



Bargaining teams reach settlement with Ontario government

A decent contract in the worst bargaining environment imaginable.

That's exactly what your bargaining teams have managed to achieve after hundreds of hours of bargaining sessions with the employer. Despite hollow threats from the employer to end issues bargaining and move into essential services negotiations in preparation for a strike or lockout, your OPS teams stayed at the table, stayed focused and achieved tentative agreements with the Ontario government.

Yes, there is a two-year wage freeze, which came as a surprise to no one. Although your teams tried to negotiate an increase, the government's austerity agenda was widely publicized long before bargaining began. They used it publicly and in the media as the cornerstone of their bargaining agenda with every Ontario public sector worker.

However, your teams not only managed to make gains in the agreements, but they also fought off most of a package of employer concessions that was unprecedented in the OPS.

The teams neutralized massive attacks on health benefits, call back language, health and safety protections, conversion of fixed-term employees and meal, mileage and travel. They fought off the majority of the attack on sick credits and the grievance procedure. And they did all of this in an environment where public support for public sector workers is at an all-time low.

In these agreements, members receive new protections and processes in the event of surplussing. New job security language will now work for members instead of the employer. Fixed-term employees can now access benefits if they choose. The union now gets improved access to information on seniority and LTIP usage to better enforce the contract and assist members on disability. And, for the first time

ever, anti-bullying language is now enshrined in the collective agreement. Corrections members, who made safety improvements the key issue in this round, now have major language improvements to address workplace safety, staffing levels, support for sick and injured workers, community corrections workload and personal protective equipment.

These agreements are the result of many factors, the biggest of which is the unprecedented support from OPS members across the province. Thanks to the power of electronic communications, social media and the tireless work of the OPS Mobilizers, your bargaining teams had up-to-the-minute information that proved invaluable at the bargaining table. As talks progressed to the final stages, your teams knew exactly what issues were vital to their members, and that was leverage they used against the employer to get as much as possible for your contract.

"We knew going into this round of OPS negotiations that we were facing the worst bargaining environment that unions have faced in over 50 years," said OPSEU President Warren (Smokey) Thomas. "Despite that, our teams managed to emerge from bargaining with agreements that will have added protections for members, and preserve quality public sector services and jobs. That was our goal going into bargaining, and the teams achieved the very best possible."

Central/Unified team chair Roxanne Barnes said these settlements are not the end of bargaining, but signal the start of a continued fight that will carry through to the next provincial election and through to the start of bargaining for the next OPS agreement.

"This is only a two-year agreement," said Barnes. "We do not have time to pause. We must begin immediately shaping the political landscape in

preparation for the next round of bargaining. That starts with the upcoming Liberal leadership convention, and carries through to the provincial election likely happening this spring. We must continue to be active, vocal and strong. We must ensure that quality public services, delivered by professional public sector workers, are not eroded in this province.”

Corrections team chair Dan Sidsworth agrees that even with the settlement offer there is still a lot of work to be done.

“We are going to continue with our goal to make Ontario corrections the safest working environment possible,” Sidsworth said. “We now have

unprecedented language that will go a long way to achieving that. Whether you work in a facility or in the community, every member must have the best chance of going home healthy at the end of the day. Ultimately, this is all that really matters. We had to exert a lot of pressure on the employer to get this offer, including walking away from table twice. We believe we have gotten everything we can get from the government.”

Your teams have unanimously recommended that members vote in favour of the tentative agreements.

Summary of changes in the 2013-2014 OPS Collective Agreement

This is a general summary only. Detailed explanations of all of the collective agreement changes for the Central/Unified and Corrections Tentative Agreements are available at <http://opseu.org/ops/bargaining2012/tentative-agreement-jan-11.htm>. The full texts of the signed Central, Unified and Corrections tentative agreements are available on the OPSEU website.

Central Agreement:

http://opseu.org/ops/bargaining2012/pdf/CENTRAL_OPSEU_CA_MOS-2013-01-09.pdf.

Unified Agreement:

http://opseu.org/ops/bargaining2012/pdf/UNIFIED_OPSEU_CA_MOS-2013-01-09.pdf.

Corrections Agreement:

http://opseu.org/ops/bargaining2012/pdf/CORRECTIONS_OPSEU_CA_MOS-2013-01-09.pdf.

Central/Unified Agreement

- Two-year agreement – January 1, 2013-December 31, 2014.
- Zero per cent wage increase in each year of the agreement. **Members still progress through the wage grid if not already at the maximum.**
- New lower step on the wage grid for new hires - three per cent lower than current starting step on the grid. Current employees **NOT** affected.
- Improvements to job security provisions, including a surplus process that is now employee driven, access to VEO at the beginning of the surplus process, VEO can be accessed even if you have a retirement factor and entry level qualifications for direct assignments and for temporary vacancies.
- A new Transition Exit Initiative, which allows employees to exit OPS without a surplus notice (with employer approval). Employees exiting will receive a lump sum of six months’ pay plus one week for every year of continuous service.
- Employer now **must** provide tuition reimbursement and career transition support
- Employer now **must** maintain a website listing all vacancies.
- Any employee surplus-ed shall be laid off as “workforce reduction process” so as to qualify them for employment insurance.
- Improved Supplementary Insurance language, increasing ability for coverage to \$10,000.00 to

Continued on page 3

\$200,000.00 for spouse and to \$1,000.00, \$5,000.00, \$7,500.00 or \$10,000.00 per dependent child.

- Fixed Term Employees can now pay for access to insured benefits.
- LTIP increased by 0.5 per cent per year for the two-year term.
- Information to new employees improved.
- Seniority lists now provided to MERCs.
- List of employees on LTIP now provided to Joint Insurance Benefits Review Committee.
- Expanded scope for MERCs.
- Flexible hours of work arrangements now include telework.
- Scope of the bargaining unit not changed by AMAPCEO agreement.
- **Anti-Bullying language now enshrined in Collective Agreement.**
- Termination pay for current employees **NOT** affected or capped. New employees will not be entitled to termination pay, but still receive severance provisions under ESA.
- Surplus Factor 80 eliminated – employer refused to renegotiate.
- After six sick days at 100 per cent pay, the remaining 124 days are paid at 66 2/3 per cent unless employee is suffering a severe illness or injury or serious, chronic illness or injury, in which case the days are paid at 75 per cent. This is superior to what was agreed to by AMAPCEO, **and eliminates most of the massive concessions demanded by the employer.**
- Notice of change of shift scheduling reduced from 120 hours to 96 hours (employer had insisted on a reduction to 24 hours' notice).
- Many employer concessions fought off, including massive cuts to benefits, cuts to call back language, dismantling of the grievance process, elimination of employment stability, mass changes to the classification system, elimination of red-circled employees progressing through the wage grid, elimination of health and safety protections on VDT terminals and ergonomics, increased conversion time for Fixed-Term employees, the waiving of relocation expenses and extending the employer's ability to direct assign.
- Employer demand for severe reductions in meal and mileage/travel credits while performing your work **entirely fought off by your team.**

Corrections Agreement

- Zero per cent wage increase in each year of the agreement. Members still progress through the wage grid if not already at the maximum.
- New lower step on the wage grid for new hires - three per cent lower than current starting step on the grid. Current employees **NOT** affected.
- Notice of change of shift scheduling reduced from 120 hours to 96 hours (employer had insisted on a reduction to 24 hours' notice).
- Bailiffs' schedule changed from Schedule 4 to 4.7. Bailiffs no longer receive compensating time.
- All Fixed-Term employees will now be prescheduled two weeks in advance.
- Weekend shift premium eliminated, but a portion of that money redirected to hourly salary increases to classifications that currently receive weekend shift premiums.
- All absenteeism targets and penalties eliminated from the contract. Employer keeping ASMP.
- Minimum 200 rollovers for Adults Corrections and minimum 15 for Youth Corrections. Management wanted zero. Current practice with respect to roll overs will continue.
- Surveillance not to be used for supervising or evaluating performance of employees or as a replacement for managing.
- New language with regard to personal protective equipment and training.
- Probation Officer Allowance of seven days maintained despite employers' continued insistence to reduce that number.
- New language on occupational stress injuries committing the employer to provide relevant data, training and identify support programs.
- New language giving the union the ability to work on provincial staffing issues for the first time.
- Expanded rights to union representation during Section 22 and Section 98 investigations.
- Provincial Health and Safety Committee language now enshrined into the Collective Agreement.
- Employer to provide mental health training for members. Union will have input into the development of any new changes.
- Subcommittee to be established to review findings of the Ombudsman Report on use of force in adult institutions.

- Backfill pool to be established for community corrections to backfill for short-term absences.
- New language for safety equipment and clothing for Probation and Probation and Parole
- New stronger language on Probation and Parole Officer workload.
- New language to establish an alternative discipline committee to review suspensions and or dismissals after they have been imposed.

Local presidents hear it first-hand from the teams

On Saturday, January 12 OPS local presidents reviewed the tentative agreements and got to hear directly from the bargaining teams about this round of bargaining and the challenges the teams faced.

The Q&A session gave the local presidents the information they needed to take back to the members at the locals. Overall, the presidents congratulated the teams for their hard work and dedication to all OPS members.

Starting Monday, information sessions will be held for locals at various locations within the regions. Information will be posted on the OPSEU website as it becomes available, or speak to your local president.

Get out and vote!

Every member needs to get out and vote. This is where you get your final say on your collective agreement. A high voter turnout sends a strong message to the employer...a message will carry through to the next round of bargaining.

Make sure you have all the information you need, and watch the OPSEU website for dates and times of vote information meetings and vote day locations in your area.

Your OPS Bargaining teams

Central/Unified Team

Roxanne Barnes, Chair	CERC
Ron Langer, Vice-Chair	Region 1
Elaine Young,	Region 2
Tammy Carson	Region 3
Daryl O'Grady	Region 4
Edie Strachan	Region 5
Pierre Verhelst	Region 6
John Watson	Region 7
Len Elliott	Administration
Barb Friday	Corrections
Cindy Falcao	Institutional and Health Care
Betty Marchegiano	Office Administration
Shelley McCormick	Office Administration
Cam Jay	Operational & Maintenance/Technical
Jeff Weston	Fixed Term
Ruth Hamilton, Tracy More	Staff Negotiators

Corrections Team

Trish Goden	Region 1
Dan Sidsworth, Chair	Region 2
Glenna Caldwell, Vice-Chair	Region 3
Brian Dunham	Region 4
Monte Vieselmeyer	Region 5
Jim Mitchell	Region 6
Greg Arnold	Region 7
Rob Field	Staff Negotiator

Contact us:

Central/Unified Team

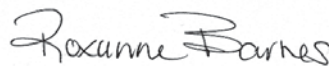
centralbargaining@opseu.org
Twitter: @OPSCentralTeam

Corrections Team

correctionsbargaining@opseu.org
Twitter: @DanSidsworth

Don't listen to rumours! TableTalk Update is your only official communication from the OPS Bargaining Teams.

Authorized for distribution:



Roxanne Barnes, Chair, Central/Unified Team



Dan Sidsworth, Chair, Corrections Team



Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President