, NWT & Nunavut
Sheldon Jacobs | Manitoba & Saskatchewan
Linda Harding | Lower B.C. mainland
Reni Stein | Remainder of B.C. & Yukon
Jeff Tessier | Royal Canadian Mint

Bargaining Update

On May 17, 2022, PSAC, our Bargaining agent, declared an impasse in its negotiations with Treasury Board and filed for conciliation.

After months of negotiations, PSAC decided to walk away from the table due to the government's failure to address any of the PSAC concerns.

The last straw was the government's insulting offer to increase salaries by a meager 1.7%, on average, between 2021 and 2025. Accepting this offer would have been nothing less than accepting that our members suffer a pay cut, while inflation is reaching new heights.

This is rather insulting for the thousands of Canadians that kept the Country rolling amid a pandemic.

What is the next step?

On July 5, 2022, the The Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Board called for the establishment of a Public Interest Commission for the EB, PA, SV, and TC bargaining tables to help PSAC and Treasury Board reach an agreement.

During a PIC, each side explains their positions on the outstanding issues at a hearing after which, the PIC issues a report with non-binding recommendations for reaching a settlement.

Once the PIC releases its report, the union meets to discuss the recommendations at which point the parties typically return to the table to resume negotiations with the employer. PSAC expects to receive the report at some point in the fall.

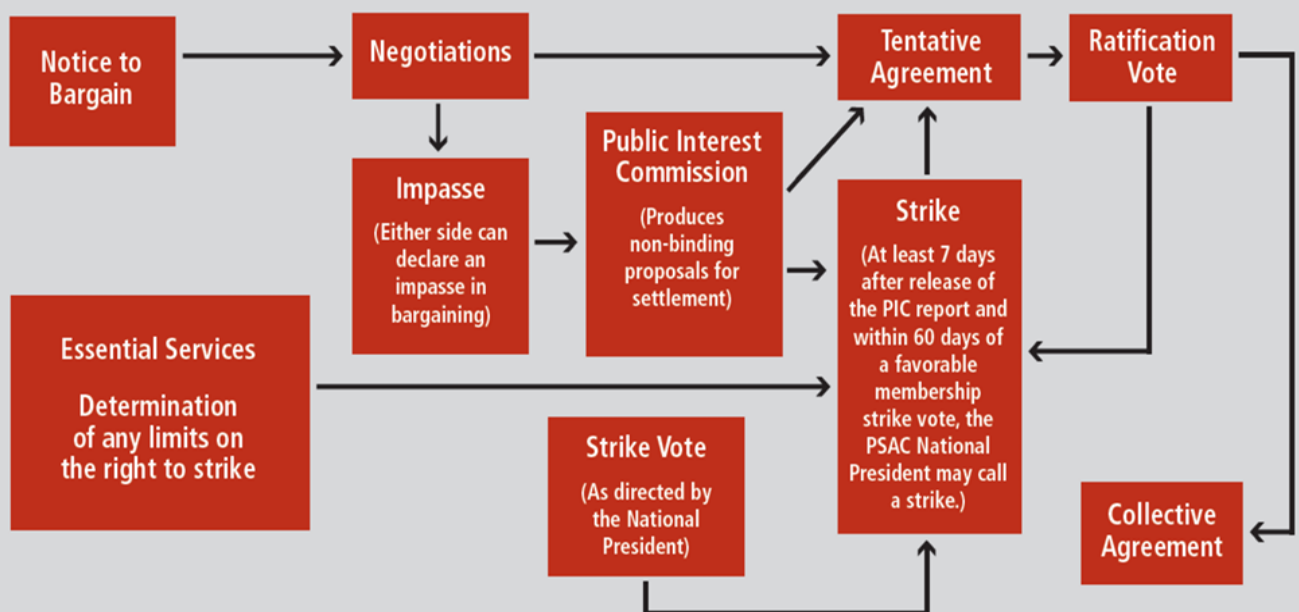
What can you do to help?

Your involvement in this round of bargaining is crucial to show the government we are united and ready to do what it takes to get the contract you deserve.

In the next months, PSAC will be calling on you to take action in your workplaces and remote offices by lobbying, taking part in rallies and sharing your stories. You can stay informed and engaged by visiting the PSAC website under Bargaining > Treasury Board.

Make sure your contact information is up to date to get all the latest updates on bargaining, and if you have yet to sign your membership card, [please do so.](#)

Negotiation process at a glance



Essential Services 101

With the bargaining going on, some of you might have heard the term *Essential Services* or *Essential Services Agreement (ESA)*. But what exactly does it mean?

First, an essential service is defined by the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act (FPSLRA) as a *service, facility or activity of the Government of Canada that is or will be, at any time, necessary for the safety and security of the public or a segment of the public*. An ESA is a written agreement between the PSAC and the employer that certain **work duties** are essential to the safety and security of the public and must continue during a strike.

To identify essential services, the employer must:

- identify the service, facility or activity they believe is necessary
- identify the level of essential service that must be provided (this cannot be disputed but can be the topic of discussions between union and management)
- establish how they will maintain that level of essential service with the LEAST number of people
- review the organization and all positions involved in supporting that activity to determine which duties are essential
- identify the specific positions that are essential and assign the minimum number of workers

Once an agreement is reached between the Union and the employer, members who are in an essential service position will be notified in writing by their department.

What happens in the event of a strike?

If there is a strike, members who are in an essential service position will have to report to work, but they should follow the instructions of the picket line captain before going to and from work.

Furthermore, they should only perform essential duties. If your supervisor orders you to perform non-essential duties, write down the date, time, manager's name and the duties requested/performed and provide this to your local union representative immediately. If your supervisor asks you to perform the duties of an employee who is on strike, **say NO**. If you are ordered, follow the steps above and grieve.

[Watch our Lunch & Learn session on ESA on our YouTube channel to learn more!](#)

Essential Services Codes

Codes are used to describe and categorize the types of essential services jobs. Factors considered are the work conditions, environmental circumstances, probability, or even the possibility, that *human life or public safety* would suffer if a work stoppage interrupted the duties of these employees.

Code	Category	Description
1	Full-Time	Essential services are required on a daily basis. Employees will report to work and perform only those duties which have been identified as essential
2	Alternate	A position whose incumbent would serve as an alternate to a full-time essential services position
3	Conditional	Essential services are to be performed when specific conditions are met and agreed to by the parties (e.g., essential at certain times / circumstances).

Time to Mobilize!

During negotiations, even the smallest gesture in support of the bargaining team can help. While it can be intimidating for some, there is a place for everyone to get involved, from understanding your collective agreement to being at the frontline of a rally.

Don't know how to get started? **Get engaged!**

Getting involved doesn't have to be intimidating. Start small. Read your collective agreement and connect with your shop steward or a member of your local executive. Start talking with your co-workers about the bargaining issues that matter most to you and learn what's happening at the bargaining table. Sign up for PSAC's newsletter and follow our social media channels. When you're ready, take part in an online action to learn more about bargaining and show your support.

Feeling more comfortable? **Get involved!**

Attend a union event, meeting, or rally. Wear buttons, pins, or union swag to publicly show support for your bargaining team and send a strong message to your employer. You can also help spread the word about important bargaining issues by handing out leaflets to other members. Keep the conversation going by posting or sharing bargaining information on social media.

Ready to take the next step? **Get active!**

Talk to your local about attending a bargaining conference to give you a say in bargaining priorities. If you are a member of an equity group, you can also consider registering for a regional equity committee or conference – bringing forward the experiences and needs of our diverse members is key to building a stronger union. Make even more of an impact by joining the bargaining team or your local executive. You can also help to mobilize other members by joining the national mobilization team and participating in a call or texting campaign. Finally, turn up the pressure by lobbying your elected officials.

Excerpt from Our Union Voice (PSAC), Vol.16, Issue N° 1, 2022.





GSU Bursary - there is still time to apply!

If you are member in good standing attending post-secondary education or have a dependant attending post-secondary education, you could win one of GSU's \$2,000 bursary.

Visit our [website](#) for more details

GSU National Council Retreat

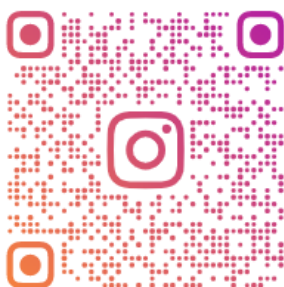
For the first time since 2019, GSU's National Council was able to meet in person during the week of April 25, 2022 for a two-day retreat, where members participated in various workshops related to their union role.

The retreat was followed by a National Council meeting and for some, it was their first time attending a National Council meeting in-person.



National Council members

GSU is now on Instagram!
Follow us at [gsu_ssg](#)



GSU_SSG

UPCOMING GSU EVENTS

Regional Caucus
September 27, 2022

Local Presidents' Conference
September 28-29, 2022

National Council meeting
September 30, 2022

Young Workers Conference
Nov. 30 & Dec. 1, 2022