



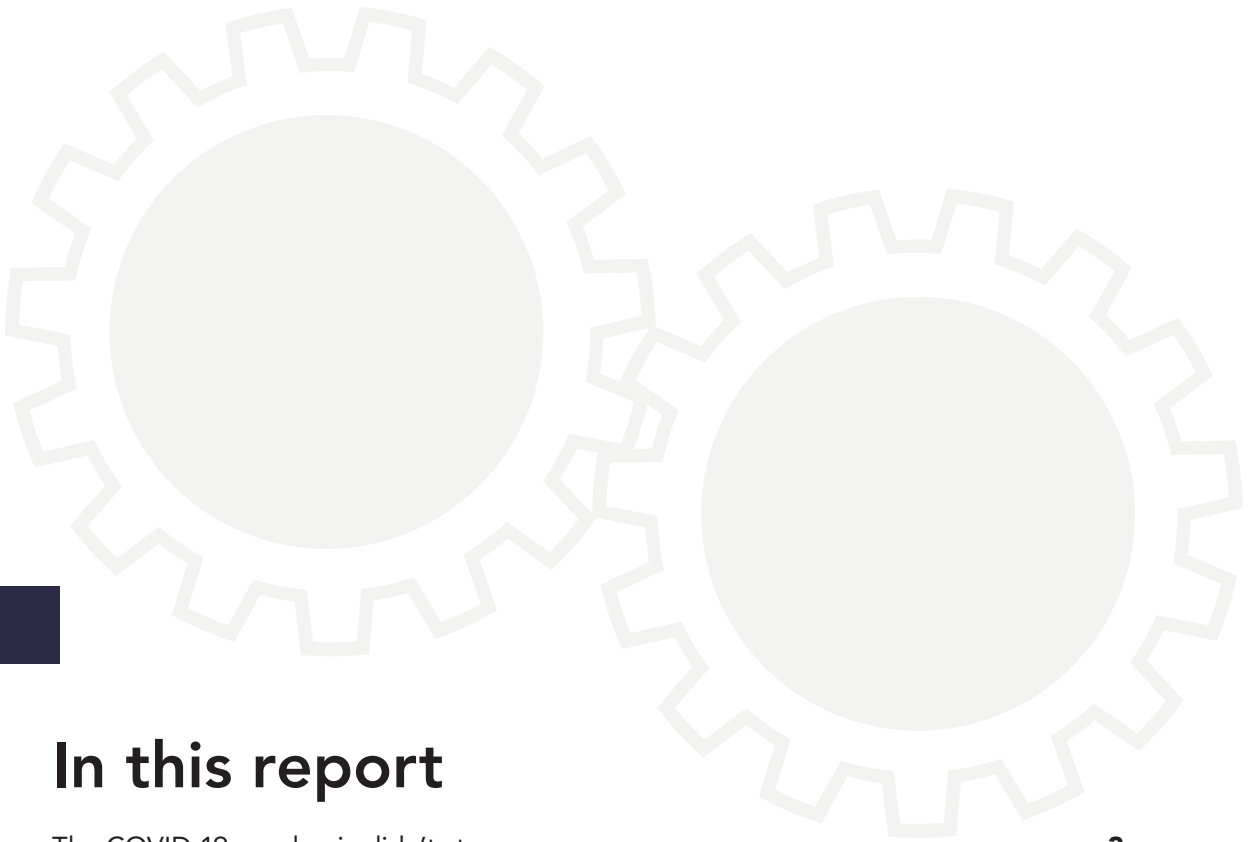
Organizing for change

2019-2022 National President's Report

PSAC NATIONAL TRIENNIAL CONVENTION

May 26 – 27 & May 30 – June 3, 2022





In this report

| | |
|---|----|
| The COVID-19 pandemic didn't stop us | 3 |
| Phoenix still plagues our members | 5 |
| Virtual collective bargaining produces gains | 7 |
| Our union continues to grow and build | 10 |
| We connect with our members and the public | 12 |
| We get political for our members | 13 |
| Campaigns showcase our members and fight for fairness | 14 |
| We represent against injustice and anti-union laws | 16 |
| Our fight for pay equity has never wavered | 19 |
| Gender Equity Task Force charts new ground | 20 |
| We are committed to anti-racism work | 21 |
| Equity work evolves to meet new challenges | 23 |
| Pandemic creates new health and safety needs | 26 |
| Our members' secure retirement is important | 27 |
| Member training continues in new ways | 28 |
| Worker solidarity as important as ever. | 28 |
| PSAC's Social Justice Fund | 29 |
| Our achievements are a collective effort | 30 |



National President's Report



Four years have passed since the last PSAC National Triennial convention in 2018 and my election as National President.

From May 2018 to March 2020, our union carried on as expected. We tackled the priorities decided by the convention delegates; we worked tirelessly to correct the never-ending Phoenix pay mistakes and pressured the federal government for a fair settlement; we mobilized to win improvements in each collective agreement that came open for renewal; we organized thousands of workers into PSAC and negotiated their first collective agreements.

We strengthened our fight against racism and discrimination, and we stepped up our efforts to advance the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We carried out numerous initiatives for gender equity: we established a national Gender Equity Task Force, we lobbied successfully for federal pay equity legislation, and we campaigned, again successfully, for universal child care. We engaged in the 2019 federal election and once again helped stop the Conservatives from forming government. And, of course, we carried on the work of defending our members' rights, protecting their health and safety, enforcing our collective agreements, educating our members, activists and leaders, and keeping the administration and finances of our union in good order.

Then, in March 2020, the first wave of the global pandemic crashed through Canada. It shut down entire sectors of the economy, throwing many out of work, forcing others to work

from home, and still others to keep providing front-line essential services in dangerous conditions. As of mid-March 2022, just under 3.5 million people in Canada have been infected by COVID-19. More than 37,000 have lost their lives. The global toll is staggering: 464 million people infected, more than 6 million deaths, and those are just the reported cases; the actual numbers are much greater.

Our union shut down our offices across the country and immediately started to operate virtually. Overnight, we had to adapt to completely changed circumstances. We acted fast to keep our members safe. We pushed fervently to get proper personal protective equipment and health and safety protocols in place for those on the frontlines, and relentlessly pressured employers to get those working from home the necessary supports. We also fought for 699 leave and COVID-related leave to support members with family responsibilities during lockdowns and school closures.

We learned quickly — often through trial and error — to do union work virtually: negotiations, representation, education, mobilization, financial administration, union meetings, ratification votes, conferences, conventions and so much more. It was very difficult for everyone — our leaders, staff, activists, and members — and I thank all of you, profoundly, for the sacrifices you made to carry on while dealing with the impact of the pandemic on your personal lives. I also want to acknowledge that the impact of the pandemic was not equitable — some of you suffered much more because of the systemic inequities in all spheres of work and life, including in our union.

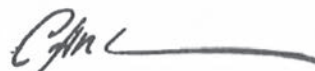
The pandemic has been horrific and illuminating. For one, it exposed the pervasive, systemic discrimination that exists in our country and around the globe, particularly the intersectional and layered dimensions of social, economic, gender, racial and colonial inequity. Also, importantly, the pandemic confirmed the central role governments play in determining safety and security.

Never has it been so clear that only governments have the fiscal and organizational capacity to ensure people's needs are met. Now, no one can dispute that only government spending and policy can ensure that comprehensive healthcare, child care, education, food security and transportation, and other critical services are available and affordable. Only governments have the means to ensure people have jobs with proper income, and to provide income supports for those who can't work or are retired.

Our union must use these truths, confirmed by the pandemic, to demand more and better of all governments. We must use the lessons of the pandemic to bolster our campaigns for public services, decent jobs, and better employment standards. The pandemic has reinforced that we must make social, economic, and racial equity a foremost priority. We must act urgently and effectively to address the symptoms of

oppression, discrimination, and exploitation, but also to uproot their underlying causes.

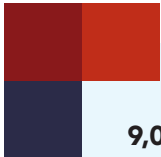
This report to the 2021 National Triennial Convention, delayed by one year because of the pandemic, is an account of the work of our union in the last four years. It is impossible to cover all our many struggles and accomplishments but even this small snapshot shows the determination of PSAC's members, leaders, and staff to never give up, to persevere even through the toughest times. Every victory reported is a tribute to our union's courage and profound belief that justice can be won when we forge membership solidarity in the workplace and with others in the community, the country and around the world. This report shows that our union keeps growing in strength and numbers — we are now almost 230,000 strong. The credit for all the reported successes belongs to all of us, and so too does the responsibility for continuing to make real change, equitable gains, and true justice.



Chris Aylward
PSAC National President

The COVID-19 pandemic didn't stop us

From the first day of the pandemic, PSAC members went above and beyond to support Canadians. They adjusted swiftly to providing existing services from their homes and were quick to roll out the new pandemic financial supports, enforce changing health mandates, help Canadians stranded abroad, and support virtual learning in the post-secondary education sector.



9,000 Service Canada and Canada Revenue Agency workers volunteered to move from their regular duties to deliver COVID-19 relief. Our members processed more than **8 million** CERB applications, over **5 million** applications for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, more than **30 million** for the Canada Recovery Benefit and more than **8 million** for the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit.

Meanwhile, many of our members remained in their workplaces, inspecting food, providing health care, protecting the environment, maintaining our borders, providing critical services at airports, delivering emergency services and even helping to create a COVID-19 vaccine, among many other jobs that could not be performed virtually.

There is no question that our members have felt the impact of balancing family responsibilities while schools and child care centres were closed. They have experienced the anxiety of trying to ensure elderly and vulnerable family and friends remain safe. They have faced the worst outcome — the loss of loved ones. Their mental and physical health has been tested to a breaking point.

Adapting to meet our members' needs

PSAC has also adapted during this period. While our offices have been closed, the work of negotiating, mobilizing, educating, representing and communicating with our members and organizing new members has continued.

We fought to make sure our members had access to the equipment and technology needed to work remotely and the personal protective equipment needed to keep them safe in the workplace. We secured 699 leave and other COVID-related leave to help alleviate the pressure many members faced trying to balance family responsibilities with work during lockdowns and school closures. We delivered regular updates on our national website and social media channels and by email on changing workplace conditions, policies, and COVID relief programs. We postponed all our conferences and conventions and undertook the painstaking work of moving them all to virtual platforms.

Finally, we have also been consulting with the government and employers to ensure there is a safe and fair return to workplace plan for all our members, including securing right to disconnect provisions, work-life balance measures and improving remote work policies.

We won on COVID-19 leave

In a major victory for our members hardest hit by the pandemic, the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Boards ruled in PSAC's favour that Treasury Board cannot force employees to exhaust all their other leave before accessing 699 leave for COVID-19-related reasons.

In 2020, PSAC had filed several policy grievances with Treasury Board, CFIA and other agencies for restricting the use of this leave. We argued this policy violates members' collective agreements and disproportionately impacted marginalized groups who have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

Members who filed individual grievances related to 699 leave — where members were forced to use other available leave like sick leave, vacation leave or family leave before accessing 699 leave — can now request the leave be reimbursed to their leave banks.

Federal government vaccination policy

PSAC continues to support mandatory vaccination as a critical public health measure to ensure healthy and safe workplaces for all. However, some aspects of the federal government vaccination mandate constitute a harsh administrative measure that is disciplinary and without just cause. We have filed policy grievances to cover all members in the federal public service (Treasury Board, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and Parks Canada) to push back where we think the vaccination policy has been applied unfairly. Part of the grievance remedy includes reimbursement of any and all lost wages as a result of the policy.

We also filed a policy grievance covering remote Treasury Board and CRA employees for placing unvaccinated remote workers on leave without pay despite being told they will not return to the workplace. PSAC argued this policy constituted an abuse of management authority because remote workers, who had little to no prospect of returning to physical workplaces in the long term, posed no reasonable threat to the health and safety of their workplaces.



Phoenix still plagues our members

Six years after the Phoenix pay system was imposed on federal public service workers, it continues to have a profound effect on our members and our union. PSAC has worked hard and devoted considerable resources to mitigate the impact on our members.

Our union has been helping federal public service workers navigate the broken pay system since it was launched in 2016. Every day, our dedicated team supports hundreds of members every month that are affected by the Phoenix pay disaster. We've helped over 10,000 members and counting with their Phoenix-related pay, pension, health care benefits or severance problems.

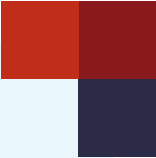
After pressure from members and the union, the government agreed, in 2019, to implement a tax change so that members overpaid through no fault of their own, would be required to remit only the net amount of an overpayment in any year, without the additional burden of repaying the extra income tax, CPP and EI deductions.

We successfully stopped the government's plan to move 4,000 RCMP civilian employees from their well-functioning pay system to Phoenix.

Since Treasury Board announced a new recovery process for employees they believe were overpaid in 2016 and 2017, PSAC has repeatedly intervened to put a halt to it. The new process does not ensure the amount owed is actually correct.

PSAC leaders and our Phoenix team meet regularly with Public Services and Procurement Canada — which manages the pay system — and Treasury Board to troubleshoot and provide feedback on Phoenix pay issues and the development of the next pay system. These meetings will continue for many more years given the Phoenix backlog of 141,000 cases, including 35,000 retirees or former members still waiting for their pay issues to be fixed.

PSAC members have drawn public, media and government attention to the Phoenix debacle by rallying, demonstrating and telling their stories of harm done. This membership mobilization made it possible for our union to achieve damages compensation. Members continue to lobby Members of Parliament to support PSAC's call for a national public inquiry into the Phoenix pay system.



PSAC secures Phoenix damages settlement

In 2020, after rejecting the government's meagre settlement offer of 5 days of leave, PSAC negotiated **\$2,500** in Phoenix general damages for **165,000 PSAC members** to compensate for the stress, aggravation, pain and suffering they endured due to the broken pay system. Our damages agreement was the best one negotiated in the federal public service and led to a top-up for all other bargaining agents

The general damages agreement also included a compensation claims process for severe damages incurred between April 1, 2016, and March 31, 2020. The claims process for personal or financial consequences due to Phoenix applied to current and former employees or their estates.

The work ahead

- The \$2,500 payment was to compensate for hardships experienced from 2016 to 2019 but the pay problems have not ended. We are demanding ongoing general damages and that the negotiated claims process stays in place for as long as the Phoenix pay problems continue.
- A new pay system that pays our members accurately and on time, every time, is still years away. PSAC wants the government to hire more compensation advisors to address problems and tackle the backlog of cases. We want the government to renew the incentive package to attract and retain these highly trained staff.
- We believe the Phoenix damages PSAC negotiated to compensate for the years of pay issues to be tax-free, like other damages settlements are. We are encouraging members to file individual tax appeals.
- We want PSAC members who work in the pay centre to continue to be consulted during the development and testing of the new pay system.



Virtual collective bargaining produces gains

We have resisted concessions, negotiated wage increases and other improvements to our collective agreements. When government and public health mandates put a stop to in-person meetings, our union adjusted quickly to a new way of bargaining. The first virtual national bargaining conference took place with our NAVCAN unit in September 2020. Virtual negotiations continue to produce settlements across the country.

One round of Treasury Board and Agency bargaining was barely concluded in 2020 when organizing for the current round began. Virtual bargaining conferences to finalize demands, elect bargaining teams and determine priorities were held.



Action produces gains

After more than three years without a contract and unprecedented mobilization by FB members across Canada, PSAC-CIU reached a tentative agreement with Treasury Board and the Canada Border Service Agency on August 6, 2021. The agreement was made possible because of the dedication and perseverance of the FB bargaining team and members across the country whose work-to-rule actions sent a clear message to the government.

Gains achieved included a minimum compounded increase of 8.08% over the four-year term, a new, pensionable, annual meal period allowance of \$5,000 for all uniformed CBSA employees and a written commitment to resubmit the FB group's proposal to introduce legislative amendments providing enhanced early retirement benefits under the public service pension plan.

PSAC closes another wage gap

In a significant victory after years of struggle, PSAC closed the pay gap between Engineering and Scientific Support members in the Technical Services group and EGs at the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. The arbitration ruling on January 6, 2022, provided increases phased in over the next two years including a new top step in the pay scale. After implementation, the new maximum rate for EGs will be 3.3% higher. EGs represent 60% of the TC bargaining unit.



Equal tuition fees win

In a historic win, PSAC has brought an end to sky-high tuition fees for its international PhD members at Queen's University. As of September 2021, all PSAC members now pay the same PhD tuition, regardless of their immigration status. This decision comes as a result of a two-year long, student-led campaign and advocacy by PSAC Local 901 members.

Some bargaining takes place outside of collective agreements

In early April 2021, negotiations finally began with Treasury Board to update and strengthen the **Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHCP)**. The plan, which covers most federal public service workers and retirees has not been meaningfully updated since 2006 despite a 2018 memorandum of understanding committing Treasury Board to begin talks by March 31, 2019.

PSAC is pushing for improvements to vision care, paramedical maximums, better coverage for psychological services including access to a wider range of practitioners and other benefits that impact our members' health and well-being. So far, Treasury Board has been resisting and the next step will be to file for mediation.

In late 2018, after lengthy negotiations and an arbitration process, PSAC won substantial improvements in coverage under the **Public Service Dental Care Plan**. A 47% increase to the annual maximum for routine and major services brought the maximum to \$2,500 per year as of January 1, 2021. Dental implants are now covered.

The dental plan is again open for negotiation. We surveyed members for their suggested improvements when the input process opened in mid-November 2021. Over the first week alone,

more than 12,000 responses were registered. The survey results will form the basis for our union's proposals when negotiations begin.

Our bargaining keeps up with changing needs

PSAC negotiations with employers across the country continue to meet emerging and pressing needs. For example, we are demanding the right to disconnect from work without penalty. Our members need protection against the intensification of work as a result of technological changes, and from the adverse impact remote work can have on their personal lives.

We negotiated gender neutral language to provide a safer space for non-binary workers in contracts with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the City of Moncton among others.

Western University Teaching Assistants have a new letter of understanding on equity, diversity, and inclusion that provides for a survey, an action plan and joint committee. The university must also allocate Teaching Assistant positions equitably.

L'Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR) student employees now qualify for the maternity and spousal leave allowance after 200 hours, a reduction from 300.

At Baker Lake Hamlet there is recognition of traditional Indigenous pursuits with four days paid leave for hunting, fishing and harvesting.

Remote or telework has become the norm for many workers during the pandemic. At Non-Public Funds (NPF) Ottawa, once a telework arrangement is agreed to, the employer must provide telework equipment and electronic network requirements. At SNPF Suffield, a pilot program for flexible work scheduling will continue, including telework options.

PSAC members working at Bryony House, a shelter for women fleeing domestic violence, have negotiated shift scheduling with double coverage, a memorandum of agreement on violence risk assessment and to conduct annual or more frequent risk assessments, as well as debriefing of employees exposed to or affected by violence in the workplace within three calendar days.

A new critical incident agreement article in the collective agreement covering PSAC members at Yukon Hospital requires critical stress defusing in case of trauma, including physical violence, threats of physical violence, vicarious trauma, and armed robber or hostage taking. Employees are also entitled to relief of duty for shift at no loss of pay and appropriate resources/support provided with no loss of pay.



PSAC strikes

Whitehorse Transit

29 days of work to rule

Many Rivers Counselling

83 days

Commission des champs de bataille nationaux

25 days

GDI Garrison, Petawawa

114 days

Office of the Auditor General

127 days

Association of McGill University Support Employees (AMUSE) floor fellows

4 days

National Joint Council

Together with all other federal bargaining agents, PSAC participates in the work of the National Joint Council and its joint committees with Treasury Board. The Service-Wide Committee on Occupational Health and Safety co-developed violence and harassment guidance materials including an assessment tool, a sample statement of work and a domestic violence tool.

Since 2018, the Isolated Post and Government Housing Committee has focused on the task of revising the methodology for the calculation of the Shelter Cost Differential (SCD). A working group was formed recently to dedicate more time to this work.

The Joint Employment Equity Committee (JEEC) has been providing feedback and input on a variety of initiatives, including the government's Self-Identification Modernization Project.

The Committee provided extensive input on the Guide on Employment Systems Review, co-developed by Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission and has asked for further consultations.

The Public Service Commission is proposing changes to the *Public Service Employment Act* to ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce and to address biases in staffing procedures.

Our union continues to grow and build

PSAC's organizing has been focused largely on the post-secondary education sector but successful drives also brought into our union workers from other sectors including gaming, information technology, research, security and transportation, the Quebec public service and non-governmental organizations. We have also expanded existing bargaining units and negotiated service agreements with post-secondary associations in Alberta.

Our union was successful in organizing Rising Sun Community Residential Facilities program which performs work contracted by Correctional Service Canada (CSC). These new members provide transitional supportive housing for men moving to community living following federal incarceration. Despite challenges by CSC, PSAC won 100 percent support in the vote.

After several years' delay, over 1,000 RCMP civilian members who were pay matched with existing Treasury Board units came to PSAC. Membership in our existing bargaining units continues to grow.

Organizing by sector

Includes new certificates, expansions of existing bargaining units, affiliations, and service agreements.

| Sector | Members |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Gaming | 11 |
| IT | 180 |
| NGO | 159 |
| Provincial Public Service | 300 |
| Research | 300 |
| Security | 140 |
| Transportation | 74 |
| University | 7,136 |
| Total | 8,301 |

Connecting with our young members

Young workers are critical to our union's strength today. We must improve how we support our younger members, leaders and activists. At the end of 2018, PSAC held its first National Young Workers Forum with 50 delegates from across the country. The forum was an opportunity to tackle some of the issues that particularly impact young workers such as childcare, parental leave, health and safety, and precarious work.

We are creating more and more spaces for young workers in the union. Our National Young Workers Working Group meets monthly and our regional young workers' conferences and committees across the country continue the organizing work. In addition to updating the young workers' basic education course, we also have organized national virtual panels and discussion forums on topics such as equity in the workplace, precarious work, and young worker power at the bargaining table, and we even held a virtual social.

| Year | No. of members |
|------|----------------|
| 2018 | 195,769 |
| 2019 | 206,482 |
| 2020 | 214,658 |
| 2021 | 229,140 |

We held our first Directly Chartered Local conference

PSAC held its first-ever conference of Directly Chartered Locals (DCL) in November 2018 in Montreal. The conference identified ways for PSAC to better address the particular challenges facing DCLs as this sector continues to grow in size and diversity. There are now 81 DCLs, representing more than 31,000 workers in 101 certified bargaining units. Most of these units are certified under provincial labour legislation and governed by provincial labour relations and employment-related laws. Most DCLs represent workers at post-secondary institutions, but others also represent police, municipal and First Nations employees, as well as gaming industry, security, and health care workers.

Delegates discussed strategies to build membership strength and win better working conditions for their members. The conference also identified ways PSAC and DCLs can address the problem of precarious work, which is particularly prevalent in the post-secondary sector. After the conference, PSAC modified membership sign-up protocols allowing DCLs to sign up members electronically and e-membership cards are now available to post-secondary locals in Ontario and being extended to all DCLs as a priority.

PSAC has sought improvements in federal and political legislation affecting DCL members. Also, PSAC has been participating in the Education for All coalition to better push for increases in federal and provincial funding for university-based research and lower tuition across the country.



We connect with our members and the public

Since 2019, PSAC's communications team has published over 550 articles and resources for members on the PSAC national website, social media accounts, and via email. Our enquiries team has triaged and responded to approximately 18,000 member calls and emails.

Growing our online reach

Our weekly newsletter – **eNews**, is redesigned and is sent on Sundays with much improved engagement. Our mobilizing efforts and list-building tools have grown the database of members' personal email addresses by 58% from 116,000 to 200,000 in the last four years.

We average open rates of **40%**, far above industry standard. This means 80,000 PSAC members open our email every week and important bargaining updates will often be opened by **120,000** members. And we are now able to ensure the majority of our members receive these communications in the official language of their choice.

Social media

We have expanded our online reach and improved our tools for communicating with members through social media. Our **Facebook** followers have increased from 36,000 to **over 41,000**. Since May 2019, PSAC has reached more than **5 million people** on Facebook. We've also produced video and graphics for this platform. PSAC has an Instagram account, with **3,000 followers** and a reach of **1.4 million users**. Since 2020, our merged, bilingual Twitter account has grown to **12,600 followers**.

Our Union Voice in multiple formats

We continue to publish and mail Our Union Voice to all PSAC members for whom we have a home address. During the pandemic we introduced a digital edition that is sent to more than **200,000 members**.



We do everything in both official languages

PSAC's languages services team translates an average of **2.2 million** words a year. The volume increased by 30% in 2019 and has remained at that level.

A new tool improves our outreach

Our customized **Action Network** hub is an innovative digital engagement tool incorporating email outreach, peer-to-peer texting, petitions, calls-to-action, events and analytics into one platform to streamline engagement with our members and better protect member data.

We get political for our members

PSAC has participated in actions for legislative change, including:

- A **ban on unpaid internships** in federally regulated workplaces. This is now included in the Canada Labour Code
- A federal prohibition on scabs. The recent NDP-Liberal Supply and Confidence Agreement includes a commitment to introduce legislation by the end of 2023
- A Canada-wide **child care program**. This effort has seen significant success over the past 2 years
- Changes to the Canada Labour Code to reflect new realities of work, including the **right to disconnect, equal treatment for equal work**, increased protections for **precarious workers**, leave for **Indigenous cultural pursuits, domestic violence** and other reasons. These matters are either now law, or the regulations are being developed.
- A long-overdue review of federal **Access to Information** legislation

Two **federal elections** were held since the last PSAC convention. We created dozens of strategic communications products and mobilization tools to encourage members to vote for candidates ready to defend public services. Some of these products included

a 2021 pre-election member survey, information on political rights and rights of expression on social media, analysis of the five major parties' records and platforms, a debate "bingo" card, and digital ads warning of Conservative cuts.

Our submissions don't stop with Parliament. After the 2019 election, Elections Canada solicited comments related to federal elections. We explained our concerns and made recommendations on the issue of regulating communications during an election that are unique to federal public service bargaining agents who negotiate and interact with the government as an employer even during elections. More recently, we have provided input on proposed changes to the federal Lobby Code of Conduct.

Conservative governments are notorious for passing anti-worker laws. **Bill 32, Restoring Balance in Alberta's Workplaces Act**, passed in July 2020, is among the worst legislative attacks on workers we have seen. The new law controls what unions spend on anything other than "core" functions in an attempt to meddle in the internal affairs of unions and presumably limit the political and social actions of unions. PSAC is actively supporting the fightback with the Alberta Federation of Labour and we know that a successful attack on one part of the country will spread to others.

Campaigns showcase our members and fight for fairness

PSAC has developed and conducted major campaigns in the last four years.

- Our **Here for Canada** campaign was a national digital, radio and TV campaign to highlight the critical and diverse work of our members and to call for an end to the Phoenix pay fiasco. We reached **1 in 12 Canadians** and the campaign received more than 37 million impressions and more than 22,000 petition signatures.
- Our **Our North, Our Future, Our Public Services** campaign also highlighted the work of our members across all components in pan-territorial digital and radio campaign in the North.
- We ran a national digital ad campaign to pressure the Public Service Pension Investment Board to make **Revera** long term care homes public with great engagement. We achieved over 15,000 signatures on the open letter to MPs. More than 5,000 emails were sent to Public Sector Pension Investments, and 500 phone calls made to MPs. Of these, more than 12,000 actions were taken by PSAC members.
- A multi-chapter, joint PSAC-Component anti-privatization campaign under the banner **Uncover the Costs** successfully stopped the contracting out of Canada Revenue Agency call centre work and changed contracting out policies at the Department of National Defence. We continue to pressure Employment and Social Development Canada to bring the work of 1-800-OCanada back in house.




Public Service Alliance of Canada
Association des fonctionnaires du Canada

We represent against injustice and anti-union laws

For over two years, hearings, case conferences, grievance conciliation and mediation have been carried out virtually, in keeping with local public health directives. This is the case for both federal and many provincial labour boards.

Speeding up the grievance process

Lengthy delays can occur in the processing of grievances at the adjudication level. Cases can take years — even a decade or more in extreme cases — to be resolved. PSAC, with input from components, is providing input to the Federal Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board in its initiative to address the backlog and the inordinate delays.



DND guilty of anti-Black racism

In 2020, PSAC won a landmark case representing Christian Reeves, the only Black man in his mechanic program at the Canadian Forces Base in Halifax. Reeves experienced anti-Black racism and was terminated in 2015 for “poor performance.” After he filed a grievance, PSAC launched an investigation that revealed a coordinated plot against him, and he was awarded damages and four years of back pay.

Harassment in the military being investigated

In April 2021, the federal government announced the appointment of retired Supreme Court Justice Louise Arbour to conduct an external review of sexual harassment in the military workplace. Arbour’s mandate includes making recommendations on an effective external oversight mechanism. PSAC and the Union of National Defence Employees are working together with Arbour’s office to provide input into the review process and ensure that impacted unionized civilian members are heard in the process.

PSAC has also assisted numerous members and former members in submitting their claims under the CAF-DND Sexual Misconduct Class Action Settlement. The settlement provides for financial compensation, restorative engagement, changes to Canadian Armed Forces policies as well as changes to Veteran’s Affairs policies related to disability.


Black class action lawsuit spans 50 years

In 2020, twelve federal public service workers, including several PSAC members, mobilized and filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of federal employees who identify as Black, Caribbean or of African descent. The lawsuit stretches back 50 years, arguing the federal government has perpetuated Black employee exclusion: the systemic practice of limiting

skilled Black workers from career advancement opportunities, which has led to them being disproportionately underrepresented at the highest levels of the federal public service.

As of March 2022, 1,300 former and current Black federal public service employees have signed up for the suit seeking over \$2.5 billion in damages, policy changes, an employee mental health fund and an official apology. PSAC is supporting this historic legal action and is seeking intervener status in the case. PSAC's legal team and staff meet regularly with the Black Class Action Secretariat to share resources, coordinate media coverage, and promote social media content. PSAC has also published in-depth interviews of plaintiffs, held an informational panel on the case, and commissioned a report on how to improve our representation of Black PSAC members.

Certification hearings will take place from September 21-23, 2022 and will determine if the class action proceedings will continue.



Discrimination against Indigenous workers crosses departments

Federal Indigenous employees filed a class action in September 2021 and it is awaiting certification. It focuses on systemic discrimination experienced by Indigenous employees working in specific departments that serve Indigenous communities. PSAC is meeting with key stakeholders on how to best support these Indigenous members who are facing systemic discrimination, harassment and barriers to promotion.

Charter and Constitutional Challenges

PSAC is participating with other unions and federations of labour in Ontario and Manitoba in Charter challenges of laws that restrict or remove the right to free collective bargaining. In Ontario, the challenge is against the Ford government's **Bill 124** *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*, 2019, which includes mandatory restraints on wage increases to 1%. This legislation will directly impact our members in Ontario's university and health sectors. PSAC has highlighted the impact on the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority given its unique challenges as a rural northern hospital serving a primarily Indigenous population.

In Manitoba, we continue to challenge **Bill 28** – the *Public Services Sustainability Act*, 2017 which froze public sector workers' pay for two years and limited increases in a further two years. While it never came into force, it effectively took wage demands off the table and reduced unions' ability to bargain.

PSAC was one of two unions that joined the legal challenge against Quebec's **Bill 21** (the *Act respecting the laicity (secularism) of the State*). The bill bans public school teachers, judges, police officers and other public service workers from wearing religious symbols while at work. In 2021, the Quebec Superior Court ruled that the provincial government's use of the notwithstanding clause prevented it from nullifying the bill. However, the Court recognized that Bill 21 has a disproportionately negative impact on Muslim women and racialized communities.



CRA failed to stop harassment

In an unprecedented decision, the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board (FPSLREB) found the Canada Revenue Agency had discriminated against PSAC member Marilyn Doro when it failed to provide a harassment-free and safe workplace. The Board ordered CRA to pay her \$20,000 for the pain and suffering she experienced from sexual harassment and another \$20,000 for its reckless mishandling of her harassment case — the maximum amounts the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (CHRA) allows for damages of these types. CRA also had to reimburse Doro \$22,955 for the costs of her treatment for depression and anxiety arising from the harassment. An independent investigator had found that there were 13 incidents of sexual harassment.

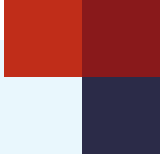
Our fight for pay equity has never wavered

PSAC and our members have spent decades fighting for a proactive federal pay equity law that would oblige employers to pay equal pay for work of equal value without unions having to file complaints with the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Finally, on August 31, 2021, the *Pay Equity Act* covering federally regulated workplaces came into force. This is a historic victory and could have a significant financial impact on our members' salaries, specifically those of members in female-dominated job classes.

The new Act applies to 212 federally regulated employers represented by our union that have 10 or more employees. These range from large national bargaining units such as Treasury Board, Agencies, Canada Post to units in airports, museums, ports and the north.

Unions and employers will be required to establish pay equity committees and jointly develop pay equity plans to remedy pay inequities within three years of the Act coming into force. Pay equity plans will also need to be updated every 5 years. PSAC will continue to provide information and work with our components and locals during this process.

For the core public administration, a multilateral working group has been put in place that includes other bargaining agents. It will meet until a pay equity committee is established. Treasury Board has a large team dedicated to pay equity negotiations.



Persistence results in pay equity settlement

After nearly 20 years of litigation, PSAC and the Union of Canadian Transportation Employees component arrived at a pay equity settlement with NAVCANADA for employees in female-dominated positions. PSAC's complaint, filed in 2002, was connected to the massive pay equity settlement reached with Treasury Board in 1999. The settlement was subsequently approved by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. It applies to employees in certain positions between November 1, 1996 and June 30, 2011.

Gender Equity Task Force charts new ground

Women are the largest demographic of members within PSAC, representing about 60 per cent of our members. While PSAC has made significant gains in the areas of pay equity, paid maternity/parental leave, same sex benefits and domestic leave, women and persons from other equity seeking groups continue to be significantly under-represented in the elected leadership of PSAC and its components.

On the recommendation of PSAC's National Human Rights Committee in December 2017, PSAC's National Board of Directors struck a Gender Equity Task Force in 2018. The Task Force's mandate was to examine women's representation on all leadership bodies within the union, identify barriers, evaluate existing equity initiatives with respect to women and to develop recommendations to increase women's participation throughout PSAC. The Task Force took an intersectional approach to its work in recognition that not all women experience gender inequities in the same way or to the same degree.

The Task Force identified major barriers including a problematic union culture, inaccessibility of union meetings and inactive, unengaged locals as well as a confusing structure. Family care obligations and fear of employer reprisals were also rated as barriers to participation.



Our union is working on implementing the 13 Task Force recommendations, all of which were adopted by the National Board of Directors. They include:

- Integrating Intersectional Gender Based Analysis (IGBA) in all our work, including evaluating by-laws and the PSAC constitution, policies and regulations
- Using the Local Development Program to build a more inclusive union, and developing a union education program for women, as well as implementing a leadership development program and a mentorship program
- Making the bargaining process more inclusive
- Producing a PSAC awareness program and establishing a women's network
- Reviewing progress annually

The Task Force was composed of Sharon DeSousa (then Ontario Regional Executive Vice-President), Union of National Defence Employees President June Winger, and members of the National Human Rights Committee Women's Working Group Missy Taylor, Sandrine Oka and Angela Decker.

We are committed to anti-racism work

After a series of horrific events — the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor in the USA, and Regis Korchinski-Paquet here in Canada — Black Lives Matter protests erupted worldwide. PSAC responded with calls for justice for the Black community, as well as increased measures to eliminate institutional racism and unconscious bias against Black, Indigenous and racialized people. PSAC developed digital shareables, posters and protest placards, as well as held several anti-racism webinars such as:

- Anti-Black Racism: It's everyone's fight
- An Introduction to Anti-racism for White Folks
- A Panel Discussion on Systemic Racism in the Labour Movement

Due to perpetuating myths and stereotypes that people of Asian descent are responsible for COVID-19, there has been a rise in Anti-Asian hate in Canada and the rest of the world. Anti-Asian racism is not new but has come more into focus during the pandemic. In 2021, in honour of Asian Heritage Month, we hosted a webinar entitled "Combatting Anti-Asian Racism" where we examined key issues and challenges to Asian activism with leading academics and human rights activists.



We have an Action Plan to tackle racism

The legacy of colonialism, slavery, residential schools and systemic racism in our society and in our union continues to do grave harm. There is an urgent need to bring about systemic, transformative and lasting change.

PSAC has adopted an Anti-Racism Action Plan. The immediate priorities of the plan are to:

- reach out and consult with Indigenous, Black, Asian and racialized PSAC members
- strengthen PSAC advocacy and representation on racial discrimination and workplace racism
- provide accessible anti-racism tools and materials at a one-stop online resource hub
- conduct an audit of the PSAC Constitution, bylaws and union processes
- develop campaigns to mobilize members against racism

An initial consultation with Indigenous, Black and racialized members began at the National Equity Conferences in November 2021. A regional roundtable was held with Black members in the Atlantic in December 2021. A national survey and focus groups with Indigenous, Black and racialized members, are currently

being planned for this year. The Advocacy and Representation on Workplace Racism course is being finalized with a spring training schedule.

Some of the work of the action plan overlaps with the recommendations of the Gender Equity Task Force, such as the development of an Intersectional Gender Based Analysis training that has already been piloted. The training assists in identifying systemic barriers and gives participants some equity analysis tools. Both the Task Force and the Action Plan require the development of a mentorship program to help support diverse leaders. These are just the first steps, and we expect more recommendations for action as a result of our ongoing consultations.

PSAC is also setting up an internal Oppression Prevention Bureau and an anti-racism oversight committee to address and implement long standing recommendations to address systemic racism within our organization.

Equity work evolves to meet new challenges

The discriminatory impact of the pandemic has made our union's equity work even more urgent. We have carried out robust Black History Month programs including virtual panels, sharing digital content and the development of a Black labour history timeline. August 1, 2021 was the first nationally recognized Emancipation Day in Canada and our union recognized it by providing education on the origin of the day, as well as ways in which members could participate.

Our anti-racism education resources section on our website now has pages dedicated to these topics:

- PSAC webinars on anti-racism
- Truth and Reconciliation
- Black Lives Matter
- General resources on anti-racism
- Decolonization and Indigenous Issues
- Anti-racism resources for white people



Truth and reconciliation

In recognition of National Indigenous Peoples Day, we invited members to learn more about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, and the history of Indigenous Peoples. A webinar discussed how we work as allies and best support decolonization and sovereignty for Indigenous Peoples.

PSAC also recommitted itself to truth and reconciliation and has begun to reflect inwards on how it can implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We held a national moment of silence with an Elder and staff after the confirmation of thousands of unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School and other residential school sites. Work has begun on examining union policies and collective agreement language to remove colonial influences.

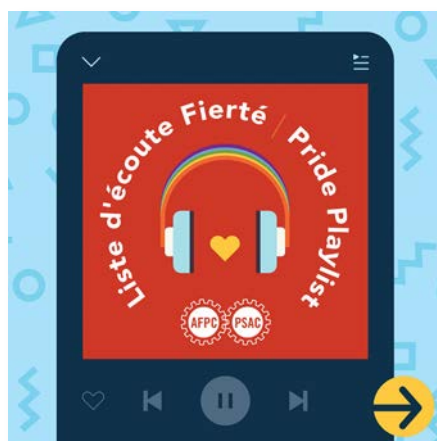
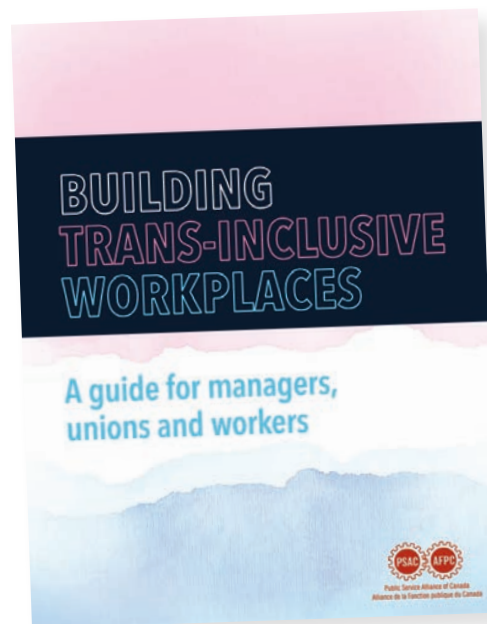
For the first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30, 2021, we put together a series of educational resources to help members take action.

Supporting LGBTQ2+ members

PSAC remains vigilant to help ensure legislation and policies do not negatively impact transgender people. We have developed resources to make all spaces, including our union, more trans-inclusive. For example, we have produced a guide for workers, unions and managers on building trans-inclusive workplaces and a video series supporting trans and gender diverse people in the workplace.

We mobilized members to write to their Members of Parliament to vote in favour of federal legislation, Bill C-6, to end the horrific practice of conversion therapy in Canada. While this bill did not make it through the Parliamentary process before the 2021 federal election, an improved version, Bill C-4 was adopted in December in one of the first acts of the new Parliament. We continue to fight to eliminate the discriminatory ban on blood, organ and bone marrow donations from many LGBTQ2+ people.

We also continue to support annual Pride activities and in 2021 provided members with a pride playlist featuring songs by LGBTQ2+ artists and allies that celebrate queer lives and their experiences in queer activism. PSAC has also redesigned its Pride flag with the addition of a black stripe for diversity and a brown stripe for inclusivity, as well as creating a new Trans flag.



The *Employment Equity Act* Review

Our union has been fully engaged in the federal government's long overdue review of the *Employment Equity Act*. We developed two online surveys — one for the membership and one for leaders, activists and staff who work on employment equity — and held two virtual consultations including the National Human Rights Committee.

Ongoing equity consultations

PSAC is providing input to the Accessible Canada Standards Technical Committee on Employment which is working to establish employment standards under the new *Accessible Canada Act*.

Our union is also participating with the employer in a joint working group formed to examine how Official Languages requirements impact the employment and career progression of equity seeking groups.

Equity conferences

PSAC's 2021 virtual National Women's Conference drew over 150 delegates to share their experiences as women members, activists and leaders. Delegates passed resolutions, including many that support the findings from PSAC's Gender Equity Task Force report.

PSAC's four equity conferences — Indigenous, Racially Visible, PRIDE and Access — were held virtually in November 2021 under the theme "Engage, Empower, Unite". Delegates discussed actions to advance members' human rights in ways that recognize intersectionality.

Initiatives against harassment and violence

Following direction from the PSAC 2018 National Triennial Convention, PSAC created the Anti-Harassment Initiative Fund to actively fight harassment. Resources of up to \$25,000 per initiative are being offered to locals, Directly Chartered Locals, area councils, regional committees, regional councils and components to tackle all forms of harassment.

The new federal regulations on harassment and violence are now in effect. They encourage employers to take a more proactive approach to prevent and resolve incidents of workplace harassment and violence. Employers are also required to conduct workplace assessments to preemptively identify risks and incorporate the results of these assessments into their human resource policies, procedures, and training.

PSAC successfully lobbied for the Labour Program to re-establish the advisory committee that was in place to advise on the roster of investigators, the guidance materials and the regulation themselves. It is critical that the Labour Programs' interpretations, policies and guidelines remain current.

We encouraged our members to take part in the first ever national study on workers' experiences with sexual violence and harassment in the workplace co-sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress and the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children.

Pandemic creates new health and safety needs

The pandemic has put occupational health and safety at the center of our health and safety work. PSAC leaders and staff across our union worked tirelessly to address the complex issues that have arisen from ensuring members have proper personal protective equipment, to demanding that protective strategies, including vaccination mandates, are implemented appropriately, fairly and in a way the uphold workers' rights.

Mental health also remains a priority. We continue to put forward bargaining demands to address our mental health concerns. We won important changes in our collective agreements with Treasury Board, the Government of Northwest Territories and Queens University.

PSAC has participated in meetings of the Advisory Board of the Centre of Expertise on Mental Health and in the Mental Health Champions Network. We have been involved in the Interdepartmental Committee on Mental Health Performance which addresses how Treasury Board can measure, report, and continuously improve on its mental health strategy.

Our union is also involved in the development of a study into the prevention of psychological trauma through the Committee on Mental Health Support Mechanisms. Unfortunately, Treasury Board has so far refused to dedicate any resources or staff time to support the drafting of the final report.

Violence and harassment continue to be a major concern. We have made progress for our federal public service members by co-

developing with Treasury Board, through the National Joint Council, new guidance materials for joint workplace harassment and violence prevention assessments.

Developing a course for our health and safety committees

The Joint Learning Program, with our input, is developing a much-anticipated two-day basic Health and Safety course. Course content will focus on a few key pillars: the legislative framework, roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders who have a role in occupational health and safety, the hazard prevention program and how to make health and safety committee meetings effective.

Workers' compensation

The number of active workers' compensation cases has remained steady. We adapted quickly to new temporary online representation requirements put in place by Boards across the country.

Our members' secure retirement is important

Fighting for early retirement

In 2019, PSAC tabled two formal proposals with the Public Service Pension Advisory Committee for enhanced early retirement — 25 years and out — for our Union of National Defence Employees firefighter members and for the Customs and Immigration Union Border Services bargaining unit. This early retirement option is consistent with what other firefighters and the broader law enforcement community have.

We negotiated an agreement with the Border Services Agency in 2021 committing Treasury Board to resubmit the early retirement proposal for the necessary legislative changes to the *Public Service Superannuation Act* and for PSAC to have the opportunity to make the case to the Public Service Pension Advisory Committee.

Public service pension plan investments a growing concern

Pension plans have an obligation to invest wisely and achieve good returns on those investments. However, we are becoming increasingly concerned about some of the Public Service Pension Investment Board's investment choices.

When COVID-19 made its deadly way through long-term care institutions, it was a stark reminder of the differences between for-profit chains and publicly owned and operated homes. In response, PSAC conducted a public awareness campaign to focus attention on the public service pension plan's sole ownership of Revera Inc., one of these for-profit operators with long-term care homes in most of Canada. Our campaign urged the plan and the government to **"Make Revera Public"** to stop funding profit and to improve conditions for both residents and workers employed there.

Some of our other concerns include PSPIB's investment in the notorious operators of the immigration detention facilities along the

U.S./Mexico border; its partnership with Pretium which was cited in the U.S. for disproportionate eviction notices to racialized people in the South-Eastern U.S.; its lethargic responses to key climate change issues; and its partnership with Starlight Investments which is currently imposing an exorbitant rental increase on tenants in one of its apartment complexes in Toronto. We are raising these concerns with officers from the investment arm of the plan and with members of the plan investment board.

PSAC part of pension equality win

In 2019, PSAC had intervenor status in a 20-year old Section 15 equality rights *Charter* challenge. Known as the **Fraser** case, it involved three women RCMP officers who opted to work part-time, and job share for a time in order to care for their young children. The women were not permitted to buy back their pensionable service at the full-time rate for these job-sharing years under the *RCMP Superannuation Act*, an option that was available to employees using other types of leave. The Supreme Court ruled that this discrepancy is a violation of the women's *Charter* rights and ordered the RCMP to provide a pension buy-back option for all employees who participated in job sharing. The potential consequences of this case for pension plans in all jurisdictions are considerable.

Member education continues in new ways

We delivered 359 in person regional education courses to 5,168 members on a range of issues including Domestic Violence Awareness, Mental Health Awareness, Anti-oppression and more prior to the pandemic. We quickly adapted to provide online tools and virtual training, some of which included:

- Developing five new online courses with over 300 course completions
- Transforming Talking Union Basics, Grievance Handling, and Introduction to Local Officers to virtual courses and delivering 82 virtual sessions to more than 1,200 members
- Hosting national webinars on a variety of topics reaching more than 2000 members and hosting 71 regional webinars to 2,026 members
- Providing joint health and safety committee training to more than 150 PSAC-UVAE members across the country
- Creating 30 new regional courses including Politics for Everyone and Social Media Training

Joint Learning Program

The Joint Learning Program's immediate response to the pandemic was to create a series of online facilitated discussions titled *Empowering Conversations*. Launched in May 2020, the first two sessions were designed to address concerns related to COVID-19 and the reality of employees whose work and family lives had abruptly changed. In 2021, the scope

expanded to create spaces for conversation on topics of interest including the launch of the "Anti-Racism: Let's Talk!" session. Since its launch, the six-session series has been a success with over 1,000 sessions delivered.

In late 2020, the union renewed the JLP pilot project with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). JLP virtual discussions have recently been made available to our members working at the Agency.

In response to the need for a standardized, high-quality, and comprehensive occupational health and safety committee training program, PSAC negotiated a pilot project for the JLP to develop and deliver a "joint training" program tailored to the learning needs of these committees in the federal public service in the last round of bargaining. The program is currently in development.

Worker solidarity as important as ever

PSAC is a key member of the Canadian Labour Congress

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) saw a significant turnover in leadership at the pandemic-delayed convention held in 2021. Three of the four CLC executive positions are now filled by women. Bea Bruske was elected as president, only the second woman to hold the position. Delegates also gave a large vote of confidence to re-elected PSAC member and CLC Executive Vice-President Larry Rousseau. PSAC-CIU member Danielle Dubuc was re-elected as a CLC vice-president for workers of colour for a fourth term.

PSAC's Social Justice Fund

Negotiating support for our Social Justice Fund

Thanks to our members who have promoted this bargaining demand, we have negotiated employer and employee contributions to the PSAC Social Justice Fund in 97 units across the country. These units range from hamlet councils and housing authorities in the north to Canada Post Corporation, and the Northwest Territories and Nunavut governments. Large or small, these contributions represent a significant portion of the Fund's budget dedicated to anti-poverty programs in Canada, as well as the defense of labour and human rights around the world. Some examples of SJF commitments include contributions to the Myanmar Strike Fund, support for the flooding of Dene communities in the Northwest Territories, humanitarian relief in Haiti and support for humanitarian corridors during the four month rotating strikes in Colombia in 2021.

Antipoverty Initiatives in Canada

Over \$224,000 was allocated to fund 46 initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation, including Canadian-based initiatives addressing COVID-19. Projects include affordable housing, clean water and decent public services, women's shelters, living wages, and the empowerment of Indigenous communities in Canada.

COVID-19 emergency fund

The SJF COVID-19 Emergency and Recovery Fund was created in May 2020 to address the needs of the most vulnerable communities not included in assistance packages available in Canada and internationally. The Fund supported migrant workers, seniors and Indigenous women's groups across Canada as well as women workers in Palestine, frontline health workers in Zimbabwe and LGBTQ2+ people in Southern Africa.

BC Emergency and Resilience Fund

Record-setting rainfall in British Columbia in 2021 triggered catastrophic flooding and mudslides resulting in massive economic and social devastation to many communities, First Nations, farms and the transportation system. In response, the SJF began to coordinate a BC Emergency and Resilience Fund to provide both immediate and long-term support to communities across the province. Over \$250,000 was raised from the SJF, PSAC regions and components.

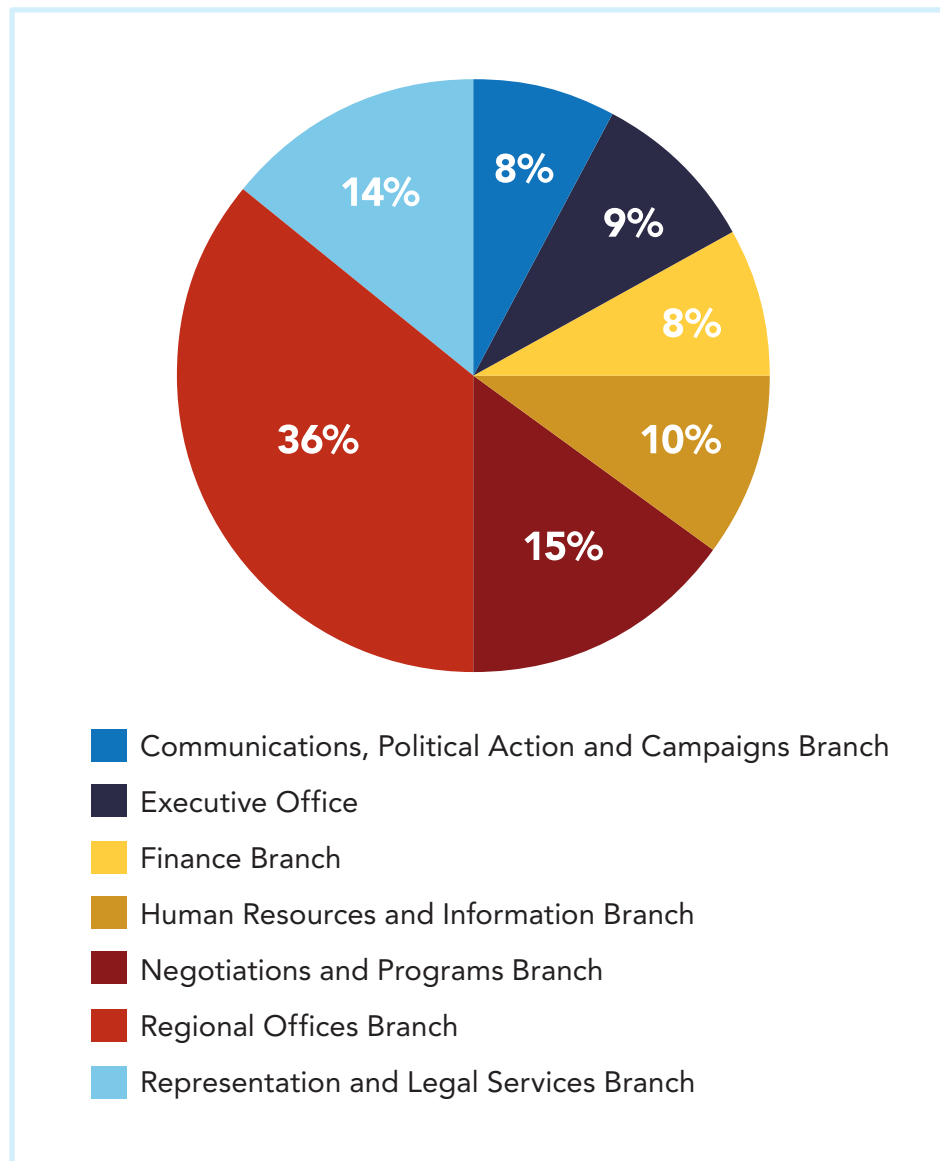
Labour reform in Mexico

For nearly a year, the SJF has been working with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the United Steelworkers and the Centre international de solidarité ouvrière (CISO) in Montreal to develop a project in support of labour reforms in Mexico — the most important in 60 years. The project is being implemented by four labour counterparts in Mexico and is funded by Employment and Social Development Canada. Beyond funding, the long-term viability of the reforms depends on our ability to build solidarity between Mexican and Canadian unions into the future.

Our achievements are a collective effort

I end with a special tribute to the employees of PSAC who give so much of themselves to our union. None of the achievements that I have reported would have happened without the skills, commitment, and hard work of PSAC staff. As National President, I benefit each day from their support, wisdom, and dedication and so on my own behalf, and on behalf of the entire membership, I express my deepest gratitude.

Also, I want to recognize the leadership of the members of PSAC's Alliance Executive Committee and of our National Board of Directors. I thank each one, those who served for all or part of the last four years, for their close collaboration and guidance. We have worked well together: sharing our views, putting forward new ideas, finding common ground, and always putting members first. It has been an honour working with you.





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