

A publication of the B.C. General Employees' Union

Provincial

Worksite poster
(back cover)

**A trailblazer's
farewell**

p. 4

REUNION

**How to
STEP UP**

p. 22

Tips on how to get involved, foster a culture of connection, and bolster collective power for justice and dignity at work.

She's paid less when she works with women.



Your fellow BCGEU members at Atira Women's Resource Society—who are all women and gender-diverse workers—do the same vital work as their community health peers at the other three largest supportive housing agencies: RainCity, Lookout and the Portland Hotel Society.

Shirley works at both Atira and another of these agencies, as do others like her. So, why are they paid less when they work with women and gender-diverse people in need of supportive housing, and more when they work at the other big co-ed agencies?

This is gender inequality.

The government needs to ensure that Atira workers are paid the same as their community health peers, who are doing the same critical work in the same communities.

Send a letter to
your MLA and the
Finance Minister –
join the fight
for equal pay
for equal work.



atira.bcgeu.ca

**It's time to end gender inequality
and bring stability to the people
working in supportive housing.**



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 4911 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3W3
 Email: theprovincial@bcgeu.ca
 Staff writers: BCGEU Communications, Press Secretary

Provincial Executive

President	Stephanie Smith
Treasurer	Paul Finch
Executive VP	James Cocola
Executive VP	Doug Kinna
Executive VP	Kari Michaels
Executive VP	Judy Phipps
Component 1	Dean Purdy
Component 3	Andrea Duncan Pamela Pye
Component 4	Mahen Ramdharry Richard Ziemianski
Component 5	Kusam Doal
Component 6	Judy Fox-McGuire Mona Dykes
Component 7	Joanna Lord
Component 8	Scott De Long MJ Colquhoun
Component 10	Rory Smith
Component 12	Maria Middlemiss DJ Pohl
Component 17	Dave MacDonald
Component 20	Rob Davis



4911 Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. V5G 3W3
 Phone: 604-291-9611
 Fax: 604-291-6030
 1-800-663-1674 (TOLL FREE)

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Convention theme

As we reconvene post-COVID, **Re\Union** is a pivotal moment of collective reconnection and rejuvenation. This gathering is more than just a meeting; it's a reaffirmation of our solidarity and a rekindling of our community spirit, disrupted by the pandemic. It's a time to celebrate our resilience, reengage with our core values and reassert our commitment to championing workers' rights. This convention is a testament to our enduring strength and unity in the face of unprecedented challenges.

Re\Connect

Embracing the power of face-to-face connection. Handshakes, smiles and solidarity fuel our reinvigorated mission. Together again, we strengthen bonds, celebrate victories and forge a future united.

Re\Member

Putting members at the forefront and remembering our rich history and roots. Through shared stories, we celebrate the triumphs and challenges that shaped us. By reconnecting in person, we reignite the flame of solidarity.

Re\Commit

Recommitting to our unwavering dedication to fighting for workers, fair treatment and a thriving future. United, we stand as a force for positive change.

Re\Present

Reinforce our commitment to amplify voices, champion rights. Through member engagement, we forge stronger bonds, ensuring members feel heard, valued and empowered.







A trailblazer's farewell

At Convention 2014 Stephanie Smith won 57% of delegate support to become the first woman elected president of the BCGEU—as well as the first president from a component outside direct government and the first president from Component 3—Community Social Services.

At Convention 2024, Stephanie will retire as one of the longest-serving presidents in BCGEU history. With convention prep shifting into high gear, Stephanie sat down with BCGEU Press Secretary Danielle Marchand, to talk about her activist career.



Convention 2024 will be your last convention as an active member of the BCGEU. What do you remember about your first BCGEU convention?

I became a member of the BCGEU in 1995 when my union—the Children’s Services Employees’ Union (CSEU)—merged with the BCGEU. I was a steward with the CSEU, but we were a small union—about 450 members total, all from the same sector and the same region. So, for me, becoming a member of the BCGEU was exciting—tens of thousands of members from every imaginable sector and every corner of the province—and a little overwhelming.

And that was my experience of convention—exciting and a little overwhelming.

It was Convention 1997 at the Victoria Conference Centre. I had been a BCGEU member for less than two years and I was a delegate for a brand-new component: Component 3—Community Social Services.

I was completely captivated by taking part in democracy—delegates debating resolutions and setting the vision and the direction of their union; the strategic work being done on the floor; the arguments being made at every mic.

One of the hottest topics at that convention was organizing in the broader public sector—it’s strange to think of now because the public sector is such a force in our union, but at the time some BCGEU components were against organizing lower wage sectors and many other unions weren’t focused on organizing at all—they were focused on protecting their current members.

Ultimately, our delegates voted in favour of more organizing and, as a member from one of those low wage sectors, I felt seen and supported and inspired. I knew I was part of an organization whose values matched my own.

What drove you to get involved, and stay involved, as a union activist?

In the early part of my activist career, I was really driven by two things: a strong sense of justice and fairness (which my family would tell you I’ve had since I was a wee child) and an equally strong sense of curiosity, of wanting to figure out how things work.

Those two attributes got me started as a worksite steward and bargaining chair, and onto my local exec and cross component committees.

What kept me going and pursuing more senior elected positions in my component and, ultimately, the provincial executive, was the people—the more I got to know members and activists from across the BCGEU, not to mention different unions and other

“I realized my particular combination of identities and experiences gave me a different perspective on what was possible for the BCGEU and the labour movement.”



organizations, the more I felt a sense of affinity and the harder I wanted to work to make sure they had a voice, that they had power.

As I did that work, I came to see myself differently. I realized that I had something unique to offer—as a woman, as a single mom, as an early childhood educator, as someone who spent many years living outside of Canada. I realized my particular combination of identities and experiences gave me a different perspective on what was possible for the BCGEU and the labour movement. And, the more involved I got, the more opportunities I got to attend courses, conferences, and conventions that gave me more energy, bigger ideas and stronger relationships with fellow activists.

By the time I joined the Provincial Executive in 2008 I saw the potential to get our members more engaged with their union, to become more collaborative internally among our own components and areas, and also across the labour movement ... to raise the profile of our members in our movement as well as with the media and employers and decision makers.

When I was encouraged to run for treasurer in 2011 and president in 2014 it was the chance to realize that potential that convinced me to go for it.

What do you think has changed most over your ten years as president?

It's been such a roller coaster.

I spent my first term completely focused on member engagement. I made a campaign promise to visit all 12 areas in the first 12 months of my presidency and I did it—worksite visits and family events in every area. It was a massive effort for activists and staff, it was exhausting and exhilarating for me, and the response from members was incredible. We started to see conferences and courses getting over-subscribed, activist events were packed. It was great.

At the executive and provincial executive level we also started grappling with big questions of representation and diversity in our union. We knew our leadership didn't truly reflect our membership, we knew there were voices that were not being heard and we were starting to make the long overdue changes that needed to be made.

And then COVID hit in 2020 and changed everything in ways that I think we still don't fully understand. I'm so proud of how our union responded, how we supported our members in their time of extreme need and how we worked with our partners to force larger changes that would benefit workers on a broader scale.

There was no way we could have been prepared for a global pandemic but I am confident that the changes



we were making in terms of member engagement and collaboration put us in the best position we could have been in when it hit.

What advice do you have for delegates and candidates at Convention 2024?

My biggest piece of advice for delegates is to get to the mics. Pro or con, doesn't matter. What matters is that convention is the highest decision-making body of our union; it's a chance for delegates to build their union. So get to a mic and take a stand on resolutions, learn to tell a story that is compelling and persuasive and connects other delegates to your vision.

My advice for candidates is advice that I got from a former president when I was running to become treasurer in 2011. His advice was simple: everyone prepares themselves to lose, be prepared to win. Until he said it to me I didn't realize that I had done exactly that—I had prepared myself to lose. I had told myself and everyone who was supporting me that it would be okay, that I would be okay, if the vote didn't go my way. Obviously I was running for the position because I wanted to win, but I hadn't really been preparing myself to win. That piece of advice shifted my mindset. So, to every candidate I say: prepare yourself to win.



BCGEU values take action: electing the first equity executive vice-president

In the lead up to Convention 2021, members from several locals proposed resolutions to create a new EVP position for members from equity groups. The resolutions spoke to the fact that our union is increasingly diverse because our workforce demographics have significantly evolved across the province, and the fact that our diverse membership needs to see itself reflected in our union's senior leadership.

Equity groups are comprised of communities of people that face systemic barriers to participating in society, such as the marginalization created by historic, ongoing, social and environmental factors. And, while no two individuals have the same exact lived experiences, there are often shared experiences they have had to face.

We've seen great successes made possible when we've created space and representation opportunities to support members from equity groups, including work that's been done to support young workers, or women and gender diverse workers.

Currently the BCGEU Equity and Human Rights Committee coordinates their work with four primary advisory committees: Indigenous workers, workers of colour, workers with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ workers. Through a combination of advocacy and community building, these committees work independently and together to remove barriers to union participation.

While many of our union's recent executive committee members have identified with one or more equity groups, this new EVP position explicitly puts equity issues at the forefront of our union's agenda. The Equity EVP will be another representative for all 85,000 members alongside the other EVP positions. By dedicating space for members of communities who have been systemically marginalized, our union ensures diverse voices and perspectives are not just represented but empowered, from members through to our senior leadership. Why? Because, to advance the rights and conditions for all workers, we must actively recruit and train diverse leaders at all levels of our union.



Candidate Statements

President

Jeremy Williams*

Paul Finch

Treasurer

Megan Washington

Maria Middlemiss

Executive vice-president (5 positions)

Kate Banky

Doug Kinna

Judy Phipps*

Masoud Aminzavvar*

Tristen Wybou*

Cynthia Unrau

Jennifer Marquez*

**Also declared as an
Equity Executive Vice-President candidate*



At our 2024 convention in May, member delegates representing their locals will elect our union's president, treasurer and the five executive vice-presidents (EVP) for the next three years.

Statements from declared candidates that were submitted prior to the February 14th deadline are on the following pages, exactly as submitted. Candidates running for the new equity EVP office are marked with an asterisk (*).

Candidates will also have the opportunity to record video statements and delegates will receive links to these statements by email.

The written and video statements for the below candidates, and others who have declared their intentions after the print deadline, can also be found on our convention website at convention.bcgeu.ca.

Jeremy Williams* - President

In a union, the members' voices should be the loudest, but for too long, the BCGEU has ignored those voices.

Whether it's the top voices in your union advocating for COLA in emails during bargaining and then advocating against it publicly, rallying against government cutbacks while taking photos with politicians at football games, or only popping up for photo ops while questions and frustrations grow - the union seems to have just stopped listening.

As a dedicated member of the BCGEU for almost five years, I have seen firsthand the disconnect between the union leadership and the hardworking members at all our work sites.

Whether it's our BC Liquor Store workers being used as human shields during COVID with no hazard pay, the absolute nightmare our community health workers have been through with mileage and scheduling difficulties, or our Fraser Health workers waiting far too long for their retro pay, the membership is saying one thing clearer than ever:

It's time for change. It's time for new, independent voices to lead the BCGEU into a brighter future.

As your president, I will prioritise the voices of every worker, with a keen and compassionate focus as well on the mental health, wellness, and everyday needs of our members. Too often, these crucial issues are pushed aside in favour of bureaucratic red tape and political agendas. I will work tirelessly to ensure that every member feels supported, heard, and valued.

My experience as a shop steward, member at large, local chair, and member of the provincial human rights and equity committee has given me a unique perspective on the challenges facing our union. I have fought tirelessly for the rights of all our members, with even more special attention placed on Indigenous, BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, and disabled workers.

The countless members who I have represented over the last four and a half years as a steward and member at large are the ones who know more than anyone else, the fear and discomfort that I have been able to instil in their employers; watching managers crumble, and HR representatives scramble to not be the one going up against me.

The BCGEU needs a president who is not afraid to stand up for what is right, even when it is difficult. I have a proven track record of advocating for change within our union, and I am committed to building a more inclusive, equitable, and transparent organization.

My voice has often ruffled the feathers of those with closed minds, made those at the top frustrated with advocating for the kind of change that threatens bureaucracy, and created much needed dialogue on other issues such as election fairness, equitable representation, and concerns with the very systems we use to run free and fair elections.

As an invisibly disabled, queer, neurodiverse activist within the union, and as counsellor, mental health advocate, and champion of equity, diversity, and inclusion outside of the union, I bring the kind of passion, experience, innovation, and explosive voice needed to take the BCGEU into an era where the members have the power - not just a few faces at the top.

Join me in this campaign for change. Together, we can ensure that the BCGEU is a union that truly represents the voices of its members. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient union for all.

Let's make the BCGEU reflect every member ...

Let's make it, **the BCGE YOU.**

In solidarity,

Jeremy Williams

Should you choose a different candidate for President, please consider lending me your vote for EVP and Equity EVP.



Paul Finch - President

Friends,

I am honoured to be a candidate for president of the union at our convention this May in Vancouver. This is a critical time of economic uncertainty, and this statement intends to introduce my background and experience, what we have accomplished so far, and confirm many of the ways forward to meet the challenges you've articulated over the past term.

I first became a member of our union in 2005 when I was hired as an auxiliary mail clerk at the Ministry of Health, becoming a shop steward, local executive and eventually a component executive member. At the encouragement of my colleagues, I successfully ran for executive vice president at our 2011 convention, and subsequently for treasurer in 2014. I've served as treasurer since, remaining a member of local 601.

In the past decade, I've served on the following boards:

- Public Service Pension Plan board of trustees
- BC Investment Management Corporation board of directors
- NUPGE national executive board
- BC Federation of Labour executive council
- Affordable BC Housing society
- BC Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives board of directors
- BC Target Benefit Pension Plan board of trustees (chair)

As someone on the autism spectrum, I've had the opportunity to work advancing autism awareness and disability rights, and to serve as chair of the Autism Canada board of directors.

My primary goal as treasurer has been to reform the overall governance of the union, creating a robust system of accountability and transforming our investment approach and back-office processes to support the work of the union. Key new initiatives I've led as treasurer include the creation of:

- An internal audit system responsible to the PE finance committee.
- A procurement management system that resulted in excess of a million dollars in savings.
- A new investment approach, fully divesting our funds from fossil fuels and dramatically increasing the rate of return on our investments while lowering the overall risk profile.
- The pattern language project, which has established a minimum wage floor in new agreements, standardizing key sector language and winning important improvements such as paid leave for survivors of domestic violence.
- The first internal actuary role inside the union to support bargaining efforts with accurate costing instead of relying on employer costing.
- The first IT security officer and solutions architect position and building out the union's IT framework.
- The union's first human resources and governance committee.
- The union's Affordable BC housing campaign
- The design and development of the new Burnaby lower mainland office and affordable housing project.
- A campaign working with wildfire fighters to pressure and lobby government for better recruitment and retention.
- An arbitration block-booking system to speed up access to arbitrations for termination and suspension grievances.
- The first local chair assembly of the union.



While these reforms are of significant benefit to the union, we need to apply the same spirit of modernization to our front-line and member facing operations. As president, I would work closely with the provincial executive to fix the outstanding issues I've heard from so many of you over the past few years. I'm committed to ensuring our stewards and activists have the support they need and that together we're able to deliver better wages, benefits and working conditions for our members.

We need to center the experience and needs of our members at the core of our efforts, and ensure we are doing the basic work of a union well. Communications must be consistent, accurate and timely. Contract negotiations should commence within expiry of each agreement, and grievances should be dealt with expediently and with proper oversight at all levels. New members deserve a full orientation shortly after joining the union, and I believe the creation of a mobile app would allow for easy access to union services, contract language and relevant news.

We must work hard to earn the trust of our members in every round of collective agreement negotiations. We need to communicate clearly and regularly, follow through on our commitments and deploy our resources to the limits of the mandate we receive from our members. Contract campaigns must be seen and used as an opportunity to build confidence and solidarity within the union.

Too frequently, employers seek to hinder our efforts for economic justice by dividing us along lines of identity and orientation. Our success is dependent on our ability to unite our members in an inclusive and socially just environment that respects and mutually recognizes everyone's dignity and human rights. The movement to constitute equity committees for 2SLGBTQIA+ members, workers of colour, workers with disabilities and Indigenous members are a good first step to address systemic issues at our worksite and within the union, but without broader education and action will fail to produce the results we seek. We need to view equity within the union as a foundational requirement for our democracy and success.

I've heard from many of you about the importance of our ethical and social mandate as a union, and our responsibility to advocate for everyone on key issues such as the environment, international solidarity and social justice. We do not have to choose between these broader ambitions and the core economic interests of our members: we can and should fulfill both. Being successful at our broader objectives should be built on a solid foundation of delivering good quality representation. As treasurer, I demonstrated this by designing and leading our divestment from fossil fuels, dramatically increasing our investment returns over the past decade and starting our union's first shareholder advocacy program.

I look forward to the discussions at convention on our shared vision for the future. Your support continues to mean a great deal to me, and I'm excited about what we can accomplish together. The power to build a better union is in our hands.

In Solidarity,
Paul Finch



Megan Washington - Treasurer

Dear BCGEU members and friends,

I am proud to let my name stand for the position of Treasurer at the upcoming convention. I have an extensive background in union leadership and a passion for advocating on behalf of workers. I am committed to ensuring financial accountability while upholding the core values of our union for the benefit of all the members.

Since our last convention in 2021 we have had some tough rounds of bargaining. We have faced an evolving work landscape that has been brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the highest inflation we have seen in decades. Some members continue to work remotely while most have transitioned back to the office or adopted hybrid models. I recognize the work we have done so far to adapt our union to the "new normal" and I am committed to continue this work while enhancing accountability to the membership. As an activist I am keenly attuned to the diverse needs and challenges facing workers in this unprecedented era.

As a single mother I understand firsthand the delicate balance between work and life responsibilities. My personal experiences have ingrained in me a deep sense of empathy and understanding, driving me to relentless advocacy for policies and initiatives that promote the well-being and prosperity of working families. I believe in the fundamental principle that union funds belong to the members and I'm dedicated to maximizing the value derived from these resources. I am also committed to continuing the work of breaking down systemic barriers that prevent members from participating in our union. Having faced many obstacles through my path to leadership I am passionate about creating space that is inclusive to all members.

At the heart of my candidacy lies my unwavering dedication to serve the 94,000 members of the BCGEU. Currently I hold elected and appointed positions within our union. I am the Bargaining Unit Chair, worksite Steward and OHS committee member at Starlight Casino. Over the last 9 years I have served as Local 1703 1st Vice and prior to that I served as the young worker. I have served as Component Treasurer for 5 years, where I have maintained our component budget and brought technological advances to how we approach our books. In my role as Area 03 Cross-Component Chair I have had the opportunity to work collaboratively with members from across diverse sectors of our union creating exciting and fun family-oriented events for members and their families.

I have been appointed by the president as a Trustee to the BC Target Pension Board for the past 9 years where I now serve as Vice Chair. I have my Foundations of Trust Management certification and I am currently working towards my Advanced Trust Management Standards certification from the International Foundation of Employee Benefits Plan. In 2021 I was honoured to participate in the Trustee Leadership Forum for Retirement Security at Harvard. We focused on ensuring that we were working through the lens of the social principles of environmental, social and governance (ESG) investing and making workers capital work for them. I look forward to continuing our strong track record on ESG issues through our Shareholder engagement program.

As a Member Educator and Occupational Health and Safety facilitator I have had the opportunity to work with activists from across the province. Ensuring members have access to Steward and OHS training is a passion of mine. I have thoroughly enjoyed my two terms serving on the PE Constitution and Structure committee. This committee has afforded me the opportunity to continue to develop my critical thinking skills while upholding the constitution of our union. I have been the 2nd Delegate to the Provincial Executive on behalf of my component which gave me further valuable insight to the workings of the union. My platform is grounded in a return to the core values of the union, with a renewed emphasis on securing better wages, job protection, and safer workplaces for all members. In assessing the Treasurer's role and connecting with all the stakeholders, I aim to address any redundancies, evaluate expenditures to ensure they align with members' interests, and optimize the allocation of dues for the benefit of the membership. My vision for our union is one where financial stewardship is guided by principles of transparency, accountability, and strong dedication to member well-being.

Through my stewardship and representation of members' interests, I have consistently demonstrated my complete dedication to advancing the rights and well-being of my fellow workers.

In conclusion, my candidacy for Treasurer embodies the spirit of service, dedication, and advocacy that defines the essence of unionism. With a proven track record of leadership, a deep understanding of the complexities of the modern workplace, and an unwavering commitment to the core values of our union, I will lead with integrity, compassion, and foresight. As Treasurer, I pledge to be a steadfast advocate for the interests and well-being of all members, ensuring that their voices are heard and their rights are protected. I look forward to working collaboratively with you all to work towards building a stronger union!

As we gear up for the convention over the next couple of months, I look forward to connecting with as many delegates as possible and continuing the conversation of how we can work together to improve our union.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Email: meganfortreasurer@gmail.com

Facebook: Megan Washington for BCGEU Treasurer

In Solidarity,

Megan Washington

I would like to acknowledge that I live, work and play on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the k'w'ik'w'āłəm (Kwkwetlem First Nation).



Maria Middlemiss - Treasurer

Dear Fellow Union Members and Friends,

I humbly acknowledge that I am a settler, and I am making this statement on the traditional lands of the Lkwungen People, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations communities – past, present, and future. I honour their stewardship, care, and leadership on these lands.

It is both an honour and a privilege to announce my candidacy for the position of Treasurer in our union. As we approach this pivotal moment, I am eager to connect with each of you and engage in meaningful dialogue. I firmly believe that our union's strength lies in its members and our commitment to democratic, member-driven decision-making processes. While the treasurer's role is crucial in ensuring transparent and prudent financial management, I also believe it should serve to foster collaboration and empowerment among our membership, enabling us to pursue our collective objectives with vigor and purpose.

I am deeply committed to listening to your voices, understanding your ideas for improvement, and advocating for the changes you wish to see within our union. We face urgent challenges, particularly amidst the escalating cost of living. It is imperative that we stand in solidarity with our stewards, workplace leaders, and activists, who are the backbone of our union. Strengthening our collective bargaining power and advocating for improved wages and benefits for all our members will be at the forefront of my agenda.

My journey in labour advocacy began in 1995 when I became a union member, inspired by my father's activism within the BC Labourers' Union and became a steward in 1996. Like many of you, I first got involved to address a fairness issue at my worksite. Standing with members and advocating for them is what ignited my activism, but why I am still doing the work is because I genuinely care about members and improving the lives of others. Over the years, I have had the privilege of representing our members in various capacities:

- Trustee on the Public Service Pension Plan since 2017
- Vice Chair of the Public Service Pension Plan since 2020 and re-elected for a second three-year term.
- Provincial Executive Representative for Component 12 Administrative Professionals since 2014
- Chair of Local 1201, representing over 7000 members, since 2014
- Component 12 1st Vice Chairperson from 2014 to 2016
- Elected Component Vice President in 2016
- Member of bargaining committees negotiating contracts for Maximus, Health Insurance BC, and the BC Public Service
- Currently serving as Vice Chair of the PE Finance Committee and on several other committees appointed by the president.

Throughout my tenure as a local chair and component vice president, I have demonstrated effective leadership by collaborating with the local executive to identify strategic priorities and address the needs of our stewards and members. Initiatives such as the member engagement committees and regular networking meetings have strengthened our stewardship and support systems.

Provincially, I have played a pivotal role in enhancing component finances, engaging in reconciliation efforts, and advocating for members' rights promised at the bargaining table. I have been engaged in a long and challenging struggle for pay equity and have persisted in bringing this issue to the forefront. Despite repeated attempts to negotiate language promised at the bargaining table over 20 years ago, it remained unresolved.



I fought hard to bring this issue forward, and I'm very proud of the significant positive impact it has had on thousands of members, particularly those at lower rates of pay. We haven't fully achieved all our goals, but I will keep pushing forward, and hopefully, our continued efforts will lead to continued improvement and help

strengthen our collective bargaining power. We need to win better wages and benefits for our members and increase our political and public support to achieve this.

Membership engagement and education remain central to our component's objectives, and I have been instrumental in implementing listening campaigns and educational programs.

As a member of the Provincial Executive, I have been a steadfast advocate for all members. I took a lead role in initiating meetings with the component vice presidents and second representatives the day before a provincial executive meeting demonstrating proactive leadership and a commitment to ensuring thorough preparation and informed decision-making. By facilitating these discussions, we created a platform for constructive dialogue, allowing participants to review agenda items and meeting materials in advance. This approach not only fosters collaboration but also ensures that decisions are made with careful consideration. These pre-meeting discussions are instrumental in promoting transparency, efficiency, and effective governance within our union.

My involvement in the PE Finance Committee as vice chair has enabled me to contribute to crucial governance and fiduciary oversight changes, including the establishment of a robust defense fund and enhanced financial accountability measures. I am also a member of the Human Resources and Governance Committee, which has been spearheading significant governance reform and transparency initiatives.

Looking ahead, I am committed to modernizing our union by improving communication channels, developing resources for member outreach, and investing in technology to facilitate progressive practices, including but not limited to developing electronic grievance and other forms for increased access and convenience and increasing our environmental responsibility. Further improvements for financial transactions such as cash deposit system for cross component committees also need to be rolled out.

I envision an inclusive union that works for everyone. If elected, I will continue to prioritize the concerns and issues facing our collective and work tirelessly to realize our shared vision and goals. While change and progression are vital to meeting the evolving needs of our members, I also believe that stability and experience are crucial in leadership. I understand the demands of the position, and believe that my qualifications, accomplishments, experience conveys my readiness to serve in the role of treasurer, and I am seeking your support to do so.

In solidarity

Maria Middlemiss

<https://facebook.com/mariafortreasurer>

mariafortreasurer@gmail.com

votemaria.ca



Kate Banky - Executive vice-president

Dear Union Family,

First of all, I would like to start off in the right way and acknowledge that I am a settler living and working on the unceded and stolen territory of the Lək̓ʷəŋən people, known today as the Esquimalt and the Songhees who have stewarded these lands since time immemorial.

I appreciate your consideration of me as a candidate for Executive Vice President of the BCGEU. I believe I bring good perspectives to this union—as a member in both component 3 and 7 I bring that representation and I bring my passion for justice and equity.

But most importantly, I believe the heart and soul of our union is each and every member and I want to hear from all of you. How can we engage members more? How can I support you better?

Background

I come from a union family, including a strong activist Mother and Grandmother and was raised to advocate for the rights of others wherever I go. My upbringing instilled me with a strong sense of found family and community.

Throughout high school and university, I worked and volunteered with people with disabilities, started the first queer straight alliance in Nanaimo, and volunteered with local NDP political candidates. I studied at both Vancouver Island University and University of Victoria and received my BA in Political Science and Gender Studies in 2015.

I believe in activist spaces that are inclusive to all and that accessibility is the bare minimum. Personally, I have severe asthma and anaphylactic allergies as well as anxiety and I think this helps me pay attention to some of the barriers we need to reduce but I am also very ready to learn more from every member that is finding it hard to get into the rooms they want to be in.

Work

Since November 2017, I have been working on the front lines of the opioid epidemic at Victoria Cool Aid Society (VCAS). My priorities for this work have always been to break down systemic social inequities, and aid marginalized folks in overcoming barriers to sustainable living, and personal dignity. It has been an honour to support people who are unhoused and underhoused and hear their stories for the past six and a half years. I believe that in every case we need to connect with the people most effected by an issue before we can hope to solve it. In July 2021, I began working part-time as a Constituency Assistant specializing in direct advocacy. It has been a wonderful experience to work with BC NDP Constituency Assistants across the province—I have learnt a lot from that amazing team.

I think both my jobs have helped me hone many of the skills I would need as EVP including advocacy, connecting, adaptability, communication, conflict resolution, and getting to the heart of issues. I am adept at working under pressure and having every day look different.

Union Activism

I have been a Shop Steward at VCAS since 2019 and for Constituency Assistants since spring 2023. In this role I strive to provide support for my colleagues that give so much of themselves every day to the vital work we do. So many of us who work in this sector will advocate tirelessly for our clients and deprioritize ourselves, so I am really passionate about making sure these workers get the support they deserve.

At VCAS I've also been part of a lot of internal organizing campaigns including mapping and charting the worksite, strengthening and expanding our activist base. In spring of 2023, I helped organize a worker lead letter campaign that resulted in superior benefits in our workplace including shift premiums.

In November 2021, I was elected to the Community Social Services Bargaining Committee for an intense and long round of bargaining. I am so proud of the work we did. Along with historic wage increases for our sector we were able to Indigenize our collective agreements, get 100% sick time, and double our mental health benefits. I was grateful to be on a committee with so many amazing mentors and I would not be able to put myself forward as EVP without all I learnt from the inspiring activists I sat at the table with.

I became Local Chair of 301 in January 2022 and a Member-at-Large on the Component 3 Executive. During my time as Local Chair, 301 has organized several new agencies, visited 50 worksites during our member-to-member campaign, and the local executive has grown with many talented new activists. I work hard to foster an open and inclusive space in 301 and I believe this is part of why we went from a local with just a few members to holding elections with 11 nominees for two Member-at-Large positions.

I have been a member of the Area 01 Cross Component Committee since becoming Local Chair and I've appreciated that opportunity to learn from other components and build solidarity across our area.

In February 2024, I was the representative from Component 3 selected to help organize our first Supportive Housing Conference. It was an honour to be a part of building solidarity with workers from Components 17, 8, 4, and 3. I know I will take the stories and ideas I heard there forward into the work I do next.

Thank you, for being a part of the democratic process and taking some time to learn a bit about me and the other candidates—your voice matters.

As a queer, chronically ill woman who has spent my life working with people, often marginalized by ability or class, I have always been very passionate about creating space for all voices and I am committed to bringing that energy to every table I have a seat at.

In solidarity,

Kate Banky

k.banky@gmail.com

fb.com/KateBanky



Doug Kinna - Executive vice-president



Dear Members

This statement was written on the unceded Coast Salish Territory of the x^wməθk^wəyəmⁱ (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Salilwata7 (Tsilil-Waututh) peoples

For those of you who may not know me, my name is Doug Kinna. I am an Employment and Assistance Worker from Local 601 and am asking for your support to be re-elected as Executive Vice President. It is my desire to continue working together to build our ever expanding, outward looking and diverse union.

Thirty years ago when I started with the provincial government, income assistance caseloads were outpacing staffing levels. Burnout and compassion fatigue were taking a toll and office morale was at an all time low. In the absence of a steward, I raised my hand and have never looked back. That single act would prove to be one of the most transformative both personally and professionally.

Activism to me is standing by and with the members who put their trust in me to raise the issues and causes that concern them. My mandate as Executive Vice President is to advocate for these concerns identified by you such as fair wages, gender equality, Indigenous reconciliation, equity rights, workplace health and safety, and stronger connections with community.

Attending worksite visits, meeting with members, participating in conferences and conventions, joining in community events and always keeping my ringer on (just ask my wife), are some of the ways I stay connected and available.

Working for the members and being afforded an opportunity to represent the BCGEU is a great honour. The union's greatest strength however, is built on and relies upon the dedication and determination of our activists. One of the Executives Committee's roles is to represent and advance these interests at the local, provincial and federal levels.

As Executive Vice President, I will continue to reflect our unions values by promoting equity and human rights and by participating, when asked, in Indigenous reconciliation. As a past member of the Public Service Union Management Steering Committee on Employment Equity we helped introduce fair hiring practices for all equity-seeking groups.

There is still much work to be done within the BCGEU itself to recognize and address barriers to full participation within our union. I remain committed to helping develop pathways to facilitate members who are wanting to fulfill their potential in the union and within their own communities. The Indigenous Advisory Council, 2SLGBTQIA+ Workers, Workers with Disabilities, and the Workers of Colour caucuses and roundtables are a good start. We need to continue these efforts until every equity seeking group and member feels welcomed and involved.

Reconciliation requires taking action to address the decades long history of colonialism and racist practices that resulted in Indigenous alienation and disenfranchisement. It is critical the BCGEU continues to adapt policies and take initiatives that recognize and address discrimination and continue working toward relationship building and trust with our Indigenous members and their communities. We were one of only two unions in Canada that made a submission to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Inquiry.

Through participation in organizations such as the BC Federation of Labour, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, First Call Coalition for Families, Metro Vancouver Alliance, and the SafeCare BC Technical Advisory Committee the BCGEU continues to stay connected and unified with the larger community.

At the provincial level we successfully lobbied the government for changes to the Workers Compensation Board. The Patterson review was implemented as a means of shifting WCB to a more workers centered approach and away from practices implemented by the BC Liberals. This remains a work in progress and we will continue to push for needed changes to the Act.

As chair of the Provincial Executive Occupational Health and Safety Committee we maintain a focus on; violence in the workplace, exposure limits and carcinogens, ergonomics, mental health, addictions and psychological health and safety. There is an emerging and much needed awareness on how these issues affect our members and their families. By making the employer more aware, we achieved some gains in the worksites as well as at the bargaining table.

Formal Committees and Appointments

BCGEU

- Chair of Provincial Executive OH&S committee
- Chair of Provincial Executive Resolutions committee
- Chair of Workers with Disabilities committee
- Chair of Provincial Executive Trinket Task Force
- Ad-hoc committees
 - o Chair of Protection and Repatriation of Public Sector Services committee
 - o Region 3 and 4 Boundary review committee

BC Federation of Labour

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Community and Social Action
- Precarious Work working group community involvement
- Convention Resolutions Committee

Metro Vancouver Alliance Board and Strategy team member

SafeCare BC Technical Advisory committee

BC Poverty Reduction Coalition

First Call Coalition for Families

My commitments to you ;

- Work toward full equity for all BCGEU members in our union and in our communities.
- Work with members in all areas to provide greater representation, policy development and recommendations to the President and Provincial Executive.
- Continue demonstrating fiscal responsibility to the members by ensuring that dues are not casually or unnecessarily spent.
- Liaise with members in collaboration with the Executive Committee to ensure the BCGEU remains a member driven union.
- Establish closer relationships between the Executive Committee and Local executives, Stewards, OH&S reps and rank-and-file members.
- Maintain open and transparent communication channels
- Lead by example and uphold high ethical standards in all aspects of my work.
- Always have my ringer on!

Experience, leadership, and dedication are my qualifications. I ask for your support to continue my role as Executive Vice President of the BCGEU. As the Convention draws near, I look forward to creating opportunities to discuss the issues and concerns that are important to you.

Please contact me directly at doug.kinna@shaw.ca or 250 -715 - 6003.

In Solidarity

Doug Kinna



Judy Phipps* - Executive vice-president

Judy Phipps (pronouns She/Her),

I live on the unceded and traditional lands of the QayQayt First Nation, colonially known as New Westminster, BC

It's been an honour to serve our membership as one of your Executive Vice Presidents, having been elected at our Constitutional Convention in June of 2021. I come from Component 7: Education, Scientific, Technical and Administration, and my Local is 703. I respectfully declare my candidacy as Equity and Woman.

Prior to becoming an EVP, my 40+ years of work history has encompassed working within a variety of marginalized environments. Before becoming a BCGEU member, I worked in the non-profit sector as an Executive Assistant at the Elizabeth Fry Society. I left that employment because I didn't feel I was treated well, and I went in search of a union job. I am proud to say I have been a BCGEU Member for 25 years.

I held a few different positions while working at BCIT. I was hired as an auxiliary, but soon found my way into a permanent position, working as an Invigilation Coordinator for students with disabilities, ensuring their accommodations were met to provide equity within their learning environment. I then worked as Support Staff in Digital Arts as an Admin Assistant to an Associate Dean. I later transferred to the Broadcast and Media Communications department at BCIT's Burnaby Campus in the same role. When I landed this position, I began stewarding and I love it. Being a Steward brought out the best in me.

My own morals about people being treated fairly, really fell into place – stewarding was a good fit for me. Speaking out about the treatment of our members on campus and ensuring members were treated well was a big deal to me – still is.

I was also a member of BCIT's Anti-Racism Working Group, assembled to create change and policy at BCIT, which ensures education, raising awareness and ensuring an inclusive learning environment for all. I am deeply passionate about equity, human rights, anti-racism and the treatment of people. This was the motivation that led me to produce the video "Moving Forward: Let's Talk Anti-Racism", which featured two high profile BCIT Alumni sharing their unique lived experiences as IBPOC folks. Once produced, I created a partnership with the other union on campus – Faculty and Staff Associations Diversity Circles and the Respect Diversity and Inclusion Office, where we used the video to hold educational webinars on anti-racism for students and staff. The topic never gets old, and I invite you to watch it and learn from it, and of course share it.

Link: <https://commons.bcit.ca/news/2021/03/moving-forward-lets-talk-anti-racism/>

During my time as an EVP, our President assigned my Portfolio. Provincial Executive Committees I Chair are: Education & Scholarship, Equity & Human Rights, Scholarship Endowment, and the Workers of Colour Committee. I am also a Co-Chair of the Grievance Appeal and Women and Gender Rights Committees.

For committees that came out of convention, I Chair the Website Development Committee, Member Educator Review, Curriculum Development, as well as Decolonizing and Indigenizing our Language of Collective Agreements Committee. The continued work of these committees is not only important to me, but important for our members. We have made good progress, but there is still much work to be done, and I'd like to be a part of that work.

I am also a member of a the BCFED Executive and am a member of the BCFED Racial Equity Caucus and Accessibility Caucus.

It has been an incredible honour to be a representative of the BCGEU as a member of our National Unions Advisory Committee on Women's Issues and the Special Anti-Racism Committee. The insight and knowledge at these tables provide a national perspective on issues facing all Canadians, and our strength within the labour movement to make change. And we aim to make change.

There are a number of "outside committees" that I was assigned to which include, BC Forum, The Columbia Institute and Living Wage for Families.

An EVP Portfolio is large and challenging. Having jumped from Shop Steward to EVP I admit it was a bit of a learning curve. But one I have levelled out by learning the many facets of our union – all 11 Components and some 118 locals.

The work of these committees allows me to bring my lived experience to the table, to enable all sides of a discussion, ensuring a collective evolves into progress for our union and its members. I'm very much wanting to continue the work of these committees and move their work forward.

I was also assigned to Summer Institute for Union Woman. There I co-facilitated two workshops, 1) Creating an Environment; Where IBPOC Leaders and Members Can Thrive, and 2) Black Women in the Labour Movement which I co-wrote. I would also like to continue this type of work for our members. More education based on lived experience is important, and our members would benefit. As would our allies – we can all do better.

My time as EVP has been an incredible experience. As a person I am much stronger and more determined than ever. My sense of awareness is grand and insightful. I look forward to Convention and speaking with as many delegates as I am able to, about things that matter to our union. The voice of our members is important and that voice is what drives our union collectively. It's that voice that matters to the labour movement. It's the labour movement that makes change within our country.



Masoud Aminzavvar* - Executive vice-president



Fellow BCGEU members,

I am honoured to put my name forward for Executive Vice President and Equity Executive Vice President of the BCGEU, and I am seeking your support at our upcoming BCGEU Convention in May. My name is Masoud Aminzavvar (he/him) and I have been working and living on the unceded and stolen land of Coast Salish peoples, called Vancouver.

Since our last convention in June 2021, we have witnessed significant changes in BC and across Canada which have impacted our work and lives. The rising cost of living and inadequate wage increases have forced workers to live paycheque to paycheque in a world where our quality of life is challenged each day by crises in the healthcare, housing, and climate change.

As a progressive organization, our union must be dedicated to improving our rights and wellbeing. We owe this responsibility to our members and our communities.

My Background

In my day job, I am an outreach worker for Lookout Society, based in the Downtown Eastside. I have been a BCGEU Steward for 16 years, originally taking up the role because I believe in the workers' power to make a difference. With each year my commitment to advocating for my fellow workers has only grown.

In 2008, I was elected as a Member at Large for Component 4 and when Component 8 was established in 2011, I joined its Executive. In 2016, I was elected as Chairperson for Local 803, and subsequently re-elected in 2019 and 2021. In 2021, I was also elected as Second Vice on Component 8 Executive where we serving more than 13,000 Community Health Workers. Currently, I also serve as a member of BCGEU's International Solidarity Committee and am co-facilitator of Occupational Health and Safety, (OHS) providing training and courses around the province for the last eight years.

Bargaining Experience

In 2018, I was elected to join the bargaining team for Community Health Workers and was re-elected in 2021, to represent members at the bargaining table. I fought tirelessly alongside our members to save our health and benefit trust, while bargaining for one of the highest wage increases in the history of Community Health. This outcome was not achieved easily- we stood together and fought collectively at the table despite the employee's intimidation tactics and threats to our rights.

Building Workers' Power at Every Worksite

Since the last convention, I have been focusing on increasing Local 803's member engagement through OHS Committees, recruiting stewards, finding leaders at worksite, organizing Joint Labour Management meetings, and conducting regular worksite visits.

What I have learned over the years is that everyone has their own unique potential and when put into action, we can all make a big difference at work and in our communities. In 2015, I led a collective decision with the help of many activists from Local 803 to make changes to our local. We became one of the most active locals in BCGEU with regular monthly meetings, with power of diversity in its leadership, with roots in every worksite, and constant engagement with our membership. This was only made possible through solidarity and rank-and-file organizing.

As union activists, we put in countless hours to improve our working conditions by attending meetings, assisting members, and filing grievances. We need to simplify the process for members to get involved. We also need to identify the barriers that prevent workers from engaging with the union and resolve them, while

also supporting those who are involved by advocating for more educational opportunities and honorariums to assist active stewards. As an activist in the social justice movement, I have always believed that we can only make real change through collective power. I have seen this to be true in all aspects of my life – from fighting for human rights to getting fair results at the bargaining table. Solidarity is the cornerstone of our unions, be it at the bargaining table or helping our partners around the world.

Here are some of the key areas that I will advocate and fight for:

Bargaining

No more concessions.

We must reduce the power of the management in all collective agreements by having strong language to protect workers. We will improve benefits and bargain for wage increases based on COLA (cost-of-living adjustment). We will also push for wage parity with similar bargaining units.

Supporting Locals

I will attend local meetings around the province to understand the challenges members face in their area and to identify the barriers which stop members from being involved in the union at their worksite. Member engagement is important – we need to assist local chairs with more book off, so they can have the time to support members, increase member engagement, and solve the issues they face.

Young workers

The future of our union will depend on how we open the door to support young workers. I will continue the important work that has been done to engage young workers and will create opportunities to support their activism in the social justice movement.

OHS

I will work with OHS activists in the areas that need advocacy for better Occupational Health and Safety. We need to start by looking into loopholes that have been working in favour of employers and against workers in the Workers' Compensation Act.

Indigenous workers and other intersectional allies

I will commit to working closely with all levels of our union to continue the work being done to improve the position and working conditions of members whose intersectional identities affect their experiences at the workplace, including indigenous workers, 2SLGBTQIA+ workers, workers of colour, and workers with disabilities. I will push for the importance of establishing positions at every level of the union, for Indigenous members and other intersectional allies.

Friends and delegates, I will be contacting you and look forward to hearing from you.

Please send me your questions and comments by email or through social media.

Masoudforevp@gmail.com

Instagram: Masoud Arjang

Facebook: Masoud for BCGEU EVP

604-649-5453



Tristen Wybou* - Executive vice-president

Dear union family,

Born and raised on Ts'msyen territory in Prince Rupert where I was grateful to grow up with my First Nation culture, I experienced the efforts of working people throughout the community whose collective strength is reflected in how I persevered and grew into who I am today. Throughout my lived experiences as someone who is queer and lives with disability, the effort undertaken in advocating for myself and fellow members emphasized the importance of the support of a union. After years of activism and feeling first-hand the strength of solidarity, I am deeply honoured to put my name forward to be one of your Executive Vice-Presidents.

Union Activism

When I first became a member of the BCGEU in 2018, I didn't anticipate how quickly I would become immersed as a union activist. I became a member of our union through working at a local non-profit society. As a Local 312 member, I joined the local executive, participated in union events and roundtables, and found myself organizing to address challenging work environments alongside my colleagues. What I was already holding, long before becoming a union member, was my belief in collective action and voice, in working to mutually support each other in order for us all to succeed.

While I was serving as a young worker on the Local 312 executive, I was also a Vice President of the North Coast Labour Council where I worked alongside members of various unions in the community to support the broader labour movement during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our movement must be united across regional and sectoral differences to overcome the challenges we are facing as we are continually asked to do more with less, navigating systemic barriers that impact us and our communities, all while many of us are earning wages that do not meet our true costs of living.

It was with the knowledge gained in these early experiences that I was able to help others as an activist in my workplace and community. I changed jobs in 2020, moving across the province and working in non-union worksites. It became clear to me that we were facing significant issues and needed to stand together to address them. Organizing my worksite in 2022 was an impassioned effort to address the inequities and concerns rampant in care work: unreasonable workloads and unpaid labour, unequal pay for the same work, and sector wide culture of neglect for psychological health and safety. This required cultivating solidarity and giving support to workers who are so often supporting others. After only a few tense months, we succeeded and became members of Local 403.

I quickly leapt back into action, chairing our bargaining committee and ratifying a first stand-alone agreement, while also volunteering my time as a community member. While bargaining our first collective agreement I joined the board of directors for the BC Civil Liberties Association. As someone who fundamentally cares about our rights and freedoms in society, I wanted to take on a role to develop good governance practices within an organization that advocates for fundamental rights and justice for all.

I continue to be active in our union within my own worksite as shop steward, Health and Safety Committee co-chair, and through the Joint Labour Management Committee. Now, as I seek election to become one of your Executive Vice-Presidents, I hope to bring with me this rich history of collective action and care.

Commitments

If elected, I commit to:

- **Building Good Governance:** Upholding principles of transparency, accountability, and fairness in all union affairs, ensuring the rights of every member are preserved while promoting democratic processes that move our collective issues forward.
- **Championing Equity:** Advocating for the rights of Indigenous and marginalized communities within our union, ensuring that their concerns are not only acknowledged but actively addressed through education, bargaining, and union representation.
- **Growing Social Justice Movements:** Taking a proactive stance on issues such as deepening inequality, the housing crisis, and poverty. Aiming to create a union that effectively fights for the well-being of all.
- **Enhancing Accessibility:** Working tirelessly to eliminate barriers within our union and worksites, ensuring that every member can fully participate and contribute to our collective success. This includes supporting members in northern and rural communities who face unique challenges.
- **Utilizing Activists' Strengths:** Involving activists more in external organizing, internal organizing, bargaining, picket line support, and other campaigns. This necessitates streamlining the structure of our union to remove barriers to involvement.

My strong belief in collective power is what led me to take action in my workplaces, in the broader labour movement, and in the communities I have lived in. I have experienced the support and generosity of union members throughout my life which has only reinforced this belief. It would be an honour to continue this work within the role of Executive Vice-President, supporting fellow members to address the diverse issues we are facing across the province and around the world.

I look forward to talking to many members and delegates to our convention to hear about your own experiences. Together, we can continue to build a stronger union that truly represents the power, resilience, and aspirations of our members as we work towards a future of solidarity, forever.

Sagayt K'üülm goot,

Tristen Wybou (he/him)

tristen.bcgeu@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/tristen.wybou>



Cynthia Unrau - Executive vice-president



Greetings my friends,

My name is Cynthia and my passion is supporting people. As public servants many of us share this passion and it is an honour to offer my support to the Provincial Executive and the BCGEU. I began my career in public service in 2008 and I have been proudly providing conflict and dispute resolution services to the public first as a Family Justice Counsellor and currently as a Case Manager with the Civil Resolution Tribunal. I love mediation and negotiation and my skills have served me well as a Shop Steward. Supporting members and empowering them to step into the power of their collective agreement is truly a worthwhile experience.

I am at a place in my life and career where I have time and compulsion to do more! I have raised children and as I transit to a quieter life providing support to my father in his gold years I want to offer everything I can to support, empower and most importantly grow the union movement! Not just our amazing union but all unions! Without the strength and protection of a union Canadian workers are suffering, often in silence and always without power and confidence to advocate for their rights as a Canadian worker~

We have an obligation to expand! It's not enough that we have our union and the bargaining power of thousands of members. If we care about humanity we have more work to do to spread the message and offer the supports needed. I was the lucky one who was raised in a union household. My father went to union meetings and I heard the message at our dinner table. So many young workers across Canada haven't been as lucky! New Canadians aren't aware of the possibilities until we take the message out into the light of day and the dark of night.

I hope you support me and my passion and allow me to share the time, energy and enthusiasm I have for workers. In my personal life I raise chickens in the North Okanagan and you will likely see me at events with my best 4 legged friend Georgi; a beautiful miniature Australian Shepherd leaving behind a hilarious white fire Siamese cat named Roo who thinks he is a dog!

See you on fronts!

Cynthia

Jennifer Marquez* - Executive vice-president



JENNIFER G. MARQUEZ - REGISTERED CARE AIDE

- Local 403 Executive Member - Recording Secretary
- Area 03 – Cross Component Committee Member
- Component 4 Executive- Equity Member.
- OH&S Member at my workplace
- Joint Labour Management Committee Member at workplace
- BCGEU OH&S Facilitator

I, Jennifer, began my career as a Registered Care Aide in 2018. I then became a steward in 2020 as I saw that my peers needed someone to help be their voice. My goal is to represent my members in good faith, welcoming their concerns without judgement.

I strive for collaboration and open communication with my team, recognizing the value of taking in everyone's strengths and ideas. While also taking ownership and accountability for my own responsibilities.

If elected as your Executive Vice Representative, I will be available to all BCGEU members as a compassionate, inclusive, and trusted representative for all their needs. I wish to create opportunities to further educate members of the benefits of using BCGEU support services, encourage members to be more involved in union activities, and make knowledge of this information more accessible.



Guidelines for full-time officer and executive vice-presidential candidates' election campaigns

Policy H-10

1. No funds or assistance in kind will be contributed from the union, components, locals or cross component committees other than that specified in the guidelines.

There will be no component hospitality suites during convention.

2. Declared candidates will have an opportunity to have a picture and a personal statement of no more than 1,000 words in a special election issue of The Provincial and on the BCGEU website. These will be placed in random order by position being sought. Appropriate notices to potential candidates will be announced in The Provincial and on the website. Information regarding how members declare their candidacy, as well as the guidelines in this policy, will be provided to members on the website and in the last issue of The Provincial in the year preceding the Constitutional Convention and again in the March issue of the convention year.
3. Following The Provincial deadline as set for the personal statements by candidates for either full-time officer, or for the executive vice-president positions, the president will notify the provincial executive and the cross component committee chairs of the declared candidates and the offices they seek. Within ten days of that notice, the date for a video recording of each candidate will be announced by union headquarters to include declared candidates for full-time officer and executive vice-president positions. The video recordings will be posted on the BCGEU website.

Leave of absence and travel expenses for declared candidates only will be paid by union headquarters. Administrative assistance for the scheduling and conduct of the all-candidates' webcast(s) will be provided by the union.

4. If components wish to invite declared candidates for full-time officer and executive vice-president positions to address a component executive meeting, or a component caucus at convention, they must invite all candidates who have declared their candidacy for the same position prior to the component executive meeting or the component executive convention caucus.

5. Local executive and convention delegates' mailing addresses, telephone and email addresses will be given to candidates for the exclusive purpose of the election campaign and candidates and their campaign workers who will access the lists will be asked to sign a statement to that effect.
6. Photocopying at BCGEU offices will be available for candidates to a maximum of 2,000 copies, double-sided in black and white. Copying will be done by union support staff.

Envelopes, labels and postage will be provided by the union for one all-delegate mailing by the candidate. If the candidate desires, support staff may run the envelopes through the union's postage meter. Such requests, as well as requests for photocopying, will be made through a servicing staff representative.

7. Campaign expenditures by each candidate are not to exceed \$2,500 in cash or in-kind contributions (value of material goods provided), in addition to those provided for in points 3, and 6. All claims must be receipted. In-kind contributions are counted as expenses and must be accompanied by a statement confirming fair market value. Candidates shall be reimbursed for \$1,250 of the \$2,500 maximum expenditure. In-kind contributions are not eligible for reimbursement.
8. No money, or in-kind contributions is to be solicited or accepted from outside organizations or any sources external to the Union.
9. Within 60 days after the convention, a statement of campaign expenditures will be submitted by each candidate to the provincial executive. Candidates will be asked to use the electronic form available from the finance department.
10. There shall be no staff involvement in the political process. If there are any allegations of staff interference, the complaint should be made in writing to the president who will initiate due process and take action if warranted.

Elected members shall not initiate involvement of staff in the political process. Should staff have



complaints, they shall make them in writing to the appropriate director who will refer them to the president for due process and action if warranted.

Staff will be advised by the president of each candidate at the time that they announce their candidacy.

11. No candidate shall produce or make statements that will bring disrepute on the union, other candidates or its members.
12. Campaigns will be kept internal and candidates will not seek out the media as a means of communicating with the membership or have the media present at all candidate meetings, nor will outside endorsements be permitted for a specific position.
13. During convention, the following rules will apply:
 - (a) No posters in the hall will be permitted. Posters to be posted outside the hall will be dealt with by the sergeant-at-arms committee.
 - (b) Buttons and leaflets must be distributed outside the hall.
 - (c) Equipment will be provided for candidates by union headquarters for display of electronic campaign material outside the hall.
- (d) Honoured guests as appointed by the president will form the balloting committee.
- (e) Each candidate can appoint up to two scrutineers for the ballot count.
- (f) The president will request an honoured guest or life member to chair the elections.
- (g) Candidates will have a total of five minutes to address voting delegates from the convention stage. Nominators will speak from the floor and limit their remarks to nominate their candidate. Should the candidate wish their nominator to speak for them, the nominator will have the opportunity to do so later, after the nomination is accepted, from the convention stage.
14. Any campaign materials that are accessible by the general public (e.g. websites) or produced for distribution at convention, must include the following statement: *"This is a publication of (name), candidate for office at the BCGEU convention. It is not an official publication of the BCGEU. Views expressed are those of the candidate"*. No campaign materials will use the BCGEU logo.
15. A candidate workshop will be provided for declared candidates prior to the candidate video recording.



Dates and details

- **January to February, 2024:**
Local meetings to elect delegates and submit resolutions were held
- **February to March, 2024:**
Equity and young worker delegate elections conducted
- **February 14, 2024:**
Deadline to submit a biography and photo for publication in this issue of The Provincial
- **April 3 to 5, 2024:**
Declared candidate video statements recorded
- **May 27 to 29, 2024:**
Pre-convention meetings
- **May 29 to June 1, 2024:**
Convention 2024



How to STEP UP!

Union engagement ... Organizing and educating together ... A culture of connection with fellow workers, communities, elected representatives and our union's structure, processes and decisions. Whatever you call it, getting involved in our union is the best way to build the collective power we need to overcome our struggles for fairness and dignity at work and, generally, for social, economic, and environmental justice.

Whether you'll be a delegate at Convention 2024 or not, here are a few ways to get involved in our union:

At your workplace

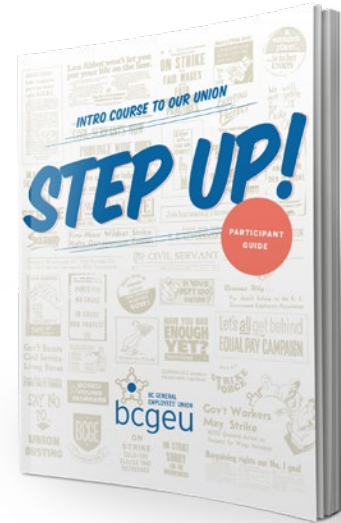
- Ask questions, stay informed
- Attend membership meetings
- Participate in campaigns
- Support your bargaining committee
- Put forward bargaining proposals (independent bargaining units)
- Talk to coworkers about issues at work and how to organize to solve them
- Run to become a steward
- Become an occupational health and safety rep
- Participate in campaigns

At your local

- Attend meetings
- Vote and run in local elections
- Put forward motions
- Report to your local on what's happening at your workplace
- Run as a delegate for convention
- Suggest resolutions for convention
- Put forward bargaining proposals (sectoral bargaining units)

At your Cross Component Committee (CCC)

- Attend courses and events
- Volunteer to help out at events
- Lead a workshop on a topic you love
- Represent your local on the CCC

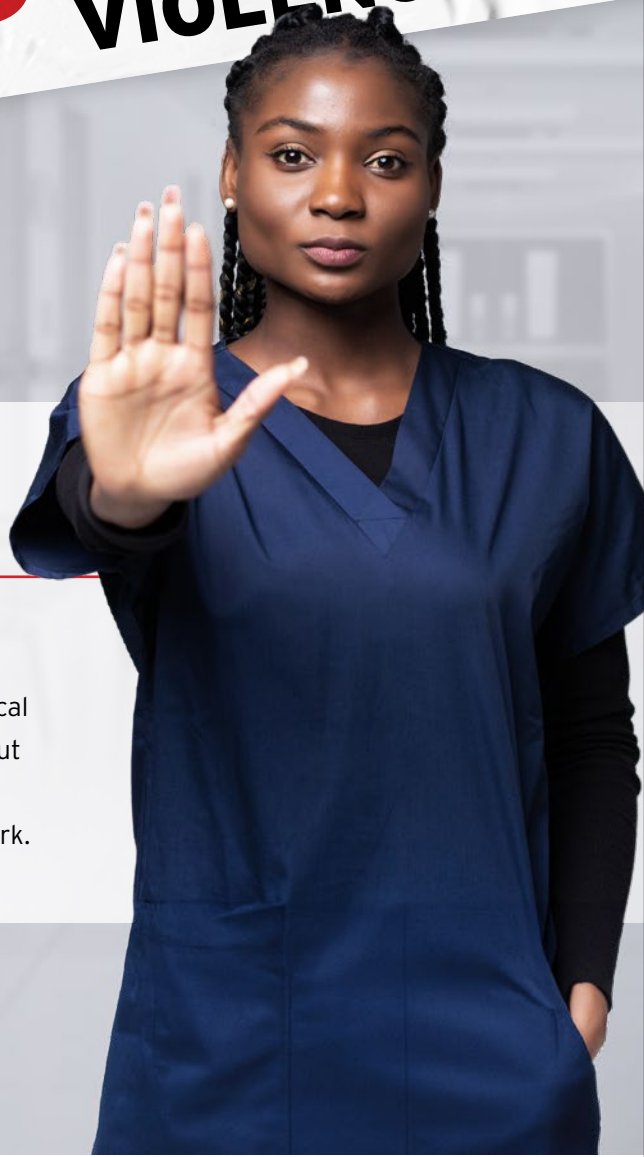


This list is an excerpt from our *STEP UP! Intro to our Union* course, open to all BCGEU members and activists wanting to learn more about their rights and the story of our union.

For more information on upcoming courses, visit my.bcgeu.ca or contact your BCGEU area office.



STOP WORKPLACE VIOLENCE



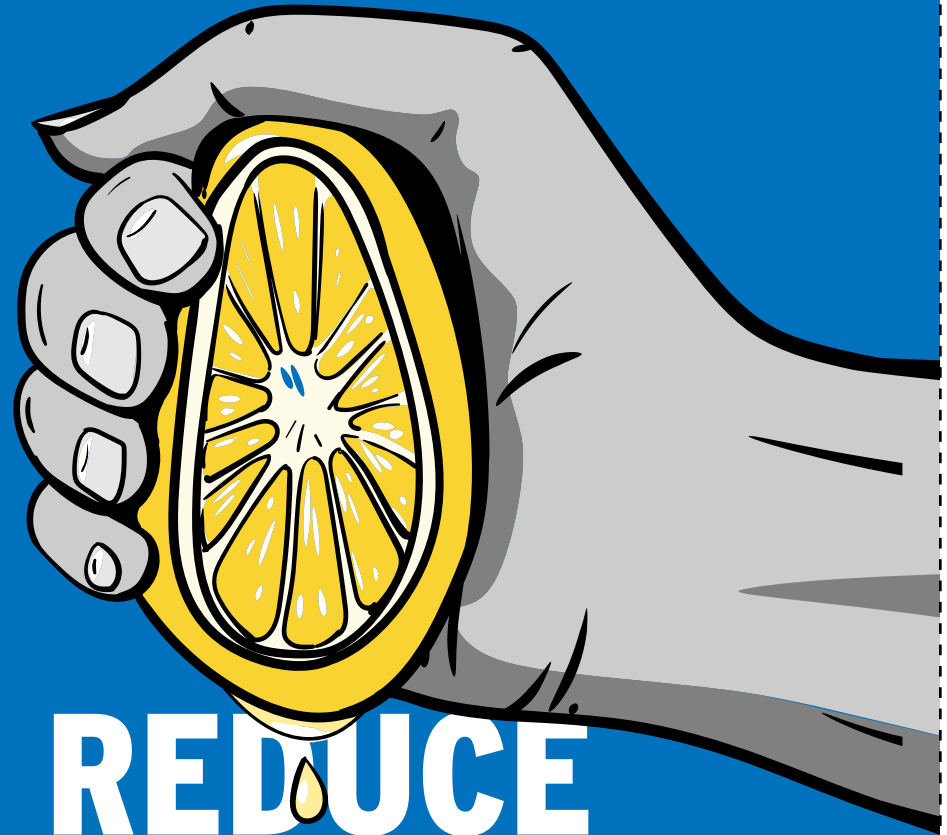
Workplace violence comes in many forms.

Any time a worker experiences verbal abuse, vandalism, emotional threats, psychological intimidation and/or physical assault, they are at risk of injury, burnout and mental stress- undermining their ability to provide the highest quality work.



To learn about mitigating risk of violence at your workplace, visit bcgeu.ca/violence





REDUCE WORKLOAD SQUEEZE!

Understaffing is the employer's problem. Not yours.



bcgeu.ca

Detach and display. Cut out this poster and stick it on the BCGEU bulletin board at your worksite.