

PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA (PSAC)

I AM A UNION MEMBER!



PSAC Prairies

Orientation Kit For PSAC Members

NAME: _____

LOCAL: _____

COMPONENT: _____

PSAC ID #: _____

STEWARD/LOCAL CONTACT: _____



ELECTRONIC VERSION: ORIENTATION KIT



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 our 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 more than 200,000 workers in every province and territory in Canada and in

locations around the world—with nearly 30,000 members in the Prairie Region.

PSAC members in the Prairies are employed in large and small communities throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Our members work for the federal government, crown corporations, airports, and in the scientific, academic, community and private sectors; in such diverse roles as park wardens, border services workers, casino workers, food inspectors and tax experts.

PSAC recognizes the growing diversity of its members throughout many fields of employment. It is this diversity that makes our union strong.

THE UNION ADVANTAGE

The union movement has made major gains in Canada, and some of the significant gains were achieved by PSAC, including: maternity and family leave provisions gained in 1980; same-sex spousal recognition in 1990; and pay equity rights won in 1998. More recently, the PSAC gained a precedent-setting family status accommodation. The 2010 ground-breaking Canadian Human Rights Tribunal 'Johnstone Decision' shaped the future of accommodations related to family status.

For further information about PSAC victories, visit psacunion.ca/our-victories



the union has
done for you!

1 Stronger contracts

We negotiated stronger contracts for thousands of workers in the federal government, provincially regulated organizations, in territorial governments and with other employers, so PSAC members can benefit from job protection and decent working conditions in these tough economic times.

2 Job security

We defended - and continue to defend - job security provisions in our collective agreements so that PSAC members are not booted onto the street with two weeks notice, but given strong transition support measures. When the Conservative government started cutting jobs we deployed our team across the country to explain members' rights and created extensive on-line tools about workforce adjustment provisions.

3 Billions of dollars in pay equity

Our pay equity complaints have gained literally billions of dollars for PSAC members. With a few exceptions, employers have done everything they can to avoid paying but we persist and we succeed. In 2011, the Supreme Court ruled directly from the bench upholding the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision that said Canada Post owed retroactive pay equity payments plus interest.

4 Legal advocacy

Our legal team has defended the rights of individual PSAC members and fought back discrimination for family status, racial discrimination and other violations in the workplace. Most recently, we won a court decision that means employers must try to find a workable solution to accommodate workers with childcare obligations.

5 Justice for members

Our negotiated grievance procedures mean the union can defend members who are unjustly disciplined or fired, or who are denied money or benefits they are entitled to receive. Each month PSAC reviews over 100 new cases after the final level of the grievance process. Over 85% of the grievances we take forward are either settled or won before a third-party arbitrator.

6 Jobs and the economy

We commissioned and publicized independent reports in British Columbia, the Atlantic and nationally that demonstrated the negative economic consequences of cutting government programs and services. Nationally, we continue to press the government for transparency around how cuts are impacting services and the economy.

7 Healthy members and safe workplaces

We have successfully campaigned for health and safety protection for PSAC members and prepared tool kits, hazard prevention guides and background information on diseases and illnesses to help protect members at work. We called for a national mental health strategy to push the government to take the current mental health epidemic seriously and deal with its root causes.

8 Taking care of families

We were one of the first unions to gain paid maternity leave 30 years ago. Since then we have negotiated payment of the difference between EI or QPIP benefits up to 93% of pay for most PSAC members who take maternity or parental leave. Last year in one of our bargaining units we achieved a breakthrough - a 93% top up for members who take compassionate care leave to look after a relative or friend in palliative care.

9 Walking the talk on justice and human rights

We actively sought and won benefits for same sex couples at the bargaining table. We were also fully engaged in the work to change the Canadian Human Rights Act to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. With our Aboriginal, Inuit and Métis members, we created the Justice for Aboriginal Peoples initiative to raise awareness and put pressure on the federal government.

10 Community partners

We have partnered with municipalities, provinces and other stakeholders to stand up for strong federal public services across Canada. We sponsor community events and local fund-raising initiatives like runs and food drives.

BENEFITS OF A FULL UNION MEMBERSHIP

As an employee in a unionized workplace, 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 and should contribute equally as well.

However, to formally join PSAC as a full member, you need to sign a membership card (pictured below). By signing this card, you can enjoy even more benefits such as attending conferences and conventions, taking educational courses, voting and running in local elections, and participating in our various committees, area councils, and other membership bodies.

If you do not have a membership card to sign, or if you need information such as your PSAC ID or local number, please contact your local executive or PSAC regional office.

Sign a membership card today! - <https://bit.ly/MembershipPSAC>

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I AM A UNION MEMBER!

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 guide to PSAC resources and our structure.

UNION STEWARDS IN YOUR LOCAL

All members belong to a 'union local,' and we encourage you to reach out to your local executive. 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.

UNION LOCAL STRUCTURE

Local executives are the 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, regional office staff and elected leaders to advocate for members.

Locals can belong to a component. Historically, components were organized along departmental/employer lines for the federal public service. Directly chartered locals (DCLs) are locals that are directly serviced by the PSAC and are not affiliated with a component. There are currently five DCLs within the Prairies.

You can find who your local executive is by visiting your component website or by contacting your PSAC regional office. If you are a DCL member, contact your PSAC regional office.

REGIONAL OFFICES

There are five PSAC regional offices in the Prairie Region. They are located in Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Calgary. Each regional office supports members from a wider geographic area.

The PSAC regional staff work with members doing education, mobilization, organizing, and political and human rights activism. PSAC regional offices are there to help locals with political action, local development, negotiations, strike coordination and more. Feel free to contact the offices to find out what activities are going on for members in your region.

You can find the contact information for each PSAC regional office on page 11 or by visiting prairies.psac.com.

REGIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT (REVP)

The REVP is the highest democratically elected member of the union in the Prairie Region. The Prairies REVP chairs the PSAC Prairie Region Council (PRC). The PRC identifies and addresses needs and issues important to Prairie Region members.

The REVP sits on the PSAC governing board, the National Board of Directors (NBoD), and the Alliance Executive Committee (AEC), which deals with the day-to-day operations of PSAC. The REVP is also PSAC's connection to the broader labour movement in the Prairies, including with the three provincial Federations of Labour in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

You can reach the office of the REVP by calling 204-956-4625 or by visiting prairies.psac.com.

PRAIRIE REGION COUNCIL

The Prairie Region 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.

PRC representatives provide leadership and political direction on a wide range of issues and are elected every three years within each region, based on rules set in the regional bylaws.

Please see <https://prairies.psac.com/prairie-region-council/> for more information.

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.

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 nearest PSAC regional office to consider whether it will be referred to a grievance and adjudication officer.

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 your rights 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.

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.

PSAC will support you through the grievance process to protect your rights and the rights of all members.

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.

I AM A UNION MEMBER!

WHAT YOUR UNION DOES FOR YOU

The PSAC is made up of members just like you who, for sixty years, have been advancing and protecting workers' rights. Working together, we will continue supporting each other to make our working lives better.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

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.

If you need help finding your collective agreement, reach out to your local executive or call the nearest PSAC regional office.

CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

PSAC has more than 300 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 60 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.

ORGANIZING

A core commitment of PSAC and the broader labour movement is ensuring that all workers enjoy the benefits of union representation and better working conditions. In the Prairies, our active organizing program has successfully unionized and welcomed over 3,000 new members to our union since 2010.

If you know someone who would like to join PSAC and

enjoy the benefits of being a union member, please contact your regional office or check the Prairies website for the regional organizer's contact information.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The PSAC has a vital interest in protecting the occupational health and safety of its members and strives to achieve the standards for occupational health established by the applicable federal or provincial legislation. That standard is identified as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.

In practice, the PSAC seeks to:

- Promote health and safety activism at all levels of the union;
- Assist components and DCLs to establish and maintain effective union health and safety committees at the local, regional and national levels;
- Assist members to develop and maintain effective joint health and safety committees that comply with statutory requirements;
- Promote union and workplace participation in program design and in the development of health and safety policies;
- Assist members who have been affected by workplace injuries, including representation for workers' compensation benefits.

The PSAC trains members as health and safety advocates and keeps them informed of current workplace health and safety issues. Health and safety training is provided as part of the regional education programs. PSAC staff also work with local joint health and safety committees to help them represent members.

The Prairie Region has staff dedicated to health and safety initiatives. Should you have any health and safety related concerns, visit prairies.psac.com/topics/health-and-safety.

HOW CAN I GET TRAINING?

BASIC AND ADVANCED EDUCATION

Over the years, thousands of PSAC members have received the opportunity to expand their knowledge over a wide variety of subjects, develop skills, personal confidence and look at the world differently following their participation in the PSAC Education Program.

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.

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 online courses and webinars.

Talking Union Basics (TUB), our introductory course, introduces members to the PSAC and prepares them for more advanced union education. It provides a 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.

All PSAC members can fully engage in PSAC education opportunities, at no cost. PSAC covers costs associated with courses, including reimbursing members for the wages they lose and travel expenses 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.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN MY UNION?

Member participation is key to PSAC's success in negotiations, grievances, pay equity, and all other union activities. We all 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.

PSAC members engaged in activism have been at the forefront of gains made by unions. Activists working with PSAC regional committees such as the area councils, women's committees and human rights committees are improving labour and human rights, social justice issues, and women's and Indigenous rights. Regional young workers' committees have raised awareness about the critical issues that are being faced today by educating and mobilizing young workers.

AREA COUNCILS

PSAC area councils are made up of members from different locals and components, grouped within regional areas.

Area councils are the forum for all PSAC locals in a community to share information and learn from each other's experiences. Sharing best practices and ideas helps members and locals become better at effective workplace advocacy.

Area councils are also the political arm of our union — they provide a venue for members to engage with and mobilize around various PSAC campaigns, political action, broader union or social justice issues, and lobby government on behalf of our union. They also provide input on and work on PSAC's municipal, provincial and federal election campaigns and talk to members and the public about the

I AM A UNION MEMBER!

importance of voting for candidates that support working people.

There are currently eight area councils in the Prairies: Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina, Westman (Brandon area) and Winnipeg.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEES

PSAC’s Prairie Region has four constitutionally-recognized human rights committees: Edmonton, Calgary, Regina and Winnipeg. There is also one Regional Indigenous Peoples Circle based in Prince Albert and available to all members in Northern Saskatchewan.

Human rights committees are open to all members who self-identify as racialized, Indigenous, a person with a disability or 2SLGBTQIA+ and are a forum for members to share information and mobilize around issues specific to human rights. Human rights committees provide a safe environment for members to raise issues of concern to make our union and our communities more inclusive, and participate in PSAC campaigns in our community that seek to strengthen human rights in our workplaces and communities.

REGIONAL WOMENS COMMITTEES

PSAC regional women’s committees are available to any members who self-identify as women. The Prairies committees are located in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg.

Women’s committees serve an important purpose in our union, including increasing the participation of women activists and leaders. They provide safe spaces for PSAC women to identify, strategize and work on issues of particular concern to women in a local or region. Women’s committees also encourage the development of strong networks of women that cross racial, sexual, gender, ability and class lines. They work politically to move forward issues at the federal, provincial and municipal level.

JOIN A COMMITTEE

Regardless of where you live, you can participate in a committee nearest you by phone or Zoom. For information on upcoming meetings, please visit prairies.psic.com. If you would like to know more or become involved in your regional area council, women’s committee, human rights committee, or young workers’ committee, please reach out to your PSAC regional office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR UNION

To inquire about the following, please visit the applicable PSAC websites:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| • About PSAC | psacunion.ca/about-us |
| • Prairie Region | prairies.psic.com |
| • Member Benefits | psacunion.ca/benefits |
| • Membership Dues | psacunion.ca/about-your-union-dues |
| • Union Voice | psacunion.ca/our-union-voice-0 |
| • Your Rights at Work | psacunion.ca/your-rights-work |

All information is available in hard copy by request to the regional office.



CONTACTS

HOW CAN I STAY CONNECTED WITH MY UNION?

PSAC communicates with its membership through various mediums, so there are many ways to connect with your union. Staying connected allows us to provide you with information on topics that will affect your job, your pay and your benefits. The following are just a few avenues to stay informed.

WEBSITES

The PSAC National and PSAC Prairies 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: psacunion.ca

Regional Site: prairies.psac.com

EMAIL

PSAC Prairies sends out a monthly email newsletter designed for members in the region, containing news, events, education opportunities, and campaign and bargaining information. For links to more information and to sign up with your email address, visit prairies.psac.com.

SOCIAL MEDIA

PSAC National and PSAC Prairies provide up-to-date union news, as well as platforms for union advocacy, through our various social media channels.

PSAC Prairies Facebook:

facebook.com/psacprairies

PSAC National Facebook:

facebook.com/psac.national

Twitter:

[@psacprairies](https://twitter.com/psacprairies) & [@psac_afpc](https://twitter.com/psac_afpc)

Instagram:

[@psacprairies](https://instagram.com/psacprairies) (PSAC Prairies)

[@psacprairiesywrep](https://instagram.com/psacprairiesywrep) (Prairies Young Workers)

[@psacafpc](https://instagram.com/psacafpc) (PSAC National)

[@psacpride](https://instagram.com/psacpride) (PSAC Pride)

REACHING OUT TO COMPONENTS

Looking for answers? Reach out to your local executive, local steward, component, or regional office.

Many components have useful information that is more specific to your work department. The contact information for all components can be found at psacunion.ca.

You can also contact your nearest PSAC regional office if you do not know which component you belong to, or if your local is a directly chartered local.

REACHING OUT TO THE PSAC PRAIRIES REGIONAL OFFICES

Winnipeg Regional Office

Providing services for members in the Manitoba region

175 Hargrave Street, Suite 460
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3R8
Telephone: 204-947-1601
Toll-free: 1-866-393-7722

Saskatoon Regional Office

Providing services for members in the Northern
Saskatchewan Region

333 3rd Avenue North, Suite 604
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 2M2
Telephone: 306-244-3033
Toll-free: 1-800-992-3033

Regina Regional Office

Providing services for members in the Southern
Saskatchewan Region

Suite 110-1230 Blackfoot Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 7G4

Telephone: 306-757-3575
Toll-free: 1-877-890-3575

There are many ways in order to stay connected. Have an idea? Need an answer? Reach out. Stay in touch.

Edmonton Regional Office

Providing services for members in the Northern Alberta
Region

10130 - 103 Street, Suite 2050
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3N9

Telephone: 780-423-1290
Toll-free: 1-800-814-3948

Calgary Regional Office

Providing services for members in the Southern Alberta
Region

Campana Building
609 14th Street Northwest, Suite 400
Calgary, Alberta T2N 2A1
Telephone: 403-270-6555
Toll-free: 1-800-461-8914