



OPSEU Update for Flexible Part-time Court Workers

February 16, 2007

Survey flags FPT problems, OPSEU pushing employer for solutions

OPSEU members in Ontario's provincial courts are experiencing big problems with the implementation of "flexible part-time" (FPT) status for previously unclassified court workers, according to an OPSEU survey of affected staff.

"OPSEU and the employer negotiated Appendix 32 and the FPT system to give unclassified court workers many of the benefits and protections of permanent full-time staff," said Julie Weber, OPSEU Co-chair of the Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee (MERC) for the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG).

"This survey proves that there are serious issues with the way the FPT program has been implemented, and OPSEU members are hurting as a result," she said.

OPSEU's representatives on the FPT Joint Dispute Resolution Committee have scheduled an initial meeting with MAG management on Wednesday, Feb. 21, to discuss the survey findings and push for solutions.

To help get the message across, the OPSEU team is asking members to wear "Justice for Court Workers" stickers at work.

"There is an annual review of the FPT program scheduled for October, but our members' can't wait that long," said Paul Myers, an OPSEU

JDRC representative and MERC team member. "By wearing stickers on Feb. 21, you can show the employer they need to fix the problems with the FPT system now."

Please see page 2 for more information on the FPT survey results.



Sticking up for justice

Want to see real solutions for FPT court workers? You can help!

Pick up some "Justice for Court Workers" stickers from your local OPSEU court contact. Wear them at work. And be sure to wear one on Wednesday, Feb. 21 when your OPSEU team meets with the employer to push for action.

For a list of OPSEU contacts in each provincial court, visit: <http://www.opseu.org/ops/merc/attorneygeneralappendix25.htm>

OPSEU survey identifies big problems with FPT system

OPSEU's flexible part-time survey paints a clear picture of the serious problems members are experiencing with conversion to FPT status. The FPT survey was developed in response to issues raised by FPT court workers across the province. The questionnaire was mailed to more than 1,200 FPT members in early January. A total of 409 members from more than 60 provincial courts returned completed surveys.

Key survey findings include:

FPT category assignments

- Only 45% of members who completed the survey felt they were assigned to the correct annual hours category.
- Almost one-third (32%) filed a written dispute challenging the category they were assigned to.

Scheduling problems

- Two-thirds (66%) report problems with the way management is scheduling work under the new system.
- Almost one in five (17%) say that management is treating their minimum annual hours as a cap on the hours they get each week.
- 28% report that management is increasing the use of unclassified staff instead of giving hours to FPT staff.
- 39% say their manager insists they be available to work every day – not just days they are scheduled.
- 25% report that managers manipulate the schedule to avoid paying on-call and call-back pay.
- 34% say management refuses to be flexible in scheduling them off when they have appointments, and says they must use vacation time instead.

Pay and benefits

Members report extremely high rates of problems with their pay and the cost of benefits under the FPT system.

- 58% disagree that getting the same pay every two weeks is an improvement.
- 65% disagree that getting paid for overage and overtime hours only once they have worked their annual minimum number of hours is reasonable.
- Just over half (51%) agree that health and dental benefits, sick leave and membership in the pension plan is important to them. However, only 22% say these benefits are

worth what they cost the member.

- Almost two-thirds (65%) think health and dental premiums are too high, while 44% of those surveyed declined the health and dental coverage because it was too expensive
- More than 4 out of 5 members (82%) report a significant drop in take-home pay due to FPT conversion.
- Over 60% said they have experienced significant financial hardship due to FPT conversion.

“Unclassified court workers have been pushing for more security at work for more than a decade,” said Weber. “That’s what the FPT system was supposed to deliver – by providing a guaranteed minimum number of hours, benefits, paid vacation and sick leave, seniority rights and job security.”

“But the way the program has been implemented is creating hardship for our members, and is threatening the way the courts are run. It’s clear that the employer needs to negotiate real solutions to get the program back on track.”

In the meantime, thank you to members who took part in the survey. Your input matters.

Want more information?

For more details on Appendix 32 and flexible part-time conversion:

- Visit <http://www.opseu.org/ops/merc/attorney-generalappendix25.htm> or
- Contact a member of your OPSEU MERC team: Julie Weber, Pauline Tapping and Paul Myers – or one of OPSEU’s JDRC representatives – Julie Weber, Paul Myers and Judith Marion (staff).

For help dealing with specific violations of your rights under the collective agreement, contact your OPSEU steward or local president.

Authorized for distribution: Leah Casselman, President