



PEOPLE POWER WORKS!

As we embark on the Public Interest Commission process, mediation dates have been set for December 20-23 in Ottawa. At this meeting we will endeavour, as always, to make gains at the table for the membership.

We entered bargaining with a sense of optimism, especially having united to ensure benefits gravely needed by Canadians were administered at literally a moment's notice. We thought the employer would recognize the amazing work you do, in addition to work-life balance issues the membership highlighted for this round. We hoped the employer would recognize the economic hardships that our members face because of inflation. Alas, it has not been that way at all, and we were left with no choice but to declare impasse. The Labour Board certified and agreed with our claim and as a result set up mediation dates in December, to be followed by Public Interest Commission hearings in the first months of the new year.



If you have been around for the last several contract negotiations, you will know that nothing ever gets the employer moving on our demands until pressure has been put on them. This is fact, and we always do better with that pressure. On the economic demands, we have consistently negotiated raises that met or exceeded inflation – this is nothing new. We did this with your pressure, every time.

For those across the country who saw what happened with education workers in Ontario over the last several weeks – **this is what solidarity looks like** and the combined pressure of membership literally overturned the most heinous anti-labour legislation seen in the country. That's what people power does. **They won by showing their strength.** It is realistically the only way to win when fighting the power for what is just! But of course, the fight didn't end there – by the time of printing, the education workers of CUPE issued a 5-day strike warning and it will come down to their resolve and perseverance. We stand with them, and time will tell how hard the fight is against a government intent on being unreasonable. The entire point being nothing will come without **collective strength and dedication.**

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**SI VOUS PRÉFÉREZ RECEVOIR CETTE PUBLICATION EN FRANÇAIS,
VEUILLEZ VOUS ADRESSER À VOTRE PRÉSIDENT- E DE SECTION LOCALE**

While we can never rule out similar legislation, we don't anticipate it on the horizon considering the Prime Minister took a principled issue against Ontario using it. What we do have is a boss with the power of delay, who flatly rejects work-life balance issues, and most offensively, has not even shown up with an economic counteroffer. Nothing. Zero. While the legislation may not come our way, the battle may very well.

Therefore, we need to keep up and frankly increase the pressure big time. We will win when we show that we will stand up for what is right. Those making astronomical bonuses quite obviously don't understand the pressures of workers' lives and their economic needs. It is our membership who will win this contract, with numbers and strength standing up to the power. It is completely possible we will see an economic offer at mediation – but if so, don't get your hopes up because if it is anything like the other public service offers on their tables, it will be completely out of touch with the current economic reality.

We can do this; we can show them that a reasonable and fair offer is the minimum. We stepped up when the employer needed us to deliver their mandate, and it's time for them to recognize that dedication through a contract that reflects today's realities.

Keep up the fight and let's win this!

Adam Jackson
2nd Vice President, responsible for collective bargaining

CALL CENTRE MEMBERS OFF-PHONE PERIOD

During the last round of bargaining, your union negotiated a five (5) minute off-phone period for each full hour that you are working. This improvement to the working conditions of our Call Centre members was a hard-fought benefit achieved through focussed negotiations and several meetings with the employer.

At a recent Call Centre meeting, it was disclosed by the employer that the use of article 60.01 (off-phone status) is only being utilized by our members about 60% of the time.

We have heard from many of our members in Call Centres that they were suffering from symptoms of fatigue and stress, amongst other things, from having to respond to voluminous calls from taxpayers without sufficient rest time from the phones. It is imperative for your mental health, stress, and fatigue that you avail yourself of this 5 minute off-phone period.

This union is constantly striving to improve benefits for our Call Centre members, and we encourage our members to avail themselves of this right contained in the collective agreement.

Eddy Aristil
Chair, Call Centre Committee



MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

First, let me congratulate you again on the excellent work you do every day for Canadian taxpayers. Whether your work is done from one of the Agency's offices or remotely, you continue to provide professional and quality service and it is to your credit.

I would also like to thank all our union representatives for their hard work and dedication to our members. Like you, they are employees of the Canada Revenue Agency and members of the Union of Taxation Employees. They are here to serve and assist you. They do so proudly and on a volunteer basis. I understand that some situations are sensitive, stressful, and difficult for our members in the workplace and our representatives do everything possible to support you. I ask each and every one of our members to always be respectful of our union representatives. Like you, they deserve to be respected at all times.



As the year comes to a close, I know that your dearest wish is to get a new fair and equitable contract as soon as possible in order to face the very high inflation that is increasing the price of all the goods and services we consume. Housing, transportation, heating, groceries, everything costs more.

Our union and its bargaining team want the same thing. But it doesn't look like the employer is in any great hurry to come to a fair agreement that shows appreciation and respect for you and the work that you do, by not even presenting us with a wage offer.

If there is one very clear message that we have been hearing from you for a long time, it is that you are sick and tired of waiting years for your contract to be renewed.

I recently delivered this message personally to both the Minister of National Revenue, the Honourable Diane Lebouthillier, and the Agency Commissioner. I reiterated our outrage that our bargaining team is the only PSAC team currently negotiating with the federal government that has not received a wage offer from the employer.

I have warned them that it is out of the question for us to wait and do nothing if there is no significant progress in our bargaining.



Just like in the spring of 2020, if we need to hold strike votes again to increase the pressure to improve our bargaining power, then that's what we will do. Your support for your bargaining team last time was simply incredible and I expect the same this time.

The Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau has recently stated that bargaining should be done in a respectful and thoughtful manner at the bargaining table. I agree. The problem with this statement is that the federal government representatives are not showing us the respect that we have a right to expect through their actions or inaction as they are constantly dragging their feet and unduly prolonging our bargaining. In effect, the employer is using existing legislation to stretch the process.

This is unacceptable, it must stop, and things must change. You deserve much better.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

There is currently a need to fill roles relating to health and safety at certain CRA worksites. These roles include, among others, Health and Safety Committee members and ad-hoc members.



Health and Safety Committee members work with their CRA counterparts to fulfill the Committee's legislated mandate under the Canada Labour Code. Duties include, among others, conducting inspections of the workplace, investigating workplace hazards and incidents, and holding regular meetings.

Ad-hoc members are employees who currently work onsite at least part of the time and who act as the eyes and ears of health and safety committee members currently teleworking. Ideally, these ad-hoc members would eventually become members of the health and safety committee.

If you are interested in becoming a health and safety committee member or ad-hoc member, please contact your local UTE president to find out whether there are currently any vacancies at your worksite. You may find the contact information for your local executive, at the following link: <https://www.ute-sei.org/en/about/locals>

The CRA is also looking for volunteers to join the First aid and AED community. The primary goal of the first aid/AED program is to ensure the workplace is prepared to provide for the prompt rendering of first aid to an employee for an injury, an occupational disease or an illness, if required.

If you are interested in volunteering, please advise your manager or a First aid/AED Coordinator. We strongly encourage you to consider volunteering for any of the above-described roles. By doing so, you would not only be ensuring a healthier and safer workplace for yourself and your colleagues, you would be doing work that is extremely fulfilling.

Doug Gaetz
Chair, UTE Health and Safety Committee

UTE SUPPORTS LOCAL FOOD BANKS

Last year, UTE National donated over \$100,000 to food banks across Canada, while many locals showed their generosity as well, an example being Sudbury Local 00042 who donated \$20,000 to their local food bank.



Food insecurity is a real issue for many Canadians. During the holiday season, it can be particularly difficult, especially in the wake of a global pandemic.

Here are some stats taken from the website [Food Banks Canada](https://foodbankscanada.ca/) (<https://foodbankscanada.ca/>) :

NUMBER OF VISITS - There was a total of 1,462,795 visits to food banks across Canada in March 2022- up 15%.

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CHILDREN - 33.1% of food bank users in Canada are children, while only representing 18.8% of the population.

SINGLES - 45.4% of food bank users in Canada are single adult households, while representing 29.3% of the population.

SENIORS - there has been an 8.9% rate increase in accessing food banks as compared to other age groups.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE - 49% of food bank users are on social assistance or disability related supports as their main source of income.

EMPLOYED - 1 in 7 of those accessing food banks in Canada are employed, with 51% of individuals employed facing food insecurity.

UTE deeply encourages its membership to join us in supporting our fellow citizens who are struggling to put food on the table for themselves and their family. We hope that this year you will join our continued initiative and donate, so we can help those less fortunate.

Ways to donate

[Find your local food bank \(https://foodbankscanada.ca/find-a-food-bank/\)](https://foodbankscanada.ca/find-a-food-bank/) and consider donating this holiday season.

Food insecurity is an issue year-round. A monthly gift is a convenient way to support your local community all year.

Donations of time, food and household items also help. Consult the [most-needed food and household items \(https://foodbankscanada.ca/how-you-can-help/\)](https://foodbankscanada.ca/how-you-can-help/) list from [Food Banks Canada](#) for more information.

Cosimo Crupi
RVP Northern and Eastern Ontario
Co-Chair Communications Committee

SOLIDARITY—WHY WE NEED TO SUPPORT OTHERS

Recently, the Ontario government passed Bill 28, an Act to resolve labour disputes involving school board employees represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). The legislation would deny these members their rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Human Rights Act and limit the jurisdiction of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, arbitrators, and other tribunals to make certain inquiries or decisions. The collective agreement included in Bill 28 would cap wage increases at 2.5% annually for workers who earn below \$43,000 per year, and at 1.5% annually for workers who earn above \$43,000 per year. In addition, those who chose to strike could be fined \$4,000 per day.



CUPE members said "NO!" and, despite the potential legal and financial penalties, took to the streets on November 4th, the day after Bill 28 received royal assent. Across the province, schools,

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SUPPLEMENTARY DEATH BENEFIT

While death is a subject that no one likes to talk about, it is important to advise members of a benefit that could be available to your beneficiary or estate upon your passing. The unfortunate fact is that in many circumstances survivors or the estate are not aware of this benefit and thus do not apply for it.

What is the supplementary death benefit? It is a life insurance benefit provided to most current or retired public service employees. For certainty, this benefit applies to current and former Canada Revenue Agency employees. In most cases employees are automatically entitled this benefit.



In almost all cases the paid-up amount of the benefit is \$10,000 for life. In certain situations, this amount could be more depending on an individual's age and other circumstances.

You are encouraged to visit the Government of Canada website: www.canada.ca and search for the Supplementary Death Benefit. There you will find more detailed information on the matters discussed above along with other useful information such as ensuring your beneficiary is up to date.

The MOST important factor to mentioned here is that in order to receive this benefit it must be applied for. We are recommending that members complete the form below and place a copy with your will or other papers and make sure a family member is aware of this document. This document includes the telephone number that your estate can call. Members should put their PRI where indicated.

SUPPLEMENTARY DEATH BENEFIT

As a retired Canada Revenue Employee, I am entitled to a supplementary death benefit in the amount of at least \$10,000.00.

This benefit must be applied for otherwise my beneficiary or estate will not receive any payout.

It is recommended that this document be kept with your will or your notarized papers and that a family member or other individual is made aware of this benefit.

My PRI (Personal Record Identifier) #: _____

Contact number to call to advise of the passing of the plan holder and to ensure they were entitled to the benefit is 1-800-561-7930

MPP's offices, and Queens Park were the sites of rallies, where thousands showed support for the CUPE workers who were risking so much to launch the protest. On November 7th, after seeing this massive show of **solidarity**, Premier Doug Ford announced that Bill 28 would be repealed.

This is an Ontario example, but it could happen in any province, with any bargaining unit. And if it is ever successful, it could open the door for similar legislation to be applied elsewhere...even federally. ***That's why it's so important for us – all of us – to be vigilant and prepared to stand up for any group whose rights are being threatened.***

I was on one of the CUPE picket lines and the people I saw on the line, aside from CUPE members and union supporters, were regular citizens, standing up in support of a group whose rights were being threatened. And because of the vast support, Bill 28 was repealed on November 14th. CUPE members were again free to negotiate a collective agreement!

We need to be on guard and prepared to stand up when others' rights are being threatened – an injury to one is an injury to all. It's easier to strengthen the dam than it is to put all the water back when the dam weakens and fails. So, when your Union asks you to support another group, remember CUPE and the fight they put up to protect their rights...and in the process to protect yours too.

Melanee Jessup
Communications Committee

PSAC FREE \$10,000

As an important member benefit, the Public Service Alliance of Canada will provide you with \$10,000 of life insurance plus \$10,000 of accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) insurance absolutely free through the **PSAC FREE \$10,000** program.

That's right! **Free insurance!**

This offer is available **only** to members in good standing of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. All you have to do is confirm your membership in PSAC by completing the **PSAC FREE \$10,000** member information card below. **There are no medical exams and no obligation or commitments of any other kind required.**

Remember, this insurance coverage is provided free of charge, compliments of the PSAC . However, this free coverage is NOT provided automatically. Our insurers require that the **PSAC FREE \$10,000** member information card be completed in full and signed by you before coverage takes effect.

<https://www.coughlin.ca/psac-afpc/pdf/PSAC-Free10KCard-0120.pdf>

So, complete the **PSAC FREE \$10,000** member information card and return it to:

PSAC FREE \$10,000
c/o Coughlin & Associates Ltd.
Box 3518, Station C
Ottawa, ON K1Y 4G1

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UTE and PSAC have started organizing membership mobilization activities this fall. A National Day of Action was just held on November 28. This is just the beginning. I am calling on all of you to participate in these activities. We need to turn up the heat and fast!

As always, it is very important for you, our members, to show unwavering support for your bargaining team. You know that there is only one team that truly has your best interests at heart, and that is our team.

Together, I am convinced that we will be successful again in securing a new, improved, fair and equitable contract.

Let's go! It's time to act!

In closing, I wish each and every one of you and your loved ones a wonderful Holiday Season. And may the New Year bring you joy, happiness and prosperity! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Stay safe and take good care of yourself and your loved ones!

In solidarity,

Marc Brière
National President



**SEASONS GREETINGS
FROM THE
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
AND STAFF OF THE
UNION OF TAXATION
EMPLOYEES**

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please note that all address changes should be done online at <https://www.ute-sei.org/en/for-members/change-address> or via email to membership@ute-sei.org. If you do not have access to e-mail, please pass it on (with your PSAC ID) to a local representative or mail it directly to the National Office at 233 Gilmour Street, Suite 800, Ottawa ON K2P 0P2.

ESSAY FROM A 2022 UTE NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

UTE scholarships have a requirement that the applicant write a 500 - 700 word essay, provide a submission in an audio format, visual (painting, drawing, sculpture or photograph), or video format that would express their views on one of four topics chosen by the Honours and Awards committee. One of the topics was having candidates suggest strategies to deal with all the information that we see coming from so many sources and how they attempt to validate truthful information from misinformation or conspiracy theories. The committee felt the following essay provided good tips and strategies to separate fact from fiction effectively in a unique way.

*Gary Esslinger,
Co-chair Honours and Awards Committee*

BEING AN INTERNET DETECTIVE

Convenience is a trait that can serve as both a blessing and a hindrance. With the increased accessibility of fast search engines and vibrant social media posts, humans consume enormous amounts of knowledge daily but also develop an inherent lazy nature. The problem is no longer about finding information but avoiding traps or false news. Nowadays, verifying information becomes crucial, especially if important decisions are at stake. To navigate the complicated connected world, one must become a digital detective: skeptical, investigative, and self-conscious. One must not be quick to succumb to any content without carrying some doubt to remain not gullible among the lies of a deceptive world.

In many TV shows, detectives may do profiling on suspects. In the context of verifying information, it would be the creators. The internet and social media can be deceptive because people can easily manifest fake identities. With the possibility of troll accounts and bots, it is crucial to do a background check on the people who created the content. Background checking may involve checking their account history and previous content to see if they have said past conflicting statements or been consistent with their message. One may also examine their online presence on other platforms. For instance, observe their past interactions and supporters. These findings will indicate their biases and purposes, proving that they may not be objective. Additionally, looking for affiliations and sponsors will show whether bribery was involved.

An essential thing that any detective should do is study the evidence itself and look at the big picture. When consuming the information, try to note the tone to gauge a sense of whether the author is purely objective or carries an underlying opinion. If there are images, try to do a reverse image search to find their sources of origin or if they were stock photos. Articles and posts may selectively choose certain parts, so it is essential to refer to any references that the content has left. For instance, Wikipedia is a common source that is questionable in its credibility; however, the encyclopedia has always left a reference list, which would allow users to find the original resources. Depending on the topic, it is also beneficial to look at discussion boards or experts' opinions to gauge an agreement. Additionally, the internet may provide a vast collection of tools to check suspicious websites or cross-reference images.

Lastly, a simple strategy is to develop self-control when consuming. Although examining oneself will not prove any credibility, it can help you develop techniques to help you digest information without being immediately gullible. For instance, be aware of your own inherent biases on the topic you are reading. Sometimes, we may naturally only pay attention to the parts we want to believe are authentic in a post; however, it makes us blind to everything else the post may be saying and obliterate any suspicion. One should also refrain from applying that content immediately. Whether one will use the information for an academic paper or an Amazon purchase, it is better to take five than make hasty decisions. Additionally, one must always maintain some skepticism. Not everything is a lie but remember that the content may only be brushing the surface of things. As a detective, maintaining some doubt is critical.

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In conclusion, the internet is an overwhelming collection of accounts: some may be true, but some may be pushing a hidden message. While accessibility has developed from the era of newspapers and telegrams, it has become harder to trust anything. That is why one must always play the role of a detective when encountering information. Check the author, trace the source, and preserve a fresh batch of doubt. While this process may seem time-consuming, these strategies will become a part of intuition through repeated practice. Ultimately, people must rely on themselves to protect themselves from gullibility and lies.

Karlinna Nguyen

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS 2022

The Honours and Awards Committee met in Ottawa during the week of August 15-19, 2022, to review all submissions and choose the 2022 scholarship winners.

This year, UTE is pleased to announce that because of a partnership with the Personal Insurance Company there are an additional 10 UTE/Personal Insurance scholarships of \$1000 being awarded.

The National \$3,000 scholarships for 2022 are awarded to:

Haley Mae Dawe	National Robert “Bob” Campbell Scholarship
Karlinna Nguyen	National Diana Gee Scholarship

The Regional \$1,500 scholarships for 2022 are awarded to:

Nadine Walsh	The Al Rollins Atlantic Regional Scholarship
Laurence Lemay	The Quebec Regional Scholarship
Claude-Alexandre Guimont	The Jean Bergeron Montreal Regional Scholarship
Riley Gavan	The Northern and Eastern Ontario Regional Scholarship
Fatima Khan	The Nick Stein Southwestern Ontario Regional Scholarship
Diya Kataria	The Linda Collins Greater Toronto Regional Scholarship
Renelle Phaneuf	The Prairies Regional Scholarship
Albert Nguyen	The Don Davoren Rocky Mountains Regional Scholarship
Emily Hanna	The Pacific Regional Scholarship
Kaitlyn Cote	The National Capital Region Scholarship

The \$1,000 UTE/Personal Insurance Company Scholarships for 2022 are awarded to:

Belinda Che	Quebec Region*
Armapal Singh	Montreal Region*
Yarema Duplak	Prairie Region
Jacob Colatosti	Southwestern Ontario Region
Zoe Renaud	Northern and Eastern Ontario Region
Jack Barney	Greater Toronto Region
Margaux Moignard	National Capital Region
Devansh Srivastava	Rocky Mountains Region
Aidan Stackhouse	Atlantic Region
Pranay Desai	Pacific Region

*The Quebec and Montreal Personal Insurance Scholarships were allocated to applicants from the Rocky Mountains Region.

Cosimo Crupi,
Chair, Honours and Awards Committee



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND YOU

The Union of Taxation Employee (UTE) supports equal opportunity for all its members, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, age, mental or physical disability, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious or political belief, family or marital status, or conviction for which a pardon has been granted.

Equal Opportunities Committee Structure and Mandate

These principles established the Equal Opportunities Committee structure and the Mandate in which it operates.



Equal Opportunities Committee Structure

The committee consists of two National Officers, one member elected by Local Presidents at a Presidents' Conference, and representatives from the following equity seeking groups: Persons of Colour, People with Disabilities, Women, Indigenous Peoples, LGBTQ2+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, 2 Spirit) and a UTE Labour Relations Officer who is assigned as the technical advisor. The representatives from the equity groups are chosen through a process of seeking interested individuals from locals. These names are then submitted to the chair, co-chair, and the president's representative, who then select representatives to form the remainder of the committee.

The Equal Opportunities Committee Mandate

- To provide support and guidance to members regarding equal opportunities issues.
- To provide input towards the development of UTE Regional and National Equal Opportunities conferences.
- To promote a greater understanding of equity issues.
- To consult and collaborate with the employer on all aspects Employment Equity and diversity to insure abidance of the legislation.
- To monitor the application of the Agency National Employment Equity Action Plan.
- To develop awareness of equity/diversity issues and to develop support for these issues among union members and the public.
- To identify emerging equity/diversity issues of concern to union members and to recommend action as necessary; and
- To participate in and promote Union campaigns involving Equal Opportunities issues.

Communication and working jointly with elected members of our Union is a key priority. It ensures that all partners play an active role in the implementation of employment equity. Over the years, the committee has been very influential in having the UTE adopt resolutions to make our union more inclusive by accommodating people with disabilities and by encouraging members of all equity groups to participate in our union.

Equal Opportunity achievements include:

- The organization of regional and national UTE Equal Opportunities conferences.
- For educational purposes, the UTE provides financial support to their members who wish to attend non-UTE conferences organized for equity groups.
- The holding of UTE-sponsored events in facilities accessible to people with a disability.
- Provision of technical aids needed to fully participate at union meetings.
- Material in alternate format - such as large print and Braille - to members who have self identified.
- Creation of a \$5,000 fund to assist Locals in providing adequate communication and access for physically challenged members, or those with a disability.
- A comprehensive regulation governing family-care expenses for members attending UTE organized events.

Union Management and Their Responsibilities

The Employment Equity Act specifies that employers must consult and collaborate with Unions in employment equity policies, procedures, and the implementation of programs and action plans. The UTE strongly believes that collaboration and co-operation is to take place at all levels of the Agency. Union-management consultation on equity issues is a key priority. Ongoing meetings are held with management's National Employment Equity Co-ordinator and the Assistant Commissioner of Human Resources to discuss issues such as Employment Equity Action Plans, awareness training on equity issues, special programs for the hiring of members from designated groups, participation of union members on Advisory Committees and any issues that are barriers to the promotion of equal opportunities.

Getting Involved

If you would like to get involved, please reach out to your Local Executive, or contact any member of the National Employment Equity Committee. Their contact information can be located on the National UTE Website (ute-sei.org).

In Solidarity,

Kimberley Koch,
Chair Equal Opportunities Committee