



Atlantic

**Call for Applications to the PSAC Atlantic School
Building our Union. Building our Power
May 27 – 31, 2015
St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, NS**

What is the Atlantic School?

The Atlantic Regional School is the flagship of the region's education program. It brings together union activists from the four Atlantic Provinces with a foundation in union education to advance their skills in the company of the region's most activated members. The school's in-residence program is tailored to deliver advanced courses in both official languages, while immersing participants in union culture.

So, what's this year's School all about?

Currently, our Union is engaged in what stands to be the most difficult round of collective bargaining we have seen for some time. We are also approaching a federal election that will have sweeping implications for our members, our families and the communities where we live.

The 2015 school seeks to address this difficult juncture and to prepare participants to face it head on.

The school is geared towards building our capacity to organize and educate, with the view to building our union power as a whole in the Atlantic. Our union will only be as strong as we are organized and united.

What courses are being offered?

The Atlantic School will offer three courses that aim to prepare us for the immediate fights ahead and to build our power in the long term. Here they are:

1. Fighting to win in 2015 and beyond

It's an election year and the stakes are high for PSAC members and for all Canadians. This course will explore our Union's plan for the federal election and will prepare participants with skills to return to their locals, committees and councils ready implement it. This course will also ask the hard question, "Is defeating Harper enough?" and explore how our union can fight for the world we actually want, not just fight against the world that we don't.

2. Organizing for a Fair Contract and Union Renewal

The majority of PSAC members are currently in bargaining. But no matter who your employer is, if there is going to be a fair contract, bargaining teams need their members behind them. This course will explore strategic ways of organizing to support the bargaining process and applying pressure on the employer. Collective bargaining also tends to interest members who are not typically involved in their union, which is a good thing. The course also will approach organizing around collective bargaining as a way of getting more members involved in their union.

3. Worker Educator Training

Are you an educator at heart? Have you always wanted to facilitate workshops or lunch-and-learns in your local? Or maybe you'd like to gain the skills to host a discussion after your AGM? Do you think education is key to getting members involved in our union?

The Atlantic is seeking to create a network of Worker Educators committed to building union engagement through member-to-member education. This course will train members in the principles and practices of varying methods of union education and facilitation. Participants will learn how to deliver one to three-hour workshops that deal with issues of key importance to our members.

Please note! Taking this course involves a long-term commitment. You should only apply if you are willing to take the plunge. After this training, you will undertake a certification process where you will practice your facilitations skills with the support of the Regional Education Officer and Regional Representatives. Once you are certified, you will develop an annual work plan to put your skills into practice.

We are excited to offer this course in both French and English.

More detailed information can be found at the end of this document. Please contact Regional Education Officer, Lesley Thompson, at 902-445-3541 or thompsonl@psac.com if you need more information about what's involved in becoming a Worker Educator.

Pre-requisites

To be considered for the Atlantic School, applicants must have completed Talking Union Basics or the National Aboriginal People's Circle Training, or have equivalent union or community experience.

Selection Process

Participant selections will be made with a view to have equitable representation from Components, Directly Chartered Locals, and the Atlantic Region's four provinces. We also seek representation from the five equity seeking groups (women, LGBTQ members, racially visible members, members with disabilities and Aboriginal members), from French language speakers and from members who are young workers. Consideration is also given to past union, community and social justice activism.

School schedule

Registration will take place on Wednesday, May 27, from 5pm-8pm and again on Thursday, May 28, from 8am-8:45am.

The School will officially open at 7pm on Wednesday, May 27, followed by a meet and greet. It will close at noon on Sunday, May 31.

Location

St. Francis Xavier University located at 1 West Street, Antigonish, NS, will once again be the home of the 2015 Atlantic School. You can have a look at the facilities at www.sftx.ca.

Participants will stay in campus residences unless a special accommodation is requested. All bedrooms are individual with hotel-style accommodations (private bathroom, fridge, microwave oven, coffee maker, etc).

Costs and expenses

There is a registration fee of \$35 to help offset the cost of the school memorabilia. However, no undue hardship will be placed upon any member or local. There is no other cost to PSAC members.

Meal and incidentals

Meals will be provided at the Atlantic School with the exception of dinner on Wednesday, May 27. Meals and incidentals while participants are traveling to and from the school will be covered in accordance to PSAC rates.

Wages

Where possible, we are depending on local and component activists to negotiate employer-paid training time and transportation expenses. Loss of salary will be paid to those PSAC members who are unable to obtain training time from their employer. These members must apply for leave without pay.

Family Care

Costs incurred for family care while attending the Atlantic School will be reimbursed in accordance with the PSAC Family Care Policy which can be found here: <http://psacunion.ca/family-care-policy>

Transportation

Travel arrangements will be discussed with each participant in advance of the School. The most economical means of transportation will be explored with the assistance of your regional office.

Scent Free

All PSAC courses are scent free and participants are asked to use unscented products. The PSAC Statement on Scent Free Environments is included for your reference in the application form.

Smoke Free

The entire campus is strictly non-smoking inside all buildings, including residences. There is a fine for smoking in non-designated areas. The PSAC will not pay these fines. They are the responsibility of the individual school participant who violates smoking rules.

So how do I apply?

Please complete the attached application form and send it to your regional office. You can find all the contact information below.

Deadline for applications is [April 3, 2015](#)

New Brunswick Regional Office

30 Englehart Street, Unit G
Dieppe, NB E1A 8H3
Telephone: (506) 857-4220
Toll Free: 1-800-788-8555
Fax: (506) 857-9792
Email: galland@psac.com

Prince Edward Island Regional Office

614 North River Road, Suite D
Charlottetown, PE C1E 1K2
Telephone: (902) 892-5481
Toll Free: 1-800-409-3184
Fax: (902) 892-6407
Email: mackayc@psac.com

Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Office

33 Pippy Place, Suite 105
St. John's, NL A1B 3X2
Phone: (709) 726-6453
Toll free: 1-888-904-4357
Fax: (709) 726-1821
Email: hydem@psac.com

Nova Scotia Regional Office

Park West Centre, 287 Lacewood Drive, Suite 301
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3M 3Y7
Telephone: (902) 443-3541 | Fax: (902) 443-8291
Email: Hfx_Admin@psac.com

PSAC Atlantic Worker Educator Network Information for potential Worker Educators

What is this all about?

While our Union has a rich Education Program, not all members can take part in courses on the weekend, or take time away from their work and home-life to attend in-residence training. So why not bring union education as close to the members as possible?

The Atlantic Region is building a network of Worker Educators committed to increasing union engagement through member-to-member education. The goal is to train a group of facilitators, spread across the region, to deliver 1 to 3-hour workshops to fellow union members. These workshops will deal with issues of key importance to PSAC members, like why unions are good for workers, effective communication, human rights in the workplace and much more.

Section 3.0 of our National Education Policy does a good job of summing up why we're doing this:

“If the empowerment of Alliance workers is to happen on a significant scale, then conscience raising union education has to be extended from weekend courses, advanced training or special interest seminars into the workplaces. Union education must find different, creative ways of reaching members and of addressing their pressing and ever-changing needs.”

The objectives of the Atlantic Worker Educator Network are as follows:

- To provide members with local-based union training opportunities organized, developed and delivered by members;
- To provide interested members committed to union education with the appropriate training necessary for them to become effective and efficient union facilitators;
- To help union facilitators realize their potential in building strong, active, informed locals;

- To offer support mechanisms and resources instrumental in establishing regional networks of union facilitators.

Do I want to be a Worker Educator?

That depends. Do you feel that you are an educator at heart? Have you always wanted to facilitate workshops or lunch-and-learns in your local? Would you like to gain the skills to host a discussion after your AGM? Do you think education is key to getting members involved in our union?

Becoming a Worker Educator involves a long-term commitment and like all the work we do as union officers and activists, it is voluntary. But that doesn't mean you'll be alone. The Worker Educator Network will have the support of the Regional Education Officer every step of the way.

How do I become a Worker Educator?

Worker Educators must complete a three-day training course followed by a certification process. Once certified, they will work closely with the Regional Education Officer to develop an annual training plan. These steps are described below.

What does the training involve?

We're excited to announce that the first Worker Educator Training is being delivered in both languages at the upcoming Atlantic School, May 27-31, 2015.

After the completion of the three-day Worker Educator Training Program, participants will:

- have a good understanding of the principles and practices of varying methods of union education;
- understand the role of the facilitator and be able to put facilitation skills into practice;
- be able to deal effectively with group dynamics, facilitate across diversity and adapt for the group;

- be able to access resources to support their role as union educators;
- be able to actively participate in the Atlantic Worker Educator Network.

What if I've already taken facilitator-training?

All former Atlantic Alliance Facilitators must take the Worker Educator Training Program and complete the certification process, to become a Worker Educator.

Members who have completed the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Instructor Training, Joint Learning Program facilitator training or has completed the Alliance Facilitator Training in another PSAC Region, may apply to complete the certification process outlined below without taking the Atlantic Worker Educator Training Program. Members who have taken Alliance Facilitator Training in the Atlantic must take the Worker Educator Training Program.

What does the certification process involve?

The certification process should be completed within 8 months of taking the training.

The first step is a practice facilitation. The worker will be paired with a Regional Representative who is facilitating an upcoming basic course. Together they will select a module for the Worker Educator to prepare and deliver. The Worker Educator will also observe at least one day of the course.

The second step is to create a facilitation opportunity within the local, like a lunch and learn. The member will prepare with the help of a PSAC staff person using PSAC materials. If possible, the PSAC staff person will also attend.

Finally the member will submit to the Regional Education Officer a year-long plan for doing member-to-member education in their local.

Please note: Worker Educators are not responsible for designing workshops from scratch. Materials and resources will be provided by

the Regional Education Officer. Worker Educators will have a list of topics and workshops to choose from.

Maintenance of Certification

Once certified, a Worker Educator will continue to submit and complete a yearly work plan. They will also be invited to participate in regional events and activities organized for Worker Educators, like facilitation and skills-building workshops.

Do you have any questions?

Please don't hesitate to contact Lesley Thompson, Atlantic Regional Education Officer with any questions you have. She can be reached at thompsonl@psac.com or 902-453-3541.