

SPEAKER NOTES

WHO IS THE PEA?

The PEA (pronounced p, e, eh), is a labour union in British Columbia. The union was formed in 1974 to represent licensed professionals employed in the BC Public Service. Since that time, we have grown to support a wide range of professionals in the education, legal, union and health care sectors across BC.

OUR CULTURE

Our members identify as professionals first. They are proud of their professions and the education that they pursued to attain their career. Many members can feel conflicted when balancing the desire for fair wages and benefits with their duty to their professional bodies.

WHO DOES THE PEA REPRESENT?

The PEA is divided into chapters. Each chapter represents a distinct workplace or group of professionals. The PEA represents health care, education, public service, union, and legal professionals.

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

The PEA represents physiotherapists, pharmacists, health care officers and other professionals in health care. These members are employed by the various health authorities throughout the province and are organized within the PEA as the Health Science Professionals (HSP) chapter.

EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

The PEA represents teachers, librarians, administrators, kitchen staff, grounds workers and others who work in the primary and secondary education sector (kindergarten to grade 12), at St. Margaret's School (SMS) in Victoria.

In the post-secondary sector, the PEA represents professionals at the University of Victoria (UVic). These members work in student services, information technology, and academic departments. They include administrative officers, systems specialists, program coordinators, academic assistants, lab instructors, and other professionals.

The PEA also represents librarians working in the Okanagan Regional Library system. The Okanagan Regional Library (ORL) System covers local libraries from Kelowna to Golden and Revelstoke to Princeton.

LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

For over 30 years, the PEA has worked with legal professionals in BC to assist them in balancing the professional requirements of their work with their need for fair and reasonable wages and working conditions. The PEA represents four groups of legal professionals: BC Family Maintenance Agency (FMA) lawyers, Law Society Lawyers (LSL), Legal Services Society (LSS) lawyers, and the lawyers that work for the Hospital Employees' Union (HESU).

PUBLIC SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

The PEA was originally formed to represent professionals working for the BC Public Service. Today, these members comprise the Government Licensed Professionals (GLP) chapter. They include engineers, foresters, psychologists, geoscientists, veterinarians, agrologists, psychologists, and pharmacists. These individuals report to their respective licensing boards to ensure a high level of professionalism in the delivery and management of our public services and resources.

The PEA also represents professionals at the BC Oil and Gas Commission (OGC), including geologists and engineers.

UNION STAFF PROFESSIONALS

The PEA represents the staff at the Hospital Employees' Union (HESU). These members include accountants, administrators, researchers, graphic designers, legal counsel, union representatives and other professionals.

OUR LEADERSHIP

The PEA has four elected table officers:

- President, Shawna LaRade: Forester, Government Licenced Professionals Chapter
- First-Vice President, Cherene Palmer: Labour Relations Officer, Hospital Employees' Staff Union
- Second-Vice President, Ronda Field: Physiotherapist, Health Science Professionals
- Secretary-Treasurer, Melissa Doyle: Experiential Learning Officer, University of Victoria

In addition, representatives from the different chapters make up the Association Executive. The Association Executive makes major decisions for the union including issues related to finance, staffing, and policy. The Association Executive has a number of committees designed to address specific needs for the union.

Each chapter has its own elected leadership.

OUR HISTORY

The PEA was formed in 1974 to represent licensed professionals in the BC Government. We expanded our union in the early 1980s to include other professionals including the Legal Aid Lawyers. Librarians in the Okanagan Regional Library joined the PEA in the late 1980s.

We expanded our membership again in the mid-90s with the University of Victoria academic professionals and the lawyers at the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program. Our Health Science Professionals grew and changed over the 90s into the membership of today.

In the 2000s the PEA added the staff at St. Margaret's School, the Oil and Gas Commission professionals, the lawyers at the Law Society.

In the mid-2010s the PEA welcomed the staff at the Hospital Employees' Union.

In 2013 the PEA joined the BC Federation of Labour on a trial basis and affiliated permanently in 2016. The PEA has affiliated to the Canadian Labour Congress through PIPSC.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The PEA is made up of 2800 members. Over half our membership is based in Victoria. Metro Vancouver has the next largest concentration of members. Kamloops, Prince George and the Okanagan as well as smaller communities across BC all have groups of PEA members.

We have a smaller percentage of young workers (10%) due to the higher level of education required for many of the positions our members hold. Our membership is generally older, with 70% above 40 years old.

TERMINOLOGY

Our terminology is unique to our union. It's part of what sets us apart and gives our members a sense of belonging:

A **chapter** is the group of members at a workplace, or employer. It is often referred to as a local in other unions.

A **Local Rep** is the person or persons in the workplace who is the first point of contact for our members. This position is referred to as a steward in other unions.

A **Labour Relations Officer** is the staff person who works directly with PEA members in certain chapters. They advise members on work-related issues, handle grievances and arbitrations, bargain collective agreements and more. The PEA has a direct service model, where any member can reach out to a Labour Relations Officer with their questions or issues.