

CANADA / 2026 EDITION

UNION ECOSYSTEM ATLAS



A visual guide to how unions work in Canada

Union structures, representation, workplace rights and the wider labour movement.



Stronger workers.

Stronger workplaces.

Stronger communities.

Stronger Canada.

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Independent member-education project

Not an official publication of any union, employer, or government.

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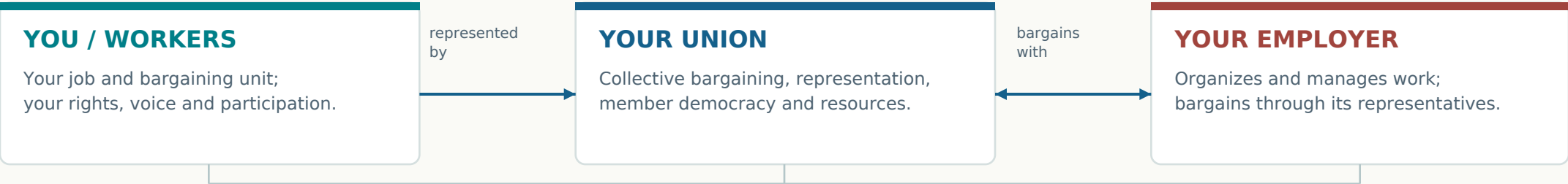
Master Map



Who connects to whom — and where to explore each part.

THE ECOSYSTEM Relationships, not a single chain of command.

WORKPLACE Where work happens: jobs, colleagues, management, working conditions and workplace issues.



Rights and duties are shaped by the applicable legal framework.

LAWS & INSTITUTIONS

Labour and human rights laws, labour boards, tribunals and courts shape rights, duties and available remedies. The applicable rules and institutions vary by jurisdiction.

THE WIDER LABOUR MOVEMENT

Unions cooperate through councils, federations, labour centrals and international networks. Affiliations vary; these connections do not form one chain of command.

Read the connections alongside the explanations: representation, bargaining, law and cooperation are different relationships.

YOUR READING ROUTE Follow Parts I-IV, or use an appendix as a reference. Full topic index: page 2.

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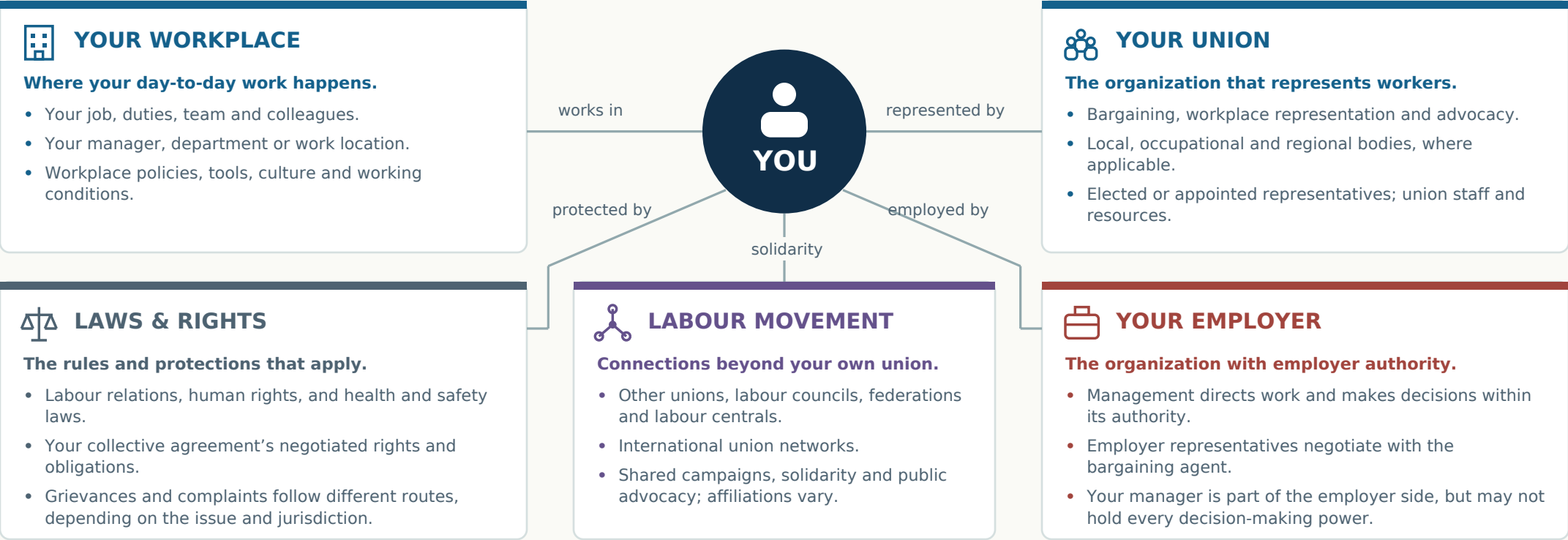
A-E

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PIPSC, federal processes and Ottawa-Gatineau.

One Member, Many Systems

You are part of several connected systems, each with a different role.



HOW THE SYSTEMS INTERACT

Example: your employer changes an attendance policy. The change affects your workplace. Your union can explain the collective agreement, advise on options and challenge a decision where grounds exist. Applicable law may create additional rights or remedies. The wider labour movement may support public advocacy.

KEEP THE DISTINCTIONS CLEAR

A bargaining unit is the group of employees represented together. The bargaining agent represents that unit. For example, PIPSC represents the federal IT bargaining unit.

Knowing which system has authority helps you find the right support.

Sources: Treasury Board: IT agreement, art. 24

PIPSC: Constitution & Bylaws, bylaw 12

Dues, Taxes & Democratic Accountability

Pooled resources. Different mandates. An expectation of responsible stewardship.

COMPARE	THE UNION SYSTEM	THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM
Contributions	Dues pool resources from represented workers. Depending on the law and agreement, deductions can apply even when a worker has not joined the union.	Taxes are imposed under law and paid by individuals and businesses as applicable. Taxpayers, residents and eligible voters are overlapping, distinct groups.
What they fund	Collective bargaining; workplace representation and legal support; member education; organizing and advocacy; staff, administration and reserves.	Public services and programs: health, education, transportation, public safety, social supports and government operations. Responsibilities vary by level.
Who authorizes	The union’s constitution and bylaws assign authority over dues and budgets to members, delegates and/or governing bodies. The exact allocation varies.	Federal example: government proposes financial measures; Parliament authorizes taxation and public spending through the applicable legislative processes.
Who administers	Authorized officers and staff collect, allocate and spend funds within approved budgets, policies and delegated authority.	Ministers, departments and public officials administer programs and spending within legal authorities and financial controls.
How to scrutinize	Elections, AGMs or conventions, financial reports, audits where required, member questions and internal review processes under union rules.	Elections, legislatures and committees, public accounts, auditors, access-to-information regimes and public scrutiny, with rules varying by jurisdiction.

WHERE THE ANALOGY ENDS

Different powers

A union represents workers and operates under its rules and the law. It does not have government’s legislative or taxing powers.

Dues are not taxes

That does not make dues optional. Membership status and the obligation to pay dues are separate questions. See Layer 03, page 6.

Different participation rights

Paying taxes does not itself confer voting rights. Paying dues does not necessarily confer every internal union membership right.

SHARED EXPECTATION Clear authority, transparent reporting and accountable use of pooled resources.

Sources: House of Commons: financial procedures Federal IT agreement: dues, art. 25 PIPSC bylaws: governance example

The Rand Formula

Paying dues and joining a union are separate questions.

COVERAGE

Is your job in the bargaining unit?

The bargaining agent represents a defined unit of employees. The collective agreement sets terms and conditions for that unit.

CONTRIBUTION

What dues must be paid?

Under a Rand arrangement, dues are deducted from bargaining-unit employees whether or not they join the union, subject to applicable exceptions.

MEMBERSHIP

Have you joined the union?

Membership follows the union’s admission rules. Payroll deductions alone do not establish membership or all internal participation rights.

UNION MEMBER

You have joined under the union’s membership rules.

- Dues are deducted as required by the law and agreement.
- You are covered by the unit’s collective agreement and represented by its bargaining agent.
- You may vote in internal elections, attend member meetings and run for office, subject to eligibility rules.

DUES-PAYING NON-MEMBER

You have not joined; often called a Rand deductee.

- Dues are deducted under the Rand arrangement, subject to applicable exceptions.
- You remain covered by the unit’s collective agreement; the union’s representation duties extend to non-members.
- Internal membership rights generally do not apply. Check the union’s rules and the type of vote below.

WHY THE FORMULA EXISTS

Shared benefits, shared costs: employees covered by collective bargaining contribute to negotiating and administering the agreement and maintaining representation, even if they do not join the union.

FEDERAL EXAMPLE • PIPSC IT AGREEMENT

Article 25 requires monthly dues deductions from employees in the unit, subject to its provisions and exceptions. Choosing not to join PIPSC does not by itself end coverage or the deduction obligation.

VOTING: CHECK WHICH KIND

Internal elections: eligibility depends on membership and the union’s governing rules.

Bargaining-related votes: non-members may be eligible. To authorize a strike, federal public service law (s. 184) requires a secret ballot among all employees in the bargaining unit.

Ratification votes: check the applicable law, union rules and voting notice; do not assume the internal-election rules apply.

APPLY THE RIGHT RULES

Dues are not taxes. Obligations, exceptions and participation rights vary by law, agreement and union rules.

Sources: PSAC: Rand formula

IT agreement: arts. 24–25

Federal law: strike votes, s. 184

Fair representation, s. 187

How a Union Is Structured

Members, elected representatives and staff: connected roles with distinct responsibilities.

MEMBERS ARE THE FOUNDATION

Members shape priorities, elect representatives and participate through the channels established in their union’s rules.

COMMON FUNCTIONS

The boxes group responsibilities; they do not show a universal reporting hierarchy.



Democratic decision-making

Conventions, AGMs or congresses bring members or delegates together to decide major policy, constitutional rules and other business within their authority. Leadership elections may happen there or through separate ballots.

Union-wide officers and boards or councils govern between these meetings, implement decisions, oversee resources and represent the union publicly. Their powers and accountability are set by the constitution and bylaws.



Local, regional and other bodies

Locals, branches or chapters connect members with union activities and workplace concerns. Regional or intermediate bodies coordinate across workplaces, departments, sectors or geographic areas, as the union’s rules provide.

Names are not interchangeable: a PSAC Component brings together members by department, agency or territorial government. PIPSC has parallel Group/Sub-Group and Region/Branch structures. Check each body’s mandate.



Bargaining and workplace representation

The bargaining agent represents the bargaining unit in dealings with the employer. Bargaining teams and negotiators develop proposals and negotiate within their mandates; stewards and other representatives help address workplace issues.

Selection varies: representatives may be elected or appointed. PIPSC’s bylaws provide for steward appointments and for Regular members of its Board to serve by virtue of office. An elected local role is not itself a steward appointment.



Professional staff and operations

Union employees provide labour-relations advice, negotiation, legal support, organizing, member services, education, communications, research, finance and administration.

Staff carry out professional and operational work within assigned authority and union policy. They can make delegated decisions; decisions reserved to members, delegates or elected governing bodies remain with those bodies.

BARGAINING UNIT AND BARGAINING AGENT

The unit is the group of employees represented; the agent is the union authorized to represent them. Federal example: the federal labour board determines the appropriate unit on certification (s. 57); certification gives the union exclusive bargaining authority (s. 67).

WHO IS PAID?

Elected roles may be voluntary, salaried, or supported by release time or honoraria. Staff are employees. Pay, leave and expenses follow the applicable rules.

Sources: PIPSC bylaws: structures and stewards
PSAC: Components

PSAC: governance
Federal law: unit determination, s. 57

PSAC: operations and services
Bargaining authority, s. 67

Who Decides What?

Participation, advice, approval and implementation are different roles.

DECISION OR ISSUE	DECISION AUTHORITY AND SUPPORTING ROLES	LIMITS AND WHERE TO CHECK
Constitution and bylaws	Members or constituent bodies propose amendments. Eligible members or delegates approve them through the process specified in the governing rules.	Check notice, quorum, voting thresholds and any further approval required. A local cannot amend the union’s national constitution.
Union elections	Eligible members or delegates elect leaders. An elections committee or designated officials administer the process under the union’s rules.	Check the constituency, eligibility, nomination requirements, voting method, term and challenge procedure.
Overall policy and strategy	Members and delegates shape policy through resolutions. Assemblies set broad direction; boards and executives make the strategic and operational decisions assigned to them.	Read the reserved powers and delegations. Executives must respect the constitution and binding decisions of the governing assembly.
Bargaining priorities and negotiations	Affected workers provide input. The designated bargaining bodies approve mandates; authorized teams and negotiators develop proposals and negotiate with the employer.	Check the bargaining policy and Group or unit rules. Member priorities inform demands; neither side can unilaterally make a negotiated agreement.
Tentative agreement ratification	Eligible voters accept or reject the tentative agreement under applicable law and union rules. Bargaining representatives explain the deal and may recommend acceptance or rejection.	Check voter eligibility and approval steps. A team recommendation is not ratification. Strike votes are separate; see page 6.
Grievances and representation	Stewards and staff assist the employee. Designated staff or officers decide union support, strategy or referral under the applicable policy and law.	PIPSC example: its representation policy assigns primary responsibility to staff and provides a review route for disagreements. Grievance deadlines still apply.
Budgets, dues and major spending	An AGM/convention, membership or designated board approves these matters as assigned by the rules. Officers and staff administer authorized spending.	Authority exists at local, regional and national levels. Budget approval, spending approval and payment signing are separate responsibilities.
Local activities and engagement	Members suggest priorities. The local executive, membership meeting or authorized committee decides activities within its mandate and budget.	Check local bylaws and union policy. A local activity decision does not itself change a collective agreement or national policy.

FIND THE RIGHT AUTHORITY

Name the decision, identify the governing rule, then confirm who can approve it and how to seek review.

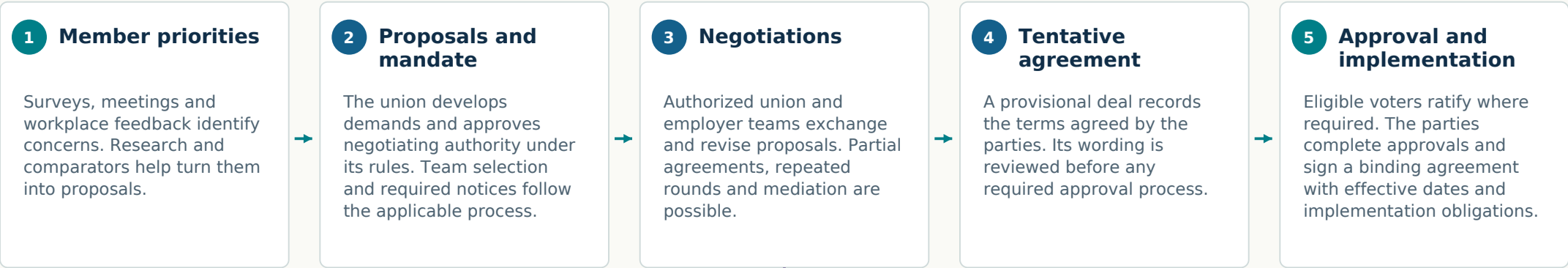
Sources: PIPSC: constitution and bylaws

PSAC: constitution and bargaining regulations

PIPSC: representation policy

Collective Bargaining

The union and employer negotiate terms and conditions for a bargaining unit.



Negotiated settlement path. Timing varies; stages can overlap and repeat.

If issues remain unresolved

AVAILABLE ROUTES DEPEND ON THE LAW AND BARGAINING REGIME

Mediation / conciliation

A neutral third party helps the parties seek settlement. Recommendations may be non-binding. Talks can continue or resume.

Strikes / lockouts

Available only in some regimes, subject to legal prerequisites. Ballots, notices, waiting periods and essential-service restrictions may apply; neither option is automatic.

Binding arbitration

Where available, an independent decision-maker settles submitted issues. A binding award takes effect through its legal process, rather than a ratification vote.

BEYOND PAY: TOPICS DEPEND ON LEGAL SCOPE

Pay: wages, progression and allowances.
Time: hours, scheduling, telework, leave and the right to disconnect.
Protection: health and safety, equity, anti-harassment and accommodation.
Work: workload, staffing, job security, classification, careers and technology/AI.
Rules: privacy, data protections and grievance or dispute procedures.
Benefits: health, dental, disability or pensions, where legally negotiable.

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE: CHECK THE LIMITS

Under the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act, the bargaining agent chooses arbitration or conciliation for a round; mediation can assist either.
Section 113 restricts agreement terms governed by federal staffing and pension statutes. After expiry, terms continue as provided by law (s. 107); there is no unconditional extension until a new deal.

ASK YOUR UNION Who sets the mandate? What is negotiable? Who votes? Where can I find the official bargaining updates?

Sources: TBS: bargaining definitions FPSLREB: bargaining and dispute resolution Federal law: scope, s. 113 Continuation, s. 107

Your Rights at Work

Several sources can protect the same worker. The applicable rules and remedies depend on the workplace.



Collective agreement

Negotiated pay, allowances, hours, leave, benefits, job security, discipline and grievance rules. Telework or flexible-work provisions depend on the agreement. Read the actual clause, coverage and exceptions.



Labour-relations law

Organizing and joining unions; bargaining-agent recognition, representation, collective bargaining, unfair labour practices and dispute resolution. The applicable statute sets each labour board's powers and complaint procedures.



Employment standards

Statutory minimums for covered workers: pay, hours, vacation, holidays and leaves. Coverage and exemptions vary by jurisdiction and sector. Do not assume private-sector standards apply to public servants.



Human-rights law

Protection against discrimination on prohibited grounds, such as race, sex, religion, disability, family status and sexual orientation. Accommodation duties, including the undue-hardship limit, and remedies follow the applicable law.



Health-and-safety law

Employer and worker duties, hazard reporting, committees or representatives, inspections and enforcement. Refusing dangerous work is a defined legal process with conditions and exceptions; follow the applicable procedure.



Employer policies and rules

Directives on attendance, conduct, security, technology and daily operations. Policies must respect applicable law and binding agreement provisions. Some add entitlements; not every policy is a negotiated right.

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE EXAMPLE

Canada Labour Code Part II covers health and safety; Part III employment standards generally does not apply. Labour relations follow the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act, rather than Code Part I.

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG Possible routes; availability and interaction must be checked for your situation.

Agreement / discipline	Ask the union about a grievance. Some claims need bargaining-agent approval and representation.	Discrimination / accommodation	A grievance and/or human-rights process may apply. A commission may require another route to be used first.
Health / safety	Use the applicable safety reporting, committee or regulator process. Follow the legal work-refusal procedure if relevant.	Unfair labour practice	A complaint may go to the appropriate labour board. Its jurisdiction and the statutory filing requirements control.
Minimum standards	An employment-standards complaint may be available if the statute covers you and the issue.	Policy / other issues	Internal review, statutory appeal, tribunal or court routes depend on the issue. One process may restrict another.

ACT EARLY Contact a steward or union staff, keep records and check each deadline; an informal discussion may not stop the clock.

Sources: Canada Labour Code: scope
Federal grievances: s. 208

Human rights: accommodation
Human-rights complaints: s. 41

Dangerous-work refusal
IT agreement: example of negotiated rights

Representation & Grievance Pathways

Something went wrong at work. The issue, your coverage and the applicable rules determine the next steps.

START WITH THE ISSUE

Pay errors; discipline or performance; accommodation; discrimination or harassment; unsafe work; staffing or appointments; agreement interpretation; employer policy disputes. Keep dates, correspondence, relevant clauses and the outcome you seek.

PIPSC: WHO CAN HELP

A steward is usually the first contact. The regional office assigns specialist staff when needed. A local executive can help you find the right contact.

CHOOSE THE APPLICABLE ROUTE

Examples, not an escalation ladder. Coverage, decision-makers and procedures vary.

| Agreement grievance

Use the agreement’s process for an alleged breach or misinterpretation. Internal levels and deadlines apply. Federal example: bargaining-agent approval and representation are required for agreement grievances (s. 208).

| Health and safety

Hazards or unsafe work. Raise the concern with the employer and safety representative or committee; regulator involvement may follow. A work refusal has its own legal procedure.

| Human rights / accommodation

Discrimination or accommodation. An internal process, grievance and/or human-rights complaint may apply. The commission or tribunal’s jurisdiction and rules determine which route can proceed.

| Labour-board complaint

Unfair labour practices or other matters under labour-relations legislation. File with the board that has jurisdiction. This complaint is distinct from the employer’s grievance procedure.

| Employment standards

Minimum wages, hours, leave or pay rules, where the statute covers you. Use the competent standards authority. Do not assume this route applies to federal public servants.

| Internal employer process

Policy complaints or review mechanisms, including conduct or harassment processes. Follow the specific procedure. Classification may have a distinct grievance route; check which regime applies.

| Staffing / appointments

Appointment, competition or layoff concerns where recourse exists. Eligibility, grounds and deadlines vary. Federal staffing complaints have their own rules and are not ordinary agreement grievances.

| Other tribunals / courts

Specialized appeals or judicial review may be available in defined cases. Courts are not an automatic next step after a grievance. Check jurisdiction, prerequisites and deadlines.

ONE ISSUE, SEVERAL SYSTEMS

Routes can overlap, require another process to be used first, or restrict one another. Get advice before choosing.

GRIEVANCE PATHWAY

Typical example; levels and timelines vary.

01

File on time

Submit the written grievance with required approval.



02

Employer response

Review and reply at the first applicable level.



03

Further levels

Advance within the required time if unresolved.



04

Final internal level

Complete the final level under the applicable rules.



05

Arbitration / adjudication

If eligible: follow referral and approval rules.

REPRESENTATION IS BROADER

Advice, agreement interpretation, informal discussions, meetings, accommodation and return to work, workplace consultation, complaints and hearings. Asking for advice does not commit you to filing a grievance.

Possible outcomes include settlement, employer or tribunal decisions, or policy changes. A claim may also be rejected.

DEADLINES MATTER

Confirm each filing deadline and who will act. Advice, informal talks or mediation do not automatically stop the clock.

Sources: PIPSC: workplace support
Federal law: s. 208

FPSLRB: grievances and complaints
Adjudication: s. 209

Human rights: s. 41

FPSLRB: staffing complaints
Labour Code: scope

Public service recourse

The Employer Side

The person directing your work may not hold the authority to change the rule affecting you.

Manager / supervisor

Directs daily work, assigns tasks and manages performance. May approve leave, accommodations or discipline only within their authority. Often a first contact; a higher-level decision or specialist advice may be needed.

Department / agency / organization

Organizes operations, branches, budgets and resources; implements workplace policies and agreements. It may be the legal employer or operate under a broader employer. Its name alone does not establish who can decide.

Human resources / labour relations

Advises management on agreements, staffing, classification, discipline, grievances and accommodation. Supports sound processes and legal compliance. Advice does not itself confer approval authority: check who is authorized to decide.

Senior management / executives

Sets organizational direction and approves matters reserved to that level. May exercise statutory or delegated powers and handle major workplace issues or designated grievance levels. Seniority alone does not establish authority for every decision.

Employer bargaining representatives

Negotiate for the employer within an approved mandate. Develop proposals, consult management, HR and experts, and coordinate organizations where needed. Bargaining representatives do not normally decide daily workplace matters.

Central employer body

Where one exists, sets shared policies or bargaining mandates and may serve as the legal employer across organizations. Its role depends on the sector and statute; a central body is not part of every workplace structure.

WHO MAY DECIDE? CHECK THE DELEGATION

Illustrative roles: confirm the law, agreement, policy and written delegation for your workplace.

ISSUE	DECISION AUTHORITY AND SUPPORT
Daily assignments	Supervisor or manager within operational authority.
Performance	Manager leads; HR advises; formal actions need proper authority.
Significant discipline	Authorized manager or executive; labour relations and legal advice.
Accommodation	Authorized manager acts with worker input; HR and specialists advise.
Staffing / appointments	Authorized hiring manager; HR supports the applicable staffing process.
Policy development	Designated policy owner or approval body; management and HR support.
Collective bargaining	Mandated negotiators; employer approvals under the applicable regime.
Grievances / disputes	Designated employer authority at each level; labour relations advises.

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE EXAMPLE

Core public administration: Treasury Board is the employer, supported by its Secretariat (TBS).
Separate agencies are separate employers; represented agencies need Treasury Board President approval of bargaining mandates.
Staffing: the Public Service Commission delegates appointment powers under its own framework, where applicable.

TWO SIDES, DIFFERENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Union: advice, representation, bargaining and challenges to employer decisions.
Employer: operations, workplace decisions, policy implementation and bargaining.

ASK WHO CAN ACT Who is the legal employer? Who can approve this decision? Who advises? Which rule or delegation gives them authority?

Sources: Federal employer: s. 2
Treasury Board / TBS roles

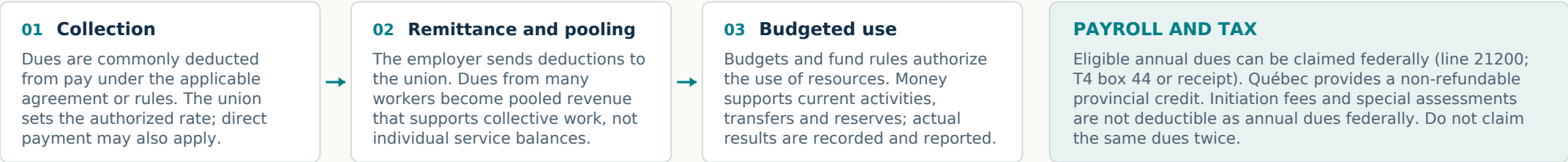
Deputy-head powers: s. 12
Core / separate employers

PSC: appointment delegation
DND: delegation example

TBS: accommodation process

Follow the Dues

Pooled resources fund collective capacity. Members can scrutinize the rules, priorities and results.



Budgets authorize spending; collection and financial oversight happen throughout the year.
WHAT DUES CAN FUND Illustrative categories, not percentages or equal shares. Accounting categories may overlap.

Collective bargaining

Research, wage and economic analysis, bargaining teams, negotiations, expert advice, mobilization and contract campaigns.

Representation and legal support

Labour-relations staff, grievances, arbitration or adjudication, legal advice, human-rights and accommodation support.

Member services and education

Workshops, training, communications, resources, conferences, member events, and steward and leadership development.

Organizing and engagement

Member outreach, workplace organizing, recruitment and retention, campaigns, advocacy, community involvement and solidarity work.

Operations and administration

Staff, offices, technology, accounting, audits, governance, democratic processes and day-to-day operations.

Reserves, strike funds and contingencies

Capacity for labour disputes, strike support where a fund exists, contingencies and future operations. Fund balances and annual spending are different measures.

FUNDING DESTINATIONS

Structure varies by union.

National operations, regions, locals or branches, components or groups, and affiliated labour organizations may receive funds. These are destinations, not additional spending categories to add to the purposes above.

WHO SETS PRIORITIES AND CHECKS THE MONEY?

Members / delegates	Elect leaders; set dues/rules and vote on budgets as the constitution allows.
Board / executive	Exercises assigned approval and oversight; maintains financial controls.
Treasurer / finance staff	Prepare budgets, record transactions, administer spending and report.
Finance committee	Reviews finances and recommends action under its mandate.
Auditor, where required	Independently examines statements and reports; does not set priorities.

MEMBERS CAN ASK Who sets dues? What was budgeted and spent? What funds bargaining and representation? What reserves exist? Are statements audited? How can I influence priorities?

Sources: PIPSC: financial bylaws
IT agreement: dues, art. 25

PIPSC: Finance Committee
CRA: annual dues deduction

PSAC: dues structure example
Revenu Québec: dues credit

PIPSC EXAMPLE

General meetings set dues; the AGM approves the proposed budget. The Board oversees accounting records. The Finance Committee reviews and recommends to the Board. Constituent bodies may receive annual allowances. The auditors' report is available to members before the AGM.

Accountability & External Recourse

Employer and union obligations have different enforcement routes. Match the issue, jurisdiction and remedy.

ROUTES FOR WORKPLACE AND LEGAL ISSUES

Availability, powers and deadlines depend on the law, agreement and issue.

Grievance; arbitration or adjudication	Interpretation or application of an agreement, and other grievable matters. An external hearing is available only for eligible disputes.
Labour relations board	Certification, unfair labour practices and other assigned matters, including employer interference or unfair union representation.
Human rights commission / tribunal	Discrimination and accommodation. Federally, the Commission screens and investigates; the Tribunal decides referred cases and may order remedies.
Health and safety authority	Inspections, hazard investigations and enforcement. Workplace reporting, complaint or refusal procedures may be required first.
Employment standards authority	Minimum pay, hours, leave and other entitlements where the legislation applies; investigations and enforcement under that regime.
Courts / other specialized tribunals	Judicial review or other claims within their jurisdiction. Courts are not an automatic appeal or rehearing of every workplace or union decision.

Adjudicators decide disputes independently. Regulators enforce legislation and may be government departments; their roles and powers differ.

UNION ACCOUNTABILITY

Internal democracy and review work alongside legal obligations. The same issue may engage both.

Members and delegates

Elect leaders; use AGMs, conventions and votes to influence priorities and constitutional rules.

Financial scrutiny

Review budgets, financial reports and audits; use the approval and oversight rights in union rules.

Internal complaints and appeals

Follow the applicable constitution, bylaws and policy. Review rights and decision makers vary.

External legal accountability

DFR and other statutory complaints may apply. Court remedies depend on jurisdiction and the issue.

DUTY OF FAIR REPRESENTATION

Federal public service • FPSLRA, s. 187

The certified union and its representatives must avoid arbitrary or discriminatory conduct and bad faith when representing bargaining-unit employees. The duty covers employees in the unit, including non-members.

A union may decline a case after proper consideration. A DFR complaint examines the union’s handling of representation, rather than rehearing the grievance.

Federal deadline: 90 days from when the employee knew, or should have known, the relevant conduct or circumstances (s. 190).

MEMBER ACTIONS

Identify. Clarify the issue, jurisdiction, decision maker and remedy sought.

Document. Keep dates, correspondence, decisions and relevant rules or agreement clauses.

Seek advice. Ask a steward or union representative early; consider independent advice for a complaint against the union.

Protect deadlines. Check each filing clock. Do not assume an internal appeal pauses an external deadline.

Participate. Vote, attend meetings and review finances.

FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE

FPSLREB. The Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board independently adjudicates assigned labour relations, grievance and staffing matters.

Code coverage. Canada Labour Code Part II covers public service health and safety. Part III employment standards are not the general source of federal public service pay and leave rights.

Overlapping processes. Human rights issues can arise in grievances. The Commission may require available grievance or other statutory routes first (CHRA, s. 41).

Jurisdiction matters: other Canadian sectors and provinces use different boards, statutes and procedures.

Sources: FPSLREB: fair representation
FPSLREB: mandate

FPSLRA: complaint deadlines, s. 190
Canada Labour Code: coverage

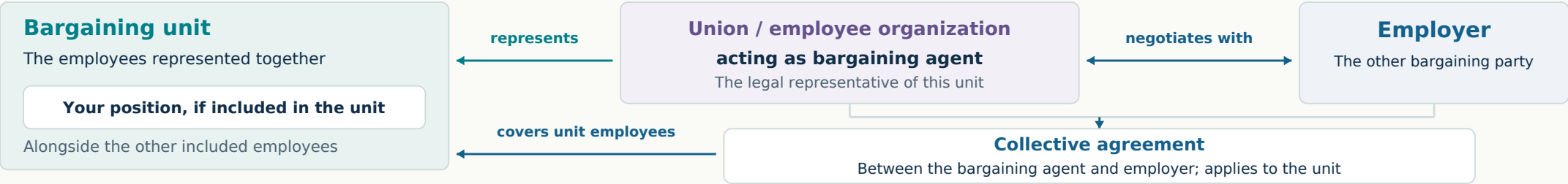
Human rights: Commission / Tribunal
CHRA: screening and other recourse, s. 41

Bargaining Units, Bargaining Agents & Unions

Who is represented together? Who bargains for them? Where do internal union bodies fit?

THE LEGAL RELATIONSHIP

A simplified map for a represented workplace with a collective agreement.



“Bargaining agent” describes a legal role. It does not automatically mean a separate level inside a larger union.

WHAT DETERMINES YOUR UNIT?

Your employer, duties, classification and any legal exclusions help determine whether you fall within a unit. Job title or level alone is not enough; not every position is represented. The unit’s legal description sets its boundaries. A newly certified unit can exist before its first collective agreement.

INTERNAL UNION STRUCTURES

A union may represent many units across employers, occupations and regions. Locals, branches, groups and components organize governance, member engagement and services under union rules. They may have executives and committees. Their names do not establish bargaining-agent status: check which organization is certified or legally recognized.

COVERAGE AND MEMBERSHIP

Being represented differs from formally joining the union. In many workplaces, the agreement and representation cover unit employees who have not joined; dues may still be payable under applicable rules. Membership can affect internal voting and candidacy. Check eligibility separately for elections, agreement ratification and strike votes.

ONE UNION, MORE THAN ONE BARGAINING UNIT

Union / bargaining agent in both examples: PIPSC

BARGAINING UNIT	EMPLOYER	AGREEMENT
Information Technology (IT)	Treasury Board	IT agreement
Audit, Financial and Scientific (AFS)	Canada Revenue Agency	AFS agreement

Within PIPSC, Groups organize members of a bargaining unit. Sub-Groups connect members of one Group locally; Branches connect members across Groups in an area. These bodies are not additional bargaining units.

COMMON MIX-UPS

- “My union is my bargaining unit.”
The unit is the represented employee group.
- “One union means one agreement.”
A union can negotiate many agreements.
- “My local is the bargaining agent.”
Sometimes; check the legal recognition.
- “Paying dues means I have joined.”
Dues deduction and membership can differ.

CHECK YOUR PLACE Confirm your employer, unit, bargaining agent, agreement, membership status and internal union bodies.

Sources: FPSLRA: definitions, s. 2
CIRB: certification explained

IT: recognition and dues, arts. 24–25
CRA: AFS collective agreement

PIPSC: Constitution & Bylaws
PIPSC: membership and Rand contributors

How Canada’s Labour Movement Connects

Affiliation, shared campaigns and solidarity connect workers across unions, regions, sectors and borders.

Workers and members

Join and participate, elect leaders, shape priorities and build workplace strength. Members’ involvement connects everyday concerns to union decisions and broader collective action.

Local / branch / group / component

Internal bodies organize members by workplace, occupation, employer or geography. They may have elected executives and committees. Names, powers and responsibilities vary by union.

Union / bargaining agent

Negotiates collective agreements, handles workplace representation and provides services, education and resources. A union can represent many bargaining units with different employers and agreements.

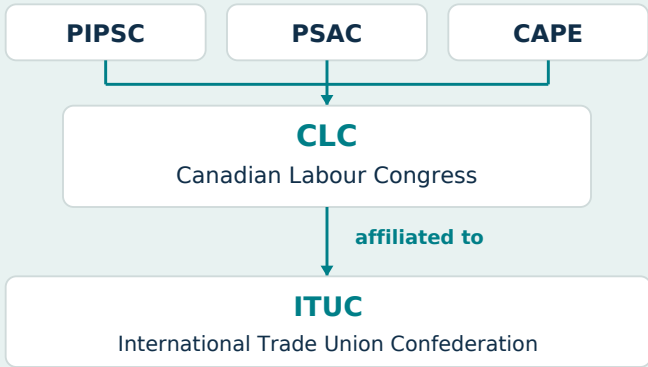
Union constitutions and legal bargaining rights determine who makes decisions and represents members.

COOPERATION BETWEEN UNIONS

Local labour councils	Bring participating union locals and bodies together for city or district campaigns, community advocacy, education and solidarity. Examples: Ottawa and District; Toronto and York Region.
Provincial / territorial federations	Coordinate affiliated unions on provincial or territorial laws, public policy, education and campaigns. Examples: Ontario Federation of Labour; BCFED; FTQ (Québec).
National labour central	The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) coordinates federal advocacy, organizing support, education and national campaigns across its affiliates and chartered bodies. Not every Canadian union belongs.
International union bodies	ITUC: the International Trade Union Confederation links trade union centres for global advocacy and solidarity. Global union federations: connect unions by sector across borders. Examples: Public Services International (PSI) and IndustriALL Global Union.

VERIFIED AFFILIATION EXAMPLE

Three of the CLC’s many affiliated unions:



Arrows show affiliation, not authority over individual collective agreements.

WHAT AFFILIATION DOES

Shared campaigns, research and education extend workers’ influence. Affiliation carries constitutional rights and obligations; the CLC also has rules for its chartered bodies. Affiliation does not automatically transfer bargaining rights or day-to-day representation away from your bargaining agent.

WHO ADOPTS INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS?

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a UN agency bringing governments, employers and workers together. Its International Labour Conference adopts labour standards, including conventions and recommendations. Union bodies advocate for standards and their implementation; they do not adopt ILO conventions on their own.

ASK YOUR UNION Which bodies do we affiliate to? Who are our delegates? Which campaigns or education activities can I join?

Sources: CLC: affiliated unions
CLC: Constitution (2026)

CLC: federations and labour councils
NUPGE: regional and global connections

ITUC: affiliated organizations
ILO: adopting standards through tripartism

Canada’s Public-Sector Union Landscape

There is no single public-service union. Representation varies by employer, bargaining unit and jurisdiction.

FOUR OVERLAPPING ARENAS

Unions can appear in more than one arena. Blue labels link to primary sources.

Federal public service

Federal departments and separate agencies; many occupational bargaining units.

PSAC
Broad occupational coverage

PIPSC
Professional and technical groups

CAPE
Economics/social science (EC) and translation (TR)

AJC
Law practitioners

CEIU and UCTE: PSAC components

Provincial / territorial public service

Government departments and agencies across provinces and territories.

OPSEU/SEFPO Ontario
BCGEU British Columbia
AUPE Alberta
SGEU Saskatchewan
MGEU Manitoba
NBU New Brunswick
NAPE Newfoundland and Labrador
PEI UPSE Prince Edward Island

PSAC territorial components:
UNW (NWT) · NEU (NU) · YEU (YT)

Municipal / local government

Cities, regions and local services: transit, roads, parks, water and administration.

CUPE / SCFP
Municipal services

Unifor
Transit and other public services

ATU
Public transit

IUOE Local 772
Example: City of Hamilton

Teamsters Local 879
Example: Essex County roads

Broader public sector

Health care, schools, colleges, universities, social services, utilities and other institutions.

ONA (Ontario) **BCNU** (B.C.)
Nurses and health professionals

AUPE (Alberta) **NSGEU** (N.S.)
Health care and other public services

CUPE and **Unifor**
Health, education and other services

FSE-CSQ
Québec teachers through affiliates

APUO
Faculty and librarians, uOttawa

MANY FORMS OF REPRESENTATION

Unions may have broad membership or specialize in professional and technical work, health care, education, public safety, trades and operations, or a particular employer. Some span public and private sectors. CUPE and SCFP are the English and French names of the same union.

FEDERAL LABOUR RELATIONS

The Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act (FPSLRA) covers the core public administration and separate agencies, with the FPSLREB administering bargaining and adjudication. Most federal Crown corporations instead fall under Part I of the Canada Labour Code. Parliament has a separate labour-relations statute.

PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

Provincial governments, municipalities, hospitals and schools generally fall under provincial labour regimes. Territorial governments have their own public-service rules; municipalities in the territories fall under Part I of the Canada Labour Code. Boards, bargaining structures and dispute-resolution rules vary.

LOCATE YOUR OWN BARGAINING UNIT

Check your collective agreement and confirm the employer, bargaining agent and governing law. Public funding alone does not identify the applicable system. Not every worker is union-represented: federal EX positions, for example, are unrepresented. Affiliation networks are explained on page 16.

READ THIS AS A LANDSCAPE

Examples illustrate the range of representation; this is not a complete union directory or a hierarchy.

Sources: TBS: bargaining agents and unrepresented groups
FPSLREB: statutory mandate

PSAC: component structure
Canada: federal jurisdiction

NUPGE: provincial component unions
CUPE / SCFP: sectors of work

Canada’s Private-Sector Union Landscape

Union representation varies across industries, employers, bargaining units and regions.

INDUSTRY / WORKPLACE	EXAMPLES OF UNIONS WITH MEMBERS IN THESE SECTORS	
Manufacturing and automotive	Unifor · United Steelworkers (USW) · IAM Union Automotive, aerospace, metalwork and other manufacturing.	
Construction and skilled trades	LiUNA · IBEW · IUOE Labourers, electrical workers and operating engineers.	
Transportation and logistics	Teamsters Canada · Unifor · IAM Union Transport operations, freight, warehousing and related services.	
Retail, food and commercial services	UFCW Canada · Teamsters Canada · Unifor Grocery stores, food processing, distribution and other workplaces.	
Telecommunications and media	Unifor · IBEW CEP merged with CAW to form Unifor in 2013.	
Energy, utilities and resources	USW · Unifor · IUOE · Teamsters Canada Resource operations, industrial sites and related projects.	
Hospitality and service industries	UFCW Canada · UNITE HERE · Teamsters Canada Hotels, food service and other service workplaces.	
LiUNA: Labourers’ International Union of North America · IBEW: International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers IUOE: International Union of Operating Engineers · UFCW: United Food and Commercial Workers		
MOST WORKPLACES: PROVINCIAL RULES Most private-sector workplaces in the provinces fall under provincial labour law. In the territories, private-sector collective bargaining falls under Part I of the Canada Labour Code; territorial employment standards generally apply unless the industry is federally regulated. The applicable rules depend on the employer and activity.		
FEDERAL JURISDICTION CUTS ACROSS INDUSTRIES Examples include banks; telecommunications and broadcasting; air transport; cross-border rail, road and marine transport; ports and interprovincial or international pipelines; postal and courier services; grain elevators; and uranium mining and atomic energy. The Canada Industrial Relations Board administers Part I of the Canada Labour Code. Ownership is a separate question: most federal Crown corporations also fall under the Code, but they are not private companies. See page 17 for the public-sector landscape.		
A LANDSCAPE, NOT A DIRECTORY Sources: Statistics Canada: table 14-10-0132-01 Unifor: sector profiles		Examples are illustrative, not exhaustive. Blue union labels link to primary sources. Canada: federal jurisdiction Teamsters Canada: trade divisions Unifor: merger and structure CIRB: industrial relations

COLLECTIVE-AGREEMENT COVERAGE

Canada, 2025 · Employees aged 15 and over

Public sector	77.5%
Private sector	15.1%
All employees	30.6%

Coverage includes union members and non-members covered by an agreement. These are annual averages, not union membership rates.

HOW TO READ THE EXAMPLES

An industry’s union presence does not mean every workplace is unionized. The same union can span many employers and sectors. Your bargaining unit and agreement determine your representation; affiliation does not identify your contract.

Local & Regional Labour Ecosystems

Workplace representation, union affiliation and community cooperation connect in different ways.

PEOPLE AND BODIES

ROLE IN YOUR LOCAL ECOSYSTEM

Your workplace / employer	Your job, classification, daily conditions, health and safety, and workplace rules, within the applicable agreement and law.
Your union’s local bodies	Member engagement, events and access to stewards and representatives. Locals, branches and other bodies have different mandates.
Other unions in your area	Cross-union solidarity, shared expertise, joint campaigns and support for workers during labour disputes.
Local labour council / regional labour body	Brings affiliated union locals together through delegates; coordinates local advocacy, labour education and solidarity.
Provincial / territorial federations of labour	Coordinate broader campaigns, education and advocacy. Examples include the Ontario Federation of Labour and Québec’s FTQ.
Wider union connections	National or international unions provide their own support structures. Labour centrals, such as the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), coordinate affiliates.
Community groups and advocacy networks	Housing, transit, social services, equity, human rights and environmental campaigns; partnerships can broaden public support.
Education and training institutions	Colleges, universities, union schools and training centres can support labour studies, skills, apprenticeships and research.
Municipal / regional government	Local services, transit, planning, housing and bylaws create opportunities for advocacy. A municipality may also be an employer.

WHAT HAPPENS LOCALLY?

- Solidarity actions and strike support
- Labour education and skills training
- Political and legislative advocacy
- Housing, transit and public-service campaigns
- Organizing drives and member outreach
- Health, safety and equity initiatives
- Public events and community coalitions

HOW PARTICIPATION WORKS

Affiliation and delegate eligibility follow each body’s rules; membership is not automatic. Joining a community campaign is different from becoming a council delegate. Councils and coalitions support unions. They do not replace the bargaining agent or take over your collective agreement.

EXAMPLE: OTTAWA

Affiliated locals send delegates to the Ottawa & District Labour Council. The council is chartered by the CLC and affiliated to the Ontario Federation of Labour. It also works with community partners, including United Way East Ontario. These are distinct relationships, not a single reporting chain.

WHY GEOGRAPHY MATTERS

Industries, employers, union presence and public institutions differ by region. Cross-border communities may involve several legal systems. Labour jurisdiction depends on the employer and activity, not simply a worker’s address; see pages 17–18.

LOCAL CONNECTIONS BUILD COLLECTIVE STRENGTH

Sources: CLC: federations and councils
CLC: national role

FTQ: regional councils
CLC: labour education

Ottawa council: structure and membership
Canada: labour jurisdiction

Organized Labour by the Numbers

Collective-agreement coverage across sectors, provinces and industries.

CANADA • ALL EMPLOYEES

2025 coverage

30.6%

PUBLIC SECTOR

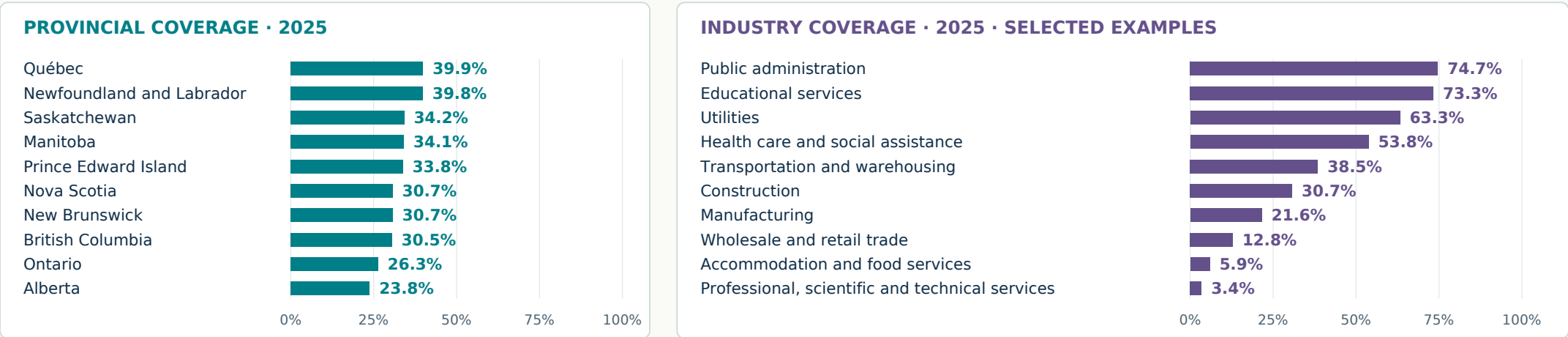
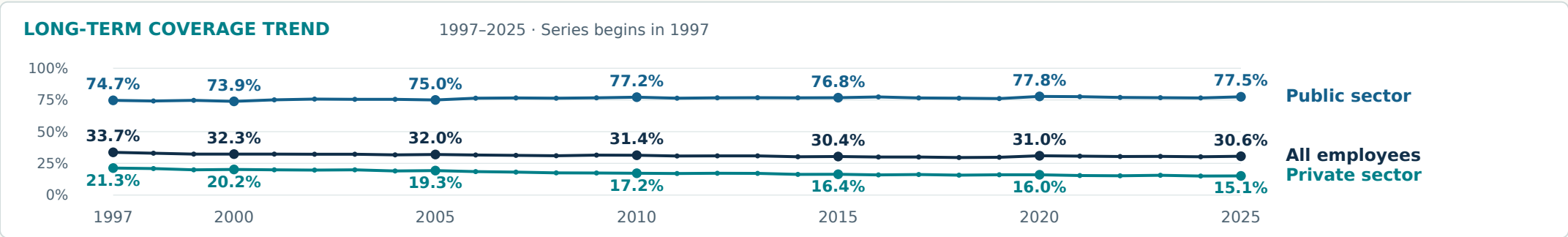
2025 coverage

77.5%

PRIVATE SECTOR

2025 coverage

15.1%



COVERAGE

SCOPE

READING THE DATA

Share of employees who are union members or covered non-members. Membership rate: union members as a share of employees.

Employees aged 15+; annual averages; territories excluded. Industry examples are selected, not exhaustive. Rates are not workplace counts.

Public-sector coverage is much higher. National averages hide variation. “Public administration” is one industry within the broader public sector.

Sources:

Statistics Canada: 14-10-0129-01 (geography)

14-10-0132-01 (industry and sector)

Labour Force Survey: concepts and definitions

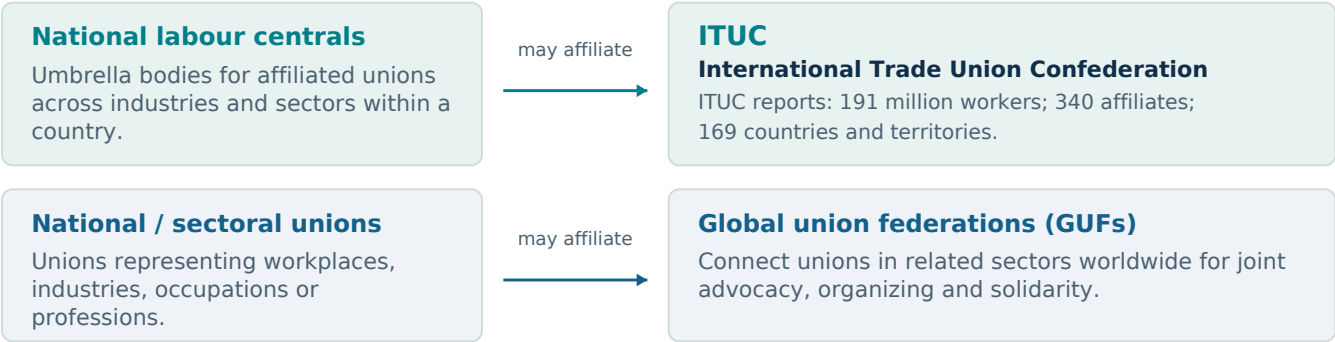
Labour Force Survey • Tables released January 9, 2026 • Values verified October 6, 2026 • All charts use a 0–100% scale.

The Global Union Movement and the ILO

From workplaces to the world stage: union cooperation and international labour institutions.

TWO ROUTES FOR INTERNATIONAL UNION COOPERATION

Workers organize in unions; affiliation connects unions across borders.



These routes can overlap. Affiliations vary; GUFs are independent of the ITUC.

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

ILO UN agency • 187 member States

TRIPARTITE REPRESENTATION



The three groups help shape international labour standards, policies and programmes for decent work and social justice.

Unions engage through worker representation and international cooperation. The ILO is not a union or a higher level of union leadership.

GLOBAL UNION FEDERATIONS: SIX EXAMPLES

Each brings together unions within particular industries or occupations.

IndustriALL Global Union	Mining, energy and manufacturing
UNI Global Union	Services: finance, ICT, media and professional work
International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)	Transport and logistics
Education International (EI)	Education, including higher education and research
Public Services International (PSI)	Public services, government, health and utilities
Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)	Construction, building materials, wood and forestry

OECD: COVERAGE AND MEMBERSHIP

2023/24 or latest available • 38 countries

33.6% **15.2%**

Bargaining coverage

Employees covered, among those with bargaining rights.

Union density

Union members as a share of all employees.

Employee-weighted averages; country years vary. Coverage uses an adjusted denominator, unlike page 20. Laws and bargaining systems differ widely.

WHY IT MATTERS

International solidarity shares knowledge and supports workers' rights and stronger conditions locally.

GLOBAL UNIONS PARTNERSHIP

The ITUC, GUFs and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) cooperate across institutions.

Sources: ITUC: role and reported membership
Global Unions: partnership

ILO: tripartite structure
OECD: September 2025 policy brief

OECD: database and source spreadsheet
Federation names link to official sites • Verified October 6, 2026

How a Member Fits into the Union

One member. Two systems. One union.

YOU: A PIPSC MEMBER

Your Group and your geographic community connect you to the same union.

THE GROUP SYSTEM

Bargaining-unit and professional representation

Your position and bargaining unit

Your employer, classification and position determine which bargaining unit and collective agreement apply.

Your PIPSC Group

A Group includes one or more bargaining units represented by PIPSC. It advances professional interests and bargaining priorities.

Your Group Executive

Elected under your Group’s rules; leads the Group between general meetings and represents its interests within PIPSC.

Your Sub-Group • where one exists

A local geographic part of the same Group: member engagement, professional concerns and input to the Group Executive.

THE REGION SYSTEM

Geographic representation across different Groups

Your Region

You may choose to participate where you reside or work. Participation rights apply in only one Region.

Your Branch

A local geographic community with members from at least two Groups; some Branches also have a departmental focus. It supports local participation.

Your Regional Council

The Region’s governing delegate body. Branches and other organizational units participate under the Region’s constitution.

Your Regional Executive

Regional members elect their Director(s). Other executive seats follow regional rules, often election by Council delegates. The executive coordinates regional work.

PIPSC NATIONAL GOVERNANCE

AGM: The Annual General Meeting is PIPSC’s supreme governing body. Accredited delegates set policy and direction; Groups and Regions supply delegations.

Board: The President, four Vice-Presidents and ten Directors govern between General Meetings, subject to bylaws and member decisions.

Board connections: Nine regional Directors and one Advisory Council Director.

WORKPLACE CONSULTATION

Employer-specific Consultation Teams bring stewards together, with PIPSC staff support, to discuss shared workplace policies and concerns with management.

Consultation does not amend the collective agreement or replace individual grievance processes.

Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada

MEMBER VOICE

Participate through elections, meetings and resolutions, subject to eligibility rules. PIPSC holds the bargaining certificates.

Sources: PIPSC Constitution & Bylaws
Region policy

2025 AGM amendments
Branch policy

Group policy
Regional elections: NCR example

Sub-Group policy
Consultation policy

Regular-member overview; retired-member participation follows applicable rules.

One Union. Many Professions.

Selected examples of PIPSC’s professional bargaining communities.

80,000+ scientists and professionals

40+ Groups

26 employers

PIPSC 2026/27 Strategic Plan

ATLAS CATEGORIES For orientation only: not formal PIPSC divisions. Groups may span several fields. Examples are not exhaustive.

Digital & technology

IT · Information Technology
CFIA-IN · CFIA Informatics
UOTTAWA · University of Ottawa Information Technology Professional

AFS also includes computer systems staff at the Canada Revenue Agency. Similar work can fall under different Groups and agreements.

Science & research

SP · Applied Science and Patent Examination
RE · Research
CFIA-S&A · Scientific and Analytical
NRC-RO/RCO · Research Officers and Research Council Officers
CMH · Canadian Museum of History – Scientific Researchers
CMN · Canadian Museum of Nature

Engineering & technical

NR · Engineering, Architecture and Land Survey
NUREG · Nuclear Regulatory
CRPEG · Chalk River Professional Employees
WTEG · Whiteshell Technical Employees
MAGE · Manitoba Association of Government Engineers

Health & medical

SH · Health Services
CFIA-VM · Veterinary Medicine
MP · Ontario Medical Physicists
JCC · Juravinski Cancer Centre – Radiation Therapists
YHC · Yukon Hospital Corporation

Other hospital Groups represent radiation therapists and technical professionals.

Finance, audit & commerce

AFS · Audit, Financial & Scientific (CRA)
CP · Commerce & Purchasing
OSFI · Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions – Professional Employees

Financial, economic and purchasing roles; AFS also spans science and technology.

Institutional & specialist

HOC · House of Commons Procedural Clerks, Analysis and Reference
SEN · Senate Legislative Clerks
CCC · Canadian Commercial Corporation
NAV · NAV CANADA Professional Employees
NRC-IS · Information Services (communications)

WHAT MAKES A GROUP?

A Group brings together one or more bargaining units; the Board sets its definition. PIPSC is the certified bargaining agent. Each Group has a constitution consistent with PIPSC’s bylaws and an elected executive. Members shape bargaining priorities and professional advocacy.

FIND YOUR GROUP

Employer, classification and bargaining-unit placement matter.
Example: A represented Treasury Board IT-02 position: IT Group; IT collective agreement.

Sources: PIPSC Groups directory
NRC classifications

Collective agreements
AFS Group overview

Constitution & Bylaws: Groups
Treasury Board IT agreement

PIPSC 2026/27 Strategic Plan
Adopted 2025 bylaw amendments

Federal Bargaining Agents

Different jobs. Different bargaining units. Different representatives. A shared public purpose.

TREASURY BOARD EXAMPLES

Examples below apply to represented positions in the core public administration.

PIPSC

Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada

NR · Architecture, Engineering and Land Survey
SP · Applied Science and Patent Examination
CP · Commerce and Purchasing
SH · Health Services
IT · Information Technology
RE · Research

Example: IT-02 position → IT unit and agreement

PSAC

Public Service Alliance of Canada

PA · Program and Administrative Services
SV · Operational Services
TC · Technical Services
EB · Education and Library Science
FB · Border Services

Example: AS-02 position → PA unit and agreement

CAPE

Canadian Association of Professional Employees

EC · Economics and Social Science Services
TR · Translation

EC and TR are separate bargaining units with separate collective agreements.

Example: EC-04 position → EC unit and agreement

OTHER TREASURY BOARD BARGAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Acronym / unit · full organization name

ACFO-ACAF · CT: Comptrollership
Association of Canadian Financial Officers

PAFSO · FS: Foreign Service
Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers

AJC · LP: Law Practitioner
Association of Justice Counsel

CFPA · AO: Aircraft Operations
Canadian Federal Pilots Association

IBEW 2228 · EL: Electronics
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 2228

UCCO-SACC-CSN · CX: Correctional Services
Union of Canadian Correctional Officers

CUPE 104 · LES-PO: law enforcement / police support
Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 104

CMSG · SO: Ships’ Officers
Canadian Merchant Service Guild

CMCFA · UT: University Teaching
Canadian Military Colleges Faculty Association

Unifor · AI: air traffic control; RO: radio operations
CATCA Local 5454 (AI); Local 2182 (RO); PR-Non-S†

NPF · RM: RCMP regular members and reservists
National Police Federation; regular members below inspector

FGDCA · SR-C: ship repair chargehands / supervisors (East)
Federal Government Dockyard Chargehands Association

FGDTLC-East · SR-E: Ship Repair (East)
Federal Government Dockyard Trades and Labour Council (East)

FGDTLC-West · SR-W: Ship Repair (West)
Federal Government Dockyard Trades and Labour Council (Esquimalt)

EMPLOYER AND BARGAINING AGENT

Treasury Board is the employer for the core public administration. The union represents employees. They negotiate pay, benefits and working conditions.

SEPARATE EMPLOYER: CRA

CRA bargains separately: **PSAC-UTE** for Program Delivery and Administrative Services; **PIPSC-AFS** for Audit, Financial and Scientific.

FEDERAL FRAMEWORK

Parliament makes laws. The **FPSLREB** is the independent labour-relations tribunal. Confirm your employer, classification and unit to find your agreement.

† PR-Non-S: Non-Supervisory Printing Services is listed under Unifor by TBS; no agreement appears in its current agreement directory.

Sources: TBS representation map AJC official name	Treasury Board agreements Electronics: IBEW 2228	CRA collective bargaining Police support: CUPE 104	FPSLREB mandate RCMP members: NPF
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Three Problems. Three Different Routes.

Choose the route that matches the decision or conduct you are challenging.

FPSLRA FRAMEWORK Selected routes under the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act. Jurisdiction and employment status matter.

A Employer action

INDIVIDUAL GRIEVANCE

Examples: pay, leave or discipline.

Start with a grievance. Use the employer’s internal grievance procedure and advance through the required levels.

Adjudication is conditional. After the final level, only eligible grievances can go to the FPSLREB. Section 209 includes agreement interpretation/application, specified discipline, and certain termination, demotion or deployment cases.

Union role. Collective-agreement grievances require bargaining-agent approval and representation, including at adjudication.

CHECK EACH DEADLINE

Consult the collective agreement and regulations for presenting, advancing and referring a grievance to adjudication.

B Union representation

DUTY OF FAIR REPRESENTATION

The concern is how the union represented you.

File a complaint with the FPSLREB. Section 187 prohibits arbitrary, discriminatory or bad-faith representation; section 190 provides the complaint route.

What the Board examines. How the union investigated, considered relevant factors and made its decision. Serious negligence, prohibited discrimination or hostility may engage the duty.

Support the allegation. Provide facts about the union’s conduct. The Board does not decide the underlying grievance’s merits.

90 CALENDAR DAYS

From when you knew, or the Board finds you ought to have known, of the conduct or circumstances. This limit cannot be extended.

C FPSLREB decision

JUDICIAL REVIEW

A court reviews the tribunal decision.

Choose the correct court. Board panel or adjudicator: **Federal Court of Appeal**. Other decision makers, such as the Chairperson: **Federal Court**.

Scope of review. The court applies the relevant legal standard and reviews procedural fairness. This is not a new hearing of the grievance.

Possible results. The court may dismiss the application or set aside the decision, including sending it back for redetermination.

NORMALLY 30 DAYS

From when the decision or order was first communicated to the affected party. A judge may allow additional time.

THE DFR DISTINCTION

A refusal to grieve is not automatically a breach. The issue is whether the union acted arbitrarily, discriminatorily or in bad faith; disagreement with its decision is not enough.

CHECK THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

These are selected routes, not all available remedies. RCMP members and parliamentary employees have distinct statutory rules. Confirm the applicable jurisdiction and deadlines.

FPSLREB: Federal Public Sector Labour Relations and Employment Board.

Sources: FPSLRA § 208: grievances
FPSLREB: procedural guide

FPSLRA § 209: adjudication
FPSLREB: judicial review

FPSLRA §§ 187, 190: DFR
Federal Courts Act § 18.1

General education; not legal advice.

FPSLREB: fair representation
Federal Courts Act § 28

Ottawa-Gatineau Union Ecosystem

One region. Two provinces. Many labour systems. A shared community of workers.

YOUR EMPLOYER, BARGAINING UNIT AND APPLICABLE LAW IDENTIFY YOUR REPRESENTATION.

Ottawa / Ontario

REGIONAL & PROVINCIAL NETWORKS

Ottawa & District Labour Council (ODLC)

Brings local unions together for community advocacy and solidarity. Chartered by the **CLC** and affiliated with the **OFL**. Its website reports **90 affiliated locals** and approximately **50,000 members**.

Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL)

A provincial federation that works with unions and labour councils on legislation, public services, workplace rights and social justice.

Local connections: union education, community partnerships and support for workers across public and private sectors.

Federal public service

ACROSS BOTH CITIES

SELECTED TREASURY BOARD EXAMPLES

PIPSC · Professional, scientific and technical groups

PSAC · Administrative, operational, technical and border groups

CAPE · Economics, social science and translation

ACFO-ACAF · Comptrollership

PAFSO · Foreign Service

Employer: Treasury Board for the core public administration; separate employers such as CRA have their own bargaining relationships.

More bargaining agents: Appendix C, page 24.

Treasury Board representation directory

Outaouais / Québec

REGIONAL & PROVINCIAL NETWORKS

Conseil régional FTQ-Outaouais

Regional council of the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTQ): solidarity, education and support for affiliated unions.

CCSNO-CSN

Conseil central des syndicats nationaux de l’Outaouais: the regional CSN body supporting organizing, campaigns, training and labour disputes.

CSQ network: a local example

The Syndicat du soutien scolaire de l’Outaouais (SSSO) is affiliated with FPSS-CSQ, within the Centrale des syndicats du Québec.

A NATIONAL NETWORK

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) connects affiliated unions, provincial/territorial federations and local labour councils. **PIPSC**, **PSAC** and **CAPE** are affiliates.

A CONNECTION ACROSS THE RIVER

PSAC-NCR is affiliated with both the OFL and FTQ and works with ODLC and Conseil régional FTQ Outaouais. Regional solidarity can cross legal jurisdictions.

PSAC-NCR: regional affiliations

FIND YOUR PLACE

Confirm your workplace, employer, bargaining unit and collective agreement. Councils and federations coordinate solidarity and advocacy; your bargaining agent represents your unit in its relationship with the employer.

JURISDICTION IS A SEPARATE QUESTION

Federal public-service labour relations: **FPSLRA**. Banks and telecommunications: **Canada Labour Code**. Most other workplaces fall under provincial law. Parliament has a separate labour-relations statute.

Shared community: public servants • health and research • schools • municipal and provincial services • private-sector workers • community allies.

Sources: ODLC: role and membership
CLC: national network

Ontario Federation of Labour
CLC: affiliated unions

Conseil régional FTQ-Outaouais
SSSO: CSQ affiliation

CCSNO-CSN: mission
Federal labour jurisdiction