



Welcome to your union.



WELCOME

Welcome to CUPE BC

Whether you've just joined a CUPE local yourself, or whether you're just looking for information on how our union is structured, this booklet is for you. CUPE BC is the largest union in BC.

We represent workers in municipalities, public schools, early learning facilities, libraries, universities, colleges, social services, health care, public utilities, transportation, emergency services and airlines -- more than 80,000 members across British Columbia.

CUPE BC represents workers just like you all over BC.

What is CUPE?

CUPE is the largest labour union in B.C. and in Canada.

A strong and democratic union, CUPE is committed to improving the quality of life for workers in Canada. Women and men working together to form local unions built CUPE. They did so to have a stronger voice – a collective voice – in their workplace and in society as a whole.

Together we have won the right to negotiate our wages and working conditions; to stop arbitrary action by employers; and to speak out without fear of reprisal.

CUPE members are service-providers, educators, white-collar workers, technicians, labourers, skilled trades people and professionals. More than half of CUPE members are women. About one-third are part-time workers. Together, our combined voice speaks volumes. Together, we have accomplished much—and can accomplish so much more.

CUPE is a modern, dynamic and sophisticated union with more than 70 offices across the country.

CUPE is a strong voice for protecting public services and vibrant communities.

CUPE BC has a long history—and there have been a few changes since this photo was taken in 1963.

What is CUPE BC?

CUPE BC is a provincial division of CUPE and acts as the political voice of CUPE locals in British Columbia. CUPE BC is comprised by locals that have chosen to affiliate to the Division to have a stronger, united voice in their community, province and National Union.

Delegates from affiliated locals meet annually to decide on policy directions for CUPE locals in British Columbia, political agendas and discuss important issues in their communities in the form of resolutions. Every two years, delegates from locals to convention also elect an Executive board who carry out the Action Plan approved at convention.

CUPE BC works for the members of CUPE locals throughout BC giving them:

- A strong and respected voice in both in the community and in the province.
- A united voice in CUPE National and the BC Federation of Labour.
- A voice in deciding the policy and activities of CUPE BC.
- Active and committed working committees that ensure the diversity of CUPE member's interests are represented on a provincial level.
- Support for organizing, job actions and campaigns in your local and your community.
- Information about what governments and other employers are doing and how it affects workers and public services.
- Access to a network of activists across the province who can provide mutual support on issues you are dealing with in your local and like you, are committed to building a strong community where they live.

What is CUPE National?

CUPE National is our national parent union. All CUPE locals are chartered by CUPE National. CUPE National provides a democratic structure for members to participate in their union, ensuring rights through the National constitution and National Convention, held every two years.

CUPE National also offers support to locals through National Representatives. CUPE National Representatives provide labour relations expertise, legal assistance, communications support, research, job evaluation guidance, education workshops, advice on equity issues and health and safety advocacy. National Representatives in British Columbia are based out of the B.C. Regional Office in Burnaby and in many communities across British Columbia.

Most school district employees are represented by CUPE.

What is a CUPE Local?

A local is made up of you and your co-workers and is generally composed of the employees from a specific employer or workplace. In some cases, locals cover multiple employers and in some cases even multiple sectors (i.e. municipal and education).

In B.C., we have over 190 local unions of various sizes spread across the province. The smallest local has a half-dozen members while the largest has almost 7,000 members. There are more than 2,650 CUPE locals across Canada. Nearly every community in the country has one or more CUPE locals.

Members decide for themselves how to run their local union. Locals set their own bargaining demands, work with their national representative and CUPE staff to negotiate their collective agreement, handle grievances with employers, and decide what issues the members want to support.

CUPE BC members work in a wide range of jobs and occupations in just about every community in the province

Who are CUPE members?

CUPE members work in hundreds of occupations that help keep communities strong. We work for municipalities, school boards, airlines, hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, colleges, universities, social service agencies, the ambulance service, public utilities, and other public institutions.

Joining CUPE BC

To join CUPE BC, you and your fellow workers need to be organized as a CUPE local. You can then vote at a local membership meeting to affiliate your local with CUPE BC. If you would like more information on how to affiliate your local, please contact our offices.

CUPE BC includes community health care workers.

How are decisions made?

CUPE is a democratic union. Members determine what the union does, how it operates, what stands it takes on issues and what goals it sets for the future at the local level through their local, provincially through CUPE BC and nationally through CUPE National.

At the annual convention of CUPE BC more than 500 delegates gather to discuss and debate resolutions and policy papers. The decisions made at convention become the union's positions on issues and help plan action for the years ahead.

Between conventions, CUPE BC plays a key leadership role in coordinating the work of affiliated local unions. The executive board, union committees and policy conferences take action on the issues the members have said are important.

Delegates to CUPE BC's annual convention make democratic decisions that set the direction for the coming year.

