

GOVERNMENT BENEFITS 2016
AS OF JANUARY 1, 2016

CANADA PENSION PLAN AND QUEBEC PENSION PLAN	
1. Contribution Rate	4
2. Year's maximum pensionable earnings (YMPE)	\$54,100
3. Basic exemption	\$3,100
4. Maximum premiums for employees	\$2,100
Maximum premiums for self-employed	\$5,000
5. Retirement Benefits (maximum for new recipient)	\$1,000
6. Lump Sum Death Benefit (max.)	\$2,100
7. Disability (max.)	\$1,100
8. Dependent children's benefit	\$2,100
9. Surviving spouse 65 and over (max.)	\$6,100
10. Surviving spouse under 65 (max.)	\$9,100
Surviving spouse 45-64 (max.)	\$9,100



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VOLUME 4, NO.1

WWW.UNIFOR.ORG

JANUARY 14, 2016



uniforum



Unifor staff and members from across every sector have answered the union's call to help Syrian refugees settle in Canada, and have been attending training sessions to help them do that. Story Page 2.

Unifor organizing brings in thousands

Unifor heads into 2016 with plans to build on the organizing successes of the past year, when more than 6,200 new members were welcomed into the union.

"We had an incredible year in 2015," said Organizing Director John Aman. "Unifor has made organizing new members a priority since its founding, and that has been shown in our successes."

Over the course of 2015, Unifor organized 6,287 workers at 54 workplaces across Canada, including hospitality and gaming, airlines, manufacturing, telecom and more across the Canadian economy.

Unifor's Organizing department also held a successful All In organizing conference in 2015, attracting local activists from across Canada to get them more involved in

CRTC risks TV jobs

A Unifor-supported analysis has found that more than 15,000 jobs are at risk due to CRTC rulings and policies on TV broadcasting left over from the Harper Government.

"This study fills a void, and should send a powerful message to the new government," said Unifor Media Council Chair Randy Kitt.

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Union provides support for Stelpipe Welland retirees

More than 330 Unifor retirees from Stelpipe and Welland Pipe attended an important information meeting before Christmas to learn about options after their benefits were terminated by U.S. Steel Canada.

The session opened with Rick Alakas, President of Local 523, in heavy spirits saying, "everyone in here is

someone's grandparent, or parent – this is an outright shame one should be treated like this."

In a quick response to defend retirees and post-retirement benefits, the local backed by the National took legal action. After reviewing the outdated law, the Ontario Superior Court ruled in favour of the corporation and benefits

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In Brief

Local Union Task Force survey

Unifor's ambitious Local Union Task Force project to strengthen one of our most important structures, union locals, wants to hear from local leadership and members.

To do that, a questionnaire has been set up on Survey Monkey. Just go to Unifor.org/LUTF, and click on the survey link.

It takes about 15 minutes, and will help the task force further understand how members are involved in their local union, what kinds of services they receive, their views and opinions about local union work and more.

The task force was set up by Unifor National President Jerry Dias last year, and is holding town hall meetings across Canada.

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Uniforum is published every two weeks by Unifor, Canada's largest union in the private sector.

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Unifor launches sponsorship program with Lifeline Syria for refugees

Seventy-six Unifor activists met recently in Toronto for a day-long training with Lifeline Syria representatives to launch Unifor's Syrian refugee sponsorship program. More such training is planned.

On the ground, Unifor members will assist by offering everything from an initial welcome at the airport, to orientation to life in Canada, to assistance with accessing health, to education and social services in the community.

"Unifor is backing with financial aid, but for the next 12 months, 76 members will open up their own homes, their hearts and their lives to offer guidance, social

interaction and friendship," said Mohamad Alsadi, Unifor's Director of Human Rights and International Development.

"It is this kind of generosity from Unifor members that can make a significant difference to Syrian refugees."

This first training was offered by Lifeline Syria representatives at the Local 112 office in Toronto. Training will continue this month on settlement planning.

Along with providing an overview of procedures and roles of sponsors, Lifeline Syria reps stressed the need for volunteers to provide emotional and moral support.

Financial sponsorship was made possible through



First training session held before Christmas.

Unifor's Social Justice Fund. The union will continue to work with Locals across the country to raise further funds to assist more Syrian refugees.

If you'd like to help, contact Alsadi at mohamad.alsadi@unifor.org.

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The Friends of Canadian Broadcasting study found that 6,830 jobs are at risk in the TV industry alone, with another 8,300 at risk due to the economic impact of the lost TV jobs, and a \$400-million drop in spending on Canadian programming by 2020.

CRTC decisions have also been an issue at Hamilton TV station CHCH, where all staff was dismissed just before Christmas when the station declared bankruptcy. A new company with the same management immediately rehired about one-third of the staff.

Unifor National President Jerry Dias has said the station's actions are an example of the failures



Unifor National President Jerry Dias met with CHCH staff, and promised the national union's support.

of the CRTC under the previous Harper Government to address the funding needs of local broadcasters.

He met with CHCH Unifor members, pledging the union's full support

in their struggle with the station.

Bell Canada linked 300-plus layoffs across the country at CTV to CRTC regulatory changes such as pick and pay and simultaneous substitution.

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"Thousands joining Unifor"
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bringing new members into the union.

"Local involvement is key to organizing new members," Aman said.

The largest bargaining unit organized in 2015 was Casino Rama near Orillia, Ontario, with 1,647 new members, who are currently negotiating their first contract.

Aman said the victory at Rama was part of a larger effort across the gaming industry to attract more members, with new bargaining units also organized at Ajax Downs, Georgia Downs and Grand Villa Casino.

"Hospitality and Gaming workers are seeing what joining Unifor can do for

them," Aman said.

Other successes include:

- 330 new members at the University of New Brunswick
- 160 at Pepsi Bottling in Edmonton
- 123 at Rio Tinto Alcan in Montreal
- 212 at Stock Transportation in Oakville

Organizing efforts taken on last year and being pursued this coming year include outreach to freelance media workers as part of our union's community chapter, the Canadian Freelance Union.

Aman said 2016 looks like another good year, building on the success of the past year, and the energy of the All In conference and campaign.

A toolkit to help locals identify potential new



Unifor's Organizing Department held a packed and very popular Organizing Summit in 2015 as part of its efforts to boost membership .

members and to step up their organizing efforts was handed out at the September conference, and is available online at unifor.org.

"I'd like to encourage all

locals and Unifor activists to get involved with organizing," Aman said.

"Helping workers join a union is the best thing you can do for them, and for our communities."

>> Continued from "Union provides support ..." on page 1

for retirees, their spouse and dependents were immediately terminated.

Unifor spearheaded negotiations with Green Shield, and its service provider Prosum Health to set up individual and family benefits for retirees.

"It feels like we were handcuffed. It's not enough, but we have done the most with what we can, especially when retirees need it most," said Alakas.

Prosum Health will provide different cost options and a loyalty program for retirees. During the meeting, retirees also received information on a grant available from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care for those under the age of 65 years.

Losing benefits was a blow to workers who built the company and took small wage increases in the hopes of a secure retirement said Lonny Petrachenko, a retiree who worked for Stelpipe for 31 years.

"I am disgusted at how the Harper government allowed this to happen with its blessing by opening the boarders to US corporations who cry poor and abandon workers, and then the court says it's ok to steal everything from us that we work our whole lives for."

Retirees were quick to thank the union for its efforts to establish communication and continue to defend them.

Retirees must decide by January 11, 2016 to enroll in a benefits program.

For more, go to unifor.org/stelpipewelland.

Lewenza honoured by OFL, still active with LUTF

Retired CAW President Ken Lewenza has been inducted to the Ontario Federation of Labour's Honour Roll for 2015 in recognition of his years of contributions to the province's labour movement.

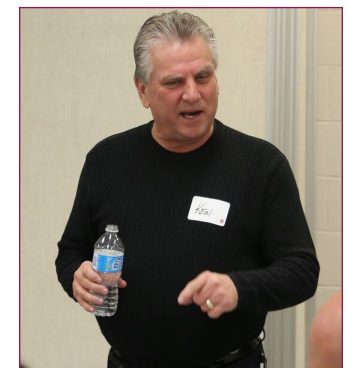
"I would like to thank and acknowledge the OFL and those responsible for the nomination and selection process of such a honour. There are a lot of more deserving union activist then I and I would have no problem taking a back seat to them," Lewenza said.

Lewenza's name will be added to a plaque for Honour Roll members, and two scholarships handed out in his name for 2016.

Lewenza, who began his union activism with

Local 444 at the Windsor Chrysler, rose to National President of the CAW, and guided the union to a merger with CEP in 2013 to form Unifor before retiring.

He remains active, including as national task force advisor for English Canada for Unifor's Local Union Task Force project to revitalize Locals.





IN THIS ISSUE: 2015 saw more than 6,200 new members join Unifor thanks to the efforts of the Organizing Department. Unifor staff and members responded overwhelmingly to the union's call to help settle Syrian refugees. Stelpipe retirees get help, and Ken Lewenza is honoured by the OFL.

Farewell letter from economist Jim Stanford

Dear Unifor Brothers and Sisters;

It has been a huge privilege to serve as Economist for Unifor, and before that the CAW, for a total of 22 years. I can't imagine a better place for a progressive researcher to build a career - and more importantly, contribute to our shared struggle for a better Canada.

Last month I finished my job with Unifor, and am now relocating to Australia with my family for a few years. (My partner has started an exciting position with the University of Sydney, and we've decided to undertake this "foreign posting" together with our two kids.)

As we prepare to depart, I've been reflecting on my rich experiences with the union, the many campaigns we fought, the victories we won, the solidarity we built.

The greatest highlight of all, however, was getting to participate in the founding of Unifor in 2013 - culminating an unprecedented and creative process, as we together imagined how to energize and strengthen our union and the whole labour movement.

Even from Australia I will serve in an advisory capacity to Unifor's leadership team, including occasional visits back to Canada. I will keep



Unifor Economist Jim Stanford is moving to Australia. In an open letter to staff and members, he bid farewell to Unifor sisters and brothers.

tweeting regularly (@jimbostanford), teaching occasional economics courses, and providing commentary for newspapers, CBC's "Bottom Line" panel, and websites. In short, while my current job with Unifor has ended, I

will remain fully engaged in the battle of ideas over how to build an inclusive, fair, productive economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve this great union!

In solidarity, Jim Stanford