



Handbook for National Vice-Presidents



Canada Employment
and Immigration Union

Syndicat de l'Emploi et de
l'Immigration du Canada

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Are you considering running to become a
National Vice-President (NVP)?
Or maybe you were just elected and want
some clarity?

This guide is intended for prospective NVPs or newly elected ones to clarify the role of National Vice-President.

The role of NVP can be diverse and require many different hats. You are the activist, the advocate, and the cheerleader! It can seem like you are everything to everyone and like everyone needs your ear and your time.

This guide will walk you through a variety of topics that will inform the work that you will do. The core is about the roles and responsibilities of NVPs; however, the National Executive, Governance and Resources are also covered.

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE



CEIU's main decision-making body is the CEIU Triennial National Convention. Between Conventions, the National Executive (NE) is responsible for all decisions.

The National Executive is comprised of seventeen members: the National President and the National Executive Vice-President are members, along with fifteen National Vice-Presidents.

As a body, the National Executive is responsible for approving the yearly budget of the union, has the power to make policies and regulations as necessary for the administration of the affairs of the Union, and has the authority and responsibility to establish committees necessary for the effective functioning of the Union and for carrying out its objectives and mandates.

YOUR ROLE AS NVP



The role of a National Vice-President (NVP) is diverse, even more so when you consider that there are many different types of NVPs.

The most common position on the National Executive is a National Vice-President with regional responsibilities. Of the seventeen members who sit on the NE, ten of them have regional responsibilities.

Furthermore, there are five portfolio NVPs who have either equity or departmental portfolios. There are two NVPs for women's priorities, one for Human Rights, and one each who represent the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

In general, National Vice-Presidents attend all meetings of the National Executive, participate in national committees, could be asked to chair Convention committees, and submit semi-annual reports on activities to the National Executive.



YOUR ROLE AS NVP

They also keep the National President fully informed and consult fully with the National President to ensure a united Union voice. They may also act for or assist the National President.

They also, very importantly, must be aware of the needs of the members in their jurisdiction, and bring those needs to the attention of the National President and/or the National Executive.

Furthermore, they must inform Local Presidents every two months of the activities in their jurisdiction. To add to that obligation, they must also submit written reports to their meeting of Local Presidents that is held a minimum of once a year, often referred to as Presidents' conference.

NVPs may be replaced by their alternate should they not be available to attend a National Executive meeting or committee meeting. They are also responsible for giving mandates to their national alternate.

Upon election, each NVP is expected to complete 15 hours of training on privilege and intersectionality.

DIFFERENT ROLES...

NVP with Regional Responsibilities

There are eight regions at CEIU and we have ten NVPs who have regional responsibilities.

For those NVPs with regional responsibilities, there are further defined roles. In conjunction with the National President, they are responsible for the administration of union affairs in their Region.

They represent the Union in discussions with regional departmental officials and have the right and responsibility to be present at any meeting held in the Region between national officers or staff with regional departmental officials.

They are also responsible for adherence to their Regional By-Laws and their interpretation. They may also administer or divide their region as they see fit, often into districts in larger regions.

They also meet with their Local Presidents within their regions at minimum once a year.

Finally, when they are unable to attend Regional Labour Management Consultation Committee meetings, they should be replaced by their alternate.



Portfolio NVPs

The five remaining NVPs are portfolio NVPs and have very different roles.

Portfolio NVPs should reach out to each regional NVP to develop a relationship and see how they can best support the region. They should work closely with the regional NVPs and their portfolio membership.



National Vice-Presidents for Women's Priorities:

NVPs for Women's priorities promote policies and programs that will encourage the full participation of women. They also prepare policies, demands, and resolutions to move women's priorities to the forefront and ensure members who identify as women are well represented in all union activities. The NVPs are also responsible for reviewing bargaining demands and Convention resolutions dealing with women's priorities.

As nationally elected officers, alongside the National President, they meet with national management on matters of concern pertaining to their mandate. They review Employer policies and directives making recommendations when relevant.

Furthermore, they support the regional women's structures. They assist in organizing regional women's committees, participate in committee meetings, and provide guidance when possible. They also meet annually with the regional women's committee chairs. Finally, they chair the CEIU National Women's committee.

National Vice-President, Human Rights:

The National Vice-President for Human Rights is responsible for ensuring human rights are at the forefront of CEIU's work. They promote policies and programs which encourage full involvement of equity-seeking members. They prepare policies, demands, and resolutions to place human rights issues at the forefront of our Union's program. The NVP for Human Rights works with the National President and National Executive Vice-President to discuss issues of importance to human rights and manage the affairs of the Union which are related to their mandate. They also share this information with other NVPs.

They are responsible for ensuring that equity-seeking members are well represented in union activities and help to organize human rights committees within each region.

The NVP for Human Rights chairs the Human Rights/Race Relations Committee and sits on the PSAC National Human Rights Committee.

They review all policies and guidelines of the Employer related to their mandate, formulate relevant recommendations, and attend national meetings with the Employer to raise concerns or issues pertaining to their mandate when necessary. Finally, they are responsible for reviewing bargaining demands and Convention resolutions dealing with human rights.



National Vice-President, Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB):

The NVP for IRB promotes policies and programs which encourage full participation by IRB members at all levels of the Union.

They attend, with the National President, IRB Labour Management Consultation Committee (LMCC) meetings. They prepare and make recommendations on all IRB policies and directives as it pertains to their mandate.

They work in conjunction with all National Vice-Presidents and keep them informed regarding IRB programs and procedures. They provide a written report to the National Executive at each meeting.

They provide guidance and expertise to IRB members and organize those locals having IRB members, in conjunction with the relevant regional National Vice-President(s). They also sit on the National Standing Health and Wellness Committee.

National Vice-President, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):

The NVP for IRCC promotes policies and programs which encourage full participation by IRCC members at all levels of the Union.



They prepare and make recommendations on all IRCC policies and directives as it pertains to their mandate.

They work in conjunction with all National Vice-Presidents and keep them informed regarding IRCC programs and procedures.

They provide guidance and expertise to IRCC members.

They also chair the National Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada Committee and sit on the National Standing Health and Wellness Committee.



Alternate National Vice-Presidents:

Alternate National Vice-Presidents shall assume the responsibilities and duties of the National Vice-President on a permanent basis, if for any reason the National Vice-President is unable to complete their term of office.

However, they shall also assume such duties on an interim basis, if so, designated by the National Vice-President for situations such as vacations, illness, national meetings, training, etc. Essentially – they act for and assist the National Vice-President when requested.

They are responsible for attending all regional meetings of local presidents such as the Presidents' conference when and where possible. If requested by the National Vice-President, they also report on their activities and recommendations to their Presidents' conference.





If designated by their National Vice-President, they also participate in, and sometimes chair, regional committees. As the alternate to the role, where and when possible, they attend the Regional Labour Management Consultation Committee (RLMCC) meetings with the NVP in order to be well versed on the current affairs and the consultation process.

They keep the National Vice-President fully informed to ensure a united union voice. They endeavour to become aware of the needs of the members in their jurisdiction and ensure they are brought to the attention of the National Vice-President.

They should attend at least one National Executive meeting during their term and communicate with the NVP following all other National Executive meetings to review the topics addressed and the decisions made.

To stay fully informed, they should receive all of the same correspondence as National Vice-Presidents and where and when feasible, they should attend planning and strategy meetings with other NVPs. The alternates to NVPs may also be asked to perform other responsibilities as determined by the National Executive or their National Vice-President(s).

BEST PRACTICES

So far, we've summarized what your responsibilities are under the CEIU by-laws and discussed the general functioning of the National Executive.

There are many other best practices for NVPs. You will be working with CEIU staff, planning events or doing representation, working with the Employer on consultation or with members on your council.

Here are a few things to know!



Working with the Employer

As you establish connections with CEIU staff, it is also important to establish relationships with your counterparts on the Employer side. These relationships will help you better navigate labour issues, if you have direct contact with those who make decisions. This practice will be more common for NVPs with regional responsibilities.

If you have difficulty identifying these counterparts, the National Union Representatives (NURs) that work in your region may be helpful in identifying who they are since they regularly work with the Employer when doing representation work.

National Tables with Employers:

- There are multiple instances in which NVPs sit on committees that meet with the Employer. These committees are joint consultation committees and enable the Employer and the Union to participate in meaningful consultation.
- There are often multiple unions at the same table since they are in the same workplace.
- Some of these committees are governed by the collective agreement, other however are required by law.
- It is important to note that these committees often have co-chairs, one being from the Employer's side, and the other from the Union side.
- If you co-chair, you represent all unions at the table.
- There are also LMCCs at the National level which address issues across all workplaces.

Labour-Management Consultation Committees (LMCC)

- The labour-management consultation committee (LMCC) is a joint committee in each workplace that helps address issues in said workplace.
- There are many different levels of LMCCs: local, regional and national.
- Each level is important as it can be considered a stepping stone to the next. As an example, if a local brings forward an issue and it is not adequately addressed at the local level, they should be flagging that to whomever sits at the regional level. If multiple local LMCCs are unsuccessful, we may choose to move it up to the regional level, and eventually the national level.
- This is incredibly important, seeing as these meetings are all tracked by minutes and we can use them as justification for demands at the bargaining table.
- LMCC agenda items should be directly connected to the collective agreement and improving our workplace. You should be connecting local LMCC minutes into your regional LMCC conversations by identifying trends and themes. Sharing minutes with those sitting at the National table is also an important element – this allows us to be stronger at National and bring forward topics that impact our members across the country.
- Being strong at the table also means being prepared. Pre-meetings are important as is creating and sharing presentations with the Employer to influence change. Bringing in experts or other leaders to conduct these presentations may also be useful.
- National Minutes are officially recorded and shared with the Treasury Board. You want to bring your questions and suggestions in powerful ways to influence change and document them. Ultimately, this will help assist the collective bargaining process.

Working with Regional Councils

Councils bring an important component to each region – one that reinforces democracy and allows more individuals to participate in decision-making.

Regional councils have different structures depending on the region. Each council is chaired by the regional NVP and governed by regional by-laws. Regional by-laws should be an extension of the national by-laws and should bring further clarity to the council.

Most councils are made up of the NVP, their alternate and local presidents. Others have equity seats such as a young worker representative, a women's representative and a human rights representative. Some have coordinators for different districts or departments and do not include local presidents. This is often very much dependent on the size of the region in terms of the number of locals and members. Other regions have opted to add a regional treasurer to their council as well.

Many councils also have standing committees, some are equity based – such as young workers, women or human rights. Others are focused on the business of the region such as finance or by-laws. Larger regions sometimes even have standing committees for different groups of employees.

There are a few things that you may want to consider as an NVP when you are working with your council.

- Have a clear agenda and stick to it. Councils generally take place under a rules of order structure.
- Ensure that everyone has access to the by-laws and fully understands their role.
- If you have a human rights representative on your committee, ensure that this person has self-identified in their equity group(s) with both PSAC and CEIU.

Working with CEIU Staff

At first, you will meet the staff who are employed in your regional union office. As an NVP, you will also receive information regularly from National Office.

The following topics should form part of a conversation as soon as you are elected. They need to be clarified to ensure a smooth transition between NVPs and clarity for staff.

Event-planning:

A big part of what you will do is organize events in your region or for your constituent members. Generally, regional events are a team effort at CEIU. The NVP will often work with their council, committee, or their alternate to make decisions around events.

However, a big part of event planning is coordinating with the regional administrative assistant(s). For this purpose, there is a form included in the toolkit that should be used for each event titled Event Request Template. A thorough conversation with the regional administrative assistant(s) is central to successful events.

Furthermore, event planning also means planning the agenda. For this purpose, there should be discussions early with regards to staff availability for these events. Should staff be required to train or attend these events to work, they should be notified at minimum 6 weeks prior to the event. Without appropriate notice, staff may not be able to accommodate such requests.

Hotel visits, to choose event locations, are generally done by regional administrative assistants or admins from national office. It is acceptable that NVPs do these visits, but they should have taken the training offered by our national office administrative staff.



Collaboration:

Regional NVPs and Portfolio NVPs should collaborate to develop a relationship and support the regions and members. Regional NVPs may want to consider inviting Portfolio NVPs to your LMCC, council meetings, presidents' conference, etc. Portfolio NVPs should coordinate with Regional NVPs whenever working with a local in their region.



Local Compliance and Health:

The Finance and Administration team who work out of National Office issue membership lists on a regular basis. They also track when financial statements are submitted to release dues to the locals. Local Compliance is also tracked by the Membership Engagement Officers and a report is sent to all Regional NVPs before each National Executive meeting.

A large role of the NVP is mobilizing and supporting build local engagement. This should be the primary focus. Think about how you can establish and support locals. How are you training folks to do representation? How are you supporting them after receiving training?

After all your efforts, you will still have locals that are non-compliant. Some may even have no local officers elected.

How would you go about fixing this issue?



- 1-Ensure you've reached out to the local to try and organize a General Meeting. It is suggested to try more than once utilizing different formats and times.
- 2-Reach out to the Finance and Administration team to find out what steps need to be taken to get the local's finances up to date. The team can also let you know who the current signing authority or authorities are for the local.
- 3-Reach out to the Membership Engagement Officers for support and resources.
- 4-Should all attempts to organize a General Meeting be unfruitful, then the local should be put in trusteeship. This request should be brought by the NVP and can only be approved by the National Executive.
- 5-The request must clearly outline the by-law violation.
- 6-Once the trusteeship is approved by the National Executive, the NVP must name a local trustee who will inform the membership, administer the affairs of the local, and keep the National Executive up to date on progress.
- 7-For the local to be taken out of trusteeship, they must meet all the requirements under our by-laws.

Representation:

Exploring informal avenues for problem solving should be the first step. Many issues can be resolved informally through discussions with management or through informal conflict management.

If it is determined that grievance is warranted, the regional union office (RUO) can be consulted as needed for grievance wording or technical guidance.

When sending a file to your RUO for representation at the 2nd and 3rd level, or at the request of the RUO, please include the following. This should be considered time-sensitive/urgent as we must ensure timelines are met:

- Member contact information
- Labour Relations contact information, if applicable
- Grievance Form Signed by all parties
- Transmittal Form(s) Signed by all parties. If level is waived, the email with the mutual agreement
- Written Reply received from the employer, if applicable
- Statement of Facts Set out in chronological order.
- Documents relevant to the case, Including evidence/exhibits
- Termination Letter, if applicable
- Arguments Presented by union representative, if applicable
- Arguments Presented by the employer during the hearing which may be relevant, if applicable
- Witnesses contact information, if applicable
- Policies, regulations, memorandums, jurisprudence If used, and if applicable



Tips and Tricks

There are so many ways to approach your role as an NVP and each person will do what works for them. Seeing as generations of NVPs have come before you, here are some quick tips and tricks that can be shared.

Your activists:

- It's incredibly helpful to have easy access to communicate with your activists. You should keep an up-to-date database of the activists you will need to communicate with on a regular basis.
- You may also choose to create a space, such as a group chat, where you can exchange information and ask quick questions of activists.

Your documents:

- Governance documents guide most of the work accomplished in the labour movement.
- It's important to always have your national by-laws, regulations, and policies at hand. You should also have your regional by-laws and financial guidelines as well as your collective agreement. If you are chairing, you should also have your rules of order booklet on hand.



Your time:

- More and more, you will be solicited to attend events, take part in discussions, support members, etc. It is very important to have a means by which to organize your schedule.
- Furthermore, when organizing your region, you may also want to set a calendar of events on an annual basis. That way, your training events, committee meetings and presidents' conferences are set in advance and both you and your activists can work around the dates that have already been determined.

Delegating:

- You may feel alone right now, understandably. However, there is a whole team around you! First and foremost, your alternate(s) can take on mandates and can help lighten your workload. The same is true for your regional council and/or your local presidents. They are all elected to support the membership and can support you as well!



CEIU STAFF ROLES

There are upwards of 40 staff members at CEIU. They all have varied roles. The following section outlines why you may choose to reach out to any of them.

Please keep in mind that there are NVPs with different responsibilities, so NVPs will interact more with one staff member versus another.

As a concrete example – Portfolio NVPs work very closely with our Employment Equity and Human Rights Officer since their roles are more closely related.



Staff at National Office

The staff working out of the National Office work on a variety of files. The following outlines the sections of CEIU at National Office and which interactions you may have with each.

Finance and Administration team:

- Membership lists and reports
- Expenses
- Local Finances
- Issues with CEIU technology

Senior Administrative Assistant (Membership):

(members_membres@ceiu-seic.ca)

- Component (from 7X) and Local Transfers
- Dormant status
- Membership Card (eRand)



There are five national officers that are available to support your work as an NVP. Those national officers are as follows, with a brief outline of reasons you may choose to reach out!

Membership Engagement Officers (2)

- Local compliance
- Training
- Resource creation
- Consultation on engagement
- Posters or designs for regional events
- E-mail blasts for regional events

Employment Equity and Human Rights Officer

- Advice on dealing with the Employer on a workplace issue related to human rights
- Advice on dealing with a member who has a possible discrimination issue
- To request training

Political Communications Officer

- Advice on regional and portfolio-specific communications ideas, priorities and goals. This includes communications support for committee work.
- Provide communications support for national campaigns and resolutions.
- Support or lead the development of communications materials (text, video, photography, graphic design, etc.).

Health and Safety Officer

- Technical resources for the Policy OHS Committees
 - Request training
 - Request support on an OHS file in their region or their portfolio
- 

Staff in Your Regional Union Office

The Regional Union Office and their staff will be your first stop for most things in your region. Here is a non-exhaustive list of the work done by the National Union Representatives and Regional Administrative Assistants.

National Union Representatives:

- Representation at levels 2 and 3
- Provide advice on workplace issues, interpretation of the collective agreement, policies, guidelines and legislation
- Provide advice on the grievance process, grievances or the choice of a complaint avenue.
- Prepare and provide training related to representation and local administration.
- Communicate with Labour Relations
- Representation of members through FPSLREB staffing complaint process



Staff at Your Regional Union Office

Regional Administrative Assistants:

- Receive and manage grievances and complaints
- Makes necessary updates in Unionware, as well as produce reports.
- Membership lists including requests for transfers
- Communications to locals
- Enquiries from the regional inbox
- Assist in the planning of regional events, such as presidents' conferences, training and elections
- Contracts and expense claims: All financial decisions must be approved by the NVP(s).
- Take minutes at Regional Executive Council meetings and Presidents Conferences, upon request.
- Update region's website, if applicable.

Please keep in mind that effective communication is crucial for the smooth operation of our organization.

To ensure clarity and efficiency, please adhere to the following guidelines:

Prompt Responses:

Timely responses help maintain workflow and prevent bottlenecks.

Last-Minute Requests:

Plan ahead and avoid making last-minute requests.

Clear Drafts:

Provide clear and concise drafts of any messages to be sent to the membership.



GOVERNANCE

We have referred to governance documents, here is a breakdown of what you can find in each.

By-laws

Outlines the powers and responsibilities of an organization. Changes to the by-laws can only be made by the delegates at a National Convention every three years. This document includes everything from the composition of the National Executive, the roles and responsibilities as well as sections on finances and elections.

Regulations

Outlines the objectives and rules for a union's conduct and internal organization. Can be changed by the National Executive. It includes regulation 22 that sets the local by-laws and other regulations that establish national committees, the processes for trusteeship or monies for presidents' conferences.



Policies

Policies are a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures. For example, our policy document covers topics such as Administrative Investigations, Family Care, Travel or even Environmental Sensitivities.

Resolutions of Record

This document provides information on resolutions that were adopted at past conventions, and which provides the action or steps that the Union must take.

Financial Guidelines

This document clearly outlines the financial guidelines for everything from NVP budgets to regional training money and any other supplements you may have access to.

Rules of Order

Every democratic organization has rules of order to ensure the efficient functioning of meetings. We follow PSAC's lead in this regard, and our rules of order are based on Bourinot's Rules of Order.

PSAC Constitution and Regulations

Nothing in our governance may contradict PSAC's Constitution and Regulations. It is important to know that CEIU must also follow these documents.

RESOURCES

Your virtual toolkit

There are many resources available to help with your role and we're adding more all the time!

Included in your toolkit:

- Event-planning guidelines
- List of trainings available from National Officers and NURs
- Current CEIU organizational chart
- Finance presentation
- Local Officer Handbook
- New Member Handbook
- Expense claim form
- Communications

Here are some other helpful links:

- [Joint Learning Program](#)
 - [National Joint Council](#)
 - [PA Collective Agreement](#)
 - [PSAC Constitution and Regulations](#)
 - [Canada Labour Congress](#)
- 