

Message from the President

As we enter into the second quarter of the year, I want to take a moment to speak plainly about the moment we are in—not just as members of OPSEU/SEFPO, but as workers connected to a global struggle for justice! Globally, we are witnessing profound hardship. From climate change which has infused devastating natural disasters (such as record breaking snowfalls, flooding/ and mudslides, hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires) that have displaced families and destroyed communities, to ongoing entrenched conflicts and humanitarian crises that continue to claim innocent lives, the level of suffering can and will feel overwhelming. These events may seem distant, but their impact is deeply rooted—and as members of a union we are grounded in resilience, human rights and solidarity, therefore, we cannot ignore them. Our labour movement (as we know it) has always stood for more than workplace rights. We stand for dignity, fairness, integrity and compassion—values that do not stop at borders. In times like these, those values matter more than ever. They remind us that solidarity is not just a principle; it is a responsibility.

Many of our members have personal ties to the regions affected by these tragedies. To those individuals and their families, we extend our deepest support. Please know that your union stands with you. We encourage members to look out for one another, to offer support where possible, and to foster a sense of community that reflects the very best of who we are. While we may not be able to solve global crises on our own, we can take meaningful steps. Whether through supporting reputable humanitarian efforts, advocating for peace and justice, or simply staying informed and engaged, each action contributes to a broader culture of care and accountability.

Here in Local 500, we remain committed to advancing the priorities that matter most to our members—fair wages, safe working conditions (physical and psychological injuries), accommodation, respect and civility while on the job. Even as we confront global uncertainty, priorities, value and mission remains clear - to protect the integrity of all members, and to continue the fight for each other. Gentle reminder – if you know of a member (colleague) who has been injured while on the job, connect with them, let them know you are thinking of them. I am aware, how easy it is for us to get caught up in what is happening in our own lives, BUT, don't forget, we are part of the greater sum of all of us!

In difficult times, it is easy to feel powerless. But history has shown that collective action—rooted in meaningful solidarity—can create real change. Let us continue to stand together, not only as workers, but as members of a global community.

Know Your Collective Agreement

Might the Emergency Situation clause apply to issues of inclement weather?

Clause 29.12 of the Collective Agreement states "Emergency Situations The Union and CAMH agree to work jointly to minimize any adverse effects of any future emergency situations of an unexpected nature."

So far, CAMH has treated inclement weather not as an emergency, but as a special case.

[Therefore the answer is that it is unlikely that normal inclement weather would be considered an Emergency Situation.](#)

CAMH Inclement Weather policy AHR3.4.9 states:

3.1 Where inclement weather impacts CAMH personnel working onsite consideration will be given to alternate work arrangements (i.e., leaving work early to allow for safe travel home) and/or lodging accommodation.

3.1.1 In determining if lodging accommodation will be offered, the following factors shall be considered:

- required level of staffing to provide appropriate level of care;
- travel distance to CAMH that is greater than 15km; or
- hours between shifts (i.e., CAMH personnel finishing their shift then working the next day); and
- other issues that impact client/patient care and/or 24/7 operation of CAMH.

3.2 Where inclement weather impacts CAMH personnel's ability to attend work onsite, but their work can be accomplished remotely, CAMH personnel may choose to do so, with the approval of their direct manager/director.

3.3 Where inclement weather impacts essential onsite CAMH personnel's ability to attend work onsite, CAMH personnel are to notify their manager/director as early as possible.

3.4 Sick days will not be utilized, in whole or in part, for any absence from work due to inclement weather.

3.5 CAMH will arrange for lodging accommodation and meals for those personnel members who are required to stay at CAMH to provide coverage for those unable to attend work due to inclement weather as necessary.

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Contact Your Local

- OPSEU.local500@camh.ca

For questions or suggestions concerning the newsletter, feel free to reach out:

- communications.local500@gmail.com

Connection Corner

OPSEU Information

[Collective Agreement](#)

[OPSEU/SEFPO – The 200,000-strong union of Ontario public sector workers.](#)
[InSolidarity Committee – OPSEU/SEFPO](#)
[Equity Unit – OPSEU/SEFPO](#)
[OPSEU Videos](#)

CAMH Information

[People and Experience - Home](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety](#)

[Anti-Racism, Harassment and Discrimination](#)

[Workplace Mental Health & Wellness Strategy](#)

[HIVE](#)

[Many of the above links are only accessible using CAMH devices while connected to the CAMH network.]

Union 101:

Welcome to the Local 500!

The Ontario Public Service Employees' Union Local 500 serves members at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. We are the largest OPSEU local serving over 2300 members! Our local represents members directly at the workplace level. This includes supporting grievances, answering member questions, holding meetings, and ensuring the collective agreement is followed. We work alongside the provincial organization, OPSEU/SEFPO, to support its mission of building public service worker power and advancing social and economic justice for all workers.

The basic building block of collective power is each one of us! Make sure you can participate fully by signing your membership card, joining the member's portal, and keeping up with OPSEU news:

1: Sign Up Your Membership Card

Joining officially is the first step. Signing up for your membership card allows you to fully participate and helps build the strength we need to win meaningful improvements. If you haven't signed already you can do so here:

<https://hub03.opseu.org/Forms/emaweb>



2: Register for the Member Portal

Access important updates, services, and union information through the Member Portal. Be sure to keep your contact details up to date so you stay informed. We need all our members to join because registered membership impacts the funding made available to our local.

<https://members.opseu.org/>



3: Stay Connected and Learn More

Check out the links below for the latest news, events, and educational opportunities.

OPSEU/SEFPO: <https://opseu.org/>



Maybe you are a new member or a current member that needs more info. You can find a helpful orientation to OPSEU [HERE](#), and helpful videos [HERE](#).



Young Workers Spotlight

The Young Worker Mentorship Program will match OPSEU/SEFPO's elected leaders (Executive Board Members, MERC, CERC, Division, Sector Chairs and Local Presidents) with young workers to learn about OPSEU/SEFPO and develop them as leaders in Union life. The 12-month program aims to establish a supportive mentoring culture and provide opportunities to connect individuals from diverse backgrounds and with different levels of experience from across the union. The program will also allow participants to build confidence with the hope of running for a leadership role in the future.

The program is very casual! Virtual meetings, coffee meet-ups, phone calls, etc., on your own time. You may be invited to union meetings and events.

Call-Out to young workers to for this year 2026-2027, **deadline April 26th, 11:59pm.**

<https://opseu.org/call-for-mentees-young-worker-mentorship-program-2026-2027/>

Bargaining Corner

Union bargaining, also known as collective bargaining, is the negotiation process between an employer and a union-represented group of employees to establish a binding, written contract called a collective agreement (CA). This process determines the terms of employment, including wages, benefits, hours, and working conditions, and necessitates that both parties negotiate in good faith.

Key Aspects of Union Bargaining:

- **Goal:** To create a legally binding agreement outlining employment conditions for a three-year period.
- **Process:** The elected bargaining team, consisting of the OPSEU Staff representative, the Local President, and seven members, meets with the management staff team to negotiate when the previous contract is nearing expiration or has already expired.
- **Content:** The negotiation process aims to refine the language used for non-monetary items, including the definitions of employees (such as casual, temporary, full-time, and contract), job specifications, working conditions, and the use of AI. Additionally, it seeks to address monetary items like wages, vacations, overtime hours, and benefits.
- **Legal Requirement:** Both the employer and the bargaining team must engage in good faith negotiations. It is essential to maintain confidentiality at all times to ensure the integrity of the bargaining process and why it is difficult to share information to members.
- **Outcome:** A new or renewed collective agreement that will guide everyone in day-to-day operations, ensure fair and consistent treatment of employees, reducing the need for individual negotiations.
- **Ratification:** All discussed items must be fully agreed upon by both the bargaining team and the employer and later submitted to members for voting. To approve and validate the new CA, a majority of 50% + 1 must be obtained.
- **Arbitration:** If an agreement cannot be reached, the process may escalate to mediation or arbitration. During arbitration, union members do not vote on the items. Instead, the final decision is made by an arbitrator, a neutral third party, usually a lawyer, who reviews the supporting information provided by each party to substantiate their demands.

What happens during bargaining:

The bargaining team will review the collective agreement one article at a time, beginning with non-monetary items. For each article, they will add, improve, modify, or remove language to better define employment conditions. For monetary items, they will advocate for increases in wages, benefits, and other financial aspects. The team will then submit their proposed changes and demands to the employer. Both parties will meet to discuss and explain the requested changes and increases. Following these discussions, each party will return to their respective groups, and the process will repeat until an agreement is reached on every article and benefit demand which will be the ratification.

<https://opseu.org/new-opseu-sefpo-members-bargaining-guide/>

For the next FOUR days of bargaining, we are encouraging members to wear specific colours in order to demonstrate UNITY and solidarity among OPSEU Local 500 members and their bargaining team.

- 1. Tuesday April 21st, 2026 --Black**
- 2. Wednesday April 23rd, 2026--Sky Blue**
- 3. Tuesday April 28th, 2026 --Tan**
- 4. Wednesday April 29th--Navy Blue**

Please note that after every series of bargaining, we will host Bargaining Update Q and A sessions, which will be announced soon.

EDUCATION

OPSEU Region 5 Education (see map for Region boundaries)

On Saturday May 30th and Sunday May 31st 2026, educational courses for our region (region 5) will take place at The Chelsea Hotel, 33 Gerrard St, Toronto, ON. Any member can register! **Registrations are due by Friday April 17th**

Courses:

Stewards 1: Making a Difference in the Workplace

Prerequisites: None

Stewards 2: Facing the Employer, Building Member Involvement

Prerequisites: Stewards 1

Stewards 3: Dealing With Discipline

Prerequisites: Stewards 1 and 2

Local Treasurer's Course

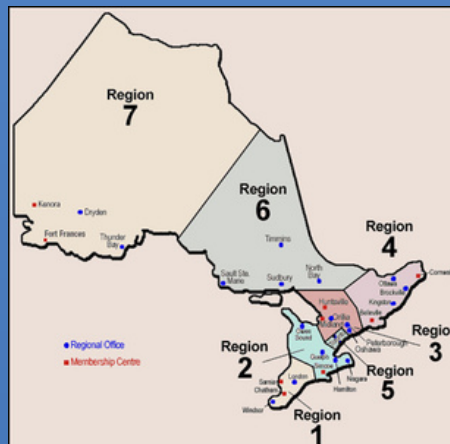
Prerequisites: None

Health and Safety: Level 3

Prerequisites: Health and Safety Levels 1 & 2

Making Composite Locals Work

Prerequisites: None



<https://opseu.org/region-5-weekend-educational-may-30-31/>

NEWS

The OPSEU/SEFPO Convention was held on April 9th – 11th, 2026 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Convention is the union's highest ranking authority. This year, JP Hornick was re-elected as President, and Laurie Nancekivell was re-elected as First Vice-President/Treasurer! Delegates also debated and voted on a few of the resolutions and constitutional amendments which were previously voted on at OPSEU Local 500. For a more detailed update, please check <https://opseu.org/latest-news/convention/>

Here are some pics of the delegates, alternates and observers who represented Local 500.



International Women's Day

Congratulations to all women as OPSEU Local 500 honoured our members with fresh-cut tulips on March 6th, 2026. It really was a special day!



Will Artificial Intelligence change your work? (Webinar)

View the recording of the webinar held on March 20, 2026
<https://opseu.org/will-artificial-intelligence-change-your-work-webinar/>

The Worth Fighting For Campaign

If you work in community public services, you're likely out thousands of dollars because of Ford's illegal Bill 124. We're fighting to get you that money back, because we're worth fighting for.

<https://opseu.org/campaigns/worth-fighting-for/>