

ALBERTA UNION OF PROVINCIAL EMPLOYEES

# BARGAINING UPDATE

NOVEMBER 5, 2019

**LEGAL AID SOCIETY**

LOCAL: 118  
CHAPTER: 018, 019  
**ALL STAFF**

## BARGAINING CONTINUES AMIDST HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS

On Oct. 28, 29 and 30, your negotiations team met with the employer to continue bargaining. While news of drastic cuts to Legal Aid in the provincial budget put any discussions of monetary items on hold, we made good progress on the collective agreement.

Over the three days, we signed off almost all outstanding non-monetary items, including a number of improvements to the current language.

### **IMPROVEMENTS**

- Union Business
  - Removal of annual caps on the number of days members can take off for union business, in favour of increasing the maximum number of members who can book time off for union business at any given time.
  - Previously, the caps were 15 days/fiscal year for individual members and a total of 40 days/fiscal year for the whole bargaining unit.
  - Now it will be 4 members in Edmonton (and still 2 members in Calgary), for reasons other than bargaining, or election/selection to full-time union positions.
- Hours of Work
  - We'll now get at least three weeks advanced notice of our schedule for Earned Days Off (EDOs), so we can better plan our lives. (Language around earned days of was previously in a Letter of Understanding.)

- Casual Illness
  - Time off for taking a family member to a medical appointment can now count towards casual illness, which is time off with pay. (Time off will be charged in half-day increments, but can also be taken as full days if necessary.)
  - Probationary employees will access the full entitlement of paid casual illness after they complete probation instead of after the first year of employment.
- Bereavement Leave
  - The definition of "immediate family" has expanded to include step child, step parent, ward and guardian.

### **MORE NON-MONETARY ITEMS**

Our leaves of absence, including compassionate care leave, and parental leave have also been brought in line with the Employment Standards Code.

New job protected leaves have been added for death or disappearance of a child, along with caregiver and military leaves. Still outstanding is the question of whether domestic violence leave would be paid or unpaid.

Other provisions were signed off with current language or minor, housekeeping changes:

- Overtime - Current
- Probationary Period - Current



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C19408  
**AULReP**

- Layoff and Recall – Current
- Part-Time Employees – Housekeeping changes
- Casual Employees – Housekeeping changes
- Temporary Employees – Housekeeping Changes

### **BUILDING STRENGTH AND MOVING FORWARD**

Some of the workplace changes LAA has imposed over the last two months have – as we expected – made it that much harder for us to support clients, and even raised health and safety concerns (read below).

After our bargaining meetings in September, we filed an Unfair Labour Practice Complaint and grievance over these unilateral changes, which would result in big wage losses for some of our members.

Hearings are expected to start later this month or early in December. In the meantime, we'll continue to push for the workplace protections you deserve, including job security, contracting out, and domestic abuse leave with pay (in line with the Government of Alberta master agreement).

In addition, the membership delivered a petition to the employer calling on them to solve these issues at the bargaining table and negotiate a fair collective agreement.

We will continue to use every possible tool in our toolbox to hold Legal Aid accountable.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS**

Ever since the new Courthouse Intake and Assessment Officer (CIAO) positions were created (splitting the duties of former LSOs into two distinct classifications), CIAOs have been meeting with clients in offices that put both at risk.

Clients often share confidential and sensitive information. Right now in the Edmonton courthouse, they're forced to do this in offices that offer no privacy. The spaces are cramped. The equipment members are working with is inefficient, and the offices are set up in a way that puts staff in vulnerable positions.

Your bargaining team raised all of these issues with the employer over the last three days of negotiations, urging the employer to suspend operations until they can solve these pressing problems.

### **“STREAMLINING” SERVICES**

LAA claims they're streamlining and modernizing our work. From the perspective of our frontline members it's quite the opposite. This employer shouldn't be trying to save themselves a buck at the expense of staff and underserved Albertans trying to navigate the justice system. Your bargaining team needs everyone's full support to challenge this.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Your bargaining team will call a membership meeting soon to discuss our next steps together. Please stay tuned for more information and keep checking the union bulletin boards.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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