

Hello,

That's a very interesting question you are asking me to comment on. "How should the union engage new members in the public service"?

I myself don't have a lot of union experience yet, or much experience in the public service. I guess most students answering this question for this bursary are likely in a similar situation. I actually do have a couple things working in my favour though. Number one is that my dad is fairly involved in the union. What this means is I hear him talk and talk with him about union things. I hear a lot of his thoughts and opinions on things and that allows me to think what I agree with and what I think of other points.

Next is that I am a public servant already! Well, kind of. I have been employed with PSPC as a student for 3 months now, and just got another contract to be extended into the winter. So this is an excellent opportunity for me. Make no mistake though. I worked hard to get here. In high school, now in college, and also at my other part time job at the local movie theater. It was me doing all these things that allowed me to be chosen to be a student in the public service.

Maybe you are wondering, what does this have to do with our question? Well, a lot. Because it gives me perspective. One of the reasons I'm so excited to get on with the government after graduation is because it is a unionized job. I can see already the big benefits that can offer compared to non-unionized jobs.

So the way I would recommend engaging new members is to talk to them. I know, sadly, that as a student I'm not unionized, but if I get in as a regular hire I would hope that some type of union orientation would be done. Let me know what the union does and does and doesn't do. Go over simple things like, what the benefits are? Who I can reach out to if I need help? I know my fellow students would appreciate that too. As being new to the unionized world, we don't have a solid understanding of what our union may be able to do. Once we understand that, if our union has touched base with all of us, it may motivate some become active in our union. I imagine getting the managers at work to agree to these orientations is tough, but honestly, I think that is the best way to engage new people. Talk to them, reach out to them, give them some basic education on what our unions can do, and then in turn what we can do for our unions. To make them stronger for us and our coworkers. Show them they are important by making that introduction happen.

Other things like social events, social media pages, that kind of thing can be great too, but until the mystery around something like unions is gone, the other steps may seem a bit too confusing for many to

take. Obviously as I mentioned above, I've heard a lot about unions and how important they are. I'm already sold there on the basics. If others could hear passionate and basic explanations as well though maybe it would get a lot more people interested in doing more with our union.

Maybe another idea would be to have someone (like maybe my dad?) visit colleges and universities and give a little presentation to the classes or the schools about what unionization means to workers and the population overall. Give students, who are really the future workforce, the chance to ask questions to someone who can give them answers. That could potentially really change the way students look for work after schooling. I know it has for me. A lot of people at home may have the opposite as well. Parents that don't support unions for whatever reasons. Maybe those kids would benefit from hearing the other side of the argument from an actual union person. There's also job fairs our union could attend to educate people before they even get to the public service, and maybe even things like mailouts highlighting some of the good unions have done. Maybe even information on it about people could join a union if their work doesn't have one.

I think, as with many things, it comes down to education. Sometimes though hoping people will get educated on their own on something as seemingly mysterious as unions, just may not be enough. The media and a lot of the public is usually against unions. It will take a big on purpose effort to start reversing that. And I think the only way is through a combination of approaches. Like the ones I outlined above. If people heard some of the great things about unions that I have I am positive many people would have a much better view of unions and getting engaged with unions. Better pay, better work conditions, better benefits, better hours of work, protection against managers if needed. Who doesn't want these things? I think a lot of the time a lot of these people that bad mouth unions just have jobs they don't like, and rather than work to find a better one with a union, they just try to bring other unionized workers down. But that's another topic.

So yes, education, reach out to the people, any people, but specifically for new people in the public service, introduce yourself, tell them what our union can do and who to reach out for help. Outline some of the benefits they have in their job because of the union. And that a lot of managers get as well.

On that note, I think I am over my 800 words, so I will leave it at that.

Thank you very much for reading.