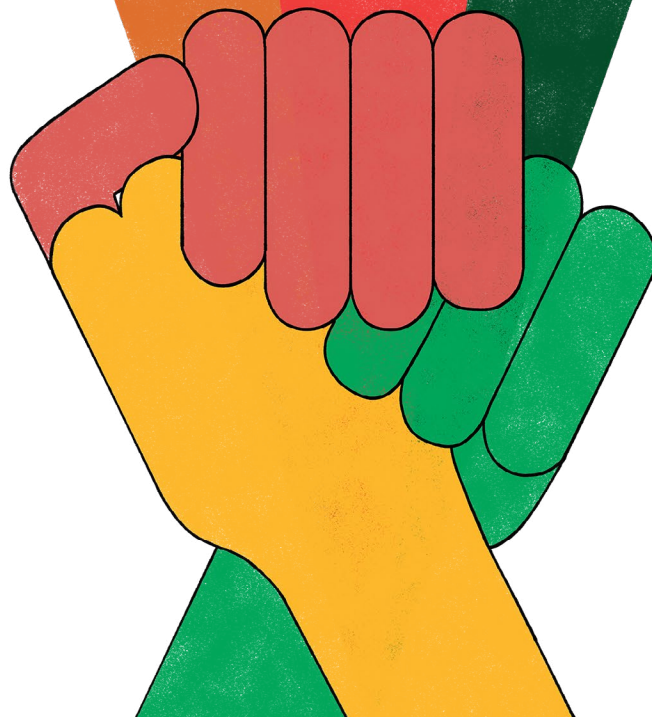


# MOBILIZATION

## Facilitator's Guide for Union Meetings



**UNITE.  
ORGANIZE.  
WIN.**



# INTRODUCTION

Dear Members,

The 2020 round of bargaining is well underway. At the time of writing, there is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the true intentions of the government with regard to its bargaining objectives. However, by submitting wage offers to us that were below inflation, despite a historic budget surplus, Mr. Legault and his ministers have demonstrated that they do not understand the extent of the crisis in the public networks.

On our end, one thing is certain—our objectives are clear: to significantly improve wages and working conditions for our 150,000 members who work in public services. To achieve our objectives, it will be necessary for workers to rattle the government through massive mobilization efforts carried out in solidarity.

As part of these union actions, we will need to use a variety of pressure tactics. For these pressure tactics to be as effective as possible, it is important for union members to be involved in determining collective actions to roll out throughout the round of bargaining. This is what we will be discussing today: we want to hear your ideas!

These meetings, which will be held with members across Quebec over the next two months, are inherently a mobilization exercise. By coming together to discuss pressure tactics and strike action, we are sending a clear message to our employer that we are determined to fight to ensure that our work in public services is recognized for its true value. Such recognition must result in better working and practice conditions, as well as better wages.

To hold discussions on this very broad subject, we have identified three key topics:

- Means of action
- Strikes
- Emergency measures to be used in exceptional situations

All suggestions are welcome during these meetings. Our goal is to brainstorm mobilization ideas. Your ideas will then be reviewed by a team of activists, advisers, and elected members of the Comité de coordination du secteur public et parapublic (CCSPP). We know that our members are creative and full of inspiration about ways to rattle their employer. We want to harness this creativity!

## YOUR ROLE AS FACILITATOR

The topics are all divided in the same way: context, a series of questions, and suggestions to elicit further responses. Your role as a facilitator is to elicit participation from as many members as possible. As we mentioned above, the goal of these meetings is to find many ideas for actions and mobilization efforts.

Here are some general suggestions related to facilitation:

- Summarize the context of the topic. You may not have time to go through all of the questions: prioritize the one that, in your opinion, will elicit the most discussion.
- In the online form, take note of the means of action and mobilization ideas that are suggested. Remove all personal identifiers from your notes (do not write the names of the people who make suggestions), but, when possible, include the sector, region, and job title of the person who suggested the idea.
- Encourage discussion by asking sub-questions. Suggestions to elicit further responses can be found in bullet points under the questions.
- Try to establish “constructive” discussions. If needed, remind participants that the goal of the meeting is to find new, inspiring action ideas and ways of improving existing ideas.
- It is important not to judge any of the ideas that members suggest. Instead, you should assert the value of the contributions made by those who speak up.

To list ideas and report on the outcome of the discussions, please complete the interactive PDF form titled *Union Meeting Response Form* that you received by email. All the necessary instructions can be found on this form. If you cannot find it, [you can download a new form here](#).

# MEANS OF ACTION

## Context

- We are focusing on collective action. A collective action increases the group's feeling of collective strength. No matter the action, the more that people participate, the more this feeling of strength increases and the more the action sends a clear message to the employer. Isolated actions can place the people who carry them out at a disadvantage, since the employer can target them more easily.
- We are also aiming to use an escalating scale of pressure tactics. This means that we will calmly begin the wave of actions and then turn toward actions that are more disruptive, which will allow us to reach the least engaged members and get them involved in collective action. This escalation of means of action indicates to the employer that we are determined to increase pressure until it understands that our demands are serious and that it must consider them.
- In our discussions, we would like to focus on pressure tactic ideas that would have the greatest impact on the employer. These can involve work organization or at least demonstrate that something significant is happening in your workplace.

## Questions

- What actions have you participated in that you would like to carry out again?
  - If needed, elicit responses from participants by telling them about an action in which you enjoyed participating.
- How would you like to take action in the coming weeks or near future? Try to think about actions that would disrupt your workplaces.
  - It is possible to elicit responses from participants about actions they may have carried out that took place outside of the union movement (feminist action, community action, student action, etc.).
  - If discussions move toward strikes, refocus the discussion around pressure tactics other than strikes (we will discuss this topic in the next section).
- People often prefer to get involved in action based on their interests. Are there actions that could be taken by the CSN public sector to reflect members' interests?
  - If needed, provide examples: a group dinner to protest employer demands, a hockey game to add positions, or a run to improve working conditions.

# PUBLIC SECTOR ON STRIKE

## Context

- At this time, the government's offer of 7% over 5 years does not even cover the inflation forecast of 10.2%. This is coupled with a gap of 6.2% between the wages of employees in the public sector and those of employees in the private sector, while the government has a surplus of nearly \$4 billion.
- After more disruptive actions are rolled out, strikes are a last resort to use to put pressure on the employer in order to improve our working conditions.
- During the last round of bargaining, we voted to engage in a common front strike. Since there is no common front this time (i.e. we are not part of a coalition with other labour organizations), it is possible that such other organizations will not go on strike or, at least, will not go on strike at the same time as we do.
- Recent changes to essential services legislation provide for going on strike more effectively in the health and social services network, allowing us to tilt the balance of power in our favour. It will be possible, in some cases, to significantly increase the duration of the strike for a large number of workers.

## Questions

- In the past, we have gone on strike in different ways. If ever we decide to exercise this right, how can we better conduct strikes?
  - Provide examples of types of strikes that occurred during the last round of bargaining (rotating strikes by sector, regional strikes, province-wide strike days, slowdown strikes).
- What types of action would you like to carry out on strike days?
  - For discussions to go beyond simple picket lines, you can mention a variety of actions that have taken place over the years: demonstrations, occupation, viewing of films, and even knitting circles!
- What arguments can we use to convince people who are currently opposed to striking to consider a strike day?
  - Here, you can suggest two key topics about which arguments can be presented: improving our working conditions and preventing the steps backward that are being demanded by our employer.

# EMERGENCY MEASURES TO BE USED IN EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS

## Context

- Public sector bargaining can quickly take an unexpected turn: a deadlock at the bargaining table, intense bargaining, an inflammatory statement made by a minister, a threat of special legislation, or the implementation of such a measure.
- These exceptional situations require quick responses.
- For the CSN, having the strength of 150,000 public sector workers undeniably affects the impact that our actions can have during an emergency situation. However, mobilizing such a large number of people can be very challenging if we want to act quickly.

## Questions

- In certain situations in which we are required to act without waiting, what types of collective action can we roll out? What obstacles would be involved in such quick rollouts? How can we overcome them?
  - Remind participants of the various actions that were discussed during the means of action section.
  - Elicit responses with a question about acting swiftly (e.g., How can we make sure that it is possible to mobilize in such a way in a very short period of time?).
  - Another possible question to elicit discussion is as follows: if we had to mobilize quickly, on a Sunday for example, what type of action could we carry out?
  - You can also give examples of actions carried out in the past in this type of context: banner drops, province-wide, regional, or local demonstrations, dissemination of information in public places or during public events, etc.
- How would you react if the government imposed working conditions and wages on you by means of special legislation?
  - What actions would you be ready to take, either in or outside of your workplaces?
- If we had to hold emergency general assemblies to respond to an urgent situation, would you participate in such assemblies that would be held outside of the usual context (e.g., on weekends or having to go by means of organized transportation for unions that are spread across large areas)?
  - What would facilitate/promote participation for these assemblies?
  - In your opinion, what would be the best means of communication to reach members as quickly as possible?

## CONCLUSION

To conclude these meetings, here is some information to share with participants:

- The ideas that we receive will provide public sector federations that are part of the CCSPP with food for thought about mobilization efforts, which it will carry out with people in various workplaces.
- A number of the ideas that are collected may be shared with other sectors. For example, a pressure tactic idea developed by a health and social services union may be suggested to staff in the education field or in government agencies, and vice versa.
- There are several steps in the rollout of mobilization efforts. A good idea for a pressure tactic or collective action can certainly help our members mobilize. It may be the source of motivation that drives workers to participate in and join the struggle.
- We know that there will be many challenges, both big and small, in the coming months—our best mobilizing tool will be our involvement. An original, well-organized action helps with mobilization, but it does not create mobilization. It must elicit engagement from a significant number of people in order to gain momentum.
- We invite you to participate in large numbers in our mobilization actions and to invite your colleagues to do the same.

Thank you for your involvement. Your participation in these important mobilization efforts is invaluable.