

Elections and connections

**Liquor Board Employees Division
February 2006**

Elections and connections is Part 4 of a larger document, *Your home in OPSEU*, that provides more detail on how LCBO employees fit into the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. *Your home in OPSEU* provides contact information for key people, descriptions of OPSEU structures, and details on all 42 of the OPSEU locals that LCBO employees now belong to. To see the full document, go to <http://www.opseu.org/lbed/TransitionreportFeb206.pdf>.

Local election success

A Q&A guide for OPSEU members at the LCBO

Local elections are the foundation of OPSEU democracy.

Local elections choose leaders – leaders who represent their co-workers in the workplace, plan local activities, and manage local funds. Local elections also elect delegates to OPSEU Convention to help steer the union as a whole.

The following is a rough guide for OPSEU members at the LCBO who are starting a new local from scratch or joining an existing OPSEU local.

Q1. Who gets elected?

Local elections take place on two levels:

- Members in individual workplaces, or clusters of workplaces, elect **Stewards**. In “multi-unit” locals, members also elect **Unit Stewards** (see Q5 for details).
- All local members elect the **Local Executive Committee (LEC)**, which is the leadership of the local. **All LEC members must be elected as Stewards before they can run for an LEC position.** Each local elects a President and at least two other officers to the LEC. “Single-unit” locals elect a Chief Steward to the LEC as well.

In single-unit locals, all stewards sit on the LEC; in multi-unit locals, unit stewards sit on the LEC, but shop stewards do not (see diagram on next page).

Q2. What do stewards do?

Stewards handle grievances and speak to management on behalf of their co-workers, keep co-workers informed of union issues and activities, encourage participation in union activities, and serve as a link between their co-workers and their Unit Committee or Local Executive Committee.

Q3. What rights do stewards have so they can do their jobs effectively?

Stewards have the right to attend LEC or unit committee meetings. They have the right to know the status of grievances from their group. They have the right to high quality education and training.

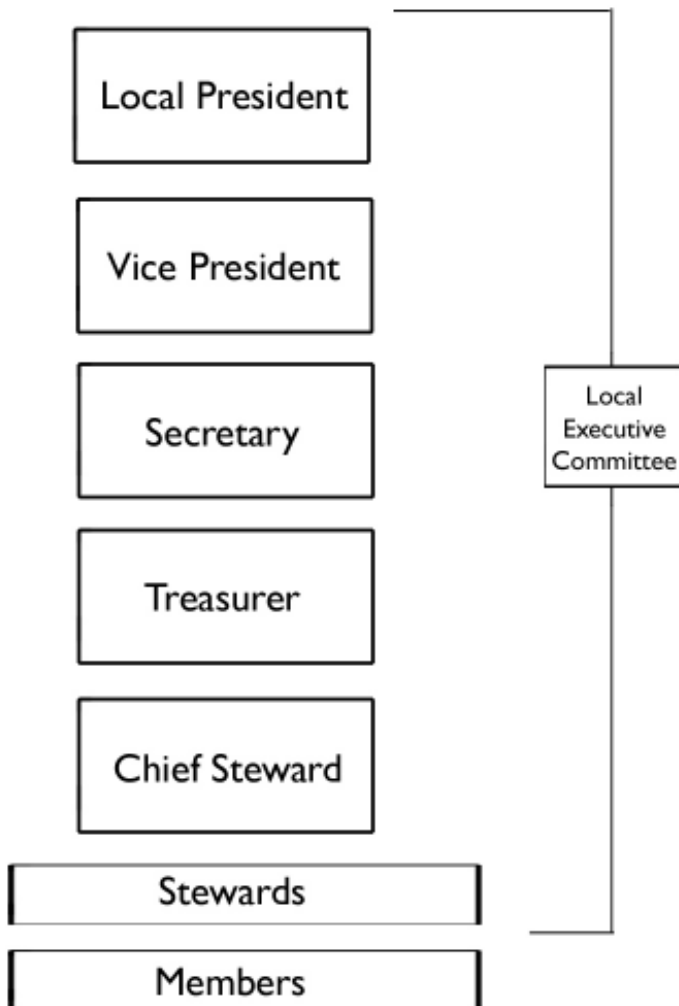
OPSEU local structures

Definitions:

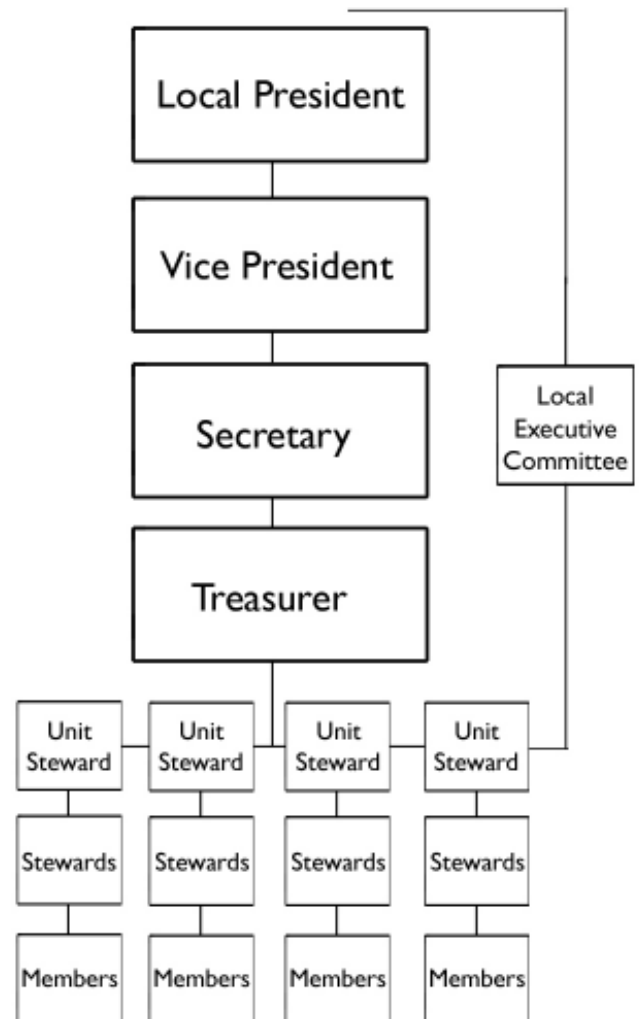
Single Unit Local = one (1) unit and one (1) employer

Multi-unit Local = many units and one (1) employer

Single Unit Local



Multi-unit Local



Q4. What other supports are in place for stewards and LEC members so they can do a good job?

The OPSEU training program for stewards at the LCBO is being developed now, and will be piloted shortly. All stewards and LEC members are eligible to attend regional educationals and other training programs.

New local presidents attend a new presidents' orientation at OPSEU head office.

Locals also have their own staff representative and access to office space and equipment located at OPSEU regional offices and membership centres.

Q5. What is the difference between a “shop steward” and a “unit steward”?

Shop stewards are directly elected by the members in their work area. In single-unit locals, all stewards sit on the LEC.

In multi-unit locals, groups of shop stewards form a “unit committee”. Members from each unit elect one of the stewards on the unit committee to serve as the unit steward. This unit steward sits on the LEC.

The number of unit stewards in a local depends on the size of the local.

Q6. How do locals decide how many stewards to elect?

The OPSEU staff representative assigned to each local will work with the existing leadership (and members in the workplace) to decide what makes sense. A local with (say) 25 small stores will not likely want to elect a steward from each store. A better solution might be to create four groups of stores, with each one electing its own steward.

Q7. Who gets elected in “composite” locals where a group of LCBO employees are joining an existing OPSEU local?

Members elect their stewards in the same way they would in an all-LCBO local. From among these stewards, one person is elected immediately to sit on the LEC as a unit steward. The unit steward from the LCBO unit may run for any position on the LEC when the next local elections are held.

Q8. Can locals change their steward structure after the first elections?

Yes. Once the new locals are up and running, LECs will be able to change the number of stewards and/or the areas they represent. Where changes occur, locals will hold by-elections to fill any vacancies.

Q9. What do the various officers of the LEC do?

The **President** enforces the by-laws and the regulations of the local and the union, presides at local meetings, and generally supervises the affairs and operations of the local. The President is an *ex officio* member of all local committees. This means he or she is a full voting member of all such committees.

The **Vice-President** stands in for the President when he or she is absent and exercises any and all duties assigned by the President or the Local Executive Committee.

The **Secretary** attends all local meetings, keeps minutes, distributes notices to members, handles local correspondence, and sends updated membership information to the OPSEU regional office.

The **Treasurer** oversees expenditures of the local and generally safeguards its finances.

The **Chief Steward** supervises and assists the Shop Stewards.

Q10. What other positions are elected by the local as a whole?

Every local must elect at least two members to a two-year term as **Trustees** to sit on the local audit committee. The job of the Trustees is to examine the books, records, and property of the local and its units at least twice a year and report their findings to OPSEU head office and to local members at a general membership meeting.

Trustees may not be stewards and may not hold any other office in the local.

Q11. Who votes?

All members in good standing of the union may vote in steward, unit steward, and LEC elections. During the transition, this includes those who have signed OLBEU cards and/or OPSEU cards.

Stewards are elected by the members in their work area; officers of the LEC are elected by all members of the local.

Q12. How do local elections work?

All positions in the local must be elected by a clear majority (50 per cent plus one) of those voting. This may require more than one ballot.

Balloting for stewards, unit stewards, and LECs takes place at a general meeting of the members in the area (for stewards and unit stewards) or the whole local (for LECs).

Q13. Who will run the elections for OPSEU members at the LCBO?

The OPSEU staff representative assigned to each local will work with the existing (OLBEU) leadership in the local to plan how elections will be held. Staff representatives will oversee the voting to make sure it is done fairly in accordance with the OPSEU Constitution.

OPSEU Executive Board Members and members of the Liquor Board Employees Division will also be available to assist.

Q14. What happens when there is only one candidate for a position?

The candidate is acclaimed. To make it official, the usual practice is that one member from the area or local casts a ballot to officially elect that candidate.

Q15. Can locals have ballot boxes at work locations, or use mail-in ballots?

Under the OPSEU Constitution, the president of OPSEU may allow locals to set up one or more polling stations not connected to a member meeting, or may permit other arrangements such as mail-in ballots. Proxy voting is not allowed. Holding elections at member meetings has several advantages:

- It helps build the local by bringing members together to talk face-to-face;
- It allows members to meet candidates for office, get to know them, and learn about issues facing the local;
- It ensures secure control of ballot boxes; and
- In LEC elections, it allows people who are not elected to one position to try again and run for another position.

Q16. Many OPSEU locals for LCBO employees cover a large geographic area. How can we make sure members attend?

Geography is a challenge. It is up to the assigned staff representative and existing member leadership to come up with a plan that will:

- notify local members that elections will be held;
- give members lots of notice so that they can plan to attend area and local meetings;
- encourage members to run for positions and vote; and
- find ways to make it easy for members to attend meetings.

Q17. Can locals pay expenses (e.g., mileage, child care) for members to attend meetings?

This is up to the locals themselves. Some OPSEU locals do; some do not. OPSEU policy encourages (but does not require) locals to provide child care for local events.

Since the 27 brand new locals for LCBO employees do not yet exist, expenses will have to be decided by the assigned staff representative in consultation with existing leadership.

Northern locals can also get assistance from the Northern Lights fund, which helps locals with accommodation and travel expenses. Locals should contact an Executive Board Member for their region.

People with disabilities who need assistance to take part in meetings (for example, a personal attendant, sign language interpretation, braille, etc.) may have those expenses paid by the union (centrally) through the Accommodation Fund. For more information, contact Heather Sinclair in the OPSEU Equity Unit at 1-800-268-7376 ext. 8790.

Q18. When will local elections be held?

Soon! All elections must be completed in February and March so that locals have time to elect delegates to the OPSEU Convention scheduled for April 20-22, 2006. Convention delegates must be registered no later than April 6.

Q19. Will the Liquor Board Employees Division and OPSEU head office provide any support to get locals up and running (in addition to regional staff reps)?

OPSEU Communications is mailing an information package to all LBED members for whom we have correct addresses. The package includes advance notice of the local elections, information about the member's local, regional office contact numbers, and how to find out more.

To promote the election, locals may apply for funding from the union's Local Time Off Fund. This fund helps locals pay for time off for members for union activities. The Local Time Off Fund is also called the "80-20 fund" because the central union pays 80 per cent of the cost and the local pays 20 per cent. OPSEU head office will pay a maximum of \$10 per member in good standing; the local contributes \$2.50 per member in good standing.

Since, for the time being, we have locals in the Liquor Board Employees Division but no Local Executive Committee, requests for Local Time Off funding will be authorized by OPSEU staff reps. Staff reps will assess such requests based on the local organizing committee's workplan.

The form for the Local Time Off Fund is on page 25.

Q20. What do I do if I want to run for a position?

To run for a position, you must be a member in good standing of your union. You must have a union card. For these elections, you can be a signed-up member of either OLBEU or OPSEU. If you are not signed up, contact your nearest OPSEU regional office for an application.

To run for a steward position, you must be nominated by a signed-up co-worker in your work area. To run for a unit steward position, or a position on your Local Executive Committee, you must first be elected as a steward. Then you must be nominated by a signed-up co-worker from your unit or your local, respectively.

The easiest way to run for election is to bring along your nominator and attend an election meeting. However, you can still run for a position if you don't attend the election meeting. Just complete a Nomination Form (see page 24) and hand it in to your staff representative. Members may vote for you even if you are not there.

Of course, if you do not attend the election meeting you will miss a big opportunity to persuade voters to elect you.

For more information, call your OPSEU regional office and ask to speak to the staff representative assigned to your local.

Q21. Does OPSEU provide support (e.g., expenses, phone lists) to members who want to run for a position?

No. You have to fund your own political career.

Q22. Does OPSEU have templates for posters to promote local elections?

Yes. They are included with this document. See pages 22-23.

Q23. Where can I get more details about local elections?

Local elections and structures are governed by Article 29 of the OPSEU Constitution. You can get a copy of the Constitution from your nearest OPSEU regional office or at <http://www.opseu.org/constitution/Constitution2005.pdf> .

Making connections

Building communication plans for strong OPSEU locals and successful local elections

Many of the new OPSEU locals at the LCBO bring together members who have not worked together before. Most of the new locals are spread out over a large geographic area. Keeping members informed and in touch is a big challenge.

The good news is, keeping in touch is always a challenge, even in locals where all members work in the same building. That's why it's so important to have a local communications plan.

Building a communications plan means deciding on a message, knowing your target audience, deciding who will do the work of communication, and deciding when, where and how the message goes out.

We don't communicate just for fun – we communicate to get things done. The first thing new locals need to use communication for is to hold local elections.

Holding successful local elections involves four main steps:

1. Deciding on how many stewards will be elected, and in what area, and deciding what positions will be on the Local Executive Committee.
2. Setting dates, times, and places for steward and LEC elections.
3. Promoting the elections to all members and potential candidates.
4. Holding steward and LEC elections.

Use the worksheets here to plan your local elections – and a communications plan to make those elections a success.

**We communicate
to get things done.
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Local election CALENDAR

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Jan. 22-28		LOCAL ASSEMBLY	
Jan. 29 - Feb. 4			
Feb. 5-11			
Feb. 12-18			
Feb. 19-25			
Feb. 26 - March 4			
March 5-11		Deadline for Convention resolutions and constitutional amendments	
March 12-18			
March 19-25			
March 26- April 1			
April 2-8			
April 9-15			
April 16-22			

Local election worksheet

Step 1: Plan your elections

1. How many stewards will your local need?

Group the members in your local into areas that will be served by one shop steward. List store numbers and/or departments for each steward area.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____
- h. _____
- i. _____
- j. _____
- k. _____
- l. _____
- m. _____
- n. _____
- o. _____
- p. _____
- q. _____

2. If your local is a multi-unit local, how many unit stewards will your local need?

Group the shop steward areas listed above into units that will each elect a unit steward to sit on the Local Executive Committee.

3. When and where will the steward elections be?

On your Local Election Calendar (see pages 120-121), pencil in dates and locations for your steward elections.

4. When and where will the Local Executive Committee elections be?

On your calendar, pencil in a date and a location for your Local Executive Committee elections. **This should take place in time to elect Convention delegates** so they can register before the April 6 deadline (this is an extended deadline for LBED locals only).

Local election worksheet

Step 4: Create your message(s)

1. What can you say to members to encourage them to run for a steward position in their work area, or a position on their LEC?

2. What can you say to members to encourage them to attend meetings and vote in steward and Local Executive Committee elections?

Local election worksheet

Step 5: Choose your methods

Check the four most important communication methods you'll use to run successful elections in your local.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Face-to-face (visits)	Personal; lets members know message is important; allows members to ask questions	High time commitment; not all members are at the same place at the same time; works best when there is a workplace contact
<input type="checkbox"/>	Face-to-face (meetings)	Personal; lets members know message is important; lets members ask questions; lets members discuss issues with each other; ensures all members get the same message	Requires all members to be in the same place at the same time; may not reach all members (e.g., shift workers, parents)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phone trees	Personal; lets members know message is important; lets members ask questions; allows callers to divide up the work	Require constant management to make sure they don't break down
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phone banks	Personal; lets members know message is important; lets members ask questions; allow callers to divide up the work; easier to manage when all callers are together and have set aside a specific time and place to call; can be fun	
<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail	Fast; easy; ensures all recipients get the same message; good for reminding people of something they already know about	Difficult to know if recipients have received, understood, and believed the message (or care about it); some members do not have e-mail
<input type="checkbox"/>	Web site	Allows members who are "out of the loop" to receive information	Requires effort to set up and maintain; no way to know who gets (or doesn't get) the message; not all members have web access
<input type="checkbox"/>	Posters	Create visible union presence in workplace; reminds people of message	May be removed by employer in some cases
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mail	Reaches most members, relatively quickly; lets members know message is important	Costly, time-consuming to produce; difficult to know if members have received, understood, and believed the message (or care about it)

Local election worksheet

Step 6: Put it on the calendar

Figure out **what** communications tasks your local needs to do to run your elections. Figure out **who** will do them and **when**. Put the information on your Local Election Calendar.

Step 7: Make it happen

Running local elections is work, but it's well worth it. Strong, effective OPSEU locals built on member participation hold the key to strong union representation – and better jobs – for all OPSEU members at the LCBO.

The pages that follow may help you plan and promote your elections.

NOTICE of ELECTIONS

All LCBO employees who have signed OPSEU or OLBEU union cards are eligible to vote in the elections for

OPSEU Local _____ .

The election for a steward for our area will be held:

Date:

Time:

Place:

The election for Local President and other officers of the Local will be held at a **General Membership Meeting:**

Date:

Time:

Place:

If you are interested in running for a position, or for more information, contact:

Ontario Public Service Employees Union
www.opseu.org



Ever think of running for office?

If you have signed an **OPSEU** or **OLBEU** union card, you are eligible to run for election as a **STEWARD** in **OPSEU Local _____** .

Stewards:

- speak to management on behalf of their co-workers,
- handle grievances,
- keep co-workers informed about union issues, and
- serve as a link between their co-workers and their union local.

Stewards receive training from the union and are eligible to run for positions on the Local Executive Committee.

If you are interested in running for a position, or for more information, contact:

Ontario Public Service Employees Union
www.opseu.org



NOMINATION FORM

for steward, unit, and local elections in **OPSEU**

I nominate: _____
(Print name)

for the position of: _____

Signature of nominator: _____

Date of nomination: _____

I accept this nomination: _____
(Print name)

Signature of nominee: _____

Date of acceptance: _____

Ontario Public Service Employees Union
www.opseu.org





LOCAL TIME-OFF FUND APPLICATION FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Complete and return to Accounting Department by mail or by fax: 416-448-7450

LOCAL: _____

DATE: _____

The Convention 2001 approved a budget which allows OPSEU Locals access to additional funds for booking member time-off. Funding is available to assist the Local Executive Committee and/or their members in the performance of their duties, effective April 7, 2001.

The funding level is determined by the following calculation:

"A maximum of \$12.50 per member in good standing. OPSEU Head Office will contribute \$10.00 per member with the Local to contribute the remaining \$2.50 per member."

For greater clarification, the number of members in good standing in a Local will be based on OPSEU membership records for the month of December of the previous year.

Locals must ensure that their Local Trustee Audit Reports are up-to-date.

Local must complete information requested in both boxes.

I affirm that this application for time-off has the approval of the Local Executive Committee.

Name of Member(s): _____

Purpose of Time-off: _____

Dates/Duration of Time-off: _____

Print Name of LEC Member _____

Signature of LEC Member _____

Date _____

Tel: _____

Note: A Local Executive Committee Member cannot sign for his/her own application for reimbursement.

Date of Last Local Trustee Audit Report Submitted: _____

Number of Local Members in Good Standing: _____ (as of last year's December Membership Report)

Maximum Local Entitlement: \$ _____ Maximum Reimbursement (80%): \$ _____
(based on \$12.50 per member, per year)

Salary

Benefits

Total

Estimated Time-off Costs (for this application): _____

Time-off to be paid by: _____ Regular expense claim (proof of lost wages required)

_____ Employer's invoice _____
(Employer's Name)

Estimated Remaining Entitlement: \$ _____

Note: OPSEU will pay the member or employer for 100% of the total wage bill. The OPSEU Local Time-Off Fund covers 80% of the cost, and the remaining 20% will be deducted from the Local's next quarterly rebate(s). Any payment made by OPSEU in excess of the maximum entitlement will result in a 100% cost recovery from the Local.