

THE ADVOCATE

Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees

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UPSE MEMBERS...YOU ARE THE UNION!



UPSE PROUD



Dear Members,

Welcome to the Spring edition of The Advocate. As we approach another summer on our beautiful Island, I want to thank our members for the essential services you provide to Islanders every day. I hope you find time this summer to rest, recharge, and enjoy time with family and friends. While your union continues to make progress on many fronts, several significant challenges remain.

Challenges

Staffing Shortages

Many employers continue to struggle with recruiting and retaining skilled professionals. These shortages are affecting member safety, workplace well-being, and the delivery of services. The increased use of agency staff has created morale and workplace culture concerns, particularly when agency workers are compensated at significantly higher rates than unionized employees. UPSE will continue to advocate for safe staffing levels and oppose the growing reliance on agency staffing.

Privatization of Public Services

UPSE remains firmly opposed to the privatization of public services. Privatization reduces public oversight and shifts resources away from service delivery toward private profit. We continue to defend public services and are awaiting

an arbitration decision regarding travel LPNs, which may provide further direction on addressing agency staffing concerns.



Karen Jackson
President, UPSE

Long-Term Care Safety

We remain concerned about the placement of individuals with complex behavioural and mental health needs in long-term care facilities that are not designed or staffed to provide those services. This creates unsafe conditions for both residents and staff. UPSE has repeatedly raised these concerns publicly and directly with government officials.

Child and Youth Psychiatric Unit

UPSE continues to oppose the relocation of the Child and Youth Psychiatric Unit. Staff, including clinical professionals, have expressed unanimous concerns about the move. We will continue advocating for decisions that prioritize quality care and the expertise of frontline workers.

Early Learning and Pedagogical Support

The reduction in funding for pedagogical support in Early Learning Centres is disappointing and short-sighted. These supports play an important role in helping educators, children, and families succeed. UPSE has actively advocated against these cuts and will continue to do so.

Consultation and Collective Agreement Compliance

Some employers continue to make significant decisions without meaningful consultation and have failed to fully implement negotiated collective agreement provisions and settlements. UPSE is pursuing all available avenues, including legal

remedies where necessary, to ensure employers meet their obligations.

Moving Forward

Despite these challenges, your union continues to strengthen its ability to serve members. We expanded labour relations support with the addition of temporary Labour Relations Officer Shawn Alexander, and support from our Education and Research staff. Members now have six points of contact to help address workplace concerns in a timely manner.

We have also strengthened our internal operations by implementing new policies, procedures, and retention practices to improve consistency, protect member information, and ensure high-quality service. Work is also underway to review our Local structure and advance the goals of our strategic plan.

UPSE continues to be a strong public voice for members. Through media interviews, opinion pieces, press releases, and direct advocacy, we have elevated important workplace issues and ensured member concerns are heard when other avenues have not produced results.

Finally, our committees continue to play a vital role in member engagement and support. Their work helps build a stronger, more connected union and remains essential to achieving our strategic goals. Together, we remain strong. UPSE is a proud and diverse union representing members across both the public and private sectors. Thank you for your continued dedication to serving Islanders every day.

Karen Jackson,
UPSE President

Steward Conference

UPSE Stewards Conference, 2026

UPSE stewards from across Prince Edward Island gathered on June 5 for our 2026 Stewards Conference in Charlottetown. The day featured training and discussions on the role of stewards, mentorship, note-taking, mental health awareness, labour relations issues, and emerging trends in labour law.

Thank you to our presenters, including the Canadian Mental Health Association and Pink Larkin, for sharing their expertise.

A strong union starts with informed and engaged stewards. Thank you to everyone who participated and continues to support UPSE members in workplaces across the province.



Day of Mourning, April 28, 2026

President Karen Jackson attended the National Day of Mourning ceremony to honour workers who lost their lives on the job. In 2024, nine Islanders died due to workplace injuries or illness, and 1,809 workplace injury and illness claims were reported across Prince Edward Island. Across Canada, the reality is even more sobering: over 1,000 workers lose their lives each year due to workplace incidents.

These are not just statistics. They are coworkers, friends, and family members whose lives, and whose loved ones' lives, are forever changed. Today, we remember them. And we renew our commitment to safer workplaces.

UPSE continues to push for:

- Safe staffing levels and manageable workloads
- Strong protections against workplace violence
- Proper equipment, training, and supports for workers
- Stronger health and safety standards across all sectors

No one should be injured or lose their life simply for going to work.



Karen Jackson, UPSE President.

2026 Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference

The PEI Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE) was proud to welcome participants from the 2026 Governor General's Canadian Leadership Conference (GGCLC) during the PEI Study Tour on May 26. The visit brought together 17 emerging leaders from across Canada representing business, labour, government, and community sectors for a candid discussion on leadership, labour, and the future of public services in Prince Edward Island.

As part of the discussion, UPSE 2nd Vice-President Mark Aresenault, shared his perspective on the evolving role of unions and the changing realities facing workers today. Drawing on more than 30 years of union involvement and public service experience, he spoke about how unions continue to advocate for fair wages, safe working conditions, job security, and dignity for workers in both the public and private sectors.



A major focus of the conversation was PEI's growing labour shortage and the challenges of recruiting and retaining qualified workers. Mark noted that younger generations often approach work differently than previous generations, with less faith in long-term employment stability and greater mobility between employers. He also highlighted the increasing pressures caused by an aging population and the need for more workers across healthcare, education, and other essential services.

The discussion also explored the role immigration and temporary foreign workers play in addressing labour gaps, while recognizing the complexities and concerns surrounding these issues. Participants heard examples of PEI communities finding creative solutions to local challenges, including medical homes, and specialized response teams.

Throughout the session, UPSE emphasized that strong public programs and healthy workplaces are investments in society. Whether advocating for affordable education, housing, healthcare, or better working conditions, unions continue to play an important role in supporting both workers and the communities they serve.

UPSE was honoured to contribute to this important national conversation and to share PEI's unique perspectives with Canada's future leaders.

UPSE Congratulates its 2025 Retirees!

I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to UPSE's 2025 retirees. Your dedication, professionalism, and commitment to public service have made a lasting impact on communities across Prince Edward Island. Through your years of service, you have helped strengthen the programs and services that Islanders rely on every day, contributing to a better quality of life for all.

Retirement is a significant milestone and a well-earned reward for a career built on hard work, perseverance, and service. It marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter filled with opportunities to explore new interests, pursue long-held passions, spend more time with loved ones, and enjoy the freedom that comes with this next stage of life.

As you look ahead to new adventures and experiences, know that your contributions have left a meaningful legacy. The Union of Public Sector Employees is proud to celebrate your achievements and recognize the important role you have played in serving the people of Prince Edward Island.

Congratulations on this remarkable accomplishment, and best wishes for a happy, healthy, and fulfilling retirement.

Karen Jackson, UPSE President

Note: Retirees not in the pics include:

Debra Curry, 22 years of service	Colleen Richards, 10 years of service	Nancy Adams, 10 years of service
Judy Hornyik, 20 years of service	Gordie Mingo, 23 years of service	
Phillip LeBlance, 29 years of service	Irene Webster-MacDonald, 28 years of service	



Barry MacDonald, 25 years



Barry McCarron, 25 years



Blair Sorrey, 26 years



Bonita Moore, 26 years



Bonnie Corrish, 20 years



Brian Murray, 30 years



Charles Campbell, 45 years



Darlene MacDougall, 32 years



David Morrison, 6 years



Erin Heffernan Andrews, 35 years



Gailene Penny, 25 years



Glenna Bakker, 40 years



Harold McGuigan, 50 years



Joanne Brown, 24 years



Joseph Radvanyi, 26 years



Karen Power, 15 years



Kate Howatt, 25 years



Linda Doucette, 35 years



Mark Kays, 15 years



Mary Myers, 38 years



Monica Taylor, 37 years



Myrna Mellish, 19 years



Nancy Easton, 23 years



Patricia Beer, 30 years



Patricia Noonan, 13 years



Robbie Albert, 22 years



Robert Duncan, 38 years



Valerie MacEachern, 26 years



Anne Compton, 28 years



Corinne Peters, 16 years



Donna Albert Affleck, 27 years



Gail Wallace, 30 years



Janice Baglole, 44 years



Kim Williams, 35 years



Linda Hashie Gallant, 25 years



Lori Newrick Gallant, 7 years



Sherry Reilly, 2 years



Terry Oatway, 30 years



Theresa Burns, 30 years



Tracey Fallon Ford, 19 years



Westley Hustler, 20 years

UPSE Attends Historic CLC Constitutional Convention

UPSE delegates joined labour leaders from across Canada at the 31st Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), held May 11–15, 2026, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Held under the theme “Canada’s Unions: We Build, We Care, We Fight,” the convention brought together a record number of delegates, making it the largest convention in the history of the Canadian Labour Congress. Delegates debated and voted on policies that will help shape the future direction of Canada’s labour movement.

Key issues discussed included the housing and health care crises, affordability, climate action, protecting good jobs, and defending workers’ rights. Thousands of union members also participated in a rally in Winnipeg, calling for stronger protections for workers, improved working conditions, and public health care.

Convention delegates re-elected the Team Unite leadership slate to guide the CLC through the next term. Re-elected were Bea Bruske as President, Lily Chang as Secretary-Treasurer, and Siobhán Vipond and Marc-Edouard Joubert as Executive Vice-Presidents.

The convention also adopted a number of resolutions that will help shape the CLC’s advocacy efforts in the years ahead. Delegates debated issues affecting workers and communities across the country, reinforcing the labour movement’s commitment to fairness, equity, and economic security for all.

UPSE was proud to be part of this important gathering and to contribute to discussions on the challenges and opportunities facing workers across Canada. The convention provided an opportunity to share experiences, build solidarity, and strengthen the collective voice of working people from coast to coast.



Pic: Karen Jackson (President), Dianne McSweeney (BOD), Lori Matheson (BOD), Jenn MacDonald (BOD), and Hugh Handrahan (BOD).



Meet UPSE's Membership Records Coordinator, Norma Jarvis

As Membership Records Coordinator with PEI UPSE, I am responsible for managing and maintaining membership records for bargaining units across Prince Edward Island. A large part of my role involves ensuring member information is accurate and up to date, assisting with membership applications, and helping members navigate questions related to their status, benefits, and other union-related matters. I enjoy being a resource for members and take pride in providing timely support to help them find the information they need. Whether someone is a new member looking for guidance or a long-time member seeking assistance, I work to ensure they have access to the information and support they need.

In addition to maintaining membership records, I support many of the administrative functions of the union, including assisting with election and voting processes in accordance with the PEI UPSE Constitution and Bylaws, preparing reports, coordinating convention materials, and helping ensure important deadlines and information are communicated to key stakeholders. The variety of responsibilities keeps every day interesting and allows me to contribute to the important work UPSE does on behalf of its members.

Before joining PEI UPSE, I spent nine years working in the Human Resources Department at the City of Charlottetown. During that time, I gained valuable experience in employee relations, records management, and providing administrative support, skills that continue to serve me well in my current role.

My pride and joy are my two grown sons Caleb and Cole. When I'm not at work, you'll usually find me spending time with my dog, Buster. We enjoy exploring local trails together and making the most of PEI's beautiful beaches during the summer months.



Pic: Norma Jarvis, UPSE Membership Records Coordinator

Members: Please Update Personal Contact Information

The union encourages all members to take an active role in the union by keeping up-to-date on union news and issues. To ensure you receive the most recent UPSE communication materials, please update your contact information with the union to ensure your current contact information is up-to-date, or to make changes.

Call Norma Jarvis at **902-892-5335** or email her (njarvis@peiupse.ca).

You can also visit the UPSE website and go to the [update your contact information](https://www.peiupse.ca/members/update/) (<https://www.peiupse.ca/members/update/>) link under the **Members** tab on the homepage where you can update your information on-line.

Congratulations to Dina DesRoches on her Retirement

UPSE would like to recognize and celebrate Dina DesRoches's remarkable career as she begins her well-earned retirement. For nearly four decades as a member of the Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees, Dina has dedicated her career and her voice to supporting people when they needed it most. As a Social Worker, she served in Child Protection, Victim Services, Probation Services, and as a Clinical Services Therapist. Her work has touched countless lives, always grounded in compassion, professionalism, and a deep commitment to helping others.

Dina's impact reaches far beyond her professional role. Within the union, she has been a trusted leader and tireless advocate. From her time as Assistant Director to serving as Director for Local 10, she consistently stepped forward to represent members and strengthen the union. She also played a central role in advancing women's voices in the labour movement. As Chair of UPSE's Women's Committee, Dina helped lead important conversations, organize meaningful events, and ensure issues affecting women remained front and centre. Through her work with the National Union of Public and General Employees Women's Committee, she brought that leadership to the national stage, helping connect and amplify the voices of union women across the country.



Dina DesRoches, Long time UPSE
Activist Retires

Dina has always stood up for what matters, whether marching in defence of workers' rights, organizing women's conferences, or delivering workshops on stress, workplace violence, and multi-generational workplaces. She understood that strong unions are built through education and engagement, and she always encouraged others to get involved. Thank you, Dina, for your years of service and your commitment to others. We wish you all the very best in your retirement.

Would you like to receive an e-copy of *The Advocate* instead of a paper copy? Please contact UPSE by emailing (peiupse@peiupse.ca) or call the UPSE office at **902-892-5335**, or toll free at **1-800-897-8773**.

Bargaining Update

Health PEI, Bargaining update

The collective agreement between the Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE) and Health PEI expired on March 31, 2026. UPSE Health members submitted their demand forms and elected their negotiating team. The team most recently met on June 11 in preparation for bargaining and is awaiting a response from the employer on proposed fall bargaining dates.

UPSE Health Development and Training

The UPSE *Health Development and Training* fund is available to PEI UPSE members who are employed with Health PEI and are covered under the Health PEI Collective Agreement. The fund provides employees with monies to improve required skills to better perform current job responsibilities as well as future job opportunities. You will find the application and guidelines on the PEI UPSE Website (www.peiupse.ca).

Please ensure that you use the current application form found on the UPSE website for all of your development and training requests. Contact Bryan Burt at bsburt@peiupse.ca or call (902) 892-5335 for questions and inquiries about the fund.



UPSE Development and Training Fund Civil Service Employees

The Development and Training Fund, a joint initiative of the Government and the PEI UPSE, is designed to provide funding to employees for learning opportunities, encourage employee participation, benefit career development and improve government service delivery to the citizens of this province. You will find the application and guidelines on the PEI UPSE Website (www.peiupse.ca). For more information please contact Tara McGuirk at (902) 368-6175, or email her at tmcguirk@gov.pe.ca

Don't Forget to Read Your Collective Agreement!

Have you looked at your collective agreement recently? Your collective agreement is a legal contract negotiated, agreed to, and signed by your employer and your union. Both the employer and the union are bound by law to abide by its terms and conditions. It's like a "rule book" that defines your working conditions and sets out the rights and responsibilities of the employer and the workers. By reading and understanding your collective agreement you will become more aware of the rights and benefits you have in the workplace. You will also be in a better position to protect yourself, if, and when, any problems arise at work. To see your collective agreement visit the UPSE website (www.peiupse.ca) and look under the "Collective Bargaining" section. If you would like a hard copy please contact the UPSE office by emailing peiupse@peiupse.ca or call 902-892-5335 or toll free at 1-800-897-8773.



NUPGE/UPSE National Scholarships (\$2,500): Apply Now

NUPGE/UPSE is once again pleased to inform you that applications for the 9 scholarships of \$2,500 each are now open! These scholarships are offered to a child or grandchild (including a foster child or foster grandchild) or a legal ward of a current or retired member of a NUPGE Component (UPSE) or Component affiliate. With the exception of the Young Worker Scholarship, applicants must be planning to enter their first year of full or part-time public, post-secondary education in the coming year.

The Young Workers Scholarship is also open to members of NUPGE Components (UPSE) or Component affiliates. Applicants for this scholarship do not have to be entering their first year of studies but must be under the age of 35 as of the scholarship

deadline. Each scholarship winner will be determined based on a 750 to 1,000-word essay. Marks are allocated for content, presentation, and adherence to the essay topic.

To find out more details you can visit the scholarships section of our website. <https://nupge.ca/scholarship-faq/>

The deadline for applications is July 15, 2026, at 5 p.m. EDT.

To apply for a scholarship you must meet all of the following requirements:

- You must be a child or grandchild (including a stepchild, foster child, step-grandchild, or foster grandchild) or a legal ward of a current or retired member of a NUPGE Component (UPSE) or a Component's affiliate.
- You must be planning to enter the 1st year of a public, post-secondary education institution, full-time or part-time, in the coming year.
- The university or college that you are planning on attending must be located in Canada.
- You must write and submit an original 750-to-1,000-word essay on this year's essay topic for your scholarship.
- You must use the online application form to submit your essay.
- The contest results will be publicized on the social media and websites of NUPGE, its Components, and Component's affiliates. So, you must agree to the publicity conditions.

Most NUPGE scholarships have additional requirements. See details here: <https://nupge.ca/scholarship-faq/>

Each scholarship winner will be determined based on a 750 to 1,000-word essay on this year's topics. Marks are allocated for content, presentation and adherence to the topic.



NUPGE: Public Services Matter

**UNIONS FOR
NUPGE
PUBLIC GOOD**

Both fight fire, but Canada doesn't treat them the same.

Canada's forest fire and wildland firefighters are not classified as firefighters. Here's why it matters.



**STAND UP FOR
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We rely on them in our time of need. But today, chronic shortages and burnout are pushing them to the breaking point.



> Vital link identified...

ROLE: PERFUSIONIST ALERT: SUPPORT NEEDED

**UNIONS FOR
NUPGE
PUBLIC GOOD**



Canada's colleges and universities are in trouble, and Ottawa is looking the other way.

Here's what's happening and why the federal government has a role to play in supporting them across Canada.

In Canada, our public services are under attack. Austerity measures and other spending priorities are at the top of government agendas. These decisions can have an impact on your quality of life: accessing healthcare, pursuing an education, and keeping your family safe. The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), your national union, has embarked on a campaign to protect our public services, and the workers who provide them every day. And you can help!

Across the country, college campuses are closing. University programs are being slashed. For decades, governments steadily pulled back their share of college and university operating budgets. Now they're acting like it's someone else's problem. But it's not because post-secondary education is the supply line for nearly every occupation Canada says it's short of. [Urge the federal government to act now.](#)

Right now, chronic underfunding and inadequate workforce planning have driven widespread staffing shortages and burnout, pushing allied, support and community healthcare professionals to the limit. [Tell the Minister of Health](#) that we need a national healthcare workforce plan to address this staffing crisis. In three years, Canada has burned through nearly 30 million hectares of land — an area larger than the United Kingdom. And now, forest/wildland firefighters are managing more than just fires. They are fighting for equal treatment in pensions and benefits, and to be properly considered as firefighters. [Support their struggle.](#)

Find out more about your national union, the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), via www.nupge.ca, and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [X](#)

Do You Want to Join UPSE?

Do you know a group of non-unionized workers who might be interested in joining UPSE? If so, please contact Bryan Burt, UPSE Education and Organizing Officer, at 902-892-5335, toll free 1-800-897-8773 or e-mail bsburt@peiupse.ca

UPSE offers a wide range of membership services including professional staff to help you when problems arise in the workplace (full grievance support), experienced negotiators to bargain fair and equitable contracts on your behalf, a wide range of educational opportunities, and a benefit program for members.



PEI UPSE Bargaining Units

City of Charlottetown, Civil Service/IRAC/WCB, Health PEI,

Holland College Faculty/ Atlantic Tourism and Hospitality Institute

Strait Crossing Bridge Limited, Tremploy, Grain Elevators Corporation

Holland College Administrative and Support/ Holland College Early Learning Centre

Whisperwood Villa, Community Connections,

Morell and Area Early Learning Centre,

Community Inclusions, Garden Home



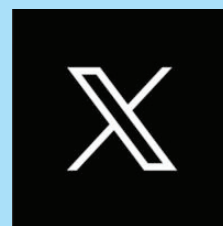
Prince Edward Island Union of Public
Sector Employees

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UPSE Website!

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UPSE Executive Officers

President: Karen Jackson
kjackson@peiupse.ca

First Vice-President: Carolyn Knox,
cknox@ihis.org

Second Vice-President: Mark Arsenault
maarsenault@gov.pe.ca

Third Vice-President: Jim Ryan
jimryan@eastlink.ca

Secretary-Treasurer: Kevin Gotell
kgotell@peiupse.ca

UPSE Staff

Wilma Ramsay: Labour Relations Officer
wramsay@peiupse.ca

Troy Warren: Labour Relations Officer
twarren@peiupse.ca

Shawn Alexander: Labour Relations Officer
salexander@peiupse.ca

Bryan Burt: Education and Organizing Officer
bsburt@peiupse.ca

Mark Barrett: Communications & Campaigns Officer
mbarrett@peiupse.ca

Andrew Jack: Labour Relations Officer
ajack@peiupse.ca

UPSE Staff

Norma Jarvis: Membership Records Coordinator
njarvis@peiupse.ca

Mary MacLean: Education and Meetings Coordinator
peiupse@peiupse.ca

Jackie McCaughey: Accounting and Technology Coordinator
jmccaughey@peiupse.ca

Jill MacMicken-Wilson
Research and Policy Analyst
jmacmicken-wilson@peiupse.ca

Jason Rendell: Executive Director
jrendell@peiupse.ca