

UPDATE

UFCW 1518

RESPECT
||| **RETAIL**
WORKERS

¹⁵¹⁸
UFCW 

Demanding
Respect

UFCW 1518 members are fighting for their rights—
and asking the public to join them



CLIMATE JUSTICE IS LABOUR JUSTICE

Workers
are
at
the
frontlines
of climate change.

B.C. needs to

#RaisetheBar

How can we fix it?



**1518
UFCW**

WE FIGHT FOR FAIRNESS

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Kim Novak, President, UFCW 1518
Patrick Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer, UFCW 1518
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Anita Letendre, Save-On-Foods, North Vancouver
Camila Mehai, Safeway, Vancouver
Christine Holowka, Save-On-Foods, Prince George
Connie Buckner, Cowichan Home Support, Duncan
Dave Diamond, Save-On-Foods, Kelowna
David Gutierrez, Save-On-Foods, Surrey
Eleanor Smith, Penticton Home Support, Penticton
Erica Jones, Save-On-Foods, Maple Ridge
Jaime Emerson, Save-On-Foods, Abbotsford
Jennifer Vecchio, Nelson Home Support, Nelson
Jhoelyn Cantil, Sunrise Poultry, Aldergrove
Kathleen Guerin, Save-On-Foods, Kamloops
Kevin Sparkes, Sunrise Poultry, Maple Ridge
Linda Wilson, Port Alberni Home Support, Port Alberni
Marlene White, Sobeys, Coquitlam
Marylou Fonda, Save-On-Foods, Fort St. James
Peter Dombrowski, Sobeys, Chilliwack
Rajiv Mehra, Grand River Foods, Abbotsford
Raven Morningstar, Save-On-Foods, Whitehorse
Teresa-Lyne Dziedzic, Safeway Pharmacy, Surrey
Virgilio Encarnacion, Sofina Foods, Port Coquitlam

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Extended Health Plan

Safeway Members: 1.800.295.3348
Overwaitea Food Group Members: 1.877.643.7200
Community Health Members: 1.888.275.4672

Health Care Benefit Trust 1.888.736.2087

Dental Plan 1.888.818.3368

UFCW 1518 Pension 1.888.345.8329

Municipal Pension Plan 1.800.668.6335

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE

KIM NOVAK
President



Building community through workplace presence

It's hard to believe that summer is already here, but the sun is out and so is your union!

Since the last *Update Magazine* dropped in the fall, we've been growing UFCW 1518's physical presence. Whether we're engaging in conversations on the shop floor, hosting uplifting events, or spearheading public-facing advocacy campaigns, we're stretching the limits of what an empowered union can do.

This enhanced engagement has taken many forms. In the day-to-day operations of the union, it's meant more site visits. You might already be seeing more of your union representatives, and we can assure you that site visits will only ramp up as the year continues and more of you enter negotiations for renewed Collective Agreements.

Our goal for 2023 is to connect with representative members in every sector, store, and department. Major cities and remote corners of the province alike, we're drawing on the experience of members everywhere, at all points in their union journey, and asking you to share your voice. You all have a story to tell and a role to play in your union's fight for fairness, dignified wages, respect, and healthier working conditions.

We know how much members value in-person contact, and we're excited to be renewing these ways that we network so that we can grow our influence as a union.

In November 2022, we hosted our first large-scale, in-person event since 2019, bringing together over 200 members from stores across the province. Members met fresh faces, participated in workshops, learned about bargaining, and returned to work armed with information to educate and empower their coworkers.

In the last month, our Sobeys and Save-On-Foods bargaining teams have been touring stores, growing support for their bargaining efforts, including proposals for higher wages, equity language, improved sick days, and more. Meanwhile, members in the Industrial sector are gearing up for their own negotiations by attending in-person meetings and getting informed about the bargaining process while UFCW 1518 representatives empower Stewards to continue harnessing their personal relationships to build strength and momentum on the ground.

We've also launched the Respect Retail Workers Campaign to ensure that our communities are aware of the rising abuse, violence, and retaliation that retail workers have experienced in the face of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. We're encouraging all members and customers to proudly wear their Respect Retail Workers buttons as a reminder to the public that retail workers support their communities every day, and they deserve solidarity, not abuse, in return.

By getting out in front of the issues that matter most to our members, we're carving the path for workers to take the lead in their workplaces and communities and fight for the fairness that they deserve.

PATRICK JOHNSON
Secretary-Treasurer



Raising the bar in health care contracts

As we rolled into the new year, we talked a lot about how big this year was going to be for bargaining—preparing for it, participating in it, and better understanding the process—as a wave of UFCW 1518 contracts expire.

But we'd be remiss not to also talk about the negotiating stories that we concluded this year, which were both instructive and inspiring. In many ways, it's fortunate that our greatest mobilizing efforts in retail, industrial and cannabis are coming on the heels of these two highly successful UFCW

1518 bargaining campaigns. I'm talking about health care negotiations. In this sector, members set an extraordinary example of what solidarity and strategic engagement can achieve: life-changing deals and a worker-oriented culture that will benefit the whole public.

To start, our members in community health achieved some of the highest wage increases that they've ever secured (an average of 14% to 16% over 3 years), which will not only help with cost-of-living pressures but also recruitment and retention.

Understaffing and burnout is a chronic issue in this industry, and our members addressed it head-on in bargaining. Some of their most creative provisions came in the form of language for worker committees, which we are in the process of establishing right now. These member-driven working groups will ensure our community health care professionals continue to have a platform to speak up now that bargaining is done—a guaranteed place for them to raise ongoing concerns, propose solutions, and ensure frontline experience shapes the way that community health is delivered.

Community health is a notoriously difficult industry to organize because workers are scattered across geographical

locations and rarely congregate together at a central work location. Nevertheless, our members broke down these barriers and harnessed all of the resources UFCW 1518 made available to them to get the best deal possible.

You encouraged your coworkers to send in updated contact information, which expanded our reach and bolstered internal data. As a result, when bargaining hit an impasse, your employers knew we meant business and we had the capacity to pull off a successful strike vote. Then, when it came time to ratify a tentative agreement, our UFCW 1518 Stewards stepped up, maximizing their connections to ensure their coworkers voted.

The result was one of the highest vote rates that we've ever seen from this group of workers! Similarly, in Community Social Services, UFCW 1518 members rallied hard behind their bargaining representatives to get a fantastic Collective Agreement.

As we move forward into 2023, we will continue to take the lessons that we learned from these two tables and apply them to all of our sectors, so that we can keep winning big.



BECOMING **INDUSTRIAL** STRENGTH

Our members in the Industrial sector—which runs the gamut from meat processing plants to recycling centres—are tough. As UFCW 1518 Executive Board member and Grand River Foods employee Rajiv Mehra says, “we are pushed a lot.”

He describes his own work environment as incredibly cold and wet, but it’s all because of the union that workers like him have the health protections and work wear that they need to do the job safely and well.

What these physical workspaces lack in warmth, our members make up for with care, community, and vitality. The Industrial sector boasts one of the strongest networks of engaged and vocal Shop Stewards, who take great care to protect their coworkers. Consistently, they act as both a buffer between the shop floor and the employer, as well as a liaison between the larger union and their coworkers.

Avalon Dairy member Clint Dennett is one of these Stewards. “I was in it before we were even certified. I took it on as a challenge. [Stewards] are pretty much the leaders around here—we try to bring everybody together and on board.”

Inspiring passion and power in their coworkers will be the next big challenge for these leaders. The more members who are willing to speak up, enforce their collective agreement, and use the union’s platform to advance causes that they value, the stronger the union and the better their wages and working conditions will be.

Dennett agrees and says that mentorship and education for members will be key because the Stewards can’t be everywhere at once. Mehra notes that shifts in demographics must be considered when talking about empowering workers too. When he first started at Grand River Foods, many languages were spoken among staff.

“Currently, there are only two communities left,” he explains. “Ninety percent is Punjabi-speaking people and Filipino workers. These are the two communities coming ahead in labour, and this makes for a lot of changes. They need someone [in labour] who speaks their own languages.”



Update Magazine sat down with Mehra, Dennett and other passionate industrial activists to ask them how the union has improved their workplace, and how their coworkers can get more involved.

How has unionizing benefited your workplace?

James Commodore (Avalon Dairy): Respect. A lot more. We don't have a lot of the bullying from management anymore because we have rights now. We have a voice. Things have changed quite a bit for the better.

Rajiv Mehra (Grand River Foods): Job security. If the employer has done something wrong, you can approach the union through your Shop Stewards—they're the first people on the floor, elected by the members.

We've seen many times when people are terminated from the shop. When you're non-unionized you have no rights to come back to work. But when you're unionized, we can fight to bring people back and get them their job back.

Clint Dennett (Avalon Dairy): I'm glad we got a constant rep. When [Union Rep] Michael came in, it was like a safety net, so now we can move forward. He's here—and it's good for the members to see him. It's that reinforcement of 'look the union's here.'

What advice would you give to members who want to get more involved?

Mehra: Call the union! See the benefits that your union has. They will support you in every aspect, wherever you are. You need their help, they come. Nobody can harass you, nobody can push you, nobody can bully you—these are the advantages the union has. And without the union, you can't get all these benefits.

Dennett: I would say, 'do it.' That one class that we took online, you learn so much. You think you know a lot, but as soon as you do a class you learn so much more.

“Call the union! They will support you, wherever you are.”

—Rajiv Mehra, UFCW 1518 Industrial Member



ECYCLE MEMBERS

Ken Dickey & Debbie Lundstrom are standing up for their coworkers as members of their Bargaining Committee

WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT YOU!

Are you a member of the UFCW 1518 Industrial Sector?

Fill out our Industrial Survey for a chance to win some UFCW 1518 swag!

Scan the QR code below to participate:



A MATTER OF RESPECT

UFCW 1518 Launches the Respect Retail Workers Campaign to fight back.

Respect for retail workers should be a given, but it's not. From big-box stores to boutique shops, tensions are running high and frontline workers are bearing the brunt of people's anger, impatience, and stress, first over the pandemic and now over sky-high costs.

"Not only are these issues out of our members' control but they've been hurt by them too," says UFCW 1518 President Kim Novak. "Through ads, social media posts and grassroots advocacy we're raising awareness about the pressures retail workers face and giving them a platform to tell their stories."

To win the wages that all workers need and the respect that they deserve, we must unite with each other and with customers to fight for fairness! We're all on the same side of these issues and want secure jobs and fair wages to access the food, medicine, goods and services our members provide.

OUR MESSAGE

Retail workers support their communities every day, helping them get the food, supplies, and medicine they need. Now they need the support of their communities.

“*Our workload has been really heavy, and we had to deal with so many unhappy customers.”*

WHY NOW?

For over two years, UFCW 1518 members have kept their cool, all while taking the heat. Floods, fires and a pandemic demanded that they drop everything to support their neighbours. Now it's time the public stand with them.



GET YOUR BUTTONS

Watch for UFCW 1518 President Kim Novak and Union Reps in stores



FRESHCO KELOWNA MEMBER
Maria Eden wears her Respect
Retail Workers Button



Retail workers need their employers and the public to know that they are as committed to improving their workplaces as they are to supporting their communities.

Our members have been saying the time is now to fight for the respect they deserve!

**RESPECT
RETAIL
WORKERS**

1518
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YOUR RESPECT RETAIL WORKERS TOOLKIT

Here's what **YOU** can do to help support retail workers:

Order Buttons for Your Friends & Family

Tell them to wear their Respect Retail Workers button when they shop where UFCW 1518 members work. Retail members need your support!



Stand Up to Bad Behaviour

If you spot a customer being rude or abusive to a retail worker, let them know it isn't appropriate. If you fear for the workers' or your own safety, seek out a manager or security personnel.



Be Kind to Retail Workers

One grumpy or aggressive customer can really ruin a worker's day. One nice customer can turn it around.



OUT & ABOUT

UFCW 1518 members are everywhere! The union is meeting them where they're at, so that everyone can carry the megaphone in their workplaces and communities.

SHOP STEWARD & WORKSITE LEADER APPRECIATION EVENTS

UFCW 1518's Shop Stewards and Health and Safety Committee members are the activists, the leaders, and the voice of the union in their workplaces. They work tirelessly, enforcing the collective agreement, mediating conflict and helping coworkers find their union voice. This year, we are showing our thanks to these leaders by hosting appreciation events in regions across the province. Participating stewards and worksite leaders brushed up on their skills and built connections in a variety of workshops.

2022 RETAIL CONFERENCE

Our first large-scale in-person event since the pandemic, the UFCW 1518 Retail Conference brought together hundreds of members from grocery stores across the province under the same roof to build solidarity and power in the retail sector. Over two days, members attended workshops, discussed the big bargaining year ahead and prepared to return to their worksites armed with information and resources for their coworkers.



SAFeway KELOWNA MEMBER
Russell Robbins spoke with
UFCW 1518 Leadership during a unit visit

WORKSITE VISITS

We're building worker power in all parts of the province and all corners of your workplaces. To draw on the experiences and bolster the voices of more workers, your union is reaching deep. We're doing more site visits, where Union Reps will come to your workplaces to speak with you; we're devising new ways to support leaders in the workplace; and we're hosting more events in your communities.

SOBEYS & SAVE-ON-FOODS BARGAINING TOURS

Two of our largest grocery contracts are in negotiations this year, spurring thousands of workers into an impressive fight for respect, equity and dignified wages. UFCW 1518's Sobeys and Save-On-Foods bargaining teams have been leading the charge, working tirelessly at the bargaining table while also shoring up support and power in stores by doing site visits and networking with their fellow workers.



SULMA DRICOS SHARES
her bargaining priorities during
the Save-On-Foods tour



KIM & PATRICK
check-in with
members at Urban
Fare in Kelowna



**SHOP STEWARD & WORKPLACE
LEADERS APPRECIATION** guests join
a class with Union Rep Jason Frank



UFCW 1518 PRESIDENT
Kim Novak speaks at the
Kelowna Shop Steward &
Work Leaders Appreciation



**SOBEYS HEALTH & SAFETY
COMMITTEE MEMBER**
Peter Dimond at the 2022
Retail Conference



BC BUDTENDER Thomas Reimer
builds solidarity with retail workers
at the 2022 Retail Conference



UFCW 1518 STAFF join
striking PSAC workers on the
line in April



UFCW 1518 PRESIDENT
Kim Novak speaks at the 2023
CLC Convention in Montreal



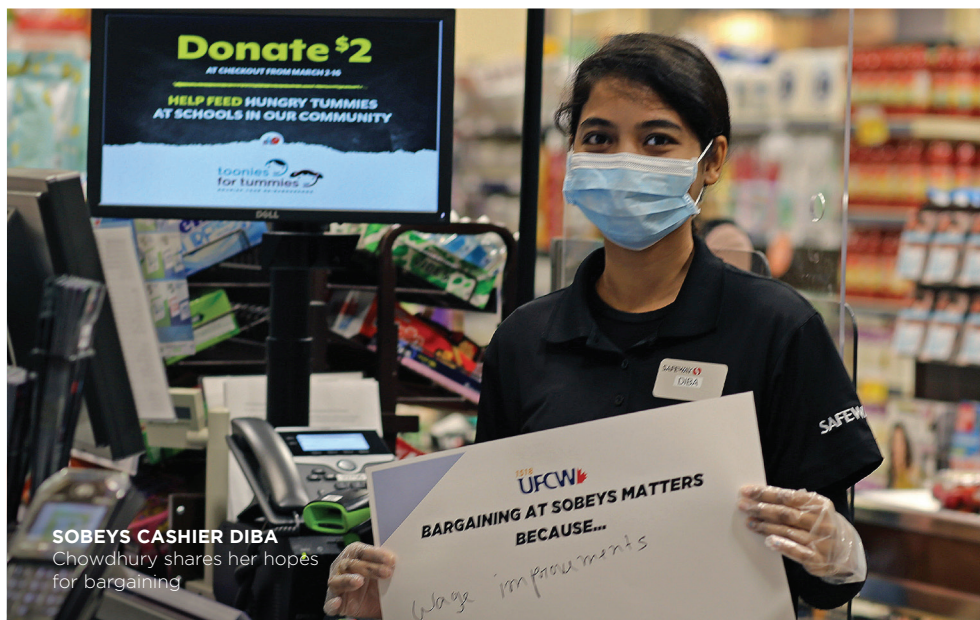
PRESIDENT NOVAK WELCOMES
delegates to the 2022 BC Federation of
Labour Convention in Vancouver



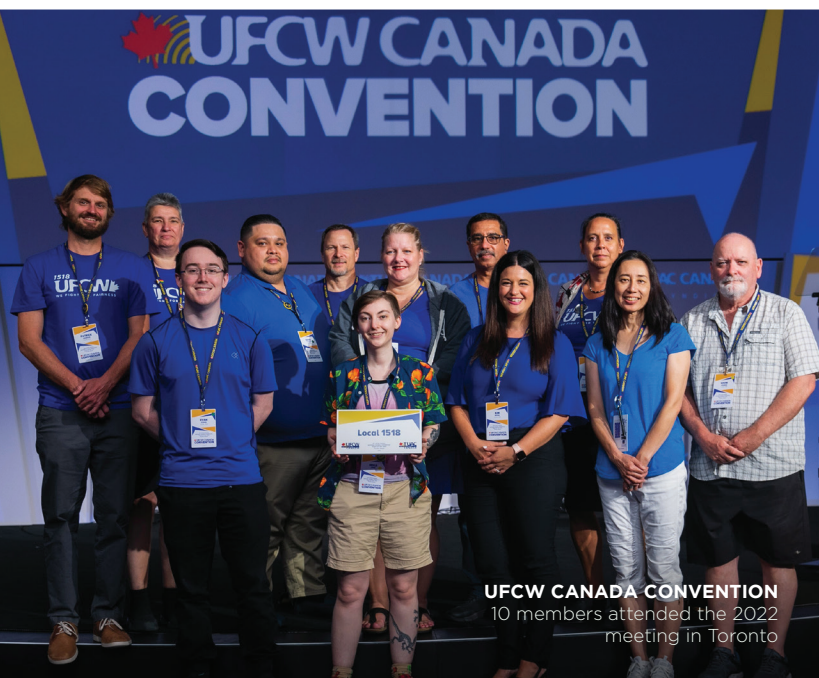
MARYLOU FONDA SPEAKS in favour of
a paid holiday for Truth & Reconciliation
Day at the BC Fed Conference



UNION REP LAURA CIPOLATO
and other reps have been
visiting units extensively



SOBEYS CASHIER DIBA
Chowdhury shares her hopes
for bargaining



UFCW CANADA CONVENTION
10 members attended the 2022
meeting in Toronto



SAVE-ON-FOODS MEMBER
Marie Chays shares her extensive
wine knowledge with customers

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Do you work in food processing or another industrial shop? Get ready for more in-person visits from your union! UFCW 1518's leadership team and staff representatives know how much workers in the Industrial sector value face-to-face communication and community, so we'll be coming to you to empower your Stewards and hear from all members on the shop floor.

BC FED CONVENTION

As a member union of the BC Federation of Labour, UFCW 1518 sent over a dozen members to the 2022 Convention. During the proceedings, delegates passed two historic resolutions that our union's Indigenous Committee submitted to advance Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous justice through the labour movement.

UFCW INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

In April, UFCW 1518's Executive Board headed south with President Kim Novak and Secretary-Treasurer Patrick Johnson to attend the 2023 UFCW International Convention. By taking to the floor, speaking on panels, voting on resolutions, and meeting with other UFCW members, our local's delegates ensured that your voices were heard and reflected in the larger union's goals, visions, and democratic processes.

CLC CONVENTION

The Canadian Labour Congress unites the efforts of unions across the country by advancing common goals and fostering working-class culture in the labour movement. For this year's Convention, UFCW 1518 sent worksite leaders from each of our largest sectors to speak up, meet other activists and build common ground with unions from a variety of industries, so that we can move forward on our progressive agendas together.

EDUCATION MONTH

We're drawing on every tool that we have at our disposal to grow our members' physical presence and power. One of those tools is online learning. This year's Education Month saw some of the highest enrollment rates we've ever seen for New Member Orientations, power hours, and full-day courses.

Here's what some of the Shop Steward and Health & Safety Course participants had to say about the experience!

“I really appreciated the information about resolving the right to refuse unsafe work issues.”

—Health & Safety Essentials Course Participant

“I can move forward knowing I have support from my union and fellow Stewards.”

—Advanced Shop Steward Course Participant

“What I liked the most about the class was the experiences shared by the other members! Real-life experience has no parallel.”

—Shop Steward Fundamentals Course Participant



Yukie Imada is a Community Health care Worker (CHW) in the Lower Mainland

HOW WORKERS SAVED BC'S HOME CARE SYSTEM

By Yukie Imada

Most of the clients I support—driving to their homes and delivering care to their doors—are seniors. When I look at them, I see my mom and dad, who are now in their 80's. When I meet their families, I think of my sister, supporting our mom through her dementia diagnosis.

All three live in Japan, which I left one final time in 2011 to settle in BC. I had two young children, and as a migrant parent, finding steady work that could pay the bills was not easy. In home care, I saw an opportunity and decided to pursue a job as a Community Health care Worker (CHW) to support my kids.

But I wasn't acting on maternal instinct, alone; I was thinking of my own parents, an ocean away in Japan. I thought that if I can't be there for them in their old age, I want to be there for someone else's parents. If I can't be beside my sister, I want to be there for BC's family caregivers, to alleviate the pressure that they experience. In this last round of bargaining, my ability to keep doing this work for British Columbians was at stake.

To save our jobs and home care we needed a real recruitment and retention plan that would fix our under-resourced and understaffed teams. Financial parity with our counterparts at medical facilities, protections against violence, and provisions for mental health were also a must.

As of March 1, 2023, we secured a new contract with all these improvements and more. As a CHW this win affects me directly. It means I can afford my bills and that I'll be less susceptible to burnout. But it also means I can pay it forward and support health care at all levels, which is the true value of quality home care.

By preventing falls and monitoring medication intake, CHWs protect individuals and help them maintain their independence. We also protect families by ensuring that sick, recovering, disabled or elderly relatives can stay connected with loved ones in the comfort of their own homes. Last but not least, we keep communities strong by ensuring that vulnerable people stay woven into the fabric of their neighborhoods.

Even though the work that we do is limited to private homes, it affects the public health care system as a whole and, therefore, every British Columbian. For instance, by doing regular house visits and providing mobility exercises, we prevent overcrowding in emergency rooms and continuing-care centres, where facilities staff are severely understaffed and overworked.

Everything is related. A solid Community Health care system is the foundation for an all-around healthy society. My mom always said everything feeds into each other. You can't distinguish giving from receiving because they're related. Just as she cared for me, I do for my community what I would do for her if she required the same level of care as my clients. Similarly, this new contract gives CHWs the support that we need to keep supporting our neighbors.

NOTICE OF NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF UFCW LOCAL 1518 OFFICERS

The UFCW International Constitution and Local Union By-laws (Article XII Section A) require that Officers of the Local Union be elected every four years. The current term of office expires on December 31, 2023.

Nominations for President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recorder and 25 Vice-Presidents for the term of office commencing January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2027, will be conducted in the coming weeks. Pursuant to the Local Union By-laws, the President, Secretary-Treasurer, Recorder and Vice-Presidents will be nominated by signature petition (Article XII Section E).

To be eligible to run for Office, one must be an active member of UFCW 1518 who has either continuous active membership in the Local since June 2022, or continuous active membership in the UFCW International Union since June 2021 (Article XII Section D).

Nominations for Position of President or Secretary-Treasurer

Nominations for positions of President and Secretary-Treasurer will be established by signature petition. To be eligible for election, the required number of nominating signatures from active members is 461 (Article XII Section E).

Nominations for Position of Recorder and Vice-Presidents

Nominations for position of Recorder and Vice-Presidents will be established by signature petition. To be eligible for election, the required number of nominating signatures from active members is 25 (Article XII Section E).

How to Acquire Candidate Election Material

A nomination package, including official nomination petition forms, will be available to any active member running for an elected position by contacting the Election Chairperson, Pablo Godoy, at 1-403-542-2366. For general inquiries, contact the election office at 604-526-1518 or 1-800-661-3708 on or after Wednesday, July 19, 2023, until noon on Thursday, August 3, 2023.

Election Office Hours

From Wednesday, July 19, 2023, until Thursday, August 3, 2023, the office will be open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. On Saturday, July 29, 2023, and Sunday, July 30, 2023, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Nomination Petition Forms

Nominations will only be accepted when completed on the original petition forms issued by the Election Chairperson. To be eligible, all petition nomination signatures must be made by an active member of UFCW 1518. Each petition shall be completed in full, be orderly and legible, and also contain the following information from each active member signing the petition: full name (printed), employer name and location, and signature of member (Article XII Section E. 2).

Properly completed nomination forms must be received at UFCW 1518 head office to the attention of the Election Chairperson by the close of nominations at 12:00 noon on Thursday, August 3, 2023. Petitions shall be filed at the local union office by mail or in person. Original signatures are required to be filed, and transmission by facsimile, computer or other form of electronic submission shall not be valid (Article XII Section E. 3).

Election Procedure

If an active member running for an elected position is challenged by another active member for the same position, a mail referendum election will take place to have the membership decide who the successful candidate will be (Article XII Section I. 1). Should a mail referendum take place, a ballot containing the names of candidates and elected position(s) being challenged will be sent to all members on August 18, 2023.

The ballot will be provided along with a secret ballot envelope and a postage paid self-addressed return envelope. The ballot must be placed into the secret ballot envelope and then placed into the postage paid self-addressed envelope and returned by September 5, 2023, for post office pick-up at 12:00 noon.

The ballots will then be transported by the Election Committee to the UFCW 1518 head office where they will be counted (Article XII Section I. 2. a.b.c.).

In solidarity,

Pablo Godoy
Election Chairperson

NOTE: In the event of a significant disruption to the mail service as a result of a Canada Post labour dispute, the dates noted for the election (mailing of ballots) may have to be moved to a later date. Members will be advised should this become necessary.



JOIN AN EVENT

ufcw1518.com/events



UPDATE

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