

Reviving Your AUPE Chapter

What is your Local
and Chapter?

Why is it important to have
an active chapter?

How can you help activate or
revive your chapter?



What is your Local and Chapter?

If you don't know to which Local and Chapter of AUPE you belong, contact the Member Resource Centre (MRC) at 1-800-232-7284 or by visiting aupe.org/contact-member-resource-centre.

How you Elect your Union Representatives



Why is it important to have an active chapter?

- An active chapter sends a message to the employer that workers are united and have power. It gives members tangible leverage. It means employers are less likely to pick on individual members or treat members unfairly.
- If you get into trouble or are treated unfairly by the employer, you have support at the workplace.
- Many, but not all, Chapters have their own elected negotiating team. An active Chapter has a stronger team to ensure we achieve a better contract.

If you have questions, you have people who can provide answers. e.g., questions on:

- Your collective-bargaining agreement
- Your rights as a worker
- Benefits
- Scheduling
- Safety at work
- Your collective-bargaining agreement
- AUPE education courses
- An active chapter means you will have better relationships with colleagues.
- You will be better informed about union events, including fun outings with your Area Council.

How can you help activate or revive a chapter?

FOR LOCAL COUNCILS:

If you're on a Local Council and want to revive a Chapter that has become inactive, here are some steps you can take:

GET CONTACTS: Reach out to AUPE's organizing department or your Membership Services Officer (MSO) and ask for a list of members of that Chapter, along with emails and landline and cellphone numbers. You can also ask for the names and contact information of members who have been identified as work-site contacts, members who have previously held positions in the Chapter and of members who have taken courses through AUPE's education department.

MAKE A PLAN: Before you contact members of the inactive Chapter, make a plan for what you are going to say and how you want the work ahead to unfold. If you need training on how to have those conversations, contact AUPE's organizing department. You'll want to talk about the importance of having an active Chapter and the benefits that will flow to members, such as member discounts, AUPE education courses and active workplace members to represent your interests. If you need help coming up with ideas or a strategy to get the Chapter active again, contact AUPE's organizing department. You can work with the AUPE vice-president assigned to your region to help get inactive Chapters up and running again.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS: You might find it useful to have materials ready to support your efforts. For example, a script that you can use as a guideline to your conversations with Chapter members, posters inviting members to meetings, fact sheets outlining the benefits of having an active Chapter and the roles of Chapter executives. Contact someone in the organizing department. They can co-ordinate with the communications department to help create these materials. AUPE has a selection of materials that can be shared with members at aupe.org/member-resources.

MAKE THE CALLS: Once you are comfortable with how you want the conversations to unfold, use the phone list and start to call the members.

SEND THE EMAILS: Email work-site members with written messages to support your phone conversations. You can send posters about meetings and fact sheets outlining the benefits of having an active Chapter. You can describe the Chapter executive positions and duties.

MEET AND GREET: Organize face-to-face meetings with Chapter members. You may need to have more than one and have them at different times of day, in order to reach people working different shifts. Invite your AUPE vice-president. Have one-on-one conversations with members to recruit for Chapter positions. Have information or handout on what the duties are of the positions. The more members that take positions mean more hands doing the work.

AND FINALLY: Once you have recruited members, the Local can call a site meeting with Membership Services Office (MSO) and vice-president, where members can be elected or appointed to Chapter executive positions. It's a good idea to follow up at regular intervals after this to ensure things are running smoothly and to tackle any issues before they become bigger problems.

How can you help activate or revive a chapter?

FOR CHAPTERS/WORK SITES:

CONTACT THE MEMBER RESOURCE CENTRE (MRC): If you belong to an inactive Chapter and you want to revive operations, you can call 1-800-232-7284 or visit aupe.org/contact-member-resource-centre. Through the MRC, you will be able to connect with your Membership Services Officer (MSO) and staff in AUPE's organizing department. They can help.

REACH OUT TO YOUR LOCAL: The MRC can connect you with your Local's leaders. See the previous section for the kind of approaches you can use either as Chapter members or in conjunction with Local leaders.

REACH OUT TO YOUR VP: AUPE has vice-presidents assigned to each region of the province. You can contact the MRC at 1-800-232-7284 or aupe.org/contact-member-resource-centre to find out who your VP and contact them.

LET'S TALK: The best start to revive a Chapter is having one-on-one conversations with your colleagues. This can start with phone calls or face-to-face conversations. Your MSO and organizers will be able to help with this. You can get contact information for your fellow Chapter members from AUPE's organizing department?

BULLETIN BOARD: Most work sites have union bulletin boards. Make use of these by posting fresh content. You can get that by contacting the MRC at 1-800-232-7284 or by visiting aupe.org/contact-member-resource-centre. AUPE has a selection of materials that can be shared with members at aupe.org/member-resources.

LET'S MEET: Once initial approaches have been made, meet-and-greet sessions can be set up to bring colleagues together. Membership Services Officers (MSOs) or organizers can attend. You can also invite the AUPE Vice-President assigned to your region.

SHOW THAT THE CHAPTER HAS VALUE: Organize lunch-and-learn sessions for members. AUPE has experts on a whole range of important topics, including: your collective agreement; occupational health and safety; the Workers' Compensation Board; pensions; AUPE's education courses.

LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR UNION: Before you start to have conversations with your colleagues, arm yourselves by taking courses offered by AUPE's education department. You should also encourage members to sign up for courses.

Case Study

LOCAL 056 CHAPTER 013 - GSS

Northern Lights Regional Health Centre, Fort McMurray

THE SITUATION

The chapter had been inactive for about two years for a variety of reasons, says AUPE vice-president Mike Dempsey.

The community had been hit by a massive wildfire and a flood. A dramatic drop in the price of oil also led to lots of people leaving.

“So, a lot of people coming and going, and a few people in leadership retired as well, too,” says Dempsey. These factors all contributed to the chapter becoming inactive.

It was so inactive, in fact, that when an AGM was called in the Spring of 2022, not a single member attended.

THE TACTICS

Face-to-face conversations are the key to reviving inactive chapters, says Dempsey.

In conjunction with the Health Sciences Association of Alberta (HSAA), which also has members at the hospital, a food truck was sent to the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre.

Free food and a chance to mingle with friends and colleagues is usually a good way to get people to show up.

“People were lined up having a chat. They’re appreciative of the good meal they could get on the union,” he says.

Dempsey, executives from the Local 056, including Local Chair Rosanna Zaniol, and a Membership Services Officer (MSO) worked the food lineup, finding AUPE members and chatting to them. Members had questions on many issues and were given answers.

“You know, we had conversations about how we have to change what’s going on and [the need to] get people organized,” says Dempsey. “Because the mindset of this government is such that that if you roll over and take it, then you’ll be even more abused.”

They talked about needing to have members step up so they could strive to improve their working conditions. In those conversations, Dempsey and his team were able to identify people with leadership potential, people who would make a good chapter chair or vice-chair.

THE RESULT

A new AGM was called about six weeks later, in the fall of 2022. This time, people not only showed up, but they had a successful election with a full slate of candidates.

The chapter, with about 250 members, was back in action – and remains active.

The next AGM is scheduled for March 10.

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