

BARGAINING UPDATE



GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

LOCALS 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 009 & 012 - ALL STAFF

GSBC UPDATE #4:

Progress made, but we still need your strength Our wage demands are reasonable when seen in context

Negotiations are well under way and – thanks to the work your negotiating team did with members in advance – we are organized, we are well prepared, and we are making progress.

However, it’s important to remember that we need your support when we call on you. Negotiations can only succeed if we are strong, united, and prepared to show that to the employer.

The Government Services Bargaining Committee (GSBC) met the employer on March 6 and 7 and on March 13 and 14.

We made progress on our non-monetary demands and have signed off on a number of articles in the collective agreement.

While things are going well, there is a huge gap between our monetary demands and what the employer is offering. We have strong research to support our monetary demands, which we have shared with the employer.

Our monetary position

The government’s opening offer was a four-year deal with raises of 2%, 2%, 1.75%, and 1.75%. It works out to an average increase of 1.88% per year.

This is nowhere near enough to catch up with soaring inflation and high interest rates we are all experiencing.

We are seeking a three-year deal with wage raises of 13%, 6.5%, and 6.5%. We are also proposing Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), to protect us from further inflation.

The chart below shows how far wages have fallen in real terms when the Consumer Price Index is factored in.

If inflation continues as predicted for the next two years, real wages for Government of Alberta (GOA) workers will have fallen by 26.2% since 2017.

Inflation vs. Government of Alberta Wage Settlements (2017 - 2026)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Cumulative Inflation (CPI) Growth	1.6%	4.0%	5.8%	7.0%	10.4%	17.5%	21.4%	24.4%	27.2%	29.9%
Cumulative Wage Growth (GoA)	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Gap (Percentage Points)	1.6 p.p.	4 p.p.	4.8 p.p.	6 p.p.	9.4 p.p.	16.5 p.p.	17.6 p.p.	20.6 p.p.	23.4 p.p.	26.2 p.p.

Source: CPI (2016-2023) - Statistics Canada: Table 18-10-0005-01 | CPI (2024-2026) Budget 2024 | GoA - Alberta Mediation Services

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It might seem to some that our wage demands are high, but in light of what happened in the last two collective agreements, and when inflation is factored in, our demands are reasonable.

The last collective agreement gave us two years of wage freezes, followed by a 2.75% raise that came in two instalments, 1.25% in January 2023 and 1.5% in September 2023.

In the collective agreement before that, we again had two years of wage freezes, followed by a raise of only 1%.

That means members received a combined wage increase of nearly 3.8% over seven years.

Inflation, meanwhile, has had a severe impact on GOA workers. In those same seven years. The Consumer Price Index in Alberta shows an increase in prices of 21.4%.

In real terms, that means GOA workers have suffered a cut of 17.6%. What we are asking for now is simply to address these issues fairly.

If we settled for the employer's current offer, our real wages would be even further behind inflation by 2027, effectively cut by 21.4% vs. the 17.6% they are today.

Government employees are still working as hard or harder than we ever have. Alberta's population growth has increased the demands on us and the services we provided, while staff shortages have led to hugely increased workloads, greater stress, and mass burn-out.

Preparing for future inflation

In this round of bargaining, we want to ensure members are not impacted by inflation again in the coming years.

That's why we are demanding a cost-of-living formula (COLA).

The chart below shows what GOA members would have received in the last four years if our COLA proposal had been in place. The plan would be for members to receive lump-sum payments at the end of each year, the size of which depend on CPI. These lumps sum payments give you some protection from inflation.

Year	Annual Salary				CPI %
	\$40,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$70,000.00	
2020	\$447.24	\$559.05	\$670.86	\$782.67	1.1%
2021	\$1,271.60	\$1,589.50	\$1,907.39	\$2,225.29	3.2%
2022	\$2,572.00	\$3,215.00	\$3,858.00	\$4,501.00	6.4%
2023	\$1,309.00	\$1,636.25	\$1,963.50	\$2,290.75	3.3%
Total	\$5,599.84	\$6,999.80	\$8,399.76	\$9,799.72	14.0%

Source: Statistics Canada - Table:18-10-0005-01

Your negotiating team also proposes that no GOA worker be paid less than \$22.98 per hour. That's known as a living wage. It's what a worker needs to earn to meet the basic necessities, including food, clothing and a place to live.

There is no reason any government worker should be unable to afford food, clothes, and rent while working full time for the government of a very wealthy province.

Bargaining specific to your Locals

Your negotiating team is working with AUPE's research department. We are identifying classifications that require market adjustments to bring them in line with wages paid for similar work outside the GOA.

Working with each of the Local bargaining committees is an important part of this work. We will meet with those Local committees to review the data from our research department.

Local Bargaining Committee dates:

Your Local negotiating teams will meet the employer to discuss proposals on the following dates:

Local 003: April 9.

Local 006: April 10.

Local 012: April 18.

Local 005: April 19.

Local 009: April 29.

Local 001: April 30.

Local 004: May 6.

Local 002: May 7.

Next GSBC main-table bargaining dates

Your GSBC team will meet the employer to discuss monetary proposals on the following dates:

April 29 and 30

May 7 and 8

June 3 and 4

We need your support

Your negotiating team cannot get the agreement you deserve without your active participation. We need to show the employer that we're angry, united, determined, and ready to fight.

We need you to attend

Our goal is to achieve a negotiated settlement at the bargaining table, but we anticipate negotiations will reach a critical stage where we need your involvement and mobilization. At that point, we will organize town-hall meetings to review what's happening and what you need to do to support your negotiations.

We need you to participate

Information pickets and worksite rallies are important ways to show our solidarity, our dissatisfaction, and our determination. Actions like these will be organized through your GOA Locals and activists with the support of AUPE headquarters. Watch for more information on these actions.

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We need you to be aware of your full bargaining rights

While we are negotiating a new collective agreement, there are also negotiations under way to secure an Essential Services Agreement (ESA).

This agreement between the union and the employer lays out the duties deemed essential to protect Albertans' lives, health, and safety at a worksite in case of a strike or lockout.

An ESA is required before we can take a strike vote. We will provide further information and progress on the ESA in future bargaining updates.

It may become necessary to take a strike vote if negotiations hit an impasse. We must be able to show the employer our strength and unity. We must be ready to fight for a fair and equitable settlement.

Most collective agreements are settled without a strike or a lockout, even when a strike vote is held. The best way to avoid a work stoppage is to have a strong strike mandate – in other words, a strong, credible vote in favour of striking. A strong strike mandate puts pressure on the employer and would give us the best chance of getting a deal that works for us.

Stay tuned

We need you to stay in touch. Please make sure your personal information is updated on the AUPE website to never miss a bargaining update: <https://www.aupe.org/update-info>.

AUPE members are under extreme financial pressures due to high inflation, out-of-control interest rates, and heavy workloads, as well as short staffing. We know there's a lot at stake and we're going to fight to make some serious gains. We need you to get involved now!

If you have questions, please reach out to a member of your GSBC Representative or your Local's bargaining team.