



# SEIU Local 1 Canada Stronger Together

**WELCOME** to the Service Employees International Union Local 1 Canada, the union of choice for over 50,000 health care and community service workers throughout Ontario.

Our local has helped thousands of health care and community service professionals earn higher wages, improve their benefits and raise working conditions. We negotiate with employers, handle grievances, arbitrate disputes and provide many other valuable services that strengthen your authority in the workplace.

SEIU goes beyond what's expected. We find innovative ways to support all our members.

Our success is based on our members' commitment to all workers because we are all Stronger Together.

SEIU also has a strong working relationships with the Ontario government's ministries of Labour and Health and Long Term Care, in addition to the many regulatory bodies that oversee and administer Ontario's health care and community services sectors.

Please read this membership package and learn more about what SEIU Local 1 Canada has to offer. This kit explains:

- The benefits that unions bring to a workplace
- The services SEIU provides to its members
- Collective bargaining and grievance procedures
- Glossary of labour terms
- Quick facts on SEIU

To find out more about our education programs, Organizing drives, union events and political action, health & safety, and social justice campaigns at [www.seiulocal1.org](http://www.seiulocal1.org).

We want your place of work to be somewhere you feel valued, secure and rewarded. That is SEIU's purpose, and that is what our members expect.

Again, welcome to SEIU Local 1 Canada.

In Solidarity,

Sharleen Stewart  
President  
SEIU Local 1 Canada





# SEIU Local 1 Canada

## SEIU Fact Sheet

### **SEIU Local 1 Canada - Our Union Local**

SEIU Local 1 Canada has 50,000 members. It is the fastest growing union in Ontario. 10,000 new members have joined since 2004, a 25% increase in only five years. No other union can match that rate of growth.

SEIU prides itself as an Organizing union. SEIU members want for others what they want for themselves. That means actively supporting 'unorganized' workers to form unions in their workplaces. SEIU's growth also comes from our excellent track record in negotiating better contracts for our 50,000 health care and community services members.

Approximately three-quarters of SEIU Local 1 Canada's members are female. The Local has advocated for regulations that fight gender discrimination and bridging the wage gap between men and women, as well as being a leader for pay equity legislation in Ontario.

SEIU Local 1 Canada is the largest home care Local in Ontario, and the union represents thousands of nurses, personal support workers, paramedics, allied health care professionals, clerical workers, support service workers and community support workers.

SEIU Local 1 Canada is diverse. A large portion of our members are new Canadians who have emigrated from almost as many places as there are countries in the world. Our members speak languages as diverse as Kiswahili, Creole, Punjabi and Phillipino, to name only a few.

SEIU is a 'member-centric' union. All important decisions in the Local are made by our members. The members elect the Local's Executive Officers and Executive Board Members, amend the Local's constitution, establish bargaining priorities, and decide how much they pay in union dues.

For more information, please visit our website at [www.seiulocal1.org](http://www.seiulocal1.org).



# SEIU Local 1 Canada

## The SEIU Advantage

**SEIU Local 1 Canada** is part of the fastest growing union and is the largest health care and community service local in Ontario. SEIU's members earn higher wages, enjoy more workplace benefits, experience a higher level of job satisfaction and are more productive on the job than non-unionized workers employed in the same sector. But there are many more advantages that SEIU members enjoy as a result of SEIU membership aside from the right to negotiate their own contracts, for example:

- Drug and dental benefits
- Pension plans
- Better work schedules
- Parental leave provisions
- Job security
- More manageable workloads
- Safer working conditions
- Early retirement options
- Fair and equal treatment
- Pay equity
- Grievance procedures

### **SEIU stands up for working people**

Unions can take credit for many things people take for granted, for example, paid vacation time, civic holidays, the eight hour work day, health and safety laws, among many other important professional and social advancements. Yet, some people say workers don't need unions anymore. This couldn't be further from the truth.

SEIU continues to lobby government for safety laws that protect health care workers from workplace injuries. SEIU campaigns for pay equity laws that protect women from discriminatory pay practices. SEIU is fighting against outsourcing jobs in the health care sector, which is reducing wages and eliminating the benefits that previous unionized health care workers fought for decades to achieve.

SEIU Local 1 Canada and so many other unions continue to be champions for millions of working people to this very day. **Put simply, unions are the most effective anti-poverty organizations within our economy.**

### **Union Dues**

Every union member pays a small portion of his or her wages to their union. This funding allows SEIU to pay for the valuable services it provides for its members. Union dues are set and approved only by the membership at the Local's Convention, which is held every four years. The services your dues pay for include:

- Collective bargaining, arbitration and grievance support
- Legal services and advice
- Leadership and steward training
- Public education and awareness-raising programs (newsletters, websites, publications, government advocacy, media and community relations, etc.)
- Organizing drives to support unorganized workers to form unions in their workplaces - We Are Stronger Together
- Professional development opportunities for members
- And so much more...



# SEIU Local 1 Canada

## Member Services

### **Collective Bargaining**

Every two or three years, along with member bargaining teams and SEIU Local 1 Canada, negotiate new contracts with employers. This process is called collective bargaining.

SEIU bargaining unit members select bargaining committee representatives to negotiate with their employers to set new wages, salaries and raises, and improve benefits and conditions of employment, such as vacation time, health and safety policy, in addition to many other important issues and concerns.

### **The role of your union steward**

Every SEIU bargaining unit has union stewards who are responsible for ensuring that employers do not violate the terms of their contract. It's their job to inform employees of their rights in the workplace. It is also their responsibility to support workers through the grievance process, or defend them when they are abused or victimized.

### **Grievances**

One mechanism for stewards to enforce the contract is through the grievance process.

A grievance is a formal complaint against management for violating the contract. It can also involve opposition to large-scale changes in the workplace, and even a violation of the law.

SEIU members are encouraged to contact their steward if they:

- Have questions regarding their contract
- Believe their employer or their supervisor violated their contract
- Have concerns about conditions in their workplace
- Suspect they might be disciplined or terminated

Grievances can be complicated and deadlines are strict. Grievances commonly should be filed within 7-10 days after the violation occurred, depending on your contract. Members should contact their union steward before taking any action themselves.



# SEIU Local 1 Canada

## Union Vocabulary

**ARBITRATION:** The process of settling labour disputes through a third party whose decision is final and binding. The third party can be either a single arbitrator or a board consisting of a chairperson and one or more representatives. Arbitration is often used to settle major grievances and for settling contract interpretation disputes.

Rights arbitration may be used to settle disputes arising out of collective agreement interpretations.

Interest arbitration is used to settle issues in cases where strikes and lockouts are forbidden by law. This type of arbitration is common and compulsory in the health care sector where many workers do not have the right to strike.

**BARGAINING AGENT:** Is the union who represents employees at a bargaining unit.

**BARGAINING UNIT:** Are the workers in a particular category, department, or occupation that is represented by a union.

**BASE RATE:** Is the lowest rate of pay for workers belonging to the bargaining unit.

**COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT:** A contract between a union and employer covering wages, hours, working conditions, pensions, etc., and the rights of workers and their unions.

**CONCILIATION and MEDIATION:** A process that attempts to resolve labour disputes through compromise. Compared to arbitration, the mediator will not side with one party against the other, and the parties are free to accept or reject its recommendation.

**CONTRACT PROPOSALS:** Are proposed changes to the collective agreement that is put forward by the union or the employer. These proposals are negotiated in collective bargaining.

**GRIEVANCE:** A formal complaint made against management by one or more employees or a union. A grievance usually claims that management breached the collective agreement. The procedure for handling grievances is outlined in your collective agreement. The last step of this procedure is arbitration.

**STEWARD:** The union's elected representatives at the workplace. They handle grievances and other issues affecting their's and their co-workers' employment. Chief stewards lead the stewards in the workplace.



# SEIU Local 1 Canada

## SEIU Fact Sheet

### **SEIU Canada - Our National Union**

SEIU Canada has over 100,000 members across Canada, represented by a total of 5 locals based in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

Almost 80 per cent of its members are health care sector workers. They are nurses, personal support workers, clerical workers, and paramedics, who work in hospitals, home care agencies, nursing and retirement homes.

The remainder work in manufacturing, building maintenance, food and laundry services, social services, education, gaming, brewing and the travel industry.

For more information on SEIU members across Canada, visit the SEIU Canada website at [www.seiu.ca](http://www.seiu.ca).

### **SEIU - Our International Union**

The 2 million-member Service Employees International Union is the largest and the fastest-growing union on the continent.

In North America, SEIU is the largest health care union, representing members who work in hospitals, nursing homes, and home care; the largest property services union, with members in building cleaning and security; and is the second largest public employees' union, representing a broad spectrum of civil service employees.

SEIU is the America's most diverse union. Forty per cent are visible minorities. Fifty-six percent of SEIU members are women.

SEIU also represents more immigrant workers than any other union in the United States.

SEIU is working within union alliances servicing similar industries around the globe to challenge multinationals to provide comparable wages and benefits, and allow workers in every country the freedom to form unions.

SEIU's mission is to build a 21st-century global union to help ensure that workers, not just corporations and CEOs, benefit from today's global economy.

For more information, visit SEIU's website at [www.seiu.org](http://www.seiu.org).



# SEIU Local 1 Canada

## Your Union Reps

Workplace: \_\_\_\_\_

Chief Steward	Department	Number

Communications Officer	Department	Number

Steward	Department	Number

RPN Division	Department	Number

Unit Meetings are held quarterly. Check the Union Bulletin Board for the place and time.