



CONVENTION
CONGRÈS 2019

STRONGER TOGETHER

Unifor Collective Bargaining Program

**WHATEVER
IT TAKES**

STRONGER TOGETHER

Unifor Collective Bargaining Program

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August 2019



unIFOR
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1. What's a collective bargaining program for?

From the earliest days of the labour movement, workers have understood the need to coordinate their efforts in order to improve working conditions. Organized workers have always aimed to establish common wages and working conditions in their workplaces, industries and even across the economy. The goals have been to raise the floor for everyone, and make sure employers cannot pit workers against one another. Building collective strength is what a union is all about.

To achieve these goals, unions have pursued many different forms of master, pattern, coordinated, central, and sectoral bargaining—setting common standards among different locations of the same

employer, among similar employers in a region, or even across whole sectors of the economy. To put this into practice, groups of workers come together in various councils and conferences to discuss the key issues, measure their strength, and develop common bargaining priorities.

Typically, workers in these forms of bargaining pledge to hold the pattern and to provide support to one another in struggles that may arise. Bargaining committees then work to achieve the common goals. Advancing and publicizing a common bargaining agenda adds to the strength of individual bargaining committees. And, at times, employers, too, come to see that common standards mean they don't need to continually compete with each other over wages and working conditions.

In Unifor, nearly half our members bargain in some form of specific coordination within their sector (see Table 1). There are several examples of master bargaining that cover multiple locations of the same employer. In some sectors, agreements tightly mirror one another across different employers (such as in auto

What's a bargaining program for?

- setting collective goals
- strengthening our hand in bargaining
- sending a message to employers
- delivering gains for our members
- changing the world



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assembly); in some sectors key elements of wages and other priority issues are established by a pattern (such as in forestry, energy, nursing homes, hospitals, or car dealerships in a region). While still in other sectors, there are renewed and evolving efforts to develop stronger coordinated bargaining (such as in retail, auto parts, and telecommunications). Additionally, the Unifor Skilled Trades Collective Bargaining and New Technology Conference sets out a targeted bargaining platform for skilled trades members across the union.

In a union as diverse as Unifor, with nearly 2,900 bargaining units in over 20 sectors of the economy, setting a single detailed bargaining agenda would not be possible, or even desirable. At different times, some parts of the economy are up, while others are down. And workers in different sectors will have different priorities at different times. The bargaining councils and conferences already in place, along with Unifor Industry Councils, are best able to assess detailed priorities and establish common bargaining agendas for their sectors.

But Unifor is more than the sum of its parts – this is reflected in our work to advance a common bargaining agenda on those issues that affect all of our members, and address the emerging challenges we face at the bargaining table across sectors. We take the opportunity at Convention to identify the core elements of a Unifor bargaining program, develop common goals and priorities, and to advise employers these are policies of the whole of Unifor.

Naturally, our bargaining challenges are rooted in Canada’s political and economic climate. We know that to achieve our broader goals, what we do at the bargaining table must be connected to a strong and vibrant culture of political activism and community engagement— key ingredients to what makes Unifor such a relevant organization and progressive social union.



To set the context, in sections 2-5 you will find short essays on the state of Canada's economy and its labour market, and on key developments and trends in bargaining. At the 2016 Unifor Convention, delegates adopted *Raising Hope, Raising Standards: Unifor's Collective Bargaining Program*, which we will re-visit to examine our progress.

In section 6 - 12 you will read about several key issues that our union currently faces at our bargaining tables including: automation and new technology; low-wage and precarious work; job security and contracting out; union programs and representation; equity and human rights; retirement security and pensions; and health and safety. For each of these issues the program outlines our overarching goals and specific bargaining priorities, which together form the basis of our bargaining program for the next three years.

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Table 1. Examples of Unifor's sector and group bargaining programs and strategies

Sector	Description	Units	Members
Auto assembly	Master bargaining at target employer, Local bargaining at each location, master pattern extended to two other employers in sequence.	17	23,000
Auto parts	Sector-wide bargaining program on seven priority items adopted in 2017, bargaining conference set as part of auto parts task force outcomes.	115	19,000
Car dealerships	Several Montreal-area dealerships covered by central agreement by legal decree, others typically follow established pattern.	85	2,000
Energy	Conference adopts National Bargaining Program, master bargaining at target employer, pattern extended to other employers.	9	8,500
Forestry	Wage conferences establish priorities, master bargaining at target employer, pattern extended, separate patterns East and West of Ontario-Manitoba border.	280	26,000
Hospitals	Ontario bargaining conference to review developments, central table in Northern Ontario, Nova Scotia legislated council of unions at four central tables.	70	11,000
Nursing homes	Bargaining conference to review developments, master bargaining among major employers, key elements of pattern extended across all employers.	115	13,000
Retail	In Ontario supermarkets, master bargaining at target employer, pattern extended to other employers, Industry Council adopted Canada-wide bargaining program in 2015.	110	20,000
Telecommunications	Industry Council adopted a renewed focus on coordination of bargaining dates, agendas, and proposals across units in 2017.	190	26,000
Skilled Trades	Unifor Skilled Trades Collective Bargaining and New Technology Conference sets out a targeted bargaining platform for skilled trades members across the union.	~500	50,000

What kind of bargaining?

Master? Pattern? Co-ordinated? Central? Sectoral?

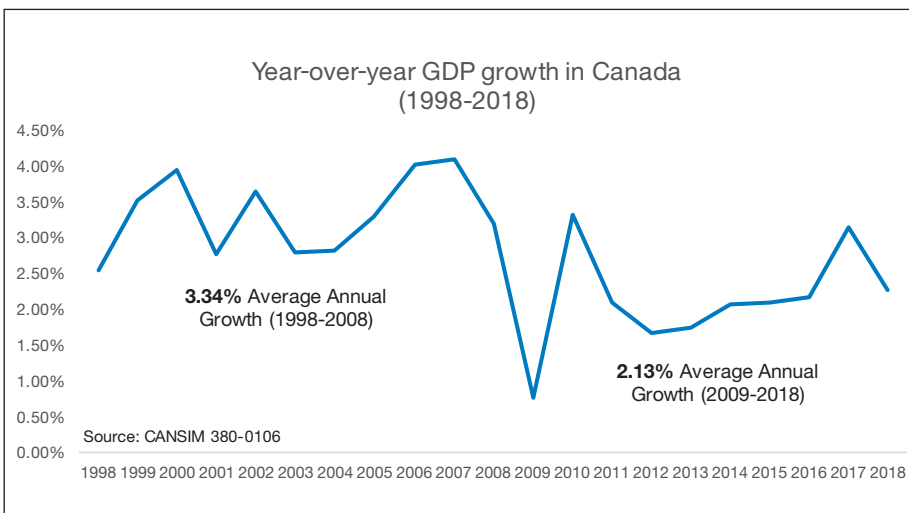
There are many different forms of bargaining used to achieve common goals. Sometimes the terms are used interchangeably. **Master** bargaining typically involves a single employer bargaining for multiple locations at the same time, often with supplementary local negotiations. **Pattern** bargaining refers to efforts to apply the outcomes of a lead set of negotiations to other employers in the same sector. **Coordinated** bargaining is similar to pattern, but is often less formal, spread over different timeframes and addresses fewer common issues. **Central** bargaining typically involves multiple employers, sometimes multiple unions, at a single table. **Sectoral** bargaining refers to efforts to apply the outcomes of bargaining across an entire sector, sometimes comprising multiple employers and unions, and at times even non-union workplaces.



2. State of the economy

Over the past decade, economic growth in Canada has been steady, but sluggish – not unlike most other developed nations. Since 2016, economic growth has averaged a modest 2.5 per cent per year, a far cry from the 3.3 per cent growth witnessed between 1998 and 2008 (see Figure 1.). Now, forecasters suggest a slowdown is imminent. How severe remains to be seen.

Figure 1. Slow growth ever since the recession



Despite record low unemployment levels, high-ranking enthusiasm for Canada's quality of life, well-managed debt and consumer confidence, most workers would raise an eyebrow at the suggestion they had just lived through a stretch of economic "good times."

Despite record low unemployment levels, high-ranking enthusiasm for Canada's quality of life, well-managed debt and consumer confidence, most workers would raise an eyebrow at the suggestion they had just lived through a stretch of economic "good times." For many, there has been no real recovery since the Great Recession – and it appears slow growth has become the new normal.

Canada's structural economic challenges

Even though Canada's economy has underwhelmed in recent years, it was still the envy of sister nations in the G7 - with GDP growing the fastest in the group since 2008. That is more reflective of poor overall performance among rich nations than of Canada's economic strength. In some respects, Canada is simply the least bad in a group of struggling economies¹.

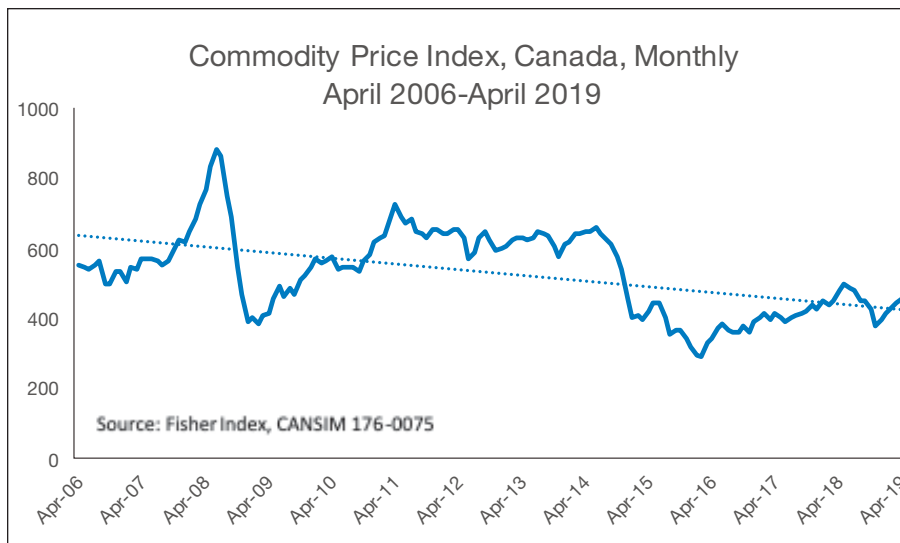
Part of the reason for Canada's relatively better showing is our country's reluctance to tread too far down the path of financial deregulation (which enabled Wall Street's unscrupulous behaviour), or government austerity (the likes of which have brought countries like Britain to its knees). Despite bouts of harmful spending cuts by conservative-minded federal and provincial governments, including to important social programs and services, Canada's public institutions remained largely intact, albeit still weaker and less robust than we need them to be.

¹ <https://fullfact.org/economy/uk-economic-growth-within-g7/>

However, none of this should overlook the post-Recession havoc wreaked on some of Canada’s key industries. The manufacturing and processing sectors witnessed a decline of 200,000 jobs in 10 years. Even with a slight rebound since 2015, neither of these sectors have fully recovered.

In resources, Canada is still feeling the sting of a 2014 collapse in global commodity prices, driven by China’s decreased demand, more stringent carbon standards and a glut of new energy supplies entering the market (including through hydraulic fracking in the U.S.). According to the Bank of Canada, commodity prices - including energy, minerals, forestry products and others - had plunged by more than half of their value (56 per cent) at the depth of the crash in 2016 (see Figure 2.). A short period of steady upward growth in prices stalled in May 2018, as prices plunged again. There has been no material improvement since 2014.

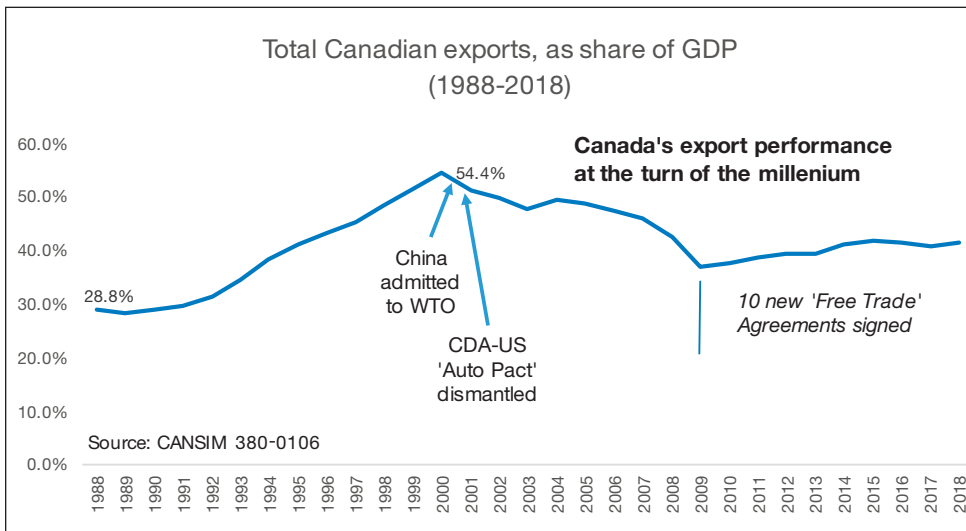
Figure 2. Lower commodity prices, a new normal in Canada



Managing economic instability

Part of Canada’s recent economic malaise is a reflection of poor political strategy. Stephen Harper’s Conservatives failed to heed warnings that a pivot toward more heavy reliance on resource extraction was short sighted. Not only has the pain of this recent (and entirely expected) economic fall-out been severe for more working people, the over-inflated Canadian dollar (which rose to an average of \$1.04 USD in 2011) contributed to a cull of under-utilized Canadian factories, processing facilities, mills and refineries.

Canada’s modern trade policy - kick-started by the Harper Tories, and manifested in the negotiation of trade pacts with Europe and various Pacific-rim nations - helped enable this flawed economic strategy. The eagerness with which Canada has sought to secure market access for resources and agricultural goods has resulted in haphazard “free trade” and investment partnerships. This approach has proved disastrous. Not only have these trade and investment deals failed to improve Canada’s

Figure 3. "Free trade" fails to fix Canada's export performance

trade performance, they mostly contain weak labour provisions and impose rules that limit government's ability to manage economic and regulatory affairs (see Figure 3.).

Not all of Canada's economic challenges are self-inflicted; some are a product of recent global political unrest. Britain's pending exodus from the European Union, the rise of far-right, xenophobic and

nationalist political movements, China's established centre of power in the Asia-Pacific and mounting trade tensions catalyzed by U.S. President Donald Trump, have all disrupted the status quo.

These challenges affect Canada's economy on many fronts, not the least of which involve active trade disputes including with China and especially with the U.S. – our closest trading partner and the destination for 75 per cent of our exported goods. In its campaign to effectively upend the global trading system, and repatriate American jobs, the U.S. has taken direct aim at Canada.

Unfortunately, Canada's economy is far from inclusive – and increasingly unequal.

Since assuming office in January 2017, the Trump Administration has targeted key Canadian industries for alleged unfair trade practices, levying import duties on such things as Bombardier's C-series aircraft, uncoated groundwood paper (both of which have since been revoked) and softwood lumber, a move that has so far hurt U.S. consumers more than it has Canadian producers.

Additionally, Canada had to stare down dubious 'national security' tariffs imposed by the U.S. on steel and aluminum exports, uranium exports, and possibly cars and parts (although Canada is largely safeguarded by the terms negotiated in the new USMCA trade deal), as well as an outright ban of Canadian canola exports to China.

For an economy as trade-dependent as Canada is, these recent headwinds spell trouble as growth continues to slow.

Building a more resilient economy

Anyone paying close attention to the underlying failings of global capitalism will find none of these recent phenomena particularly shocking. Absent meaningful alternatives to failed market-based traditions, for an inclusive, fairer and sustainable economic system, workers will continue to face instability and isolation.

Canada is a remarkably diverse economy. This is true not only in its industrial make-up, with expansive natural resources, advanced industrial manufacturing capacity, integrated transportation systems, a robust services

sector and world-class communications systems. It is also true because of its population and labour force – one that is highly skilled, highly productive and as representative of the world community as any one country can be. Harnessing these attributes in a meaningful way can build a more resilient economy. Unfortunately, Canada’s economy lacks broad vision.

Resource development lacks proper oversight and democratic management. Our diminishing industrial base means we lack the capacity to realize the full value of our natural wealth - manufacturing products that serve a social purpose, fostering necessary technical skills, and bolstering our trading relations with the world. Our

services sector (which represents 70 per cent of total economic activity) is largely under-utilized and under-valued. Too much of our human capital in services, both public and private, is treated as disposable, and automatable, instead of dependable and inventive.



Perhaps most disappointing, is that too many workers lack opportunity to participate in the economy to the fullest degree. In some cases, the lack of opportunity is systemic – workers denied access due to their race, gender, physical abilities and age. In other cases, opportunity is a function of fiscal policy and social programs (or lack thereof) – public measures that put us on an equal footing, that enable us to actively engage in work, take risks, explore our talents and stabilize us should we stumble.

Unfortunately, Canada’s economy is far from inclusive – and increasingly unequal. According to research by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canada’s wealthiest 87 families have seen their net worth grow by more than double the average Canadian family. These dynastic families control as much wealth as 12 million Canadians combined. Executive pay is exorbitant, with top CEOs earning as much in a day and a half as working families earn in a year - gaps that are far more pronounced along gender and racial lines on each rung of the income ladder. All the while, corporate profits continue to soar – hitting an all-time quarterly high of more than \$88 billion in the fall of 2018.





The challenges ahead

There are economic storm clouds on the horizon, and Unifor must be ready.

As economic growth begins to slow (real GDP is forecast to fall below 2 per cent for the foreseeable future), a movement of right-leaning conservative governments have taken the helm in various provinces, including Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

If the past is any indication of what lies ahead, Canada will be staring down another wave of fiscal austerity – with cuts looming to public services and social programs.

In times of uncertainty, governments must be prepared to invest in people – acting as economic stabilizers, not penny-pinchers or deficit-slayers. Active government engagement is also an appropriate antidote to pending environmental and climate crises (the effect of which we are already feeling), managing the necessary transition from a high- to low-carbon intensive economy.

In the coming years, we demand that governments:

- Bolster our public health care and education systems;
- Secure industries and workplaces most vulnerable to ongoing trade disputes;
- Establish more rigorous income assistance and just transition supports for workers adjusting to labour market changes (including those that are climate-related);
- Invest in public and social infrastructure, including long-overdue universal public Pharmacare and Child Care programs;
- Develop a coordinated national, sustainable industrial development strategy.

In an era of slow and uncertain growth, Canada needs a carefully-managed and forward-looking economic strategy for the years ahead. One that steers us away from the known pitfalls of austerity. We cannot be sidelined by a crisis of our governments' own making.

3. The State of the Labour Market

Reading behind the headlines

On the surface, there has been a lot to celebrate about Canada's job market in recent years. Topping the headlines is Canada's record-low unemployment rate - 5.8 per cent in 2018 - the lowest mark reported by Statistics Canada since 1976 (its modern era of recordkeeping). Add to this a healthy growth in overall labour force participation (which includes those working and actively seeking work) in the past three years, an increased number of women entering in the labour force, and an economy that turned out more than 575,000 new jobs, mostly in full-time positions (97 per cent). By these measures, Canada's labour market is certainly a good news story.

However, as workers have come to understand, there is often a lot of fog in these broad, national statistics - regardless of how positive they may sound.

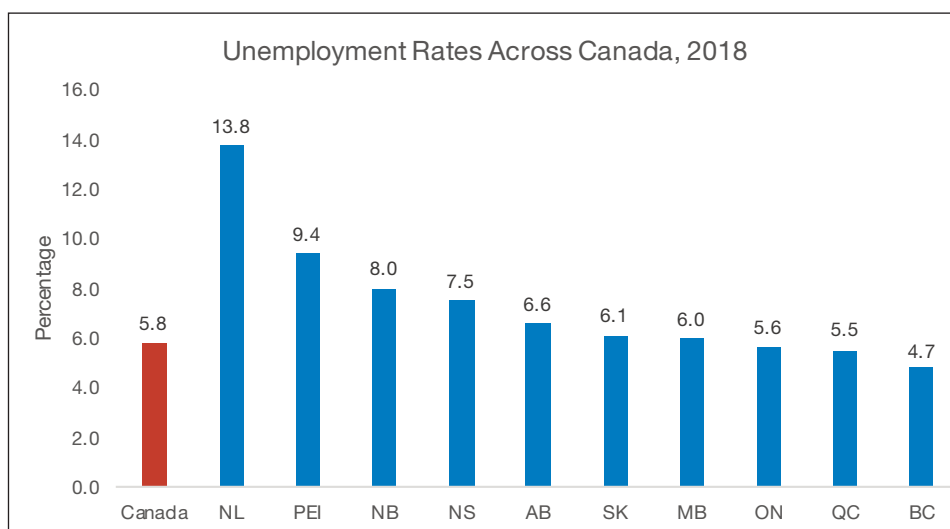
For many, this good news narrative fails to reflect their lived experiences of work, increasingly characterized by rising dissatisfaction on the job, anxiety and precarity. Too much focus on the national jobs picture not only masks regional disparities for employed and unemployed workers, but also hides deep-seated inequities of both opportunities and outcomes. Ignoring these persistent challenges prevents us from taking the necessary actions to correct them.

The demographics of job growth in Canada

The shine on Canada's impressive jobs growth since 2016 will dim depending on which part of the country you happen to work in (see Figure 4.).

Low levels of unemployment found in British Columbia (4.7 per cent), Quebec (5.5 per cent) and Ontario (5.6 per cent) provide a different picture than those in Atlantic Canada that far exceed the national average (ranging from 7.5 to 13.8 per cent in 2018).

Figure 4. Unemployment remains high in some parts of the country



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Jobs have grown fastest in the province of Prince Edward Island (at a rate of 6.3 per cent), while actually contracting in Newfoundland and Labrador (-7,300). The total number of unemployed has risen in each of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba since 2014.

Men have seen job gains from a recent rebound in Canada's goods-producing sectors,

particularly in manufacturing and processing as well as transportation and warehousing where men workers predominate. Women found new work mainly in the services sector, pockets of which are notorious for low wages and chronically low unionization, contributing to a persistent gender income gap between men and women that remains at about 70 percent.²

Among various age groups, young workers gained the least in this recent surge of job growth, with employment levels rising only modestly (about 3 per cent) since 2016. Young workers continue to struggle with low labour market participation (for both students and non-students), which still has not recovered from the 2008 financial recession.

Poor labour market conditions also continue to plague those in racialized communities.

These relatively poor outcomes for young workers are in sharp contrast to the steady growth in employment witnessed by workers 55 years and older. In fact, older workers accounted for nearly half (45 per cent) of all new jobs created in recent years.

Not only has Canada's labour force grown in recent years, it has grown more diverse. Immigrants and newcomers saw employment rolls surge by more than 300,000 since 2016. This growth in employment for immigrants and newcomers contrasts with persistently high unemployment for landed immigrants (still exceeding the Canadian average).³

Poor labour market conditions also continue to plague those in racialized communities. A recent study by the United Way of Greater Toronto highlights race-based income inequality on the rise between 1980 and 2015, to the point where racialized workers earn just 52¢ for every dollar earned by a non-racialized worker.

Canada's changing workplace

Canada's industrial make-up has changed dramatically over time. Forty years ago, fully one in three workers contributed to the production of goods – the farming of food, the extraction of resources, the manufacturing of wares.

Subsequent years saw the advancement of new productive technologies coupled with the growth of global supply chains (fueled by free trade and investment agreements) slowly displace jobs in farm fields, factories and processing plants. Manufacturing remains Canada's third-largest employment sector, but it has significantly contracted – including the loss of more than 500,000 jobs in the past 15 years.

As factory jobs have waned, Canada's service sector has ballooned – with employment growing by 1.7 million in the last decade alone. Far from monolithic, Canada's service sector is dynamic, with workplaces ranging from education, health care and social services, to retail, hospitality, transport, communications, finance and others – some of which provide good jobs with decent wages, benefits, skills training and unionization – while others are notorious for low pay, precarious and increasingly contract (or 'gig') based work. In fact, key growth sectors for employment, including retail, hospitality and professional and technical work, report some of the lowest levels of unionization in Canada (see Table 2).

² <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/cv.action?pid=1110023901>

³ CANSIM 282-0102

Table 2. Canada-wide job growth, by major economic sector (2016-2018)

	Net Job Gains (Losses)	Change (%)
Transportation & Warehousing	83,500	9.2%
Utilities	7,600	5.5%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	73,100	5.2%
Public administration	41,700	4.5%
Education	55,400	4.4%
Financial Services	46,900	4.2%
Resources	13,800	4.2%
Construction	52,500	3.8%
Other Services (except public administration)	28,000	3.6%
Health Care & Social Assistance	67,400	2.9%
Manufacturing	33,600	2.0%
Retail & Wholesale	48,700	1.8%
Hospitality	22,300	1.8%
Business & Building Services	10,700	1.4%
Information, Culture & Recreation	4,500	0.6%
Agriculture	(12,000)	-4.1%

Source: CANSIM 282-0008

The quality of work

Perhaps the biggest concern underlying this recent economic pick-up is the quality of jobs that Canada is turning out.

Despite decades of sluggish and modest real wage growth, hourly wages have picked up momentum in recent years. Impressively, the retail and hospitality sectors turned out the highest rates of wage growth in 2018 (7.2 per cent and 5.4 per cent, respectively), thanks in large part to rising minimum wages – especially in Ontario and Alberta.



However, although vitally important, compensation is just one measure of perceived job quality. There are many others. A growing number of studies suggest employment security, skills-development and career mobility, work intensity, safety and other environmental considerations can be of equal, or greater, importance to workers.

What we do know is that, despite major growth trends, work in Canada is becoming more precarious and non-standard.

Part-time work (as a share of Canada's total jobs count) continues to climb upward. Today, approximately one-in-five workers hold a part-time job, and more than two-thirds of part-time jobs are held by women. Despite the often-stated benefits of flexibility and work-life balance, a sizeable share of Canadians (approximately 20 per cent) work part-time involuntarily and would rather have a full-time job. That is a proportion little changed since the 2008 recession. More than 300,000 of those working part-time hours hold more than one job.

Temporary work in Canada is also on the rise, outpacing the growth of permanent jobs since 1997. Today, there are 2.1 million workers in Canada classified as seasonal, casual or on some form of short-term contract – earning a wage that is, on average, 80 per cent less than their permanent counterparts.

Unfortunately, temporary and part-time work only tells part of the story of Canada’s more precarious jobs market. A noticeable rise in so-called “gig” work (including freelance work and work assigned through various online platforms) has shifted the attention of regulators and policy-makers. A recent study by the Bank of Canada found that one-third of “gig” work is involuntary – its appeal largely driven by a need to earn income, especially in provinces with high unemployment, among part-time workers and among youth.

The Bank also estimates that, if counted, “gig” work (also referred to as “informal” work) represents approximately 700,000 full-time job equivalents in Canada, a sizeable share of workers who lack access to fundamental rights, under law.

Collective action and collective bargaining

As non-standard work continues to grow, and as firms continue to shirk responsibility as employers, workers will band together to demand fair work standards. Creative examples of this are happening both inside and outside of Unifor, from freelance workers to bike couriers to Uber drivers. Unfortunately, federal and provincial laws do not spell a clear path for workers to exercise their right to form unions and bargain collectively. Despite hopeful efforts by progressive governments to modernize labour standards to address this new workplace reality in recent years, little has changed. A rising tide of newly-elected provincial conservative governments threatens to derail this conversation entirely.

One thing is undeniably clear: workers need unions. Through unions, workers have secured significant workplace improvements over time – leading to transformational legislative changes that benefit all. Unions have also historically set important benchmarks on wages and other monetary gains for non-union workers to follow. However, as union influence wanes, so too does the upward pressure on working conditions – a fact that economists continue to highlight, as income inequality continues to soar.

Union density (the share of workers covered by a collective agreement) has declined modestly in Canada over time, and mostly in the private sector. Over the past three years, however, union density has remained largely stable at around 30 per cent overall, and 16 per cent in the private sector.

Quick Facts

- Studies have shown a sustained ‘racial’ wage gap in Canada for both men and women workers of colour. One study of the Greater Toronto Area shows that racialized women workers earn just 58% of what non-racialized men earn.
- More than 1 in 5 “professional” workers work in precarious jobs, and 60% of them are women.
- One-third (33%) of immigrant workers have taken on self-employed jobs due to the absence of other suitable paid jobs (compared to 20% of non-immigrant workers).
- Although more than 80% of employed off-reserve First Nations people held permanent jobs in 2016, just over half (52%) were employed at all – a rate of employment that is far below the national average.

Apart from some impressive outliers including at Unifor bargaining tables, union wage gains have been modest – hovering between just one and two per cent in both public and private sectors (see next section for a more complete analysis), despite low unemployment and positive economic conditions.

One part of this reflects recent efforts by unions to preserve non-wage benefits, like health and retirement security provisions. The other is to do with rising global competition, the use of sub-contracting and the pending wave of industrial automation and next generation technologies, including artificial intelligence. Underneath it all, modest wage settlements reflect a deepening decline of unionization in key industries, like manufacturing, that help influence private sector wage growth. This loss of union influence is a detriment to all workers.

The challenges ahead

It is difficult to project what the next three years have in store. However, most signs point to a slowdown in national employment growth, commensurate with the slowdown of the broader economy. Ongoing trade disputes, as well as uncertainty over the lasting impact of lower oil and gas prices (and the fallout for the industry), will factor in as both economic and political challenges for workers across the country in the months and years to come.

Decent work must be a cornerstone in our approach to building our fairer, more inclusive and equitable economy.

Recent statutory improvements to labour standards are under threat following the electoral success of conservative-leaning parties across Canada. Many workers at the federal and provincial levels won historic improvements to wages, work standards, job-protected leaves, and other benefits under law – all subject to dismantling. The next three years will require a vigorous defense of labour rights by unions and allies, as well as fierce resistance to a new period of anti-worker austerity.

Politics will also play out in Canada's ongoing efforts to combat climate change, and meet its stated greenhouse gas targets. Efforts by the Trudeau government to put policy into practice, after years of dithering under the Harper Conservatives, is both welcome and needed. However, programs and policies must keep workers' interests front and centre, to ensure our economic and environmental goals align. This will require bold, innovative ideas for new investment, job creation and a Just Transition.

On top of this, industry continues to stare down the next wave of workplace technological advancements. New methods of automation, advanced robotics, artificial intelligence, block chain technologies and others, could upend work processes – affecting the way millions of us work. Advancements are taking place as we speak across Unifor: in warehouses, in mining operations, at airports, in retail and elsewhere. There is more to come. Workers must be prepared to navigate the terrain of Industry 4.0 to ensure that we manage this pending change, preserve jobs, and upgrade our skills.

Ultimately, as Canada continues to position itself for growth in emerging industries, including in clean technology, agri-food, digital tech, advanced manufacturing, health and social services, and others, it is important that our labour market fundamentals remain intact.

Decent work must be a cornerstone in our approach to building our fairer, more inclusive and equitable economy: jobs that provide purpose, a sense of fulfillment, contribute to social and economic development, and deliver economic security.

4. Revisiting the Unifor 2016 Bargaining Program

Making progress

Every year nearly 1,000 Unifor collective agreements are negotiated, involving thousands of Local Union leadership and bargaining committee members, and ultimately voted upon by tens of thousands of members. The issues and outcomes are as varied as our union, but through our bargaining program we aim to advance our agenda on core priorities. An essential part of making progress is to examine our actions and record of accomplishments.

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At the 2016 Unifor Convention, delegates adopted *Raising Standards, Raising Hope: Unifor's Collective Bargaining Program*. That program included seven core priorities. Some of the priorities from the 2016 bargaining program are more easily measured than others, such as negotiating Paid Education Leave, or the Social Justice Fund, where we did not have them; or limiting the length of collective agreements.

While action on other priorities played out in key sets of negotiations, like the fight against two-tier wages; or significantly spilled over into legislative initiatives, like the battles around new labour laws addressing precarious work in Ontario and the federal jurisdictions. In Table 3 below, you will find a brief review of our progress on the 2016 bargaining program priorities.

Table 3. Review of progress made on 2016 bargaining program priorities

Priority	Highlights
Low-Wage and Precarious Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The passage of Ontario's Bill 148 the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act in 2017 represented many huge steps forward, including an increased minimum wage, equal pay for temporary workers, paid sick days and emergency leave, and fairer scheduling. After Premier Ford repealed the Bill, we shifted gears and adopted an Ontario bargaining program that aims to enshrine the Bill 148 gains in our collective agreements, and have had many bargaining successes already. At the federal level, we participated in countless lobbying efforts, consultations, meetings and other actions in support of new laws including the re-establishment of a meaningful minimum federal wage, protections against contract flipping, and fairer severance rules. Meanwhile, at the bargaining table we continued to build on earlier successes in lifting up wages and standards for some of our lowest-paid members: for example, in the retail sector we leveraged our 2015 Metro victories into wage increases for other grocery store workers including at Dominion and Food Basics (see Section 9 for more success stories).
Two-Tier Wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The fight against two-tier wages continued in the 2016 Detroit Three automakers negotiations. First adopted in the United States in 2007, our union has stood firmly against permanent two-tier wage systems. We adopted an extended wage progression instead in 2012, which was eventually adopted in the United States. In 2016, significant improvements were made to wages across the wage progression, contract and temporary workers were made permanent, and we rejected efforts to create an entirely new category of temporary workers. In the auto parts sector, a first comprehensive bargaining conference in 2017 adopted a sector-wide bargaining program on priority issues. Rejecting two-tier wages is a central feature of the program, as well as capping wage progressions to 48 months' duration, with a starting wage at a minimum of 70%. In several negotiations, wage progressions have been significantly shortened, and wages brought in line with our program.

Table 3 *continued...*

Priority	Highlights
Union Representation and Union Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have made enormous gains in Paid Education Leave (PEL) since the 2016 Convention. At that time 1,279 units had PEL language, covering 211,258 workers, with a total of \$8.5 million in contributions. In 2019, those numbers increased to 1,642 units (up 22%) covering 262,692 workers (up 20%), with a total of \$10.2 million in contributions (up 16%). • Despite changes in the status of some of the units with Social Justice Fund (SJF) language, the contribution level has remained consistent since 2016, and we saw almost \$3.4 million in SJF contributions in 2018. • The Canadian Community Fund (CCF) was a new initiative of our union at the time of the 2016 Convention. As of 2019, we now have CCF language at 53 units representing 15,393 members, including a single contract that included 4,550 members alone (See Section 10 for more success stories).
Equity and Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2017, Unifor released our Equity Audit Report and Recommendations, based on a comprehensive union-wide survey of our membership. Locals covering 80% of our membership responded to the survey. The results show we always have more work to do, but the Audit provides a great benchmark to track our progress. • We're proud to note that in 2019, 375 workplaces have a bargained Women's Advocate. In 2018, we also trained our first full class in Quebec. • In Ontario, we have taken advantage of pay equity legislation to bolster the gains we've made at the bargaining table. Through the pay equity review process, we have identified workplaces where gender-based pay gaps exist, and have used the legislation to bring compliance or trigger a review and complaint. We have won pay equity adjustments ranging from \$0.11 to \$2.00 per hour in some cases, with retroactive payments going back to 2004 and totaling in the hundreds of thousands of dollars for some workplaces. • There has also been success bargaining paid domestic violence leave in more of our contracts. But as always, we have a bigger picture in mind. In fact, domestic violence leave has been introduced or passed federally and in every province except one. In over 90% of these laws, leave is paid. This swift change of the law is due to the consistent pressure put on governments by Unifor activists and others (see Section 8 for more success stories).
Contract Term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our 2016 program called for the rejection of long-term agreements, and prioritized agreements of a three-year duration. • Of all the contracts bargained between the summer of our Founding Convention in 2013 and the summer of our 2016 Convention, 77% were 4 years or less and 46% were three years or less. In the same period, about 16% of the contracts we bargained had a term of 5 years or longer. • Looking at the period between the summer of our 2016 Convention and most recently, those numbers have improved significantly: 91% of contracts bargained had a term of 4 years or less, 63% were 3 years or less, and only 4% had a term of 5 years or longer.

Table 3 continued...

Priority	Highlights
Pensions and Retirement Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unifor members have continued to fight for improved retirement security, both for our members at the bargaining table, and for all Canadians through campaigns at the federal level. • Enhanced C/QPP came into effect in 2017, the federal government announced it would not move ahead with the previous government’s plan to raise the C/QPP and OAS age of eligibility from 65 to 67, and OAS and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) benefits were increased in July 2018, boosting retirement security for those who need it most. • Building from the May 2018 Pension Summit, Unifor has been working with partners on a proposal to build a new Unifor-sponsored collective retirement platform, a ground-breaking, value-focused program that would put members’ retirement security needs first. • We have vigorously defended our pension programs in countless negotiations, with many successful efforts to preserve and improve benefits (see Section 12 for more success stories).
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our advocacy and campaign work led to a number of improvements to health and safety rules at the provincial level, including in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador. • In addition, we continued major campaigns to improve workplace health and safety in a number of federal sectors, including rail transport, airlines, road transport (specifically for armoured car guards), and more. • In terms of training, since our last Convention, 1,914 members have taken health and safety courses offered through our Education Department (See Section 11 for more success stories).



5. Bargaining Developments and Context

Top issues at the bargaining table

Bargaining in a context of slowly-improving economic conditions, stronger profitability and lower unemployment has put the focus on making improvements after a long lean period during the decade after the global financial crisis and recession. In many sectors, greater stability has put a focus on making gains, or catching up on issues left aside in years past. But improved conditions have not been universal, particularly in highly trade-dependent sectors, which account for about half of Unifor’s membership. Trump-led trade uncertainty continues to cast a long shadow over the bargaining table for many of our members (see Section 3 for a detailed review of economic and labour market conditions).

Stronger profitability and lower unemployment has put the focus on making improvements after a long lean period.

Against this backdrop, an annual survey among major employers and unions ranking priority bargaining issues sheds some light on the current context. In many respects there are few surprises given the divergent worldviews and interests of the parties (for example, consider the high ranking of “employment security” by union respondents, as opposed to “productivity” by management). Of note, however, is the one area where we’re in full agreement: wages. After a long period of very modest wage gains, there is pent up demand and mounting expectations. Both union and management respondents agreed that money is the top issue this year.

The long-running survey also sheds light on issues that have moved higher up the ranking, reflecting current social issues and emerging trends, including a stronger emphasis on employment and pay equity near the middle of the top-ten list, and technological change making the list for a first time in many years.



Table 4. Top negotiation issues, 2019

Union Issues	Management Issues
1. Wages	1. Wages
2. Employment security	2. Productivity
3. Health benefits	3. Flexible work practices
4. Outsourcing and contracting out	4. Organizational change
5. Pensions	5. Business competitiveness
6. Employment and pay equity	6. Health benefits
7. Flexible work practices	7. Employment and pay equity
8. Organizational change	8. Outsourcing and contracting out
9. Technological change	9. Pensions
10. Training and skills development	10. Technological change

Source: Conference Board of Canada, *Labour Relations Outlook 2019*.

Show me the money

The reverberations of the global financial crisis and recession are still being felt a decade later. Wage freezes, and very small increases, were standard in most workplaces during the worst of the crisis for union and non-union workers alike.

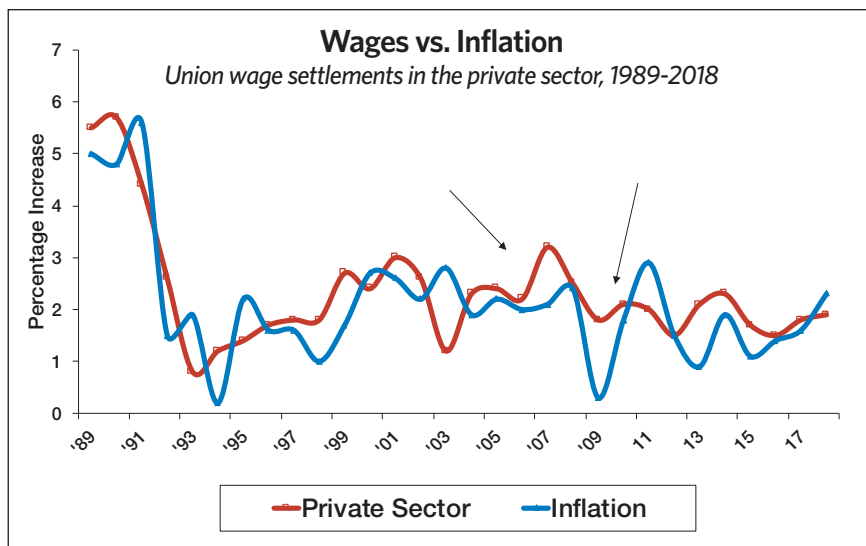
After a long slow crawl out of the recession, workers entering into bargaining now were last at the negotiating table in much weaker economic conditions three or four years ago. We are now seeing signs across the economy of sustained wage growth, and that workers are now insisting on, and winning, a slightly bigger piece of the pie.

Despite signs of a recent uptick, the long-term trend of stagnating wages compared to inflation (“real wages”), shows little sign of abating. Policymakers and economists have been pointing to the disconnect between economic growth and stagnating wages for many years as one of the greatest economic malaises of modern times. In an era marked by surging wealth and rising inequality, capitalism’s promises of market-led income distribution, and the idea that a “rising tide lifts all boats” remain as broken as ever.

Long-term real wage stagnation has been a defining feature of most industrial economies since the late 1970s, when the post-war era of strongly improving living standards, growing real wages, and expanding public services came to an abrupt end. Real wages have simply not grown for the vast majority of workers in Canada for decades; union and non-union alike.

Workers are now insisting on, and winning, a slightly bigger piece of the pie.

Figure 5. Wages have largely paced inflation



For unionized workers, a review of the last three decades of wage settlements across Canada shows that, in most cases, keeping up with inflation has been as good as it gets (see Figure 5).

Put another way, if you were earning \$10 per hour in 1989 and got the average union wage increase over the last 30 years, your wages would have gone up by 100 per cent, but inflation increased by 87 per cent, leaving real wages increase less than half a per cent per year (see Table 5).

These tiny real wage increases have occurred in an era of profound productivity improvements, and rising wealth. Keeping up with inflation is better than falling behind, and union jobs come with rights, security and benefits that others don’t have. But it makes you wonder where did all the money go? The obvious, and frustrating, answer is: to the rich.

Since the early 1980s, the income of the bottom 90 per cent of Canadians increased by a meagre two percentage points. In contrast, the income of the top 10 per cent increased by more than 75 per cent and that of the top 0.01 per cent by 160 per cent.

Table 5. What real wage increases?

Negotiated wage increases applied over last three decades						
	If Your Wage in 1989 Was:	Bargained Wage Increases Applied Through 2019	Total Per Cent Increase	Total Inflation	Real Change Over 30 Years	Real Wage Change per Year
PrivateSector	\$10.00	\$19.96	+100%	-87%	+13%	+0.4%
PublicSector	\$10.00	\$18.52	+85%	-87%	-2%	-0.1%

A more recent look at union wage settlements over the last three years shows modest overall increases, with a slight rising trend. Wage increases in the resource sector have been hard hit by the ongoing commodity slump, while those in the broader services sector have been pulled down by the heavy influence of public sector austerity measures and cutbacks (see Table 6).

The founding Convention of Unifor adopted a new constitution that set out a mechanism to determine pay increases for the union’s elected officers. *Article 8: Responsibilities of National Officers, E: Salaries and Honorariums* required that, starting in 2015, an annual report be prepared measuring the weighted average wage increase among Unifor members and presented to the National Executive Board for review and approval. These reports reveal that Unifor wage increases have largely tracked the private sector average across Canada, and also observed a small uptick in 2018 (see Table 7).

Table 6. Union wage increases by sector

Average Annual % Negotiated Wage Increases			
	2016	2017	2018
Resources	0.8	0.7	1.5
Manufacturing	1.3	1.8	2.2
Transportation	1.3	1.9	2.1
Communications	1.2	1.8	2.5
Services	1.3	1.7	1.2
Private sector	1.5	1.8	1.9
Public sector	1.3	1.7	1.1

Source: ESDC, Unifor sector calculations

Table 7. Unifor wage increases

Weighted Average	
2015	1.5%
2016	1.4%
2017	1.8%
2018	1.9%

Source: *Wage Increases of Unifor Members: A Report to the Unifor National Executive Board to Establish the Annual Salary Increase for National Officers and Regional Directors, selected years.*



Hitting the bricks: Whatever it takes

Collective bargaining works, and it works well, *most* of the time. Labour board statistics reveal that about 97 per cent of negotiations across Canada, among all unions, are concluded without a work stoppage. But making sure employers knows that our members are ready to strike if necessary, and that the union has the resources to back them up, is an essential part of defending what we have, and making gains.

A look at the long-term trends across Canada reveal that the absolute number of strikes and lockouts has declined in recent years, but still average about 200 per year (see Figure 6). While this is down significantly from height in the mid-1970s (an era marked by legislated wage controls and the general strike of 1976), work stoppages still involve an impressive number of people, about 100,000 workers hit the picket lines in Canada every year (see Figure 7).

Figure 6. Strikes and lockouts, 1946-2018

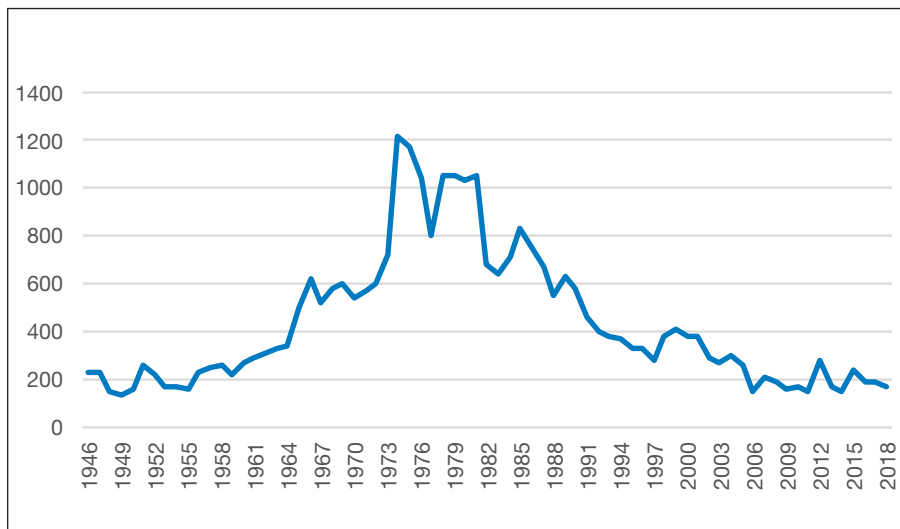
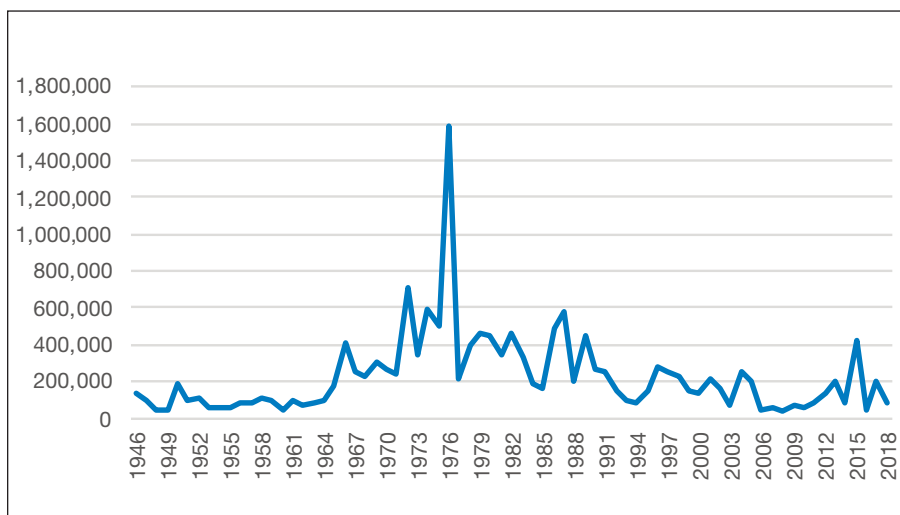


Figure 7. Workers in strikes and lockouts, 1946-2018



Employers understand full well that we're more than ready to strike if needed, and that the whole union will mobilize in defence of our members.

Since our Convention in August 2016, as of writing this document, Unifor has had 39 strikes, and 12 lockouts, involving a total of 9,916 members. We know we often face aggressive employers, and it's revealing that nearly one-quarter of our work stoppages were caused by lockouts.

Some strikes are a full "win" in terms of achieving our bargaining objectives, some end with a partial win, and some conclude having demonstrated our resolve and with a commitment that we "live to fight another day." But every time workers stand up for their rights, insist on fair treatment, and challenge their employers, it's a victory for all working people.

Employers pay careful attention to every work stoppage, and know that in Unifor it's never our preference to hit the bricks, but they understand full well that we're more than ready to strike if needed, and that the whole union will mobilize in defence of our members.

What's ahead?

While many economic indicators remain solid, there is growing concern that we face a general slowdown ahead. On top of this, our members in trade-dependent sectors face ongoing instability emanating from the U.S. White House. Across Canada, we're also seeing a rising tide of conservative provincial governments bringing forward their shop-worn agenda of tax cuts, deficit hysteria and public sector cutbacks, which will certainly lead to strife at the bargaining table in the years ahead.

Despite these challenges, compared to where we were three years ago, in many respects we're in a better position to make gains. Besides, the fact that it has never been easy hasn't stopped us yet.

A Fighting Union Since 2016 Convention

- Number of strikes: 39
- Number of lockouts: 12
- Total members involved: 9,916
- Most number of days: 1,074
- Least number of days: 1
- Most members: 2,407
- Least members: 4



6. Job Security and Work Ownership

For decades, members of Unifor and our predecessor unions have had great success in our mission to create good, stable, secure jobs to support ourselves, our families, and our communities. But it wasn't easy. Our

Employers are working hard to shrink their workforce, and create part-time, precarious, low-wage, non-union jobs.

successes have been hard won, whether on a picket line in the cold of winter, countless late nights at the bargaining table, or through difficult conversations with our members as we face down a proposed plant closure. Together, we have organized, sacrificed, and struggled to build more power for working people.

At the same time, employers have sought to undermine this hard-earned stability and security in their never-ending drive to cut costs and increase profits. While we are struggling hard to create good, stable, community-sustaining work, it often seems like employers are working just as hard to shrink their workforce, and create part-time, precarious, low-wage, non-union jobs. This unrelenting downward pressure creates a climate of perpetual fear among those left in the workplace, and the feeling of constant threat takes a toll.

Closures and scaling back work

The relentless drive to cut labour costs sometimes plays out in the form of workplace closures, as work is shifted to cheaper and less unionized labour markets, like GM's unallocation of vehicle assembly in Oshawa, Ontario; or the closure announcement at the Tandus Centiva carpet factory Truro, Nova Scotia. Other times, the employers' cost-cutting might take the form of decreased hours of operation or the loss of shifts, like FCA's announcement about their intent to cancel the third shift at its Windsor assembly plant.

Sub-contracting and outsourcing

Sometimes, the employers' program involves open efforts to break the union, but more often than not, we see more subtle – but no less effective – tactics to erode the collective power of working people. One such tactic we see in every sector and every workplace is the move towards sub-contracting and outsourcing of our bargaining unit work.

Through their decisions to outsource or contract-out work, employers are not so much eliminating jobs as they are deciding who gets them, at what price and under what working conditions. Outsourcing threatens the job security of our members but it also undermines the employment and income standards of other, often younger workers. In some situations, secure full-time jobs are exchanged for precarious part-time ones. In other situations, regular work is transformed into contingent or temporary work. And in all cases, good unionized jobs are replaced with non-union jobs with lower wages and lower standards.

Contracting out can take different forms in different workplaces, but the common underlying dynamic is the employers' program to shift work from unionized to non-unionized workers. This might mean outsourcing copy-editing or layout work at a newspaper, bringing in a third-party cleaning service at a hotel, contracting out parts manufacturing to a non-union supplier, shifting airline customer service work to a provider overseas, or sending telco technicians' work to a non-union subsidiary.

Technological change and automation

Another factor driving the accelerated threat of contracting out is the increasing pace of technological change and automation. The impacts of technological change can take many forms, ranging from the wholesale



elimination of jobs and work tasks, to the replacement of workers by robots and artificial intelligence programs, to new options for employers to access disposable workers on an as-needed basis.

Employers have sought to use technological change and automation to replace grocery store cashiers with “self-check-out” kiosks, reduce their workforce through the implementation of new baggage handling systems at airports (while at the same shifting our work to sub-contracted, third-party “specialists”), and exchange customer service specialists working in call centres for artificial intelligence-driven, automated “assistants.” Further, new jobs and classifications created by technological change may not be captured in our existing scope language, leading to the slow but steady migration of work to outside our bargaining units.

The rise of the gig economy

Another troubling aspect of the changing nature of work has been the rise of the so-called gig economy, where full-time, stable jobs have been atomized and broken up into precarious, task-based “gigs,” and the employer/employee relationship is facilitated by an online platform. The gig economy has given employers countless new opportunities to side-step their responsibilities to their workers and undermine the collective power of working people.

Our bargaining priorities

Our union has a great deal of experience in fighting for job security and confronting the challenges of work ownership. Many of these dynamics are not new; we have won inspiring victories in our struggle to build good jobs and better working conditions. We must continue to build on these victories so the next generation has access to good jobs and the collective power that comes with union membership. To achieve these aims, Unifor will:

- Bargain **stronger protections against closures and loss of hours**, including outright closure prohibitions, stronger protections for hours of work, and a better process in the face of closures (including advanced notice, the right to bargain, and enhanced severance and benefits).
- Strengthen our **scope language**, ensuring we better capture and protect our existing work, and aim for wall-to-wall coverage in all our workplaces – including residual units, especially in face of technological change and the new jobs that come with it.
- Negotiate **sub-contracting protection language**, where we explicitly prohibit the shifting of work from inside the bargaining unit to outside.

- Bargain **successor rights**, where the employer commits to maintaining union status and the collective agreement in the face of a sale to a potential new company.
- Bargain for **membership growth**, where we reach “neutrality” agreements with employers to give workers at new, or expanded operations the opportunity to join our union free from interference, ensuring that our membership grows as our employers grow.

Success stories

- **Irving Shipbuilding** (MWF Local 1): Members ratified a new four-year collective agreement following a long bargaining fight where contracting-out was a major issue at the table. The settlement included stronger contracting-out rules.
- **Bell Canada and Bell subsidiaries** (multiple Locals): Members working for Bell Canada and Bell subsidiaries opened another chapter in our ongoing fight against the company’s relentless efforts to contract out bargaining unit work. This led to the submission of a common employer application to the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) in May, for technicians and clerical workers at Expertech, the company to which Bell has been sub-contracting work, of which Bell is now the sole owner.
- **Marek** (Local 414): Food service workers at General Motors’ operations in Ingersoll and Oshawa negotiated successor rights to ensure employees and the full collective agreement carried over from former employer Compass Group to the new service provider, Marek. The Committee also ensured that the Markham engineering facility was added under the scope clause.
- **Great Canadian Gaming** (Locals 1090 and 504): Members at Casino Ajax, Elements Casino Brantford, and Great Blue Heron Casino in Port Perry negotiated an agreement that included provisions for membership growth at a newly-built site owned by the same employer.



7. New Technology and the Future of Work

The world of work is changing rapidly. New technologies are being developed and deployed at a pace that is sometimes abrupt and often alarming. Advanced robotics, automated vehicles, platform applications and artificial intelligence are just a few of the technologies that are transforming our workplaces, our relationships, and our day-to-day lives.

Our workplaces and our work are all susceptible to disruption. This is nothing new. Waves of technological advances, from mass industrialization in the late 19th century to the adoption of assembly line automation in the late 20th century, have forced a response from workers – including at the bargaining table. Just as in the past, new technology today has the potential to affect the quality and quantity of work in Canada in substantive and meaningful ways.

Researchers estimate that between one third and one half of all tasks performed by workers in Canada’s economy are vulnerable to automation in the next 15 years – a rather alarming statistic.

Additionally, recent studies, including by the World Economic Forum, have found that women hold jobs that are disproportionately more susceptible to task automation than men (including in accommodation and food services, the industry most vulnerable to automation) – creating a notable gender dimension to these changes in the nature of work.

For other workers, the expansion of popular online platform services such as Uber and Netflix in Canada have not only bolstered the rise of Canada’s “gig”-based economy, on the one hand, but have also exposed major loopholes in government regulation, on the other. In many cases, regulators have simply abdicated their responsibility to ensure a level playing field that protects workers’ rights.

Researchers estimate that between one third and one half of all tasks performed by workers in Canada’s economy are vulnerable to automation in the next 15 years.



The rapid development of new technology has left some workers feeling unqualified for their jobs, resulting from increased skill and education requirements and a lack of training. Some are seeing workloads increase, and the pace of work intensify, as physical workplace boundaries continue to break down – raising new questions about whether workers have a “right to disconnect” from work.

Others are working in already unchallenging positions, only made more mundane through technological change – jobs that do not require them to use the multitude of skills they’ve acquired over their lifetime. And many workers across the skills and educational spectrum are facing unstable

and insecure work leaving them desperate to take any employment opportunity available regardless of its quality or the stability it offers.

New technologies certainly pose a threat to workers, but they also create opportunities. If workers themselves are able to manage the design and implementation of new technologies, these have the potential to improve our collective standard of living and enhance the connections between people.

The current wave of technological change, sometimes dubbed the ‘intelligence revolution’, has the potential to dramatically alter, both positively and negatively, how work is organized and significantly impact levels of physical and psychological stress in the global population.



Our vision to strengthen worker rights

The ultimate goal of our work as a union and as workers on the front lines of addressing technological change is to ensure that our workplaces and our society harness the best of what the current wave of technological change has to offer – while minimizing, and even avoiding, the worst. In this way, we can imagine a worker who is safer, more educated, properly compensated, highly skilled, respected for their contribution, and who potentially has more leisure time as a result of increased productivity. We can also imagine a society that is healthier, more equitable, and has easier access to goods and services.

Getting there, however, is no easy task. Moving through the current wave of technological change to a stronger, fairer, healthier workplace and society will require a substantive and sustained effort at the bargaining table, in the public policy world and come election time.

Our bargaining priorities

At the bargaining table, we have the opportunity to ensure workers have a meaningful say in the deployment and management of new technologies and tech-driven processes in our workplaces. Through bargaining, we can also establish provisions that preserve the integrity of our collective agreements and safeguard members’ jobs now, and into the future. To that end, Unifor will:

- Negotiate a **clear definition of technological change** in our collective agreements (that is relevant to the workplace and industry in question), including reference to any change to physical technological equipment, but also to work processes, work organization and work methods.
- Establish **joint-workplace technology committees**, responsible for reviewing technological designs, responding to technological issues as well as implications (such as productivity improvements, privacy and surveillance considerations) of various technological decisions.
- Negotiate parameters on the **use of technology-driven data** collection, and clear limits on how performance data can (or cannot) be used in the context of job evaluations, new job opportunities, training and workplace discipline.

- Establish contract provisions that **require employers to notify the union** of any proposed technological change, prior to its implementation and deployment. Failure to notify should result in a prohibition on implementation of the proposed technological change.
- Establish rules that require employers to **negotiate with the union on the decision** to implement technological change, with allowances for the union to propose alternatives.
- Negotiate provisions that **prohibit layoff or job displacement** resulting from technological change, with opportunities and accommodations for re-training, skills upgrading and relocation for all affected members.
- Ensure that **union coverage extends to any new hires** resulting from the technological change, including work performed by contracting firms.
- Where we are unable to fully stop layoffs, negotiate **enhanced income maintenance and severance benefits** for workers permanently or temporarily laid off due to technological change.

Success stories

- Unifor **Conference on New Technology and the Future of Work** (2018): In the wake of major technological changes deploying across workplaces, including broad-based automation and artificial intelligence, Unifor hosted its first-ever national and cross-sectoral conference on New Technology and the Future of Work in Halifax on August 15, 2018. The conference, attended by hundreds of workplace leaders, marked the beginning of a national strategic effort to discuss the issues and build a political and bargaining agenda.
- **Greater Toronto Airport Authority** (Local 2002): Technological change is a priority issue in ongoing bargaining for members working for the GTAA at Toronto's Pearson International Airport. The bargaining committee is working to secure improved technological change language in the face of the upcoming introduction of a new baggage handling system, plus a number of other technological changes expected at the airport.
- **Skilled Trades at Fiat Chrysler Automobiles** (multiple Locals): All of our Detroit 3 collective agreements include language addressing the subject of new technology. At FCA, for example, we have bargained a Skilled Trades New Skills Committee/New Technology Committee. Established in the 1980s, this committee continues to evolve as tech change challenges also evolve. The committee serves as a point of contact with the company, and our language requires members to be notified in advance of any upcoming tech changes, so we can meaningfully participate in the development, co-ordination and tracking of necessary trades training programs.
- **Rexall Pharmacy** (Local 414): In the most recent round of bargaining, members working for Rexall won their first-ever contract language addressing tech change. This new language commits the employer to giving advanced notice of anticipated tech change, and requires a labour/management meeting to discuss minimizing negative impacts on the bargaining unit.

8. Equity and Human Rights

Unifor has made significant progress to ensure our collective bargaining process and agreements are viewed and negotiated through an equity and human rights lens. This is done in order to remove systemic barriers, eliminate discriminatory practices, and raise employment standards and protections for equity-seeking groups, such as Indigenous workers, women, people with disabilities, people of colour, LGBTQ workers, and young workers.

Inequality and oppression are deeply rooted within our economic and political systems and institutions, requiring us to continue using our bargaining power to win justice for all workers.

Inequality and oppression are deeply rooted within our economic and political systems and institutions, requiring us to continue using our bargaining power to win justice for all workers. To achieve this, we need to ensure that our Local Union leadership and our bargaining committees reflect the diversity of our workplaces and comprise a diversity of voices and experiences.

Building on our success

Since the rollout of our 2016 bargaining program, we have achieved some key bargaining successes. These include: having 375 active Women Advocates across Canada through our internationally recognized Women's Advocate Program; targeting incidences of unpaid internships

and increasing employment opportunities for young workers; negotiating Paid Education Leave and encouraging participation in education courses for equity-seeking groups, and developing joint labour-management committees and processes to investigate and deal with incidences of workplace harassment.

However, despite our bargaining successes, structural inequalities, including racism and discrimination against workers due to their age, gender identity, immigration status, sexual orientation, ability and ethno-cultural background continue to affect our members.



- The gender wage gap in Canada continues to persist and currently sits at 29 per cent, meaning that on average, women earn approximately 71 cents for every dollar that men earn. This gap is often higher for Indigenous, racialized, newcomer women and women with disabilities.
- Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages continue to disproportionately impact Indigenous workers, workers of colour, LGBTQ, people with disabilities and young workers.
- Workplace safety remains an issue for LGBTQ workers who continue to face harassment, abuse, and discrimination, which leads to isolation and mental health issues.
- Indigenous youth continue to face barriers entering the labour market. According to the latest census figures, the unemployment rate for off-reserve First Nations youth was 23 per cent.



Our negotiations at the bargaining table are also influencing our advocacy outside of the workplace, so that all workers (unionized and non-unionized) have access to basic rights. This is perhaps best illustrated with our bargaining commitment to negotiate workplace job-secured leave for workers experiencing domestic violence.

Our advocacy on this issue by Unifor leaders and activists has resulted in a domestic violence leave law being either introduced or passed in every province and federally. In over 90 per cent of these laws, leave is paid. Our bargaining committees continue to highlight this leave in their collective agreements to both increase awareness and reduce stigma around this issue, while actively working to improve the length of the leave and ensure they are all paid.

Our bargaining priorities

Building upon our previous bargaining program and our successes, Unifor will focus on the following key bargaining priorities:

- We must continue to **negotiate pay equity** into our agreements to reduce the gender wage gap. Where legislation exists, we must work with employers to ensure they are meeting their obligations under the law. This includes forming the necessary workplace committees, developing concrete plans, processes and timelines towards pay equity implementation, and regular monitoring and evaluation.
- We must recognize and **address the pay differences** that continue to devalue work performed by Indigenous workers, young workers, workers with disabilities and workers of colour.
- We must continue to **negotiate employment equity plans** to ensure our workplaces are reflective of the communities in which they are situated. This means prioritizing the hiring of women, Indigenous Peoples, workers with disabilities, people of colour and young workers. Employment equity language also needs to focus on support, retention and advancement of underrepresented groups.
- Look to negotiate **community benefits agreements** that emphasize hiring opportunities among equity-seeking communities with employers expanding operations in a specific geographic area.



- Encourage bargaining committees to negotiate that employers provide **gender-neutral washrooms** at the workplace. This provision would be critical for not only our trans and non-binary identifying members, but help support those who do not feel comfortable, safe, or ready to disclose their gender identity.
- Bargaining committees should look to include **Disability Confident Workplaces language** into contracts to encourage greater hiring, retention, and support for people with a range of disabilities.
- Continue **negotiating maternity and parental leave top-ups** while strengthening language to ensure women workers do not fall behind in wages and pension contributions, while also reaffirming the right for parents absent on leaves to be able to apply for open job postings. We also need to continue negotiating child care subsidies to facilitate parental return to work and help offset rising child care costs.
- Make further use of **equity surveys** prior to bargaining so bargaining committee members can gain a better perspective on the composition and needs of members.
- Make sure **collective agreements are accessible** according to members' needs. This could include translation of collective bargaining agreements into multiple languages and other accessible formats (e.g. large print, electronic format, etc.).
- Negotiate the provision of **gender-inclusive personal protective equipment** to increase health and safety for women.
- Continue ensuring the use of **gender-neutral language** in our collective bargaining agreements.

Success stories

- **Canadian Media Producers Association (NABET 700-M)**: In the film, television and digital media production industry, NABET 700-M made significant gains during their most recent collective bargaining and were able to successfully secure the position of an on-set Women's Representative on their signatory productions. The new role will open up another path in which their members can report incidents of harassment in the workplace. NABET 700-M recognized that in the precarious nature of freelance work, specific tools and mechanisms to prevent, report and respond to harassment are needed.

- **Food Basics** (Local 414): Our most recent collective agreement included gender-neutral language for the first time, recognizing that the language we use can be a powerful force to promote inclusion and equity.
- **Canadian Linen** (Local 1015): Members secured a Women’s Advocate Program for their workplace, as well as improvements to violence in the workplace and workplace anti-harassment language.
- **MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates** (Locals 112 and 673): The most recent agreement included the introduction of the Women’s Advocate program and a domestic violence leave program. In addition, the contract included a commitment to mark the December 6 National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women with a moment of silence.
- **Radisson Hotel Saskatoon** (Local 650): Members at the hotel successfully negotiated stronger protections against harassment and discrimination in the workplace, including harassment by guests, customers, and vendors, which is especially important in this customer service-oriented sector.
- **Ontario Equal Pay Coalition:** Unifor shared in the major victory when the Ontario Divisional Court ruled in April 2019 that predominantly female nursing home bargaining units must maintain pay equity using the proxy pay equity method. This precedent-setting ruling means the value and pay of the female jobs in these predominantly female workplaces, which lack internal male comparators, must be compared with similar jobs at larger public sector workplaces which have access to male comparators. Unifor is a long-time supporter of the Coalition, and on this specific legal challenge.



9. Low-Wage and Precarious Work

Low-wage and precarious work continues to erode employment standards and quality of life for workers across the country. From growing part-time work and minimum-wage jobs, erratic work schedules, little to no access to benefits and basic provisions like paid sick days, and insecure temporary and contract work, we have seen employers continue to cut labour costs under the guise of “flexibility” and “efficiency”. For workers, however, the impact of job insecurity and uncertainty are felt not only in the workplace, but in households and communities as well.

While often associated with the retail and hospitality sector, we are increasingly seeing precarious work infiltrate other sectors of the economy, including student transportation, health care, social services, manufacturing, and telecommunications. We also know these negative impacts are disproportionately felt by Indigenous workers, women, people with disabilities, people of colour, immigrants, LGBTQ workers, and young workers.

Low-wage and precarious work continues to erode employment standards and quality of life for workers across the country.

Joining the movement for decent wages and working conditions

In cities across North America, we have witnessed a wave of worker-led movements calling for a \$15 minimum wage and better employment standards, in recognition that workers who work full-time should not be living in poverty. These movements have been incredibly successful at not only pressuring governments to implement a higher minimum wage, but openly challenging claims that improving conditions for workers is bad for the economy.

Over the last few years, Unifor has joined labour, community, and grassroots advocacy groups across the country to pressure the federal and provincial governments to respond to the threats posed by precarious work by modernizing labour laws and taking meaningful legislative actions to protect vulnerable workers.

As a result of our collective actions, we are seeing significant improvements. In Alberta, the province went from having the lowest minimum wage in the country to the highest, at \$15 an hour, while making improvements to overtime pay and increased access to job-protected leaves. In British Columbia, the provincial government also raised its minimum wage with a plan to reach \$15 by 2021, while also updating employment standards to protect young workers, worker gratuities, and investments towards workplace investigations and employment standards enforcement. Calls for \$15 and fairness are also being echoed in provinces such as Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

In Ontario, however, a business-friendly government and the corporate lobby have worked hard to maintain the status quo. The 2018 election win by the Progressive Conservatives led by Doug Ford saw nearly all provisions in Bill 148 (The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act) which made several positive changes to lift standards for low-wage and precarious workers – including increasing the minimum wage to \$15 – repealed.

Unifor Ontario Regional Council immediately responded by implementing a bold bargaining program entitled *The Decent Work Bargaining Program*, which required all future rounds of Ontario collective bargaining

negotiations to include language on standards and protections that were removed by the Ford government. This includes a start rate of \$15 an hour, equal pay for equal work, paid emergency leave, fair scheduling practices, and more. In just a few months, nearly half of all Ontario bargaining to date has successfully negotiated a \$15 start rate, while a third have negotiated equal pay for equal work provisions based on employment status.

Our bargaining priorities

Negotiating legislative gains within our collective bargaining agreements helps raise awareness of these standards among our members and protect them when they come under political threat. Our bargaining priorities will look to continue raising standards for low-wage and precarious workers across the country. As such, Unifor will:

- **Negotiate a start rate of \$15 an hour.** Wage 'escalator' provisions will also be negotiated so that any increases to provincial minimum wage rates would also result in corresponding proportional wage increases for low-wage members.
- Protect against job loss through sub-contracting and contract-flipping **by negotiating successorship rights** language in agreements, ensuring that both members' jobs and previously bargained gains are protected when a new service provider is selected.
- Negotiate **equal pay provisions** so that workers, regardless of employment status (such as part-time, temporary or contract) and who are engaged in similar work (with the same skills, responsibilities, and working under similar conditions), are not paid differential wage rates.
- Negotiate a minimum of **two paid emergency leave days** which can be used by workers in each calendar year in case of personal illness, or that of a child or family member. These leaves should not require a doctor's note.
- Promote full-time, permanent work in our workplaces by negotiating language that would **re-classify members who regularly put in more than part-time hours** as full-time workers with full access to benefits.
- Work to make sure that temporary, contract, and on-call workers **are included within the scope of our collective agreements** and push for their transition to permanent employment status.
- Negotiate language that would ensure **fair scheduling practices** so that workers can balance work needs with family obligations. This would include allowing workers to request a change in work hours or location (where applicable and corresponding to existing seniority rights). In addition, members would have the right to refuse a non-scheduled work shift if given less than 96 hours' notice.
- Negotiate that all **on-call workers receive at least three hours of regular pay** whether or not they are called into work or called into work for fewer than three hours. Employers must also provide workers with at least 48 hours' notice of a shift cancellation or on-call shift opportunity.

- Negotiate schedules with **guaranteed hours of work** so that members have security in knowing what their work incomes and weekly hours will be on a regular basis.
- Continue encouraging **cross-training in workplaces** so that workers can increase skills and potential hours of work by performing a greater number of work functions. This provision would not be used to undermine negotiated job classifications or the creation of full-time work.
- For workers receiving gratuities, provisions should continue to be negotiated to ensure a fair processes of distribution among workers and **ensure tipped workers do not receive lesser benefits** due to a lower hourly wage rate.

Successes stories

- **Loblaws Distribution Centre** (Local 222): Members successfully bargained elements of Ontario's Decent Work Bargaining Program. The new agreement includes equal pay for equal work for part-time and clerical workers, 96 hour notice for shift changes and cancellations, an improved disciplinary process, better job ownership, signing bonuses, and the establishment of a joint Diversity Inclusion Committee to proactively address racism and discrimination in the workplace.
- **Rexall Pharmacy** (Local 414): Members successfully ratified a new collective agreement which saw the inclusion of wage escalator provisions for all job classifications with an additional two per cent 'top-up' increase, equal pay for equal work, protection against contracting-out and tech change, significant changes to scheduling practices where hours for part-time workers would be based on seniority with the most senior members getting up to 28 hours, and the creation of 25 full-time jobs.
- **Parq Casino** (Local 3000): Members successfully fought back attempts by the company to contract out dozens of food and beverage service jobs to a non-union service-provider. The new agreement also saw significant wage increases for some of the lowest-paid gaming workers, access to sick days, and language to protect workers against abusive patrons.
- **London Automotive & Manufacturing** (Local 27): Members working in the auto parts sector sector negotiated language restricting the use of "auxiliary employees" and required they be covered by terms of the agreement.
- **Postmedia** (Local 87-M). During the recent round of bargaining at the London Free Press, the union secured key contract provisions mirrored in Ontario's Bill 148, including a \$15 per hour starting wage for 70 full- and part-time workers who insert flyers, along with two paid emergency days for new hires, despite the Ford Government's decision to repeal these and other provisions.



10. Union Representation and Union Building

Unions and working people have been persistently under attack in recent years, especially with the election of regressive governments at all levels, new waves of conservatism within and south of our border, and the erosion of democracy in our institutions.

Outdated labour laws continue to embolden employers to find new ways of limiting compensation and workers' voices in the workplace. Legislative changes over time have made it more difficult for unions to organize and bargain. The proliferation of casual, temporary, short-term, part-time, contracted out and "gig"-based labour simply creates more forms of precarious work, where workers have little job security and protection. Governments across the country have also made cutbacks to important public programs, leaving the most vulnerable Canadians without the support they need to keep their families afloat. Apart from the individual impact on workers, these strategies also fragment our workplaces, undermine worker solidarity and erode bargaining unit structures.

In this context, it is more important than ever for workers to have strong union representation, which includes fostering an empowered and engaged membership in our workplaces. A strong union needs active and well-resourced Local Unions, which relies on an informed and engaged membership. Front-line stewards and committeepersons must be supported and equipped to effectively address workplace issues, enforce contract rules and instill confidence in our membership. Union representatives need the time and space to do union work, and members need to be given the opportunity to know their union.



Building a stronger union through bargaining requires us to negotiate collective agreement language that facilitates more opportunities for members to do effective union work, and support the struggles of other workers.

An effective union is also able to connect its bargaining successes to broader political and social struggles within our home communities and communities of workers around the world. By broadening our bargaining goals outward, we are able to push for legislative and social change in a meaningful way.

We must continue to do what we've always done - push back against employer attacks, make meaningful gains at the bargaining table for our members and be tireless advocates at home and abroad. As our workplaces evolve and increasingly threaten the job security of our members, and as globalization requires us to better connect with workers around the world, our ability to build union capacity is more important than ever.

Our vision for building union strength through collective bargaining

Building a stronger union through bargaining requires us to negotiate collective agreement language that facilitates more opportunities for members to do effective union work, and support the struggles of other workers in our local communities and around the world.

Building this strength can take many forms: from negotiating more time for local union representatives to address workplace issues, to providing more access to union education, to financial contributions that help vulnerable communities in countries abroad – and everything in between. Building our union involves increasing our capacity to empower our members, Local Unions and workers everywhere, toward achieving socioeconomic and workplace justice. It is with this approach that will enable us to make bargaining gains for our members, push back against employer attacks and prepare for future challenges.

Our bargaining priorities

We must continue to build the union through membership development and providing greater capacity for union representatives to address issues in the workplace. Further, we must continue to enhance the mechanisms intended to support working people in local communities and around the world. To achieve this, Unifor will:

- Bargain more **workplace representatives**, wherever possible including stewards, health and safety representatives, equity representatives, women’s advocates and bargaining committee members, among others.
- Bargain sufficient **paid time for union representatives** so they can effectively address workplace issues and support the membership.
- Bargain language that enables the union to provide **new member orientation** in the workplace. Where orientation programs exist, it is important to regularly update sessions and materials.
- Bargain employer-funded **Paid Education Leave (PEL)**, which provides opportunities for members to attend education courses. Where PEL funding already exists, local committees should aim to increase contributions, and explore other measures to make educational opportunities more accessible for members.
- Bargain employer contributions to the **Social Justice Fund (SJF)**, which offers solidarity and support to workers and communities at home and abroad for development, emergency relief and the fight for socioeconomic justice. Where SJF funding already exists, local committees should aim to increase SJF contributions.
- Bargain employer contributions to the **Canadian Community Fund (CCF)**, which are used for community development projects in Canada. The CCF was created in 2015 after negotiations with CP Rail and CN Rail. Bargaining CCF contributions will enable to the fund to support important projects.
- Bargaining language that enables the union to place and display a **Unifor sign or flag at the workplace**.

Success stories

- **Flair Airlines** (Local 2002): This first contract for Flair pilots included employer contributions to our Paid Education Leave program and the Social Justice Fund.
- **Resolute Forest Products** (multiple Locals): Members negotiated an agreement that included employer contributions to the Canadian Community Fund.
- **GardaWorld - Regina International Airport** (Local 1-S): Members bargained a first contract that included employer contributions to our Paid Education Leave program.
- **Victoria Regional HandyDART** (Local 333-BC): Members successfully secured annual increases for Paid Education Leave funding in the last set of negotiations, reaching six cents per hour by the end of the contract, significantly increasing the ability of members to participate in union education.
- **Toromont-Concord** (Local 112): The bargaining team secured first time contributions to the Social Justice Fund.



11. Health and Safety

Since our last Convention, eight members have died on the job, among the hundreds of workplace fatalities that occur each year in Canada. By taking actions before an event occurs, workplace illnesses and injuries can be prevented. This is the ultimate goal of the occupational health and safety (OHS) system – to keep workplaces and workers healthy and safe.

We continue to emphasize essential worker health and safety rights: to participate in health and safety committees; to know about workplace hazards; to refuse unsafe work as the cornerstone of our health and safety efforts, and the right to no retaliation. We need to make these rights stronger so that workers' representatives will have the power to act and to prevent injuries. Without union health and safety representatives' effective ability to challenge employers at the workplace, workers cannot be protected from death, injury and occupational disease.

We continue to emphasize the essential worker health and safety rights: to participate in health and safety committees, to know about workplace hazards and to refuse unsafe work.

Over thirty years after the introduction of the Internal Responsibility System and the formal recognition of worker representatives, there remain major gaps in the health and safety regulatory system for all Canadian workers, and especially those in precarious employment.

Unfortunately, the enforcement system has failed to advance the health and safety culture in our workplaces. Governments often claim that workers and employers should be partners. However, we are not partners – our interests are often different. Employers may put production outcomes before health and safety. It is not employers who get hurt. Workers, however, must put their health and safety first.

We work to align prevention efforts between the areas of workplace occupational health and safety culture, disease and injury with a focus on the most affected workers and those at greatest risk.

The three priority issues are:

- musculoskeletal disorders (due to repetitive use, overexertion and heavy lifting);
- slips, trips and falls; and
- psychosocial hazards (including workplace violence, harassment, and mental health).

These priorities were identified by reviewing several data sources including workers' compensation claims, by both cost and total number of claims. These priority diseases and injuries occur in all Unifor sectors.

Our bargaining priorities

At the bargaining table we have the opportunity to get out in front of technological change before it happens, and to protect workers from psychosocial hazards and other workplace stressors. To achieve our goals, Unifor will:

- Ensure the **right to refuse unsafe work** includes severe cases of harassment, threats of violence and the presence of violence, in addition to physically unsafe work.

- Bargain the appropriate process to **refuse excessive workloads caused by short shifting**, whether it is built in through downsizing or temporary absences. In workplaces where our members provide front-line service, such as health care, we will ensure our members are not put in the position between over-work and meeting the needs of their patients or clients.
- Build capacity of health and safety representatives by **negotiating time and resources** including more time off for representatives in small workplaces, and a full-time representative in large workplaces.
- Develop language that addresses **broader health concerns such as stress**, and even terminal illness caused by workplace environments.
- In addressing **health and safety issues associated with new technology**, specific language must be negotiated to deal with many possibilities in unpredictable and rapidly-changing workplaces. Health and safety clauses around new technology should include a clear definition of technological change, establish committees to deal with new technologies and processes, and provide clear notice and disclosure.
- Bargain provisions that **ensure members are not required to work alone** or in isolation, wherever possible. In circumstances where lone-work is unavoidable, even for short periods of time, our collective agreements must ensure that comprehensive hazard assessments are conducted jointly (between management and the union) resulting in proactive preventative measures to address all hazards, as well as the development of safe work protocols.
- Adopt the *Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Standard* (Z1003) to identify ways of reducing and eliminating the stigma in the workplace, and to address occupational psychosocial hazards through a joint forum.



Legislative Highlights

The world of work has been evolving with the legal health and safety landscape trying to keep pace:

British Columbia – As a result of the two saw mill explosions in 2012, legislation was adopted in 2017 to introduce new training, evaluation and investigation requirements for worker health and safety representatives and joint health and safety committees.

Alberta – A review of Alberta’s workers’ compensation board (WCB) and occupational health and safety (OHS) took place to keep up with the needs of modern workplaces, changing technology and other jurisdictions. The WCB changes came out of recommendations provided by an independent panel that completed a comprehensive review of the system in June 2017. It had been more than 15 years since the last WCB review and more than 30 years since OHS legislation underwent a comprehensive review.

The key focus of both legislative developments was on workers. In terms of OHS, the focus was on the three fundamental rights of workers: the right to know actual and potential dangers in the workplace, the right to participate in the workplace health and safety activities, and the right to refuse dangerous work.

The WCB changes were based on the desire to “bring about a worker-centered system that features greater independence, transparency, stakeholder engagement and accountability.”

Ontario - In the most far-reaching changes made to the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act in over fifteen years, the government moved to, amongst other matters, triple corporate penalties and quadruple individual penalties, effective as of late 2017.

In addition, other highlights included the adoption of compensation for work-related chronic stress from harassment and bullying, improvement of occupational exposure limits, respiratory protection, air sampling, and refresher training as a follow-up to legislated Working at Heights Safety Training.

New Brunswick – The province introduced new regulations aimed at identifying and preventing workplace violence and harassment. These measures were introduced to address workplace conduct, including bullying, physical violence, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and other threatening behaviour.

Newfoundland and Labrador – New regulations were adopted to address workplace harassment and violence. Employers are mandated to develop, implement and maintain a written harassment prevention plan to address workplace harassment and to investigate complaints of workplace harassment. Employers must also allow for an occupational health and safety officer to order an impartial third party investigate such workplace complaints, at the sole expense of an employer. In addition, employers must participate in training related to harassment prevention and provide training to employees on the issue and the employer’s harassment prevention plan.

Federal - WHMIS 2015 Training – On December 1, 2018, the transition to the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) had to be completed for all parties, including employers. By that date, employers’ hazardous products with new WHMIS labels and safety data sheets were in effect.

Sexual Violence and Harassment – An amendment to existing regulations will strengthen the existing framework for the prevention of harassment and violence, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, in the workplace, and will extend the occupational health and safety provisions of the Canada Labour Code to parliamentary employers and employees.

The Cannabis Act - each province is mandated to introduce OHS policies and regulations regarding cannabis and impairment in the workplace.



Success stories

- **Air Georgian** (Local 2002): We bargained a first agreement recognizing the inclusion of members from each section of the airline on the Health & Safety Committee, ensuring better member representation for that important committee.
- **Bell Canada** (multiple Locals): A Bell-Unifor joint policy committee agreement established procedures to avoid the hazards of driving a vehicle after extended hours of work such as while working on a major outage. When employees reach the 16 consecutive hours limit, the company will provide them means to leave the worksite and reach home without driving a vehicle (company or personal). The rule is not optional and applies in all occasions. This is a great example of winning a traditional bargaining goal in a non-traditional forum, such as a joint health and safety committee.
- **Diageo Canada** (Local 200): Members bargained the recognition of “invisible disabilities” such as mental illness, highlighting early intervention and treatment to assist employees toward diagnosis and effective treatment. The collective agreement included language that “invisible disabilities” may call for creative solutions and empathetic approaches when considering accommodation in the workplace, and agreement to work in good faith to achieve these ends.
- **Detroit Three Master Language** (multiple Locals): The employers recognized Team Leader Prosecution Assistance, where they commit to providing legal and financial assistance in the event a team leader is liable under the OHS Act, including reimbursement of legal fees and other expenses incurred by the employee in connection with any investigation, prosecution or other legal proceeding.

12. Pensions and Retirement Security

Building a secure pension future together

Unifor members are rightfully proud of their bargained workplace pensions. Ensuring adequate and secure retirement income for all is at the heart of a crucial challenge we face as a union: designing and delivering future retirement security in the most efficient and sustainable manner possible for our members and retirees.

Achieving decent and secure pensions has always been a key objective in collective bargaining, and is increasingly important given growing life expectancy. Everybody deserves to retire and receive retirement income that is adequate for them to maintain their living standards, achieve relief from work, and have a decent life in the community. It must also be secure; retirees should not be worried whether they will out-live their retirement income.

Unifor recognizes the foundation of workers' retirement security is the universal pension to which every worker in Canada is entitled: the Canada or Quebec Pension Plans ("C/QPP"). Unifor campaigned hard for improvements to the C/QPP in 2016 but we recognize those improvements are not enough, and Unifor continues to press for enhancements.

Our union now faces a critical challenge to strategically re-examine our role into the future around workplace pension models. We need to learn from the key practical lessons and success factors found in other Canadian models of workplace pensions. We cannot simply continue to rely so strongly on corporations or the financial services industry to provide members with retirement income security. We know corporations are trying to abandon the defined benefit (DB) pension model, which is the most secure and stable form of pension plan that provides a guaranteed pension amount in retirement.

Many corporate workplace DB pensions have been closed, and now new members are only offered a defined contribution (DC) plan. Corporations have also lobbied hard to reduce their funding obligations to DB plans, leaving them ever more vulnerable to corporate bankruptcies. The Sears case is the most recent example of underfunded corporate-sponsored pension plans leaving members short on adequate and secure pensions.

Solidarity for a secure future for all

Solidarity and inter-generational equity are both absolutely critical to confronting these challenges at the bargaining table. We cannot allow corporations to try to trade-off pension security for false promises of job security when Unifor has both the scale and strength to play a leadership role in ensuring retirement security for members.

We need to directly tackle ongoing attempts to deploy two-tier pension plans that divide workers by generations, as well as dividing active plan members from retirees. The legacy we leave for future generations should be a sustainable and secure workplace pension for everyone.

Everybody deserves to retire and receive retirement income that is adequate for them to maintain their living standards, achieve relief from work, and have a decent life in the community.

Table 8. Unifor pension plan coverage (type of plan by percentage of members)

Defined benefit:	24%
Hybrid defined benefit and defined contribution:	26%
Jointly-sponsored, multi-employer:	19%
Defined contribution or RRSP:	29%
Other:	1%
None:	1%
TOTAL	100%

Our active members of all generations, and retirees, should know that Unifor has their backs. We know that we cannot win this struggle without the support and determination of retirees and ‘new hire’ members.

Building our future from the legacy of our past

Union mergers over many decades that created the unions that then created Unifor, resulted in a multitude of small pension pools, often with Unifor trustees involved in governance. We need to ask the critical question: Would consolidating these legacy plans help to ensure efficient administration and yield greater benefits for our members and retirees? We need Industry Council leadership to work with their affiliated Locals to continue to identify these opportunities, and work with the national union to develop appropriate alternatives.

The role of Industry Councils

Our Industry Councils are vital to developing sectorial strategies to rebuild the security, adequacy and equity of our workplace pensions. As we move to secure adequate pensions for our members and retirees, our Industry Councils will be asked to assess the opportunities and challenges within their sector, reflecting on recent developments while building to consolidate and strengthen our efforts as a union to ensure sustainable, adequate and equitable pensions.

We will need to challenge ourselves moving forward into the next round of bargaining to consider the opportunities to transform existing pension structures. Industry Councils should directly address the following questions:

- What is the pension standard for the sector in terms of contributions from the employer (and workers) towards their pension; the basic pension benefit earned and the value added for members by a good pension that will be the focus to achieve for the whole sector?
- What role will existing target benefit pension plans sponsored by Unifor play as we chart our future direction and strategies for this sector?
- Would a common larger-scale, high-quality plan identifiable with the ‘Unifor platform’ work across the sector, recognizing that our union has a diverse membership, and that such a platform would need to add value for members and address workplace needs ranging from those without any pension coverage, to those with existing inferior RRSP and DC plans?
- Are there any relevant lessons from the experience of large plans in the broader public sector that should inform our efforts to ensure adequate and secure retirement pensions for all Unifor members?

Our bargaining priorities

In support of our efforts to build a secure pension future for all, Unifor will:

- Continue to support Locals in the **defense, improvement, and expansion** of existing workplace pensions.
- Continue work already underway to **develop a common Unifor pension platform** capable of offering the capacity, scale and efficiency to build and strengthen workplace pension plans.
- Negotiate and strengthen pension **bridge benefits based on age 65** as the normal age of retirement (not based on Old Age Security benefit eligibility).
- Promote **social media and workplace conversations** around pension literacy leading into and during our bargaining to bring awareness around the challenges we face to our members and the wider community.

Success stories

- **New Flyer** (Local 3003): Members thwarted an attempt to change their retirement landscape and negotiated an agreement that included defined benefit plan improvements into the future with an increase in each year of a five-year agreement.
- **Bombardier Aerospace** (Locals 112 and 673): The combined effort of Local 112 and Local 673 members resulted in the successful continuation of the tradition of maintaining and negotiating annual improvements to their defined benefit plan.
- **Toronto Star and Post Media** (Local 87 – M): Aligning with our organization’s broader vision towards a secure and adequate pension benefit, our members unanimously approved an asset transfer to CAAT that will provide a reliable retirement benefit in a legacy news print industry that has been challenged with declining readership and ad revenues.
- **The IPS Auto Parts Council** placed the issues of pensions and retirement income security on their bargaining program as a key priority issue. The 2017 IPS bargaining conference adopted a minimum floor of a 4 per cent employer contribution and enhancements to current pension plan to achieve a 40 per cent income replacement target.
- **Caesars Casino** (Local 444): The committee negotiated that gratuities would be treated as pensionable in select classifications at the casino. Gratuities represent a substantial portion of a gaming workers’ income. Amending the existing pension plan to include gratuities is a tremendous win for our Caesars members and an achievement that other gaming bargaining committees are looking to replicate.
- **Brink’s** (multiple Locals): Going into the last round of bargaining, Brink’s was determined to end participation in the defined benefit plan for new hires. The bargaining committee resisted and managed to preserve access to the plan.

