

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA (PSAC)

# I AM A UNION MEMBER!



PSAC  
*Ontario*

## *Orientation Kit For New Members*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

COMPONENT/DCL: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL: \_\_\_\_\_

PSAC ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

# I AM A UNION MEMBER!

## INTRODUCTION

### WELCOME

Welcome to the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)! The purpose of this guide is to provide you with answers to basic questions about navigating your union. We want you to be well informed about how your union can help you in your workplace.

### MEMBERS

Our union is made strong by its members – that means you. PSAC’s structure encourages active participation and supports our members’ needs. The PSAC is one of Canada’s largest unions, representing

over 170,000 members nationally, with over 30,000 members in the Ontario region.

PSAC members in Ontario are employed in large and small communities throughout the province. Our members work in the federal government (including departments and agencies), crown corporations, universities, casinos and racetracks, community service agencies, Aboriginal communities, airports, diamond mines and the security sector. PSAC recognizes the growing diversity of its members through committees and events that promote human rights and it is this diversity that makes our union strong.

## HOW DO I BECOME A MEMBER OF MY UNION?

### UNION CARD

By being employed at a workplace that is unionized, you already receive many of the benefits negotiated by our union over the years such as pay equity. The RAND formula, provides a form of union security whereby an employer automatically deducts a portion of the salary of each employee within a bargaining unit. This portion goes to the union as union dues. The RAND formula is also known as ‘automatic checkoff’. It is based on the principle that all members have equal access to their collective agreement benefits, so should contribute equally as well.

However, to formally join PSAC as a full member, you need to sign a union card [pictured to the right]. By signing this card, you are able to enjoy even more benefits such as attending conferences and conventions, participating in educational courses, voting and running in Local elections, etc. Contact your Local Executive or PSAC Regional Office to sign a union card.

The image shows a sample union card form for the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC). The form is bilingual, with English and French text. It includes the following sections and fields:

- Header:** PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA / ALLIANCE DE LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE DU CANADA. Side 1/Côté 1.
- Application:** APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP, REPLACEMENT CARD, INFO. UPDATE / DEMANDE D'ADHESION, REMPLACEMENT DE CARTE, MISE-A-JOUR.
- Instructions:** PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY and give as much information as possible! / VEUILLEZ COMPLÉTER EN LETTRES MOULÉES et fournir le plus d'information possible.
- Identification:** PSAC ID/ No ID AFPC (grid), EMPLOYEE ID/NUMÉRO D'EMPLOYÉ(E) (LAN/NO) (grid). Includes a note: Leave blank if you don't know! / Laisser en blanc si vous êtes incertain-e.
- Employment:** Component or DCL/Élément ou SL/CD, Local /Section locale.
- Membership Question:** DO YOU HOLD AN ELECTED UNION POSITION/OCCUPEZ-VOUS UNE CHARGE SYNDICALE ÉLUE? Yes/Oui  No/Non
- Member Details:** MEMBER'S DETAILS/COORDONNÉES DU MEMBRE. Includes checkboxes for Mr./M. and Ms./Mme, and fields for Surname/Nom, First Name/Prénom, and Initials/initiales.
- Contact Information:** HOME ADDRESS/ADRESSE AU DOMICILE (with city/ville, province, and postal code/code postal fields), HOME TEL. #/TEL. DOMICILE, WORK TEL. #/TEL. TRAVAIL, and E-MAIL/COURRIEL.
- Language Preference:** LANGUAGE PREFERENCE/LANGUE PRÉFÉRÉE:  ENGLISH/ANGLAIS  FRANÇAIS/FRENCH.
- Vertical Text:** Reverse to be completed / Veuillez compléter au Verso.

## WHERE DO I GO IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY UNION?

---

*There are numerous resources available to you as a PSAC member. Below is a list of people who can help you starting with your Local.*

### UNION STEWARDS

The lifeblood of our labour movement is its stewards, who are member representatives in the workplace and occupy a formal role. Stewards help to link the rank and file members to their union. While defending the collective agreement, stewards are the union's presence at work. Stewards engage and inspire members to take action. Stewards help to build the capacity of the union and problem-solve prior to following the grievance process.

You can find your steward by contacting your Local Executive.

### LOCAL EXECUTIVE

Local Executives are democratically elected leaders of your Local. Local Officers ensure that the integrity of our union is safe-guarded at the workplace. They work with members, other Local Officers, PSAC and Component Officers and other union staff and elected leaders to advocate for members.

You can find who your Local Executive is by visiting your Component website. If you are a Directly Chartered Local member, contact your PSAC Regional Office.

### COMPONENT & DIRECTLY CHARTED LOCALS

Components are made up of Locals. Originally, Components were organized along departmental/ employer lines for the federal public service. Although that logic generally remains, it is not always the case anymore, given on-going employer re-organization, and PSAC organizing into new provincial and private workplaces.

Directly Chartered Locals (DCL) are Locals that are directly serviced by the PSAC and are not affiliated with a Component. There are 18 DCLs within Ontario.

### REGIONAL COUNCIL

Regional Council brings activists together from different Components and DCLs to: network, share information, give regional policy direction, provide campaign updates, set priorities, and identify issues in the region. Regional Council representatives are elected every 3 years within each region based on rules set out by the region. Regional Council brings together activists who provide leadership and political direction on a wide range of issues.

You can find the contact information for the Regional Council representatives at <http://ontario.psc.com/council-members>.

### REGIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT (REVP)

The REVP is the highest democratically elected member of the union in the Ontario Region. The REVP of Ontario is the head of the PSAC Ontario Council and the only full-time elected position on the Council. The REVP also sits on the PSAC governing board, the National Board of Directors, and the Alliance Executive Committee, which deals with the day-to-day- operations of PSAC.

You can contact the REVP's office at: (416) 485-3558 Ext. 232.

---

## I AM A UNION MEMBER!

# HOW DOES MY CONTRACT GET NEGOTIATED?

---

## CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

PSAC has more than 230 bargaining units, each with its own collective agreement that deals with its specific working conditions. When a new group of workers unionize with PSAC, they either form a new bargaining unit, or join an existing one. Bargaining units can be as small as 10 members or as large as 70,000 members.

PSAC's bargaining teams include members elected by the bargaining unit, and a PSAC negotiator. The team receives support in the form of: research, mobilization, legal and other bargaining support from PSAC staff. Our union has over 50 years of experience in negotiating collective agreements that meet members' needs in a wide variety of jobs and locations. Bargaining teams negotiate, but collective agreements only come into force once ratified (voted upon) by the Local membership.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Your collective agreement protects you in your workplace. It outlines your rights and responsibilities and lays out the rules for your working conditions; for example, hours of work and overtime, vacation, leave, and pay and benefits. It also defines the employer's responsibilities. The collective agreement reflects a history of what members have demanded and won at the bargaining table.

Member participation is key to PSAC's success in negotiations, grievances, pay equity, or any other union activity. We all have to work together in solidarity to achieve the best outcome for all members. Activism can take many forms and it's an exciting way to participate in your union and our labour movement as a whole. PSAC collective action creates the necessary collective power to reach good agreements.

# WHAT CAN I DO IF I HAVE PROBLEMS IN MY WORKPLACE?

---

## INFORMAL RESOLUTION

If you believe your rights have been violated, speak to your Local steward or union representative about your recourse options. Before filing a grievance, there may be opportunities to solve the conflict outside of the grievance process by coming to an informal resolution with your employer.

outlined in your collective agreement, be sure to let a steward or Local Executive member in your union know immediately so that they can help you file a grievance within the timelines stated in your collective agreement.

## FILING A GRIEVANCE

A grievance is the union's tool for making sure the employer follows the rules in the collective agreement. If you believe your supervisor or someone else has violated one of our rights

## STEWARD/LOCAL EXECUTIVE

A steward or Local Executive member from your Local will help you through the grievance process in your workplace. The grievance process allows you to raise the issue directly with the employer and allows you and your union representative to gather additional information relating to the grievance.

## COMPONENT OR REGIONAL OFFICE

If the steps of the grievance procedure do not resolve the issue at a Local level, a Component representative will be assigned. If you are a member of a DCL, then the grievance will be sent to the PSAC Regional Office to consider whether it will be referred to a grievance and adjudication officer. The information you gather throughout the grievance procedure is critical to PSAC's ability to assess the merits of the grievance and to decide whether it will take the grievance to a hearing.

## GRIEVANCE & ADJUDICATION/ ARBITRATION

If the grievance is referred to a hearing, a PSAC grievance and adjudication officer will represent you at arbitration and/or before boards or tribunals.

PSAC will support you through the grievance process to protect your rights and the rights of all members. At any stage of the grievance process a settlement may be reached if both parties are satisfied with the outcome. Settlements may include back pay, a change that makes the workplace safer, or any other remedy requested, depending on what the initial grievance was based upon.

---

## HOW CAN I GET TRAINING?

### BASIC AND ADVANCED EDUCATION

Over the years, thousands of PSAC members have received the opportunity to expand their knowledge, develop skills, personal confidence and look at the world differently following their participation in the PSAC education program.

The program is truly comprehensive and offers opportunities for our members to receive union education on topics ranging from workplace issues to broader social justice and community issues. The courses offered vary in length from 45-minute workplace sessions to one or two-day courses and three to five day in-residence courses. We also offer an intensive Union Development Program for emerging leaders. PSAC Education is based on adult participatory training methods and popular education. Our courses invite members to share their knowledge and experiences, reflect on new learning, take action and change their world for the better.

Our introductory course is Talking Union Basics (TUB) and introduces members to the PSAC and prepares them for more advanced union education. It provides an historical and structural overview of the union, introduces participants to the collective agreement and gives them a chance for hands-on practice in problem-solving.

PSAC covers certain costs associated with courses, including reimbursing members for the wages they lose while taking courses and provides a Family Care Allowance for members who need it. Our courses are accessible. Check with your local steward, regional office or regional website to find out the schedule of courses and what is available to you. (<http://ontario.psc.com/topics/education-program>)



---

## I AM A UNION MEMBER!

# HOW CAN I STAY CONNECTED WITH MY UNION?

---

### PSAC communicates with its membership through various media including:

- Email
- Face-To-Face
- Telephone
- Social Media (i.e. Facebook & Twitter)
- Webinars
- Telephone Town-halls
- Meetings
- Town-halls
- Mail Correspondence
- Newsletters & E-Newsletters

## WEBSITES

The PSAC National and PSAC Ontario websites provide members with national union news and links to regional and Component websites. PSAC provides members with tools to assist them in their advocacy work, such as contact information for Members of Parliament, draft letters in support of campaigns, and advice on various advocacy strategies and tactics.

**National Site:** [www.psaunion.ca](http://www.psaunion.ca)

**Regional Site:** [www.psa.com/ontario](http://www.psa.com/ontario)

## EMAIL

PSAC regularly sends out emails to its membership with bulletins on special topics such as pay equity and bargaining strategies, which are regular feature of PSAC's communication plan. PSAC produces materials in support of its policies that result from member-driven initiatives.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

PSAC provides up-to-date union news, as well as platforms for union advocacy through our own social media.

### PSAC Ontario Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/PSACOntario](http://www.facebook.com/PSACOntario)

### PSAC National Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/psac.national](http://www.facebook.com/psac.national)

**Twitter:** @PSACOntario & @psacnat

## COMPONENTS

The contact information for all the Components can be found at: <http://psaunion.ca/component-contact-information>.

You can contact your nearest PSAC Regional Office if you do not know which Component you belong to, or if your Local is a DCL.

## REGIONAL OFFICES

PSAC Regional Offices are there to help Locals with education, political action, Local development, negotiations, mobilization, strike coordination and more.

### Regional Offices in Ontario are located at:

- **Toronto:** 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 608, Toronto, ON M4P2Y3. 1-800-354-9086
- **London:** 480 Sovereign Road, U-11 London, ON N6M1A4. 1-800-366-0539
- **Sudbury:** Unit 2 - 754 Falconbridge Rd. Sudbury, ON P3A5X5. 1-800-354-9134
- **Kingston:** City Place 1-1471 John Counter Blvd. Suite 412 Kingston, ON K7M8S8. 1-800-355-0783
- **Thunder Bay:** Ste. #224 - 1139 Alloy Drive Thunder Bay, ON P7B6M4. 1-800-355-0794





*PSAC  
Ontario*

**1-800-354-9086**

90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 608  
Toronto, Ontario M4P 2Y3

**[www.ontario.psic.com](http://www.ontario.psic.com)**