

Regional Office Report to the Regional Council 2023

In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, we acknowledge and honour this territory, Treaty 4 as the traditional land of the Cree, Salteaux, Dakota, Lakota, Nakoda First Nations and home of the Métis Nation. We respectfully thank our traditional hosts and acknowledge all Nations – Indigenous and non – who live, work and play on this land, and who celebrate this territory.

I am pleased to join you for your Prairie/NWT 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 continue 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 Prairie/NWT Region recently hosted one of the two 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 49 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. Participants also experienced a Blanket Exercise and the vast majority of the feedback supported that this sort of learning was overdue and valuable. 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 October 2022 and were pleased to see 20 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 41 new stewards to this region. Our wait list for future BST training sits at 49 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 231 stewards in the Prairie/NWT region, an increase of 31. This correlates to a loss of 10 stewards in the region overall, due to retirements and job changes.

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, as of the writing of this report, 78% of her workload is currently within the Prairie/NWT Region.

The Edmonton office continues to function smoothly, with John Hanrahan as Team Lead. Barry Reid is a seasoned ERO and I'm pleased to share that Tesh Aytenfisu joined us over a year ago as an ERO and has successfully continued in his role. Prashila Chand, our Office Administrator and longest standing employee in the region, also works out of Edmonton.

The Winnipeg office is also running well, with Jeff Ryder as Team Lead. Sean Kemball is a long standing ERO and Meira Gisser has returned from a parental leave to her ERO role. Natasha Chartier is also located in Winnipeg as well as Leslie Fiorino, our Administrative Assistant.

We had a variety of leaves within our staff complement in 2022 but I'm pleased to report we are stable 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 50-75 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, Prairie/NWT Region