

Regional Office Report to the Regional Council 2023

The Regional Office is located on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish People and we acknowledge and honour our traditional hosts from all areas of our region.

I am pleased to join you for your BC/Yukon Regional Council. In reflecting back on the past year, I've seen many changes and developments within our Regional Office team and the work we do.

Representation

Over the course of the past year, we've implemented a Case Management System that allows us to track our member cases, identify themes, ensure timely responsiveness from our staff and identify problematic issues and employers. This facilitates better reporting and communication with your Board of Directors and our President's office, while ensuring privacy and confidentiality for our impacted members.

We continue to see a substantial volume of incoming cases, predominantly as a result of the Return to Office Mandate. Between January and March we noted a 25% increase in the volume of cases that EROs were supporting, as a direct result of this mandate. Members have contacted us with a wide array of concerns, from occupational health and safety, to relocation, to family status concerns and a variety of other issues. The Vaccine Mandate also continues to create additional work as we support members through the later stages of the grievance process related to the original mandate, particularly with respect to demonstrable religious exemptions. PIPSC has seen successes on such files, both regionally and nationally.

Workplace harassment and/or workplace violence has also continued to occur and EROs are navigating the newer regulations under Bill C-65 in supporting members. We are still adapting to this new process, as is everyone else in the federal sector. Our intent is to become experts in this arena and educate stewards to provide support to members as well.

Steward Training

We're very proud to share that the BC/Yukon Region recently hosted the inaugural Anti-Oppression Labour Schools for our stewards. We had a good number of steward applicants to attend the courses and were able to provide this training to 40 people. Our stewards participated in training on How Systemic Oppression Operates in my (*their*) Workplace and How to be an Inclusive Leader. The intent of the training was to identify various forms of oppression and learn new strategies to address this as a steward.

We welcomed Richard Gaboton, the PIPSC Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility Advisor to this training as a facilitator and a co-creator of the course content. There's certainly an appetite for ongoing education on this topic and I'm proud to share that we collaboratively worked closely with your Regional Director, Training Committee and Executive to facilitate this special training.

In addition to this, we hosted Leadership training in December 2022 and were pleased to see 17 attendees complete this advanced training.

We also hosted a Basic Steward Training (BST) in both the spring and fall of 2022. As a result, we welcomed 32 new stewards to this region. Our wait list for future BST training sits at 35 at this time and, fortunately, continues to grow. All waitlisted prospective stewards are invited to each BST, which can facilitate 20 stewards at a time; however, we do make some exceptions when there are a handful of additional applicants. At this time we have 167 stewards in the BC/Yukon region and we anticipate 18 new steward appointments as a result of the recent BST.

Regional Staffing Update

Our staff complement is full and we were fortunate to be allocated additional resources for our region. We now have a Western Employment Relations Officer (ERO), which allows me the flexibility to shift support within the entire west as required. Natasha Chartier was successful in this competition and shared a workload between the two western regions - BC/Yukon and Prairie/NWT.

Dulce Cuenca continues as the Team Lead in the Vancouver office. Dulce provides technical guidance to the EROs and supports members directly.

We have four EROs in the Vancouver office at this time, three permanent and one term. Simon Cott, John Ehinger and Chris Finding are our permanent EROs. Saba Mossagizi is our term ERO and will be with us for the rest of the year while Simon is working on a project. I'm pleased to report we have stable staffing and the team is supportive of one another, capable of quickly pivoting to assist members and responding to emerging issues.

As mentioned, the CMS gives us insight into the work we do. Our staff caseloads are predominantly in the 50-60 range. This is why stewards are critical. If a member has a technically complex or particularly challenging case, they are well served by an ERO who has a manageable work volume. It's just one reason why we encourage ongoing development of our stewards, as well as continued engagement with members who are interested in developing their advocacy skills. We hope that, if not already a steward, you will join us in holding the employers accountable for your and your colleagues labour rights.

Kris Hawkins

Regional Manager, BC/Yukon