



Welcome to the union!

Congratulations on entering the library workforce! You've no doubt heard of CUPE throughout your studies and now it's time to get involved. As an employed library technician, you'll most likely be subscribed to CUPE's membership which includes many resources and benefits. This can be overwhelming for someone with little first hand experience with a union so let us help guide you through what you need to know and how CUPE will benefit you.



You and CUPE

Upon joining CUPE, you pay \$10 as a new employee initiation fee. Thereafter 2-5% (depending on your local representative) of your paycheck will automatically be deducted to support union activities. These activities include research, negotiations, supporting CUPE, and advocating for other members. These activities can be viewed on your local CUPE website or call a representative for further information.

It is your right, and is democratically expected, that all members of CUPE will vote on actions when called for.

Staying current via the local CUPE updates and newsletters are also important. Consider taking time to do extra research on topics some of these newsletters publish and talk to a representative about how you can help.

As a representative of CUPE, you are expected to uphold the morals and ethics of the union. This includes treating everyone, of all races, cultures and ethnicities, with respect, kindness and understanding.

As a librarian technician you're aiming to serve the community as best you can. CUPE is part of your workplace community and being able to support the union is important!



Your Benefits of CUPE

As a CUPE member your health coverage will be provided by Pacific Blue Cross. This includes dental and long term disability plans in case of injury on top of additional medical coverage.

CUPE guarantees living wage to its members and attempts to maintain fair wages across the board. This means that union members will receive wages based upon their workload and education or may attempt to negotiate an increase in wages depending on those two factors.

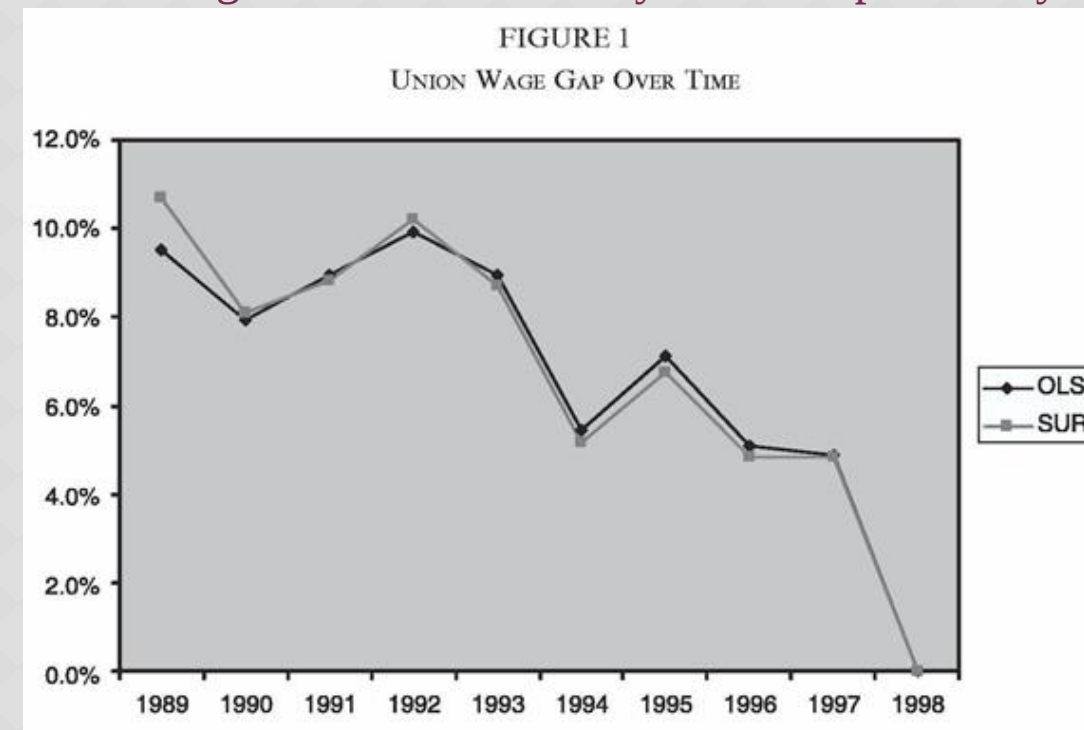
Collective bargaining aims to keep CUPE members within equity of their environment and ensure the playfield is level. Traditionally CUPE has performed collective bargaining for equal wages between men and women, set work hours, increase coverage plans (such as additional health and dental) and brought workplace grievances forward to be solved.

If one's employer is unwilling to negotiate, then CUPE will call for a vote for action which may lead to a strike. During such strikes, CUPE members are entitled to \$250 a week in exchange for twenty hours of striking. There will be CUPE representatives present or checking in on a strike to record time striking or picketing. However striking isn't always the first action CUPE will resort to. They will attempt to negotiate and perform 'soft' protests unless there is overwhelming support for such action.

Notable library protests involving CUPE negotiations in the last twenty years include Newfoundland and Labrador's attempt to close 54 libraries, Vancouver Public Library's strike for equal wages and Saskatchewan's attempt to cut library budgets by \$4.8 million.

CUPE members also have protection from layoffs in times of recession. They will only be laid off in cases of shut down and, in such situations, will be relocated to the best of CUPE's ability, to a job within the same sector of work.

Members of CUPE may also be invited to large workshops involving other CUPE sectors for general improvements in the workplace – such as racial sensitivity, cultural sensitivity and exercises in de-stressing in the workplace. In addition, there may be workshops offered specifically for librarian technicians to learn more or understanding the shifting work environments. These will be provided free of charge but travel costs may be the responsibility of the individual or their workplace.



CUPE Community Benefits

Research has shown that employers are hesitant to change and improving employee conditions. However, after a change has occurred in the labour force other workplaces will follow their example.

In a ten year research survey and project done by Lee, D. O., Rogers, K. E., & Grimes, P. W. in 2006, showed that the wage gap (in the United States of America) between unionized and non-unionized libraries was 10% at the start of 1989 but closed to 4% by 1996. This demonstrates that any increase in union librarian wages was followed closely by the non-union libraries. Their research indicates that changes made by the union will be followed by non-union forces because a change has occurred in their work sector, see figure 1 for a graph showing union vs non-union wage gap.

Furthermore, their research showed that union representatives were able to successfully negotiate and represent the wages of their parties. Indicating that the union representatives have done their research and understand the needs of their workers which suggests an understanding of the work environment of others.

As CUPE creates new standards for work, other workplaces must follow their lead if they want to retain employees who see the competitive and improving nature of other labour fields.

- By creating standards of wages, other non-union locations are expected to be competitive in order to entice workers.
- Non-unionized workplaces may attempt to create better benefits or compensate for a lack of benefits.
- In the past, unions have paved the way for universal working rights such as limited working hours and providing a minimum wage which were eventually adopted country-wide across the globe.

It is impossible to guess what the future has in store for Canadian workers but one can be sure that CUPE will attempt to maintain fair

Democratic Process

CUPE is a collective organization and individual demands will be considered in light of the democratic process.



Acknowledgements

Thanks to Google for the map below regarding CUPE locations.

CUPE information and mission statements may be found on their website at CUPE.ca

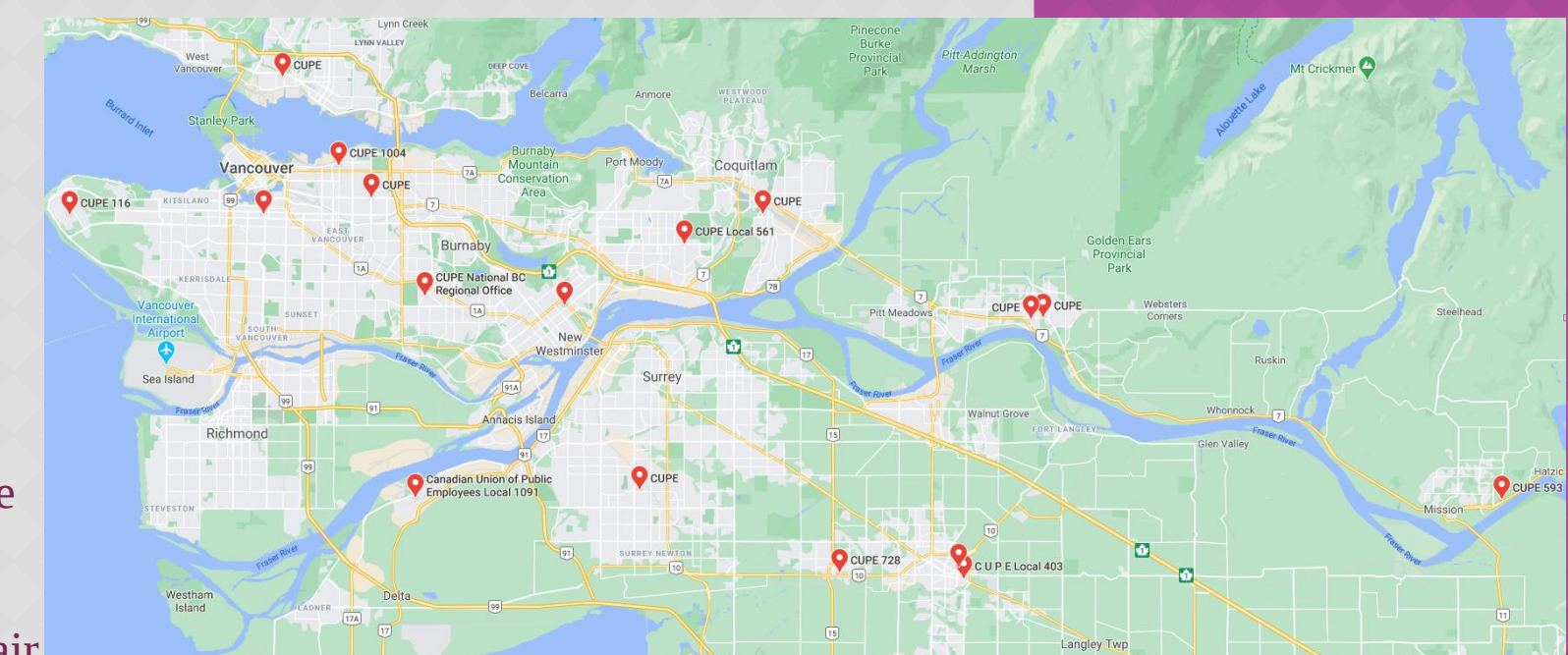
CUPE B.C. attempts to work hand in hand with the government to create the best solution for our province and its workers.

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Visit a local CUPE location today!

Or call them toll free

(844) 237 -1590



References for images used

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