

**2016 - 2018**



**PSAC Prairie Region  
Education Plan**

## OVERVIEW OF THE 2016 – 2018 PSAC PRAIRIE REGION EDUCATION PLAN

This plan was developed by the Prairie Region Council Education Committee in consultation with PSAC Prairies leaders, stewards, active union members, and regional office staff.

### **The goals of the plan:**

- Increase our union presence in the workplace in order to protect and support our members' rights;
- Build stronger Locals/Branches;
- Provide opportunities for members, activists, stewards, human rights allies and leaders to develop their knowledge, skills and abilities on important union issues;

You are invited to send your feedback on this plan to the Prairie Region Council Education Committee:

Nathaniel Angus-Jackman (Prairie Region Council) [angusn@psac-afpc.com](mailto:angusn@psac-afpc.com)

Shannon Blum (Prairie Region Council) [sylph@sasktel.net](mailto:sylph@sasktel.net)

Janette Husak (Prairie Region Council) [husakj@psac-afpc.com](mailto:husakj@psac-afpc.com)

Mike Weisgerber (Prairie Region Council) [thatweisguy@gmail.com](mailto:thatweisguy@gmail.com)

Judy Shannon (staff - Regional Education Officer) [shannoj@psac-afpc.com](mailto:shannoj@psac-afpc.com)

## DEVELOPING, PROMOTING AND EVALUATING THE PRAIRIE REGION EDUCATION PROGRAM

Members who have participated in the education program consistently refer to it as one of the highlights of their union experience. Our education program is open to any member in good standing who lives and works in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta.

Based on the goals of this plan and our ongoing conversations with union leaders and activists in the Prairies, we will:

- Prepare two education schedules per year for each of the five Prairies sub-regions (Manitoba, Northern Saskatchewan, Southern Saskatchewan, Northern Alberta and Southern Alberta);
- Offer a variety of Prairies-wide education activities;

- Offer Local and/or sub-region education events based on identified learning needs, budget availability, etc.
- **Promote** the education program by:
  - E-mailing activists (i.e. Stewards, Local, Branch, Regional and National Officers, Alliance Facilitators, Prairie Region Council representatives, Regional Women’s Committees, Area Councils, Human Rights Committees and the Regional Aboriginal Peoples’ Circle), course graduates, and any member who would like to be advised, about upcoming education events;
  - posting notices of education events on the Prairie Region website <http://prairies.psac.com/>
  - encouraging union activists and course graduates to publicize upcoming education events during their interactions with other members, including one-to-one conversations, Local meetings, Local Facebook and web sites, etc.;
  - Suggesting possible themes or “learning streams” for members with a particular focus for their union activism (i.e. steward skills, human rights advocacy, social justice, union leadership);
  - developing new promotional tools i.e.:
    - Local-based “incentive” initiatives;
    - Posters, work station and plant-gate materials with “testimonials” from course graduates, in a variety of formats;
    - “Lunch and learn” introductory events that connect with other education program events;
- **Evaluate** the efficacy of the education program. Evaluation methods will include:
  - Yearly electronic surveys for union leaders, activists, and course graduates;
  - evaluations completed by participants at the end of each education event;
  - six-month post-course follow up of at least 10% of education program participants to determine which learning has been most relevant in the longer term, suggestions for course amendments, etc.

## PARTICIPATING IN THE PRAIRIE REGION EDUCATION PROGRAM:

There is great value in bringing diverse groups of members to a central meeting place to learn from one another and build important union relationships. This “face to face” model is used for much of the Prairie Region education program and it includes our Core Program, our Advanced Program, and more:

### **OUR CORE EDUCATION PROGRAM:**

The following core courses will be available through the five Prairies Regional offices (Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton and Calgary) at least once during the 2016 – 2018 Regional Education Plan cycle. Core program courses can also be combined and amended to meet the education needs of our members in rural communities across the Prairies.

**Talking Union Basics (TUB):** The “TUB” course is the union’s key “introductory” education event. Have you wondered what it means to be a union member, how the PSAC works, and what happens to your dues dollars? The Talking Union Basics provides answers to these questions and much more. You will learn more about your collective agreement, your employee rights and your rights as a member of the PSAC. You will explore the many opportunities to be active in the union and how to help build strong locals in the Prairie region. It is recommended that members take Talking Union Basics or the “Our Communities, Our Union, Our Rights (for Aboriginal, Inuit and Metis members) course as they provide a solid foundation for other PSAC courses.

**Our Communities, Our Union, Our Rights: an introduction to the PSAC for Aboriginal Members:** This two-day course is for First Nation, Inuit and Métis members who have had little or no exposure to their union and would like to learn more about it. During the course participants will learn more about the role of the union in advancing Aboriginal rights in the workplace, the union, and our communities, resources and decision-making in the PSAC, and how to become more active in the PSAC through local, regional and national structures. It is recommended that members take Talking Union Basics or the “Our Communities, Our Union, Our Rights (for

First Nation, Inuit and Métis members) course as they provide a solid foundation for other PSAC courses.

**Health and Safety at PSAC Workplaces:** This one-day course is for any member who would like to know more about ensuring they have a safe and healthy workplace. Participants will learn about the roles and responsibilities of workers, employers and unions, and discover the important events in the union's struggle for health and safety in our workplaces. You will explore ways that PSAC members can exercise their health and safety rights, and make plans to bring ideas and information back to the Local Union at the workplace.

**Basic Duty to Accommodate:** This introduction to the Duty to Accommodate will explore the concepts behind discrimination, defining accommodation, the laws that govern accommodation, jurisprudence, and the responsibilities of all parties (the member, the union and the employer) with respect to workplace accommodation.

**Grievance Handling:** This two-day course gives new stewards essential knowledge for handling Level 1 grievances. Participants gain a better understanding of how to work with members at the initial stages of the grievance procedure, and how to mobilize members around workplace problems.

**Building the Union Through Stewards' Work:** This one-day course will support the critical role stewards play in building the union. Participants will explore how to engage more members in their union, identify a variety of strategies for addressing workplace issues and increase their confidence in talking with members.

**Local/Branch Officer Training:** There are several options for Local/Branch officer training that are offered in a variety of time frames, depending on the needs of the participants and the specifics of the region. These courses provide essential knowledge to help executive officers uphold their responsibilities, including how an effective Local/Branch functions roles and responsibilities of the Executive officers; how officers can work well as a team, engage their members, and deal effectively with management.

## **OUR ADVANCED EDUCATION PROGRAM:**

Advanced education courses usually include an application and selection process to ensure that course participants meet the course pre-requisites and reflect the diversity of PSAC members in the Prairie Region. We will continue to offer advanced courses that deepen participants' understanding of issues affecting our members. The following advanced courses will be offered at least once in the Prairie Region during the 2016 – 2018 Regional Education Plan cycle:

**Advanced Duty to Accommodate:** This course, intended for Stewards or Local/Branch officers, will develop representation skills to support members with disabilities who are experiencing duty to accommodate issues at the Local level. Areas of study include applying the legal definitions of discrimination and accommodation in the workplace, identifying pro-active accommodation measures, dealing with the challenges and key issues related to duty to accommodate members with disabilities, and identifying various recourse mechanisms for members requiring accommodation. Pre-requisite:

- the Basic Duty to Accommodate course **and**
- representation training (i.e. Grievance Handling or Advanced Representation Training for Stewards) **and**
- experience with and exposure to issues related to the duty to accommodate.

**Advanced Representation Training for Stewards (ARTS):** If you are a PSAC Steward with some experience representing members with management and you want to improve and practice your representational skills, then this course is for you. During this four-day course, you will look at various routes for engaging members in helping them to resolve workplace issues. You will deepen your knowledge of the processes and legal framework of grievance handling and what is needed from you to support the PSAC's representation of members at all levels of the grievance process, up to arbitration/adjudication. Using case studies based on grievances that have been to arbitration, you will practice steps in the grievance process including; interviewing a member, fact-finding, meeting with management for initial problem-solving, drafting a grievance, preparing for a grievance hearing and representing a member at a grievance hearing. Pre-requisites for the PSAC Advanced Representation Training for Stewards:

- the Talking Union Basics or the “Our Communities, Our Union, Our Rights course (for First Nation, Inuit and Métis members), **and**
- the PSAC Grievance Handling course, **and**
- experience representing members with management.

**Unions Work for Women:** The goal of this five-day course is to build a better union, better workplaces, and a better society by encouraging and supporting active PSAC women in their struggle for fairness, equality and social justice. Areas of study include our herstories, the work of the labour and social justice movements, the impact of the current economic and political climate on equality rights, how to work strategically with other activists, and how to take on a leadership role in the PSAC, in our workplaces, and in our communities. This course is open to women members of the PSAC. Pre-requisite: “Talking Union Basics”, or the “Our Communities, Our Union, Our Rights course (for First Nation, Inuit and Métis members), or equivalent experience gained through being an active PSAC member.

**Unionism on Turtle Island:** This five-day course is for union members who want to learn more about Aboriginal issues and work as an ally in solidarity with Aboriginal Peoples in their union, workplaces and communities. Participants will explore the history of oppression and resistance, Aboriginal issues at the bargaining table, creating a representative workforce, and supporting Aboriginal activists in the union. This course will provide a comfortable and supportive environment in which participants can explore their attitudes, ideas and questions. Participants will develop strategies to encourage solidarity and build the union. Prerequisites: “Talking Union Basics”, or the “Our Communities, Our Union, Our Rights course (for First Nation, Inuit and Métis members), or equivalent experience gained through being an active PSAC member.

**Violence Prevention in Federally and Provincially Regulated Workplaces:** This new two-day advanced course provides information and enforcement tools on the Canada Labour Code Part II requirements on violence prevention. Areas of study include recourse methods for preventing and dealing with workplace violence; the rights and obligations of workers, workplace committees and the union; complaints; and other protections available for PSAC members. Pre-requisites: an understanding of the Internal Complaint Resolution Process and the three basic health and safety rights (right to know, right to participate, right to refuse).

Selection preference will be given to members who are active Local/Branch Officers and/or active Health and Safety Committee Members or Representatives. Course content will also reflect provincial legislation, if applicable.

**Young Workers in Action:** This course brings together young PSAC members from across the Prairie region for an extended weekend of learning and networking. Participants will increase their confidence, learn more about the PSAC, the labour movement and the social justice movement, and build on their leadership skills, including public speaking, effective communications, group building and outreach. We will also have a forum for participants to strategize about how to increase the involvement of young workers in their union. This course is open to PSAC members who are 35 years of age and under. It is strongly recommended that participants complete the “Talking Union Basics”, or the “Our Communities, Our Union, Our Rights course (for First Nation, Inuit and Métis members) beforehand.

**The Union Development Program (UDP):** This 10-month leadership course is part of the PSAC’s national leadership education program. Offered annually (January to October) across the country. Prairies members participate in the West/North UDP for members from BC, the North and the Prairie Region. The UDP provides an extensive learning opportunity for emerging leaders to develop the necessary analysis and skills to identify and support union priorities, and to expand our pool of skilled activists who can inspire others. Pre-requisite: the “Talking Union Basics” or the “Our Communities, Our Union, Our Rights course (for First Nation, Inuit and Métis members), or equivalent experience through union activism in the PSAC. The annual application period for the UDP is early September to early October – please check the PSAC Prairie Region website <http://prairies.psac.com/> during that time for additional course and application information.

### **MORE FACE-TO-FACE EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES:**

Through the Prairies Regional Offices and community venues, we will continue to offer a variety of additional education opportunities as part of the 2016 – 2018 regional education plan. Please contact your PSAC Prairie Region office to find out more about:

**Facilitation skills for Leaders and Stewards:** This course promotes a facilitated approach to the work of union leaders and stewards. Participants will explore good listening skills and how to lead productive discussions, and learn more about designing union meetings that members want to attend – where exciting things can happen! You will also develop skills to facilitate new member orientation sessions, how to communicate more effectively, and how to help members work better together so we can build a stronger union movement.

**Facing Management:** Local union representatives meet with management representatives as equals for various reasons – grievance hearings, union management consultations and sometimes for collective agreement negotiations. This course will develop your knowledge, skills and confidence to effectively consult with or confront management to enhance the union’s presence at the workplace.

**Labour History:** This innovative new course is a series of four, 3-hour workshops spread over a period of time - take one or take them all! Each workshop focuses on a different aspect of our rich labour history, including why we celebrate Labour Day, our labour victories and the positive impact they’ve had on Canadian society and culture, the role of equity activists and their allies in our struggles for justice, and labour’s role, today, in protecting and enhancing workers’ rights.

**Representing Members with Mental Health issues:** This one-day course for stewards will develop your understanding of the concepts of mental health, how mental health issues impact our workplaces, and the challenges stewards face when representing members experiencing mental health issues. You will learn from actual cases that have been through the grievance and adjudication process, and you will explore the union’s duty to represent members, and the employer’s duty to accommodate.

**A Woman’s Place is in Her Union:** This one-day course brings together PSAC women to discuss the history of women’s work and the labour movement, celebrate the gains made in our journey towards equality, develop strategies for the work still to be done and make friends, create allies and build solidarity!

**The Steward Series:** This new series of eighteen 2-3 hour workshops includes the following topics:

- Building Our Union
- Connecting with Aboriginal Members
- Defending GLB Members Against Homophobia
- Duty to Accommodate
- Human Rights in the Workplace
- Mental Health Matters
- Planning for Action
- Stewards as Allies for Racial Justice
- What Stewards Need to Know about Health and Safety
- Why Unions
- Working Through Conflict

The PSAC Prairies Regional Offices will consult with Stewards in their area to determine which workshops to offer each year. Please contact your PSAC Regional Office for more information.

**Preparing for Conventions:** 2017 is the year of the Prairie Region Convention and all the Component conventions. To support the important work of convention delegates and observers, we will offer the following courses:

- **Convention Preparation:** This course focuses on the process, development and support of resolutions. It also includes exercises on preparing for an inclusive convention and a brief overall introduction to convention proceedings. All Prairies Regional Offices will offer this course, or a 3-hour “Resolution Writing” workshop, in the fall of 2016. Additional courses/workshops may be available in 2017, depending on identified needs.
- **Convention Procedures:** This course focuses on the what, why and how-to’s of conventions. It includes the role of convention participants, convention procedures, speaking to a resolution, the rules of order, and a mock convention so that participants can experience the politics and debate that takes place at conventions. All Prairies Regional Offices will offer this course in the winter/spring of 2017. Additional courses/workshops may be offered in 2017-2018, depending on identified needs.
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**The 2016 – 2018 Prairie Region Education Plan offers additional opportunities for members to participate in union education activities, including:**

### **THE ALLIANCE FACILITATORS' NETWORK:**

The PSAC's Membership Education Program policy states that *“union education must find different, creative ways of reaching members and of addressing their pressing and ever-changing needs”* and identifies the Alliance Facilitators' network as an additional way to augment the education programs offered through the PSAC Regional Offices and other venues. Prairie Region Alliance Facilitators complete a five-day facilitation skills course and further develop their facilitation skills through our three-step certification process. Alliance Facilitators believe in the power of union education, they're committed, energetic and creative, and they're eager to bring union education to your workplace through “lunch and learns” or after-hours (at or near the workplace) education events. For more information on how an Alliance Facilitator-led event can help build the union in your Local/Branch, please contact Judy Shannon (Prairies Regional Education Officer, [shannoj@psac-afpc.com](mailto:shannoj@psac-afpc.com)), or your PSAC Regional Office.

### **THE PSAC NATIONAL ON-LINE LEARNING PROGRAM:**

Our on-line program offers union training at your own pace and time. These introductory courses provide a solid overview on a range of topics. Explore the union's basic roles and responsibilities including the services it provides all members. To register for the on-line learning program, set up an account with a personal email address (Employer email addresses may be blocked). Once you've signed up, click on the “my content” link to see a list of available courses. Courses can be done on your computer or tablets and Apple products.

Here's a list of the courses currently available through the PSAC's on-line learning program.

- Welcome to the PSAC
- Union 101

- Introduction to Union Health and Safety
- Equity Groups and the PSAC
- Human Rights are Workers' Rights
- Grievance and Representation Primer
- Pensions and Retirement
- Understanding Economics
- Understanding Strikes

Please go to <http://psacunion.ca/course-descriptions-psac-online-learning> for course descriptions, then set up your PSAC account <https://psacunion.ca/user> and start learning today!

## THE 2016 – 2018 PRAIRIE REGION EDUCATION BUDGET

Membership expense reimbursement is based on the PSAC Prairie Region Education Administration guidelines (see below), the PSAC National Education Program Policy, and the PSAC Travel Policy.

### **2016 - 2018 PSAC Prairie Region Education Plan budget**

Alliance Facilitators' Network <sup>1</sup>	\$ 72,200
Sub-Regional allocations <sup>2</sup>	
Manitoba	\$101,500
Northern Saskatchewan	\$ 50,750
Southern Saskatchewan	\$ 50,750
Northern Alberta	\$ 72,500
Southern Alberta	\$ 72,500
Rural Members' Subsidy <sup>3</sup>	\$ 43,500
Region-wide Education Events <sup>4</sup>	\$237,500
Prairie Region Subsidies <sup>5</sup>	\$ 7,500
Education supplies <sup>6</sup>	\$ 900
Contingency fund <sup>7</sup>	\$ 12,468
<b>Total 2016 - 2018 Regional Education Budget</b>	<b>\$722,068</b>

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<sup>1</sup> This line item supports Alliance Facilitators with training and skill development, preparation and research time, and out-of-pocket costs associated with facilitating at education events.

<sup>2</sup> Regional Offices schedule education events for members in their sub-regions, based on this Education Plan. The determination of which courses to offer, when, and how are based on the ongoing consultations with union leaders and members in the five sub-regions.

<sup>3</sup> This line item supports education events for members in rural communities.

<sup>4</sup> Region-wide education events may include advanced union courses, union schools, conferences for different groups of members, etc. It does not include the Union Development Program (UDP) and the National Leadership courses which are funded by the PSAC National Education budget.

<sup>5</sup> These subsidies are intended to cover partial costs for members participating in non-PSAC union education events such as those offered by District Labour Councils, Federations of Labour, and the Canadian Labour Congress. Subsidies are only available for courses not offered by the PSAC in the current regional education plan.

<sup>6</sup> This line item covers the cost of education supplies such as DVDs and resource materials used at PSAC education events.

<sup>7</sup> Approximately 2% of the regional education budget has been set aside to fund unanticipated events and activities.

## PSAC PRAIRIE REGION EDUCATION PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES

(revised September 1, 2016)

All PSAC functions are smoke-free. Additionally, participants are asked to avoid the use of scented products such as perfumes and aftershaves when attending any PSAC event.

### **Registration:**

Members must register in advance for all education events, unless otherwise indicated. To register, please use the on-line registration form located on the Prairie Region website <http://prairies.psic.com/>, click on the course you're interested in, then click on "register on-line". You may also register by contacting your PSAC Prairies Regional Office by phone, e-mail or fax.

Education events are available to members who live or work in the same location as the event i.e. events held in Winnipeg are for Manitoba members, events held in Calgary are for Southern Alberta members, and so on. \* *(NOTE: This guideline is currently under review; more information will be provided at a later date.)*

\* Education events offered in rural communities are generally available only to those who live and or work in or near the rural community. Please contact your PSAC Regional Office for more information.

Members should not attend the same course more than once in a three-year cycle (for core courses and other face-to-face education opportunities) or more than once in a six-year period for advanced courses. Please see the 2016 – 2018 Prairie Region Education Plan for a description of core courses, advanced courses, and other education opportunities.

## **Course Hours:**

In general, regional-office based course hours are:

**Evening only workshops:** 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.\*

**Saturday courses (1 day):** 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. \*

**Friday night - Saturday courses (1½ days):** 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday\*

**Saturday - Sunday courses (2 days):** 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on both days \*

**Friday night - Saturday - Sunday courses (2½ days):** 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Friday and 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday\*

\* Please note that course hours may be adjusted for seasonal travel or to accommodate special needs. Details will be provided to members registered for the course.

**3, 4 and 5 day Advanced courses:** see the 2016 – 2018 Prairie Region Education Plan for advanced course descriptions. We will advertise and recruit for advanced courses two to three months before the course date. Each specific course's poster will provide information on course hours, expense entitlements, etc.

## **Member expense entitlements:**

The following expense entitlements are available to members who **complete** an evening, Saturday, Friday night - Saturday, Saturday - Sunday or Friday night – Saturday - Sunday course:

- All members are entitled to claim **Family Care costs** in accordance with the PSAC Family Care policy which is intended to assist members in covering additional costs incurred as a direct result of attending an authorized PSAC event.
- Members who are scheduled to work during course hours are entitled to claim **loss of salary** costs.

- Members are entitled to additional expenses based on how far they live from the course location i.e.:

**Course participants who live less than 60 kms from the course location:**

- **Week night courses:** a light supper (i.e. pizza, sandwiches) will be provided and participants are entitled to claim \$25 to offset the cost of transportation and parking. Receipts are not required.
- **Saturday courses (1 day):** Participants are entitled to claim \$50 for the day to offset the cost of transportation, parking and lunch. Receipts are not required.
- **Friday night - Saturday courses (1½ days):** A light supper (i.e. pizza, sandwiches) will be provided Friday evening. Participants are entitled to claim a total of \$75.00 to offset the cost of transportation, parking, and Saturday lunch. Receipts are not required.
- **Saturday - Sunday courses (2 days):** Participants are entitled to claim \$50 per day to offset the cost of transportation, parking and lunches. Receipts are not required.
- **Friday night - Saturday - Sunday courses (2½ days):** A light supper (i.e. pizza, sandwiches) will be provided Friday evening. Participants are entitled to claim a total of \$125.00 to offset the cost of transportation, parking, and Saturday and Sunday lunches. Receipts are not required.

**Course participants who live between 60 and 100 kms from the course location:**

- **Week night courses:** a light supper (i.e. pizza, sandwiches) will be provided and participants are entitled to claim mileage at the applicable PSAC Travel Policy rate, plus parking costs. Receipts are required for parking reimbursement.
- **Saturday courses (1 day):** Participants are entitled to claim mileage and one lunch at the applicable PSAC Travel Policy rate, plus parking costs. Receipts are required for parking reimbursement.

- **Friday night - Saturday courses (1½ days):** A light supper (i.e. pizza, sandwiches) will be provided Friday evening. Participants are entitled to claim mileage and one lunch at the applicable PSAC Travel Policy rate, plus parking costs. Receipts are required for parking reimbursement.
- **Saturday - Sunday courses (2 days):** Participants are entitled to claim mileage and two lunches at the applicable PSAC Travel Policy rate, plus parking costs. Receipts are required for parking reimbursement.
- **Friday night - Saturday - Sunday courses (2½ days):** A light supper (i.e. pizza, sandwiches) will be provided Friday evening. Participants are entitled to claim mileage and two lunches at the applicable PSAC Travel Policy rate, plus parking costs. Receipts are required for parking reimbursement.

**Course participants who live more than 100 kms from the course location:**

- Are considered to be in Travel Status;
- Participants will be reimbursed in accordance with the PSAC Travel Policy rates for meals, travel and accommodation (if applicable), provided they have been pre-authorized to attend the course. Further information on the PSAC Travel Policy is available at <http://psacunion.ca/psac-travel-policy> or through your PSAC Regional Office.

Information on expense entitlements for **Advanced courses** will be made available 2-3 months before the course dates, as part of the recruiting and participant selection materials.

## **Special Needs: Access and Dietary Restrictions**

The PSAC is committed to ensuring that the accessibility and dietary restrictions of our members are respected. If you are a member with a disability or special need that requires accommodation, please contact your PSAC Regional Office to provide the necessary information that will assist us in meeting your needs. The following information will be used to support your participation at PSAC education events:

- What are the functional/cognitive limitations arising from your disability? (You are not obliged to disclose your diagnosis, only your functional limitations)
- Please list suggestions for accommodating your functional limitations:
- Do you have any other special requirements that require accommodation? i.e. religious, dietary? If yes, how may we provide accommodation? Please specify:
- You may be required to provide relevant medical documentation that will assist us in responding to your request.