



Public Service Alliance of Canada  
Alliance de la Fonction publique du Canada

# Kit for Campaigners



[weareallaffected.ca](http://weareallaffected.ca)





# Welcome to our campaign

Welcome to our campaign to protect public services, jobs and workers' rights.

Cuts to public services, whether at the federal or territorial level, cuts in the education sector or at non-profit organizations are about more than just job loss.

They're about the disappearance of services all Canadians rely on. They hurt individuals, communities and the economy. We are all affected.

Our union, along with concerned Canadians in communities across the country, has been working hard to save services and protect jobs. We've also been using our collective agreement provisions to help members cope with the impact of budget cuts.

We've negotiated those provisions, just like we've won fair wages, health and safety protections, sick leave, and all of the benefits we count on. The improvements we've made for ourselves have helped other workers do the same, contributing to a higher standard of living for everyone. A rising tide lifts all boats.

Not only are public services under fire in the name of austerity and deficit reduction, we are now facing potential restrictions on our union's right to collect dues from our members and how the union and our members decide to use those dues.

We've already seen Bill C-377 passed by the House of Commons, a Bill that Senator Hugh Segal describes as having "...an anti-labour bias running rampant; and it diminishes the imperative of free speech, freedom of assembly and free collective bargaining".

Our union, together with the broader labour movement, will vehemently fight any initiatives that would take away union and worker rights that have existed for decades.

Thank you for joining our campaign for public services, jobs and workers' rights.

Together we stop any attempt to undermine not only what we have achieved but our ability to collectively improve our lives at work, our communities and our country.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robyn Benson".

Robyn Benson,

*PSAC National President*



# Standing up for services, jobs and rights

## Taking the campaign to the workplace

### Our aim is to:

- Inform PSAC members of the important gains that we have made by working collectively through the union over the years.
- Alert PSAC members to the threats to federal public services and jobs, to our negotiated working conditions and to effective union representation.
- Convince members of the need to stand together and counter these threats through our union.
- Demonstrate membership support for public services and workers' rights through the collection of pledge cards.
- Increase the visibility of the PSAC in the workplace and increase participation of members in the union through face-to-face conversations.
- Build our union's capacity at all levels – local, regional, component and national – for two-way communication with members.
- Collect up-to-date email and telephone contact information.

### Our message to our members is:

We can protect public services and jobs when we stick together.

By sticking together, and through collective bargaining, we have improved our working conditions significantly over the years.

Today, our jobs and our negotiated rights are being threatened. The Conservative government has introduced another budget with program cuts.

The next step for Conservatives is to bring in legislation to strip away our collective agreement provisions that make it possible for us to have effective union representation.

You can help protect your job and your rights by getting involved in your union. The first step is to sign a PSAC pledge card.



# Campaigners are the key to our success

Thank you for agreeing to be a PSAC “campaigner”. You will be helping defend the rights of our members everywhere.

## We need to work together

As PSAC members we are facing threats to our jobs, to the services we provide, to the benefits in our collective agreements and to the organization that is on our side – our union.

## We need to reach every member

We need to harness the full strength of our membership. It won't be easy but we can do it. Our members, like everyone else, hear a lot of anti-union messages. We hear messages from conservative “think tanks” and business associations that tell us we should lose the good things we've negotiated when these benefits should be available to all Canadians.

## What we're asking you to do

To counteract these messages and build solidarity, we need to reach out personally to every member. We need to build stronger connections between members and our union.

You will be helping do this by approaching your co-workers and having a conversation with them one at a time. The idea is to find out how they are doing, what's on their minds and to share important information with them – information about the benefits we've achieved through the union and about the threats we are all facing.

You will be asking them to sign a pledge card in support of public services, jobs and workers' rights. You will also be asking them to provide our union with updated contact information so that we can stay in touch with them, keep them informed and recruit them for future activities.

In this campaigner's kit, you will find tools and resources to support you in having the conversations and getting pledge cards signed:

- How to prepare for conversations with members
- Steps to having one-to-one conversations
- A conversation tracking tool





# How to prepare to engage members

## Review why you're having the conversations

- You are getting to know the members. You're going to find out how they're doing, what's going on in their workplace and what's on their minds these days.
- You are going to be explaining to members why their union is having these conversations at this time and that this is just the start of a bigger campaign to protect public services, jobs and workers' rights. (See the Taking the campaign to the workplace document.)
- You know members are worried. You'll be helping show them that government actions to cut public services and jobs, cutback negotiated benefits and undermine unions will make their lives even more precarious.
- You are going to listen to the members. You'll be taking note of their feedback and concerns. During each conversation, focus on listening and making sure you understand what the member is saying. After each conversation, use your campaign tracking tool to write down notes from your conversation.
- You're going to ask members to sign a pledge in support of public services, their collective agreement and their union.
- You're going to collect information for the union's database: name, address, home phone number and home email address.

## Organize the materials you need for the conversations

### For the members:

- *We're standing together for services, jobs and rights* leaflet
- *Standing together for public services & our rights* pledge card

### In your kit:

- Membership list
- Information sheets
- Tracking tool

## Work out the best times to have your conversations

When you get ready for your conversations, think about the best times to have them. These times may vary depending on the workplace. Is early morning before everyone starts work a good time or are break and lunch times better. Some members may have more time at the end of the work day. Don't forget about members in your Local who may be working different shift schedules.

## Prepare your conversation

- Review the sample conversation tool in this kit. It suggests an approach to your conversations.
- Find out what kind of problems your members are facing in their own particular job or workplace and tailor your message to the member's own situation. For example:

"I know you are really busy with an impossible workload and need your break time so I'm going to be as brief as possible. In fact, what I want to talk to you about is related to your workload situation and what kind of impact the federal budget cuts are going to have on us..."

- Think ahead about some open-ended questions you can ask members to make them feel more comfortable and to get important feedback from them. For example:

"What are things like these days for you in your job?" "What do you think about the latest federal budget?"

- Practice what you'll say.

# One-to-One Conversations

## Welcome to the campaign and thank you!

Thank you for agreeing to be a Campaigner and for helping to defend the rights of workers in Canada.

### What we're asking you to do:

Our goal is to reach out personally to every member. We need to build stronger connections between members and our union. You will help do this by approaching your co-workers and having a conversation with them, one at a time. The idea is to find out first-hand how members are doing, what's on their minds, and to share with them important information about the threat to their democratic rights as workers.

Our campaign is about connecting with members and discussing with them what we can do together. We will give members hope that through collective action, as a union, we can turn things around.

You will also ask them to sign a pledge of support, and to provide our union with up-dated contact information so that we can stay in touch, keep them informed of new developments, and invite them to be involved in other ways in the future.

In this section of the Campaigner Kit you'll find tools and resources to help you have one to one conversations and get pledge cards signed:

- 1. Before the conversation**
- 2. During the conversation**
- 3. After the conversation**
- 4. Campaigner's Tracking Tool**

There is so much at stake right now for all PSAC members—and for our families, our communities, and the people who rely on the services we provide. The gains we've made throughout the years have all been due to the collective power of PSAC members. If we all stick together, we can win again.



# 1. Before the Conversation

## Connect with your Local:

- Talk with your Local President and set a realistic time for you to prepare and hold your conversations with members
- Get a list of the members you will be speaking with. Update the list using your own knowledge of the workplace. There is often a lag between the time the employer sends the union the information and what is actually going on in the workplace. There may be newly hired employees who are not on the list yet. Or, some employees may have left but still appear on the list. Other employees may be on leaves of absence and are being replaced. Let your Local know of any changes when you update your list.

## Review the kit materials:

- Read the materials in your kit:
  - Message from the PSAC national president
  - Campaign Overview
  - The fact sheets
  - 10 Things the Union Has Done For You
  - One-to-One Conversations
  - We're standing together for services, jobs and rights!* leaflet
  - member pledge card
- If you need more information, contact your local, your PSAC regional office or component office.

## Remind yourself why you're having the conversations:

- You are getting to know the members. You're going to find out how they're doing, what's going on in their workplace and what's on their minds these days.
- You are going to be explaining to members why their union is having these conversations at this time and that this is just the start of a bigger campaign to protect public services, jobs and workers' rights. (See the campaign overview document for more details.)
- You know members are worried. You'll be helping show them that government actions to cut public services and jobs, cutback negotiated benefits and undermine unions will make their lives even more precarious.
- You are going to listen to the members. You'll be taking note of their feedback and

concerns. During each conversation, focus on listening and making sure you understand what the member is saying. After each conversation, use your campaign tracking tool to write down notes from your conversation.

- You're going to ask members to sign a pledge in support of public services, their collective agreement and their union.
- You're going to collect information for the union's database: name, address, home phone number and home email address.

### **Set up your conversations:**

- If you know some of the members you're going to be speaking with, arrange to meet any you think will be most sympathetic to your message. Ask them who you should speak with next. This way you can build a momentum of support and you can be prepared for more difficult conversations that may occur.
- Plan to have a first quick chat with the member to arrange a time and place for the one-to-one conversation. These times may vary depending on the workplace. Is early morning before everyone starts work a good time, or are break and lunch times better? Some members may have more time at the end of the work day. Don't forget about members in your Local who may be working different shift schedules.
- Make a point of talking with members who may feel excluded from our union.
- If the member works in a rural community, your conversation will probably take place over the phone. Plan to mail the leaflet, pledge card and your Campaigner calling card to the member's home after your conversation, and be sure to include a self-addressed stamped envelope so the member can return the signed pledge card to the Local. If the member prefers, you could e-mail the leaflet and other background information to her/him after your conversation - but the pledge card should be a real document that the member signs and returns.

### **Organize the materials you need for the conversations:**

#### **For the members:**

- *We're standing together for services, jobs and rights* leaflet
- *Standing together for public services & our rights* pledge card
- a pen
- your contact information

#### **For yourself:**

- Membership list
- Tracking tool

### **Prepare your conversation**



## 2. During the Conversation

The information you provide in the conversation is important. **How you participate** in conversation is equally important, especially for building long term connections between members and our union.

### Sample Steps for Conversations:

#### The Introduction.

- Begin by thanking the member for taking the time to talk with you.
- Let them know that the conversation you are having is one that thousands of PSAC members are having with their co-workers across the country to raise awareness of what is making workers feel more insecure.
- **Be positive and hopeful:** the first step to changing the situation is for each of us to understand that we are not alone and that by working together through our union we can make a real difference.

*"Hi. My name is \_\_\_ and I'm here on behalf of our union, the PSAC. We're trying to connect with our members, and to let you know about some things that are going on that we believe will have an impact on you."*

#### Ask questions and listen – find out what your co-worker is concerned about.

- Try to understand what the member's union experience has been so far. This may be their first "union" conversation – their first opportunity to find out what their union does. Some may be suspicious of why someone from the union is coming to speak with them. Some may ask you exactly what the union does for them, and some may have had a problem that the union has not addressed yet.

*"Our union really wants to hear from you about what is going on in the workplace. What changes have you noticed as a result of the public service cuts so far? Are things more difficult for you? What issues matter to you most? The PSAC wants to reach out more to members and involve us all in addressing the problems facing us."*

- **Listen attentively** to the member's questions and concerns. Answer if you can. If you do not know something (for example, where a grievance is at in the process), offer to look into the matter.
  - Don't argue or be defensive. Find openings and **look for points of agreement.**
- Pay attention to the member's words, tone of voice and body language.

- **Asking open-ended questions and staying positive** will help build your rapport with the member and give you an idea of how to approach the rest of your conversation.

## Move on to the campaign.

- Use the leaflet *"We're standing together for services, jobs and rights"* to help explain the current campaign.
- Give information on the three key issues we want members to know about:
  - federal government budget cuts and their impact on the quality and accessibility of public services;
  - the current threats to our collective agreement rights and our democratic right to collective bargaining;
  - Conservative proposals to introduce laws that give the government the right to say how the union can use its finances.
- Explain that these changes could allow some members to stop paying dues even though they would still receive all of the benefits the union negotiates.
- Ask members for their initial thoughts about what you've said.
- Make a point of saying that the union wants members to have a say and become more involved in this campaign – this is about them.
- Focus on the message and bring the conversation back to the impact of the government's plans on us all. Convey the seriousness of the situation but do not fear-monger. Stick to the facts.
- **Listen carefully and patiently.**

*"I would like to share some important information about how public services and our working conditions are at risk. I also think it's important you know what actions the federal Conservative government is considering and how they will worsen our working conditions and to weaken our union. "*

## Convey hope. Ask them to join the campaign.

- Convey optimism! Let the member know that the situation is far from hopeless. Workers and citizens can turn things around but it requires us sticking together.

*"Will you sign the pledge card to show your support? It will make a big difference. We'll keep in touch with updates on activities and ways you can become more involved."*

- Say that all the benefits that we enjoy now through our collective agreements or through government programs like Medicare were won by the hard work and determination of people who came before us.

Workers have faced all kinds of attempts by governments and employers to take things away and history tells us that it is possible to hold on as long as lots of people work together.



- Say that getting educated about the issues is a first step, as is making a commitment to join in. That's what part of this conversation is about, and that is why we want every member to sign the pledge card in support of the campaign.
- Ask the member to sign the pledge card and provide their personal contact information.
- If the member doesn't want to sign the card or provide personal information, listen to their reasons.
- Ask them to think about what you've said and agree to talk again.
- Take the pledge card back with you, regardless of whether it is signed or not. The card is a tool that helps us connect, one-to-one, with our members. If it isn't signed during your first conversation, bring it back with you for a subsequent conversation.

### **Plan for subsequent conversations.**

- Give the member your contact information and invite them to contact you.
- Let the member know there will be many opportunities for members to get involved in taking further action.
- Thank the member for their time, and confirm your commitment to follow up on any issues raised during the conversation.

### **What if?**

- Most members are going to really appreciate your efforts to get to know them better and to share information in a one-on-one conversation. It is also good to prepare yourself for some things that might go wrong.

#### **What if a member does not want to speak with me?**

- Ask the member why he or she does not want to engage in the conversation. This will help you find a way to address the concerns. Perhaps the member is nervous about being seen speaking with "the union." You can alleviate this concern by suggesting a telephone conversation instead. If a member is reluctant to have a one to one conversation, have a small group discussion instead. If a member really does not want to speak with you and will not explain why, make sure you **stay friendly and open**, invite the member to contact you at any time, and then move on.
- Do not be discouraged or take the rebuff personally.

#### **What if a supervisor tells me to stop talking union on the job?**

- Make sure you check with your local executive about your rights as a union representative to speak with members. Collective agreements often have provisions that set out these rights but they vary considerably from agreement to agreement. The general rule is to try to speak with members on their own time - during breaks, or before or after work.
- If a supervisor or manager gives you a hard time, immediately contact your local executive for assistance.



# 3. After the Conversation

## Track your conversations:

- Use the tracking tool in this kit to record any concerns the member has, their level of interest, and any follow-up that's required.
- Make sure you keep your tracking notes in a CONFIDENTIAL place.

## Return signed pledge cards:

- Return signed pledge cards to your local, as you collect them, along with a report of how many members you have spoken with and how many members you still have not reached.
- Let your local know how many members haven't yet signed a card.

## Follow-up:

- Follow through on any commitment you made to the member, such as emailing the fact sheets or other information.
- Plan your next conversation with members who did not sign a pledge card. It might take two or three conversations before the member is willing to sign. Follow up, but don't be too pushy. Some members may say they will never sign but unless they tell you they never want to hear from you again, it is a good idea to stay in touch and keep them informed of issues that arise in the future.

## Celebrate!!!

- You've already made the union more visible in the workplace, even if not all members have signed a pledge card (yet).
- Share your experience with other campaigners. Inspire each other!

## NOTES:

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# 4. Campaigner's Tracking Tool

## Tool to Track Campaign Conversations

- *Keep your notes in a safe place, and do not betray confidences shared with you.*
- *If a member asks you to follow up on a problem, make sure you do so.*
- *You may have to have several conversations with the same member before she or he is willing to take the pledge. The member may need more information. Make a note of what your next steps will be and then follow up.*

**Member's name:**

**Workplace location:**

- The member completed the pledge card
- The member wants more information about the campaign and the issues.
- The member is a potential campaign activist.

**Rate the member's interest and commitment on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest:**

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

**Member's concerns that I need to follow up on:**

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**I need to go back and have another conversation.  
Next time, it would be good for me to discuss:**

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