



## Q1. What is OPSEU?

**A1.** The Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) proudly represents about 155,000 members across Ontario in the public service and broader public sector. They are full-time and part-time workers. They trace their ancestry to all corners of the globe – as diverse a group as you could imagine. They work for the Ontario government, for public colleges, for the LCBO, in hospitals, and for a wide range of community agencies in the broader public sector.

## Q2. Why am I getting emails from OPSEU?

**A2.** If you have been receiving emails from OPSEU, then you are part of the newly-unionized bargaining unit for part-time support employees and persons employed for a project of a non-recurring nature. The colleges provided work email addresses to the union in March. We have been sending out emails to find out what members

would like in their first collective agreement. We will begin negotiating a first contract this spring.

## Q3. How did part-time support staff become part of OPSEU?

**A3.** College Support part-time employees voted to join OPSEU in June 2016. The colleges argued that the ballot boxes should be sealed and remain sealed while the parties made legal arguments about whether the union had the achieved the required 35 per cent threshold to have the votes counted. Finally, the ballot boxes were opened in January and after counting the ballots, 84 per cent voted to join OPSEU. The historic win capped a 14-year struggle by OPSEU to achieve union rights for part-time employees of the colleges. A representation vote of part-time and sessional faculty was held in October 2017. Legal maneuvers by the College Employer Council continue to hold up the counting of those ballots.

# College Support Part-time Workers

## Q&A



### **Q4. Will I pay union dues?**

**A4.** Everyone in the bargaining unit pays union dues. OPSEU has one of the lowest rates of dues for its membership and the services that it provides, set at 1.375 per cent of your gross salary. Whether or not you join the union by signing a membership card, dues will still be deducted. Any dues you pay will be a deduction on your income tax.

However, OPSEU does not deduct dues until a first collective agreement has been negotiated on your behalf.

### **Q5. I am part-time support staff but I don't know if OPSEU represents me?**

**A5.** The Ontario Labour Relations Board determined that all persons regularly employed by the college for no more than 24 hours a week in support staff jobs, and all persons employed by the college for a project of a non-recurring nature in support staff positions, are in the newly-organized bargaining unit. Our members include students working part-time for the college, regular part-time employees, and employees whose work time outside the classroom is being paid at the support staff wage rate.

### **Q6. I am a contract employee working 37.5 hours a week in a support staff position. Am I in the union?**

**A6.** Yes, because you are a person employed by the college for a project of a non-recurring nature.

### **Q7. I am an Appendix D employee. Am I in the union?**

**A7.** Yes. However, you are in the full-time bargaining unit, not in the newly-organized part-time unit. Appendix D are temporary employees working more than 24 hours a week. The full-time bargaining unit already has a collective agreement. You can find it [here](#).

### **Q8. I am a student currently working part-time for the college. My contract will end later this month. I have been hired by the college as a summer student worker. Will I remain in the union?**

**A8.** Yes. The issue becomes whether you will be in the full-time or part-time support bargaining unit. Summer student workers, sometimes known as Appendix G, are students employed temporarily for more than 24 hours a week from mid-April to the last Friday before Labour Day. Appendix G employees are in the full-time support bargaining unit. If you are working as a summer student worker for less than 24 hours a week, you will remain in the part-time support bargaining unit. Either way, you will be a member of OPSEU.

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### **Q9. How will being in the union affect my job with the college?**

**A9.** Workers vote to join a union because they want to improve their work situation. Part-time support staff are no different. They voted to join OPSEU because they want to be treated fairly at work, in terms of pay, job security, leave provisions, benefits, and scheduling. Up until now, colleges employed part-time employees on contract. Now that you have a union, we will negotiate a collective agreement which will be the contract for all part-time support employees in the future.

The collective agreement may cover things like rates of pay, job competition provisions, leave provisions, paid time-off when you are sick, paid benefits, fair scheduling, and more. It will be a first collective agreement that we will build on in subsequent rounds of bargaining. No collective agreement can solve all individual issues. However, it will have a complaints process called a grievance procedure whereby the union can advocate on behalf of individual union members who believe their rights have been violated.

We will begin negotiating provisions for the new collective agreement this spring. Until a new contract is negotiated and then ratified by the members, part-time support employees will continue to work under the provisions they signed up for when they were hired.

### **Q10. During the time that we are without a collective agreement, can the college change the terms and conditions of my employment?**

**A10.** They are not supposed to. Section 15(1) of the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act provides that the terms and conditions that you currently have will remain in place until such time as negotiating a new contract is completed, or there is a strike or lockout.

### **Q11. My contract with the college has an end date. How will being in a union help my individual situation?**

**A11.** We know from members' responses to the union's bargaining survey that part-time support staff would like to be considered for vacant part-time and full-time positions in their colleges. We will be tabling this demand at the bargaining table. This is a bargaining demand that members will be asked to vote on during the telephone town hall. Subject to the vote, we expect to be tabling a demand for fair job competition provisions at the bargaining table. We also know that currently all part-time employees are on contract because the Colleges had no other way to employ people. Now that you have a union, we will negotiate a collective agreement which will be the contract for all part-time employees in the future.

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**Q12. I am a student worker and I will be graduating soon. Why should I get involved in the union?**

**A12.** Because whatever provisions we negotiate will help improve the work situation of students in the future. As well, many college employees are graduates of the college. You may decide at some point in the future to work at the college and therefore the improvements we negotiate will make a difference in your work life.

**Q13. Who can I go to for help or to get more involved?**

**A13.** The local union at your college. They have stewards throughout the college. Get in touch with them. They are going to be looking for part-time college support staff stewards. Stewards are the voice of the union in the workplace. Don't worry if you don't feel you have the knowledge or experience, because OPSEU has a great training program to get you the necessary skills to be a voice for your colleagues. You can also email your questions to: [caatptbarg@opseu.org](mailto:caatptbarg@opseu.org)

**Q14. My contract ends April 27. I will not work again until the fall term. How can I make sure the union has my personal contact information?**

**A14.** Please sign an OPSEU membership application card. Contact the local union at your college to get one. You can also print one [here](#) and give it to your local union to sign and submit to the OPSEU Regional Office closest to the college. The OPSEU membership application card provides you with the right to have a say in how your local union is run, to attend membership meetings and events, to vote on your local budget and leadership, to run for positions within OPSEU and the labour movement, and to avail yourself of OPSEU discounts.

## OPSEU CAAT-Support Division



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