

STEWARDS ORIENTATION

Fitting into the Union



Stewards: Fitting into the Union

This orientation should take no more than 15 minutes

You can download the full Stewards Power Tool series at <https://opseu.org/member-education/>



Stewards: Fitting into the Union

Question:

How will you, the Steward in your work Unit, fit into OPSEU's structure at the Local level?

Answer:

Start small – your work group

Work areas are the steward's jurisdiction. Ideally a work area has no more than about 15 members who elect one of their number as their steward. Locals (or Units) define the work areas.



Stewards: Fitting into the Union

Why Working areas have their own Steward?

- Shared working conditions bring understanding of the group's issues.
- Stewards should not be overburdened.
- More Stewards make it easier to take on the boss.
- Stewards need other stewards to support each other, and to share ideas.
- Workers need Stewards to share information from unit and local committee meetings.



Stewards: Fitting into the Union

All OPSEU members belong to a “Unit” – a group of members who work for the same employer in the same (or nearby) locations. Units have legal and practical bases.

When members are organized, the Labour Relations Board certifies the union to represent a “Bargaining Unit.” This is a legal entity which an employer must bargain with.



Stewards: Units and Locals

Units have their own relationship with their managements, so they need their own union leaders to discuss labour relations.

They often operate as “mini-locals” in relation to their managers. When there are several different units in one Local, they are often quite independent, coming together as a Local mainly to do the internal business of the union.

One or more units make up an OPSEU Local.

Locals are the bodies that elect delegates to union conventions, approve local budgets and bylaws, get active in central and regional union campaigns and participate in area councils and labour councils.



Stewards: OPSEU Local Structure

Single-unit Local, where all members work at a single location for a single employer.

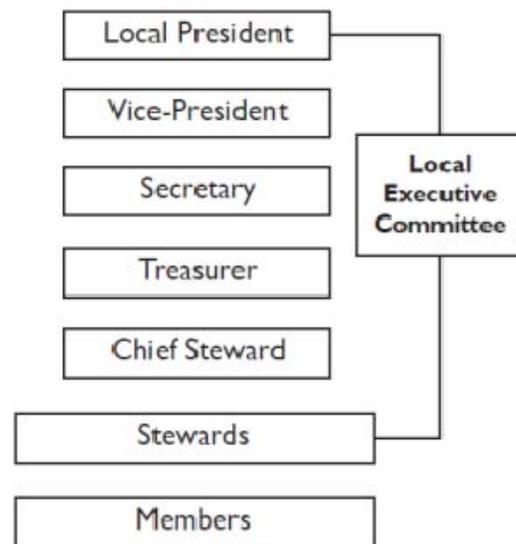
Multi-unit Local, where all members work for a single employer but at different locations.

Composite Local, where members work for more than one employer at one or more work locations.

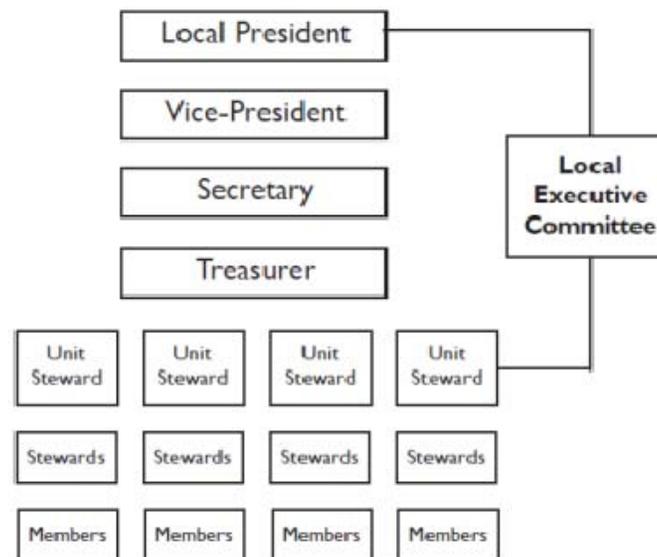


Local Structure: Single Unit, Multi Unit/Composite

Single-unit local



Multi-unit or Composite local



Stewards: OPSEU Local Structure



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Local Structure: Types of Locals

Single-unit Local, where all members work at a single location for a single employer.

Multi-unit Local, where all members work for a single employer but at different locations

Composite Local, where members work for more than one employer at one or more work locations



OPSEU Provincial Structure

Regions:

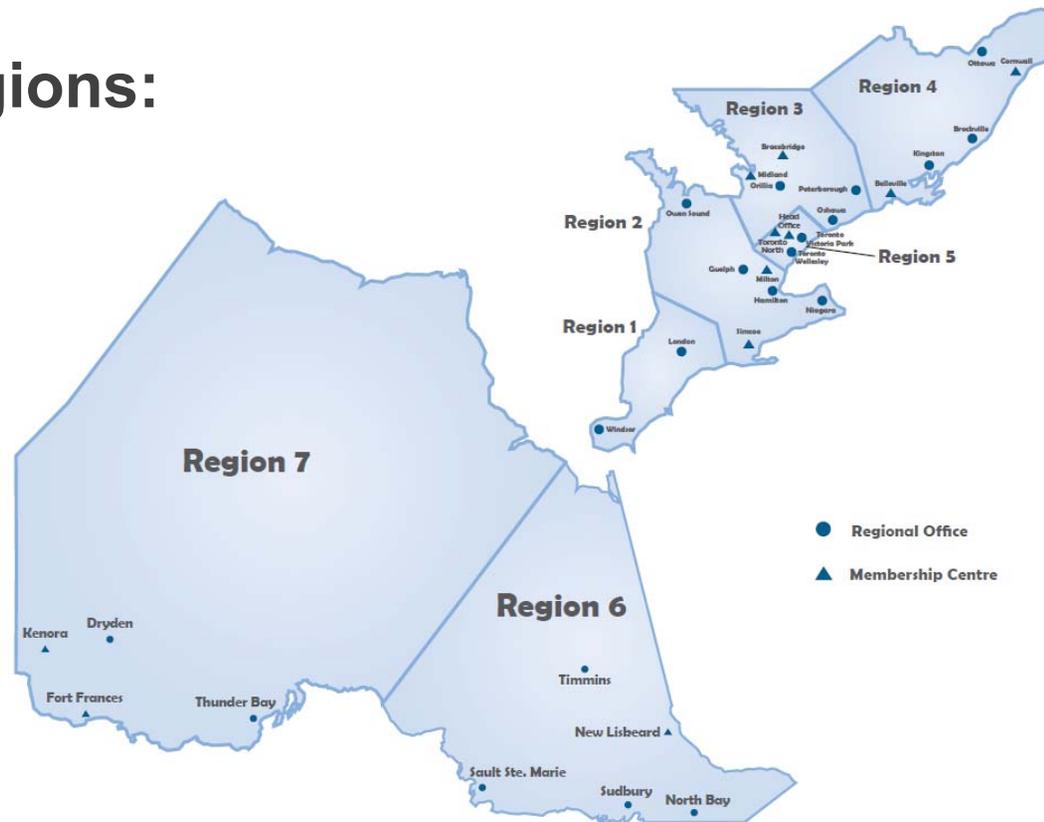
- OPSEU is structured in a number of ways including geographically by region.
- Each Local is assigned a number. The first number represents the Local's region.
- Regions are represented by Executive Board Members, Hardship Committee reps, and Equity Committee Reps.

i.e. Local 123 is in Region 1



OPSEU Provincial Structure

OPSEU Regions:



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OPSEU Provincial Structure

Locals: the heart of OPSEU structure.

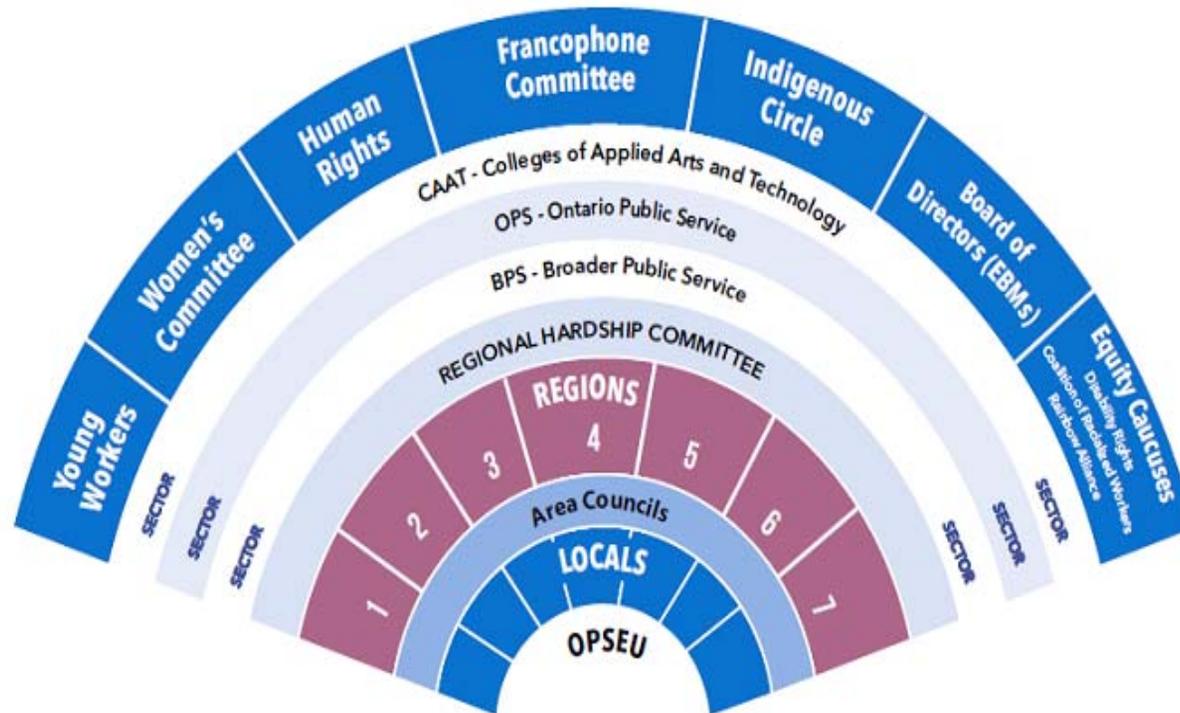
Area Council: different OPSEU Locals in a city or region.

Sectors: workplace groupings that coordinate strategies: for example: Broader Public Service (BPS), Ontario Public Service (OPS) and Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT).

Provincial Reps: Committees, Caucuses, and the Board of Directors.



OPSEU Provincial Structure



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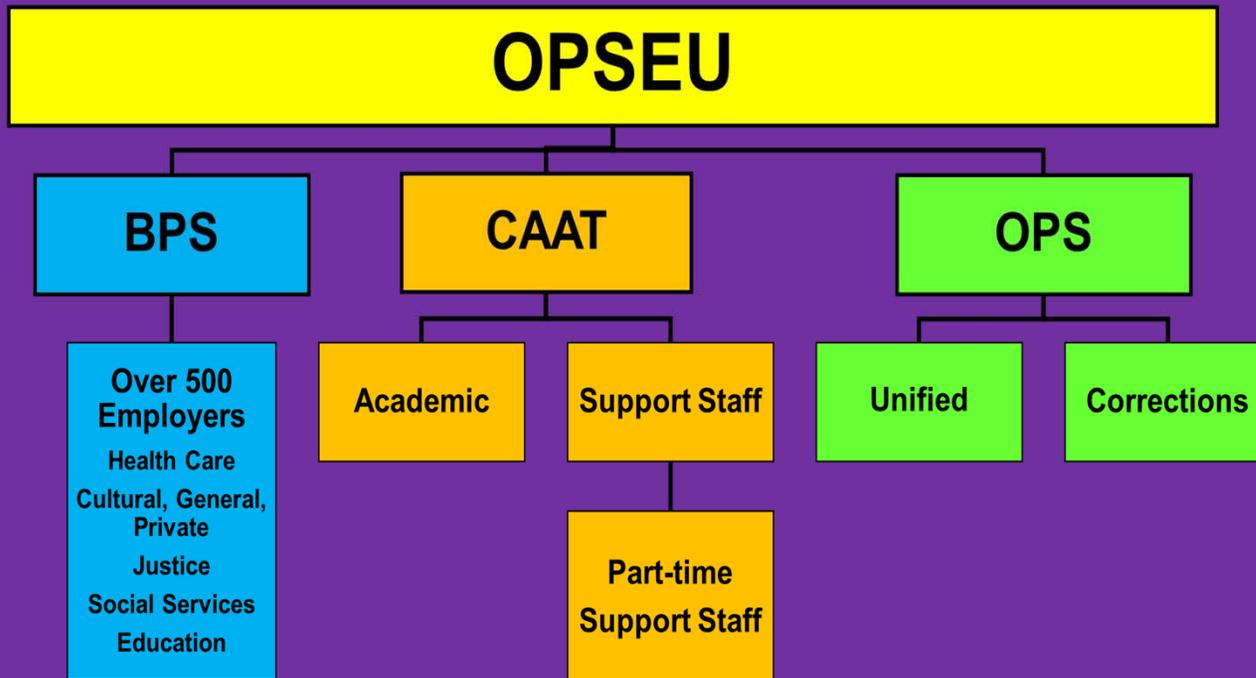
Stewards: Linking Locals

Sectors are Provincial bodies sorted by workplace/employers:

- Broader Public Service
- Ontario Public Service
- Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology



Stewards: Linking Locals



OPSEU – Broader Public Service (BPS) Sectors

1. Ambulance	10. Hospital Professionals
2. Developmental Services	11. Hospital Support
3. Boards of Education and Cultural Institutions	13. Municipalities
4. Children's Aid Societies	15. Children's Treatment Centres
5. Community Agencies	16. Property Assessment
7. BPS Corrections	17. Community Health Care Professionals
8. Long-Term Care	18. Mental Health
9. Universities	19. CBS and Diagnostics
	26. Liquor Board Employees

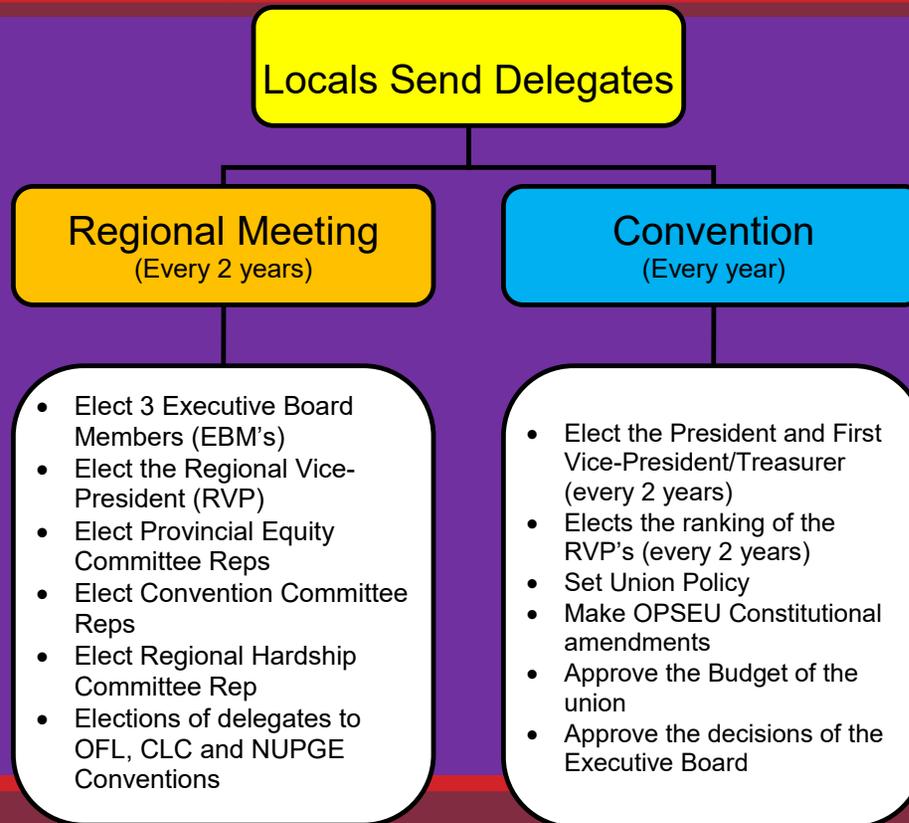


OPSEU Structure and decision making

- OPSEU is a member driven organization
- Members vote for their local leaders and delegates to Regional Meetings and Convention
- Convention is the highest decision making body in OPSEU



OPSEU Structure and decision making



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OPSEU Structure: Convention

- Decide union policy
- Amend the Constitution
- Appoint auditors
- Review and pass the budget
- Set union dues
- Approve decisions of the Executive Board

Every Two Years

- Elect the President
- Elect the 1st Vice-President Treasurer



Stewards and Staff

OPSEU depends on its member activists. This network of more than 7,000 Stewards, Health and Safety reps and others do most of the union's work.

OPSEU employs about 300 people. In addition to the necessary administrative and support staff in the head office and regional offices, there are many labour professionals. They are specialists in bargaining, handling grievances, communications, organizing, pensions and benefits, education, health and safety and more.

Before calling your Staff Rep, talk to your Unit or Chief Steward. If you need the rep's advice, assign one person to make the call and share the answer with all stewards.



Stewards Training

Your election means you have the confidence of your members. OPSEU educational programs give you the skills to serve them.

You can apply for money and facilitators to run an educational session at your Local. Ask your Executive Board member or Staff Rep for details.

OPSEU promotes local education that is specific to local needs, encourages maximum participation, provides for local development, recruits new activists, is accountable to the members and shows measurable benefits.



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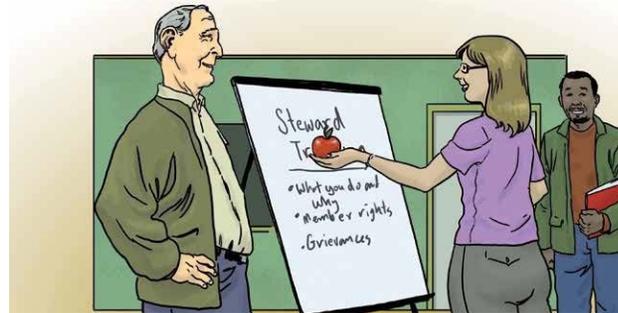
Stewards – Next Steps

- Knowing OPSEU structure will help with finding resources and supports for your Local.
- OPSEU's Member Education Unit offers training courses for Stewards.
- We urge you to apply the next time a Steward course is offered at your regional education.
- Check the OPSEU website or call your OPSEU regional office to find out when the next course is being offered.



Steward's Checklist

Question: What is a Stewards's checklist and why do you need to complete one?



Answer: A Steward's checklist is a list of basic information about your members. Once completed, it will assist you to get your work done with ease.



Sample Steward's Checklist

Section 1: About your members	Yes	No
1. List of your members' names and contact information		
2. Classification, job status and demographic profile of your members (We'll be doing an exercise later in this session on this)		
3. Working conditions and current issues facing each of your members		
4. Current status of grievances of your members (Files from previous steward; Local President or chief steward or Local Grievance Committee; conversation with OPSEU Staff Rep.)		
5. Names of supervisors/managers of your members and contact information for each		
6. Employer policies and workplace rules (employer website; past steward; OPSEU Staff Rep; Local president)		



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For more information:

Visit the OPSEU Member Education web page at <https://opseu.org/member-education/> and download the other Stewards orientation sessions.



STEWARDS ORIENTATION

Feedback?

Please take a moment to share your feedback.

1. Did you find this orientation useful?
2. Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

Thank you for your time. Please share your insight by sending a quick email to education@opseu.org





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