



**Canadian Association of Professional Employees**

# **Members Guide**

*January 2025*

## **Welcome to CAPE**

Welcome to the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE)! You are now a member of one of Canada's largest federal public sector unions, representing more than 25,000 employees in the National Capital Region and across the country. We are a powerful voice for our members and a passionate advocate for advancing fair and equitable labour rights across the public sector.

We are here to champion you and your success.

### ***Values statement***

*We the membership have formed this Association to enhance the profile and increase the visibility of our knowledge-based professional work. We shall respect the autonomy of individual groups with regards to collective bargaining. We shall maintain a high level of services, in a financially efficient manner. We shall respect democratic principles. We shall ensure that our Association is a fully bilingual organization, both in services provided to its members and in its major bodies. We shall speak with one voice while recognizing the specific character of each individual group. (CAPE Constitution, Preamble)*

Canadian Association of Professional Employees  
350 Albert St., Suite 1800  
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 1A4

**Local:** 613.236.9181

**Toll Free International:** 1.800.265.9181

**Fax:** 613.236.6017

**Email:** [general@acep-cape.ca](mailto:general@acep-cape.ca)

## Glossary

**Annual general meeting** – Yearly meeting of CAPE members to elect leadership and debate proposed resolutions.

**By-laws** – CAPE’s by-laws set out the rules that allow the CAPE to function in accordance with its Constitution. Together, these documents form the operational framework of the association.

**Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE, the association, the union)** – The union that represents federal public sector employees in the Economics and Social Services (EC), Translation (TR), Library of Parliament (LoP) and Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (OPBO) groups, as well as ESS and TRL civilian members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

**Collective agreement** – The agreement between the association and the employer for a specific group of employees that defines the terms of employment, including wages and benefits.

**Collective bargaining** – The process in which the association negotiates with the employer on behalf of a specific group of members to deliver a collective agreement.

**Constitution** – CAPE’s Constitution outlines the fundamental principles that guide the association’s governance and direction. Together with the by-laws, they form the operational framework.

**Deeming** – The transfer of federal employees from a separate branch into the core public administration.

**Employer** – All CAPE members are employed by one of the following:

- **Library of Parliament (LoP)** – The organization that serves as the official library of Parliament.
- **Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (OPBO)** – The agency that supports the work of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, an independent agent of Parliament.
- **Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)** – The administrative arm of the Treasury Board of Canada that is the employer of the core public administration, civilians and members of the RCMP, and the Canadian Forces.

**Local** – A part of the association comprised of members within a specific branch, or department, or region that serves as a resource for members.

**Local Leadership Council** – Consisting of the national president, two vice-presidents, local executives and all stewards, this committee meets to discuss matters of importance to the association and can make recommendations to the NEC.

**Member** – A registered member of the union that is entitled to all the associated benefits and perks, including voting, discount services and regular communications from the association.

**National Executive Committee (NEC)** – The NEC is comprised of CAPE members elected by their fellow members to set the direction for the association.

**President’s Council** – Consisting of the national president, two vice-presidents and the local presidents, this committee meets to discuss matters of importance to the association and can make recommendations to the NEC.

**Rand member (unregistered member)** – A non-registered member of the union that pays dues and has access to some union services, but not the full suite of benefits received by registered members.

**Ratification** – The process by which the association attains the formal consent of its membership for a tentative agreement.

**Resolution** – A submission to introduce or change a policy or procedure that is discussed and voted on, usually after the AGM. A resolution can be submitted by the NEC or by at least two members.

**Special general meeting** – A meeting open to members to discuss a specific topic or issue relating to the association. A special general meeting can be called at the request of members.

**Steward** – A CAPE member who serves as the association’s eyes and ears in the workplace. They provide general information to their colleagues and can redirect them to the appropriate CAPE officer should more formal advice or representation be required.

## Contents

Mission.....	7
Governance .....	7
▶ National Executive Committee .....	7
▶ Framework for good governance .....	7
▶ Committees .....	7
▶ Role of the president .....	8
▶ Management .....	8
▶ Election process.....	8
Our membership .....	8
History.....	8
Constitution and by-laws.....	9
Policies and protocols .....	9
<b>I. Benefits of Registration .....</b>	<b>9</b>
How to register.....	9
General benefits.....	9
ServicePlus discounts and benefits program .....	9
Dues .....	10
Unregistered members (Rand members).....	10
<b>II. Protecting and Advocating for your Rights.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Labour relations and representation .....	10
▶ What your labour relations officer can do for you .....	10
▶ Representation protocol .....	10
▶ Filing a grievance .....	10
▶ Informal conflict resolution.....	11
▶ Adjudication process .....	11
▶ Labour relation officers’ portfolios: departments and regions .....	11
▶ General information.....	11
	5

Collective bargaining: negotiating salary and benefits .....	11
▶ Collective bargaining committees.....	11
▶ Collective bargaining teams .....	12
▶ The negotiation process.....	12
▶ Voting and ratification.....	12
Advocacy and government relations: advocating for and defending our members' rights and interests.....	12
▶ Advocacy.....	12
▶ Working with departments.....	12
▶ Government outreach .....	13
▶ Collaboration with the labour community .....	13
▶ National Joint Council .....	13
Learning and training: empowering our members with knowledge .....	13
▶ Stewards' training sessions.....	13
▶ Training and knowledge events.....	13
▶ Joint Learning Program.....	14
<b>III. Local Leadership .....</b>	<b>14</b>
National Capital Region locals .....	14
Regional locals.....	14
TR Local.....	14
Stewards.....	14
<b>IV. Member engagement and communication: How we stay connected.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Email.....	15
Website .....	15
Newsletter .....	15
Communications from locals.....	15
Events.....	16
Follow us on social media.....	16

## **Mission**

To win a more just, safe, and healthy workplace, and to assert ourselves in the face of our employer, through member empowerment and organizing in an inclusive, transparent, and accountable union.

[Read our strategic plan.](#)

## **Governance**

### ► *National Executive Committee*

The National Executive Committee (NEC) is CAPE's decision-making body. A dynamic and dedicated group of members elected by the membership, the NEC brings together their varying expertise, experiences and perspectives to ensure the association is serving the membership to the highest standard possible.

The NEC is elected to serve a three-year mandate. Every NEC is comprised of the president, two vice-presidents and directors that represent the EC, TR, LoP and OPBO groups – one director per 1,000 members.

[Learn more about the NEC](#) and see the current list of NEC members.

### ► *Framework for good governance*

Good governance is essential to preserve the trust and confidence of our members and our key stakeholders. Good governance is also critical to ensure the association can deliver on its mandate in compliance with the law and CAPE's Constitution and by-laws. CAPE's ethical governance framework ensures all elected and appointed officers are accountable and share the responsibility to protect the integrity, reputation, stability and viability of the union. To ensure we are upholding the highest standard of governance, CAPE has adopted policies and guidelines for officers to follow.

Learn more about [CAPE's Framework for Good Governance](#).

### ► *Committees*

CAPE has four permanent [standing committees](#) which provide guidance and oversight on issues of critical importance, including financial due diligence and audits, elections fairness, and collective bargaining.

The NEC can also form [subcommittees](#) when necessary to address identified needs within the union.

The composition requirements for each committee and subcommittee varies, with some comprised of a mix of NEC members and volunteer members – and some of volunteer members only. CAPE staff play a support role on committees and subcommittees but hold no decision-making power.

CAPE will issue calls for volunteers to fill vacant positions at various times, either at the beginning of a new NEC mandate or when positions become available.

► *Role of the president*

The president serves as the chief executive officer of CAPE and the chair of the NEC. They are the official representative of the union and are responsible for ensuring that its duties under the Constitution and by-laws are upheld.

Learn more about the role of the president as laid out in [CAPE's Constitution](#).

► *Management*

CAPE's management team runs operations and is responsible for implementing the vision and strategy outlined by the NEC. Each member of the management team is a leader in their field – and together provide a foundation of experience and expertise to fulfill the association's mandate.

Meet the [management team](#).

► *Election process*

Every member of the NEC is elected by the membership. All registered members are eligible to run for an elected position and vote for their representatives. The NEC is elected to serve a three-year mandate, and voting takes place after the annual general meeting held in the fall.

Check out [CAPE's by-laws](#) for more information about the election process.

► *Our membership*

CAPE represents more than 25,000 knowledge-based professional federal employees, including economists, translators, research officers and policy analysts. Our members form the backbone of the federal government's policy creation, implementation and evaluation work. Our membership is comprised of the following bargaining groups:

- **EC:** economists, policy advisors and statisticians
- **TR:** translators, interpreters and terminologists
- **RA-RO (LoP):** research officers and research assistants
- **RA-RO (OPBO):** research officers, research assistants and policy analysts
- **RCMP-ESS:** economists, policy advisors and statisticians
- **RCMP-TRL:** translators, interpreters and terminologists

Find more information about [our membership](#).

► *History*

CAPE was formed in 2003 through the merger of the Social Science Employees Association and the Canadian Union of Professional and Technical Employees. The two groups often worked side by side to advance their members' common interests and realized that – as one larger union – they would have a stronger voice to advocate for their members' rights.

Learn more about [CAPE's history](#).



► *Constitution and by-laws*

CAPE's Constitution outlines the fundamental principles that govern our operations, while the by-laws set out the rules that enable us to live by those principles. Together, they provide an operational framework that ensures the union is guided by our commitment to accountability, effectiveness, professionalism and integrity.

Learn more about how [CAPE's Constitution and by-laws](#) guide our work and read the full documents.

► *Policies and protocols*

CAPE policies and protocols have been adopted to protect everyone's rights and privileges, and to ensure good governance.

Explore [CAPE's policies and protocols](#).

## I. Benefits of Registration

► *How to register*

As a federal employee classified as an EC, TR, LoP, OPBO, RCMP-ESS or RCMP-TRL, CAPE is your bargaining agent.

While you are part of a CAPE bargaining unit, you are **not** a member in good standing until you register with us. Registered members can enjoy the full benefits of your membership, including voting, and discounts and rebates through ServicePlus.

To gain full access to all the benefits of membership, [register here](#).

► *General benefits*

All CAPE members – regardless of whether they have registered or not – are represented by CAPE during collective bargaining, can receive labour relations services, and will reap the benefits of CAPE's advocacy efforts. Non-registered members can also participate in the annual general meeting as observers but cannot vote on resolutions or during elections.

Registered members have access to additional benefits and privileges, including voting rights, resolution sponsorship, meetings and training, and critical information updates. Only registered members can volunteer and run for positions on the NEC, where they can help to shape the direction of the union.

Learn more about the [benefits of membership](#).

► *ServicePlus discounts and benefits program*

ServicePlus provides members with preferential rates on group life, home, auto and travel insurance, and discounts on cell phones, hotels, rental cars and more.

ServicePlus benefits are only available to registered CAPE members.

[Sign up for ServicePlus](#) today.

► *Dues*

Your CAPE dues are deducted from your paycheck. All members – both registered and non-registered – pay union dues.

► *Unregistered members (Rand members)*

Unregistered members – or Rand members – are those who, by virtue of their employment, are represented by CAPE and pay dues to the union. Rand members are entitled to all the benefits of the collective agreement and full labour representation services but cannot take advantage of the full suite of benefits that registered members can.

Learn more about [Rand members](#).

[Register your membership](#) to enjoy all the benefits you are entitled to.

## II. Protecting and Advocating for your Rights

CAPE is a stalwart defender of your rights in the workplace. Through our four pillars of action, or [core competencies](#), the union negotiates your collective agreement and champions your benefits, employment, labour rights, wellbeing, and equitable treatment while helping to ensure you are well represented when needed and are empowered with the knowledge and tools to advocate for yourself in the workplace.

### ***Labour relations and representation***

► *What your labour relations officer can do for you*

Encountering issues in the workplace is all too common, and it is very possible that you will experience a situation during your career where your rights, safety and wellbeing in the workplace are violated or at risk. Our labour relations officers can advise you on how to best manage work-related issues or represent you to seek redress.

Learn more about [common labour relations issues](#) and how our labour relations officers can support you.

► *Representation protocol*

CAPE has a general duty of fair representation to all members of its bargaining units in all matters.

Read CAPE's [member representation protocol](#).

► *Filing a grievance*

If you feel that there has been a violation of your rights as an employee in the workplace, you can file a grievance. A grievance can be filed individually or collectively, as a group grievance or a policy grievance, whenever the employer violates your rights as an employee.

Your labour relations officer can offer advice and represent you throughout the process.

Learn more about [filing a grievance](#) here.

► *Informal conflict resolution*

One of the ways to manage workplace conflicts is through informal conflict resolution. This approach is often recommended as a first step in solving conflicts and is generally implemented through guided conversations or mediation.

Learn more about the [conflict resolution process](#).

► *Adjudication process*

In cases where a grievance is not settled or upheld within the department – and if it meets the legal requirements – it can go to adjudication. In these instances, a third-party adjudicator will make a decision on the case presented. This process is set by the Federal Public Sector and Labour Relations Board.

Learn more about the [adjudication process](#) here.

► *Labour relation officers' portfolios: departments and regions*

Your labour relations officers are trained to inform you of your rights and advise you on any labour relations and employment issues. They are assigned by department, agency and region to ensure they are well-informed of internal policies, practices and culture.

Find your [labour relations officer](#).

► *General information*

CAPE junior labour relations officers are equipped to provide members with information on a broad variety of subjects, including your collective agreement or your rights in the workplace. If your inquiry requires more specialized labour relations knowledge, they can direct you to the appropriate labour relations officer.

You can reach a junior labour relations officer at [general@acep-cape.ca](mailto:general@acep-cape.ca).

## **Collective bargaining: negotiating salary and benefits**

► *Collective bargaining committees*

Before each new round of negotiations, a bargaining committee is formed for each group. All members in good standing can volunteer to serve on the bargaining committee for their classification once the call for volunteers goes out. The selection process ensures that the committee members reflect the demographic and regional diversity of the membership, and that they are well-equipped to negotiate effectively on their behalf.

The bargaining committee prepares proposals and issues, accepts or rejects an offer from the employer, and chooses the members of the bargaining team.

Learn more about the role of bargaining committees in [CAPE's by-laws](#).

► *Collective bargaining teams*

Led by the negotiator, the collective bargaining team reviews and approves negotiation strategies, negotiates with the employer in good faith, and makes recommendations to the collective bargaining committee on the approval or rejection of an offer.

Learn more about the role of collective bargaining teams in [CAPE's by-laws](#).

► *The negotiation process*

CAPE strives to secure the best possible agreements for our members and works diligently to move the needle forward on benefits, compensation and labour rights.

Our bargaining teams are comprised of expert CAPE staff and member volunteers, and the members are consulted throughout the process to ensure your needs are front and centre throughout negotiations.

Learn more about how [CAPE negotiates on your behalf](#) and how you can get involved.

► *Voting and ratification*

Once a tentative agreement is reached with the employer, members must then ratify the agreement through a vote. Only registered members are eligible to participate in the voting process.

Learn more about the [ratification of collective agreements](#).

**Advocacy and government relations: advocating for and defending our members' rights and interests**

► *Advocacy*

We are a strong voice for the rights and wellbeing of our membership and strategically work to raise awareness with government, federal departments and the public to advance our members' interests when it comes to issues they are facing, be it racism and discrimination, pay equity, the return-to-office mandate, the health and safety of federal interpreters, just to name those.

We serve as your advocate to bring balance to the employee-employer relationship, ensure your human rights are upheld, and improve your wellbeing in the workplace.

Learn more about some of [our top issues](#) and our advocacy work.

► *Working with departments*

We interact with all key departments where we have members, often through union-management consultation committees to discuss issues affecting members in a specific department and more generally to promote our members' interests and advocate for your rights in the workplace. Our close relationship with these departments allows us to advocate strongly and directly on our members' behalf to build a better, more equitable work environment.

► *Government outreach*

We connect regularly with Cabinet officials and members of parliament across party lines to discuss issues that affect our members, raise awareness and seek their active support. We will also engage with the House of Commons and the Senate as witness for hearings and by providing expert advice and information for their committees, councils and task forces.

Learn more about how we participate and get the [full list of all the working groups](#) we sit on.

► *Collaboration with the labour community*

We work closely and collaboratively with other bargaining agents on areas of mutual concern because we know we are stronger when we raise our voices together.

CAPE has been an affiliate of the [Canadian Labour Congress](#) since January 28, 2021. Through this community of national and international unions, representing more than three million workers, CAPE has strengthened its voice and can play a larger role in advancing labour rights across the country and beyond.

► *National Joint Council*

CAPE is also a member of the [National Joint Council](#), which brings together employers and bargaining agents to resolve problems and establish terms of employment that apply across the public sector, including directives on government travel, relocation safety, and public service health plants.

Learn more about the National Joint Council and [how its work](#) complements your collective agreement.

## **Learning and training: empowering our members with knowledge**

► *Stewards' training sessions*

For more than 10 years, CAPE has hosted bi-annual stewards' training sessions for members to provide you with information on labour relations practices and policies. The sessions are designed to help stewards understand members' rights in relation to their collective agreements and the employer.

Learn more about these [training sessions](#).

► *Training and knowledge events*

Every year, CAPE hosts various trainings and knowledge events that focus on specific issues for which members have expressed interest in learning more about. Those events may cater to a specific group of members or may be offered to everyone.

Check out our [events calendar](#).

► *Joint Learning Program*

The Joint Learning Program (JLP) is a partnership between the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat designed to bring unionized public sector employees and managers of the core public administration together to build a better workplace.

Through a memorandum of understanding, CAPE members can participate in the program by attending and organizing workshops with the end goal of improving labour relations.

Learn [more about the program](#) and how you can participate.

### **III. Local Leadership**

Locals are the backbone of CAPE. They build a sense of community amongst members, serve as a link to the national CAPE office, and support organization and action at the grassroots level. Locals are mandated to defend members' rights and interests through organization, advocacy and consultation.

All CAPE members have a local. For members in the National Capital Region (NCR), your local is determined by the department or agency where you work. Members outside of the NCR belong to a local for their region, regardless of department. There is one local for all TR members, both in and outside of the NCR.

► *National Capital Region locals*

In the NCR, where most of our members are located, each local represents a specific department or agency.

Find your local and learn more about [how you can get involved](#).

► *Regional locals*

Regional locals represent members from all departments and agencies within a given province, territory or major city outside the NCR.

Find your local and learn more about [how you can get involved](#).

► *TR Local*

The TR Local represents all TR members – both in the NCR and across the country.

Learn more about your local and [how you can get involved](#).

► *Stewards*

Stewards serve as a critical link between members in the workplace and CAPE. They serve as the association's eyes and ears in the workplace, helping to keep the union aware of any developments that could impact members. Stewards can also provide

general information and guidance to members and can redirect them to the right place at CAPE when there is a need for formal advice and representation.

Learn more about the role of stewards and [how you can become one](#).

#### **IV. Member engagement and communication: How we stay connected**

##### **► *Get involved!***

There are many ways that you can get involved with CAPE – from volunteering to sit on a committee or subcommittee, volunteering as a steward, or running as a local or national representative. Your contributions make the union stronger and help to deliver positive change for your colleagues across the country.

##### **► *Email***

CAPE communicates directly with members by email to provide important and timely information, including collective bargaining updates, voting information and results, and upcoming events.

Only registered members will receive these emails so make sure to [register your membership](#).

Please use a personal email address to ensure you continue to receive CAPE emails even if you change jobs or departments. Once registered, you will automatically be added to the email distribution list. If you are registered, be sure to check your Junk folder to make sure CAPE emails are getting through.

##### **► *Website***

The [CAPE website](#) is the central resource for members to access information about the union, stay up to date with the latest news and events, and find the contact details for your labour relations officer.

##### **► *Newsletter***

All members and the public can register to receive CAPE's newsletter, which provides news highlights and updates from the past month.

Sign up for the [CAPE newsletter](#).

Check out [past issues](#) of the CAPE newsletter here.

##### **► *Communications from locals***

To build a team atmosphere and keep members well-informed about CAPE's activities, local executives can access membership lists for their department or region. All communications from locals to members must clearly indicate they are from the local

and not the national office, and their use must strictly adhere to all relevant privacy legislation.

Learn more about [locals' access to membership lists](#) here.

► *Events*

Virtual and in-person events allow CAPE members to engage directly with NEC members and the national office, providing a venue to voice opinions and ask questions.

CAPE holds both regularly scheduled events, such as the annual general meeting as well as ad-hoc events as necessary, including special general meetings requested by the membership and information sessions on important and evolving topics.

The AGM takes place every fall and is an opportunity for members to discuss the strategic vision for the association, address issues of concern, and review and discuss proposed resolutions and audited financial statements. During an election year, it is also an opportunity to hear from candidates for the NEC.

Check out the [listings for all upcoming events](#).

► *Follow us on social media*

Be sure to follow us to stay up to date on what's happening at CAPE – and like or share our posts so your colleagues see them too!

Follow us!

[X](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[LinkedIn](#)