

CIVIL SERVICE

Tentative Agreement

Q&A

Why are we voting on this offer if we filed for arbitration?

Since we filed for arbitration last spring, we have kept the pressure on government to return to the table with a fair offer. Through advertising, rallies and demonstrations, and meetings with politicians, we made it clear that civil service workers should not have to go to a third-party arbitrator to achieve a fair and respectful agreement with their employer.

On December 11, the employer returned to the negotiating table with a revised offer, and on December 17, we countered that offer. On December 30, they made us their best and final offer.

We felt this offer was improved enough to take it back to the membership for a vote.

What's better about the new offer?

The improved offer includes:

- a) a five-year deal with a general wage increase in each year;
- b) expanded employment security;
- c) special wage adjustments of 1% of payroll or \$6.8 million (classifications which put forward proposals will be considered);
- d) no concessions (all current benefits remain in place).

If the agreement is ratified, will we receive retroactive pay?

Yes. The agreement includes general pay increases that go back to March 2014 and continue through the life of the agreement. This means that if you worked during the retroactivity period, you will automatically receive the applicable general pay increases on all hours worked.

If you have left the Civil Service, you will automatically receive any retroactive increases owed to you by mail (see Article 10 - Retroactive Wages).

Why did we file for arbitration?

When we filed for arbitration, the offer before us was insufficient. At the time, many comparable public service settlements had included 2% increases in each year over four years. We believed this was a strong argument to take before an arbitrator.

Why is the recommendation a "neutral" one?

The revised offer and our prospects at arbitration are quite different. There are pros and cons to each.

The employer's latest offer is substantially improved from where we were at last spring. It provides us with stability and security until 2019, as well as wage increases and some additional benefits.

However, there is a possibility we could achieve more through a settlement imposed by the arbitrator. There is also the possibility that some gains we've achieved would not be included, such as a longer collective agreement with job security and special wage adjustments. While we still believe we have a strong case to put forward, the outcome of any arbitration is not certain.

What if we vote “no”?

If the offer is rejected by the membership, we will proceed to arbitration, which is scheduled for late spring 2016. We would not expect a result until fall/winter 2016.

What if we vote “yes”?

If the membership votes in favour of the revised offer, it will form the basis of a new five-year collective agreement for the Civil Service. If the offer is accepted, the employer has agreed to prepare it for sign-off as quickly as possible so that agreed to changes can be implemented.

If the offer is ratified, could a new government change it?

NO. The collective agreement, once entered into, would be binding on any future government for the duration of the agreement. If a government attempted to unilaterally change the agreement, the MGEU would go to court alleging a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Supreme Court of Canada has clearly ruled that attempts by governments to alter a collective agreement, previously entered into, violate the Charter.