



# You wanted to know

## Your questions...answered

**Q. We have good wages, benefits and working conditions now. Why would we join a union?**

The goal of joining a union at this time may not necessarily be to get improvements, but to protect what you already have now. When the full impact of the LHINs legislation becomes known, it could radically impact your jobs, the level of service you provide, and even your wages and benefits. Joining a union gives you a powerful voice and puts you on a level playing field with the employer to negotiate those impacts.

**Q. The employer has always treated us well. Why wouldn't they continue to do so?**

Remember, you now have a new employer and there were layoffs in the past. Prior to the LHINs legislation, the government made up for any deficits in the CCACs' budgets. Under the new rules, the CCACs cannot run a deficit, and that may translate to cuts in either staffing or services. The local employer will likely have no say in what happens to their own employees.

**Q. We have heard that if we join a union, all the things we have now (wages, benefits, etc.) will be thrown away and we will start bargaining from zero. Is this true?**

No. OPSEU will examine your wages, benefits and working conditions and compare them against the currently unionized employees in Huntsville and Bracebridge. We will then pick the best of the conditions in both locations, and use that as a starting point for negotiations.

**Q. What if the employer wants to cut our wages and benefits? What will the union do for us?**

You might ask: Will the employer do this with or without a union? Without a union, the employer can make these cuts unilaterally, with no input from the employees. With a union, you have a strong voice and a powerful organization on your side to negotiate any cuts the employer may contemplate.

**Q. If we vote for a union, do we keep our seniority?**

Yes. Currently, as a non-union employee, the employer *legally* doesn't have to recognize your seniority for all aspects of your job, even if they currently do so. If you vote OPSEU, your seniority becomes legally recognized when it comes to things such as job competitions, layoffs, vacations, pensions and benefits.

**Q. Who decides what employees become union representatives?**

The employees themselves get to vote on who become their workplace union representatives. You choose from among yourselves who represents you at the workplace. Those representatives then receive specialized training from the union.

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**Q. You said we don't pay dues until we get a collective agreement. Do we still get services from the union in the meantime?**

Yes. If you vote for OPSEU, you become union members and are entitled to representation from the union if you have an issue. You get all the services you are entitled to regardless if you are paying dues.

**Q. Can employees from other CCACs move in and bump us out of our jobs?**

As non-union employees, CCAC employees from other areas can move into your jobs if the employer allows it. You have no protection in this regard. As a unionized employee, you will have language in your collective agreement that will prevent anyone from outside your CCAC from displacing you from your job.

**Q. Who decides what issues are negotiated and what the improvements will be?**

The members have complete control of the bargaining process. You will fill out demand surveys, and decide by vote what items will be negotiated at the table. You elect from among your own group what members will be on the bargaining team, and also vote on any offers that result from that negotiation.

**Q. Will we have to go on strike?**

That decision rests solely with the employees of your CCAC, and is only considered if you cannot come to an agreement at the bargaining table. Even if the improvements you seek aren't reached, the members themselves decide whether the issues are important enough to take labour action. It is important to point out that among the 500 contracts that OPSEU negotiates, over 98 per cent of them are settled without strikes.

**Q. Is it true that if we stay non-union, we will be the only CCAC in Ontario without a union?**

All other CCACs in Ontario are unionized. OPSEU represents employees in five of the 14 merged CCACs in the province. All these members have recognized that with the potentially negative aspects of the LHINs legislation, their best protection is by belonging to a union. One of the many benefits from being unionized is that your CCAC can negotiate for parity with the others, some of which have much higher rates of pay and superior working conditions.

**Q. Can we choose to remain non-union now, and then join OPSEU sometime later?**

It's possible, but you have to remember a couple of things. First, the only reason you may want a union at a later date would likely be because something bad has happened in your workplace. At that point, it would probably be too late to do anything about it. Second, you would have to try to secretly organize a union, which is much harder than the open process the law allows at this point.

**On Dec. 6, vote**  
 **OPSEU**

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## Your Local Contacts

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