

A message to UNW Members

Re: GNWT Mediation

Hello UNW Members,

Right now, the UNW bargaining team is still working towards getting a fair agreement with the GNWT. We will be going into mediation next week (Oct 25-27) and are very much hoping that the government will be reasonable and willing to negotiate during mediation.

At mediation will be:

- UNW bargaining team
- GNWT employer representatives
- Mediator Vince Ready

There is a possibility that mediation will take longer than the scheduled three days, although we hope not. In which case, we will schedule more days, when both parties and the mediator are available.

The UNW bargaining team commits that we will continue mediation for as long as it takes, as long as we are moving forward.

What will be discussed at mediation?

The **major outstanding issues** have not changed since the strike vote, and you can read them on our website at: www.unw.ca/sites/default/files/major_os_issues_0.pdf

Why should I be concerned about the GNWT's proposal to expand the use of Relief workers?

The UNW knows, for a fact, that the GNWT is misusing relief positions instead of hiring full time indeterminate positions, as well as casuals and terms. The GNWT is not policing their own departments. Their data and reports are missing information every month and we have to spend literally weeks going back and forth to try to get accurate data. We have filed grievance after grievance on behalf of members when the GNWT has continually violated the collective agreement in these areas. In addition, relief workers must rely on the employer offering them shifts. This can and does result in some workers getting preferential treatment and more work than other workers.

How can the bargaining team in good conscience agree to the widespread use of relief when the Employer is already so egregiously misusing their current employees?

Why is the Union fighting for such high increases?

The GNWT's offer of 0%-0%-1%-1.1% over four years does not even keep up with the rising cost of living in Yellowknife, let alone the communities. The Northern Living Allowance has not increased in Yellowknife in over 11 years, and has in fact gone down in some communities. Actually, the Union's proposal of 3% each year over a three year CA is not unreasonable. The bargaining team has not moved in their proposal because the Employer refuses to move in theirs. I am sure we will discuss the numbers with the Mediator.

Is Job Security really a concern?

The GNWT has cut hundreds of positions over the last three years. They have largely avoided loud public outcry because the majority of the positions have been vacant. This is because they have consciously not filled positions, which means higher workload on remaining employees. These cuts mean there is less money going into the local economies as well. Also, there are situations – not isolated situations – of term employees being renewed over and over again for years, and even decades, instead of being given indeterminate jobs.

Support Your Bargaining Team

It is more important now than ever to show support for your Bargaining Team. Talk to your Local Executive members and/or your Regional Vice President about getting high visibility gear. We are using NEON ORANGE to represent support of the bargaining teams. There are also buttons available, and T shirts that say "Will strike if provoked". Change your Facebook banner to Support Your Bargaining Team. You can send an [email to your MLA](#) and ask them to support public service workers. Now is the perfect time.

We are hopeful to avert strike through mediation, but it is still a very real possibility.

Every indication we have received from the GNWT is that they are not willing to negotiate. Let's hope that changes at mediation. We are there to get a deal.

Questions?

Contact your Regional Vice President, your Local President, or one of the UNW Bargaining Team members. See our website for more information also. www.unw.ca/government-nwt

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