

Resolution 1, 2, 78 Report and Recommendations

Identifying and Addressing Barriers
– Building the Capacity of HEU



Contents

Helpful Terms to Know..... PAGE 01

Message from the President.....PAGE 03

SummaryPAGE 05

Background and ContextPAGE 07

- HEU – Power in Collective Action
- Ongoing Unfairness

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Project Resolutions..... PAGE 10

- Resolution #1
- Resolution #2
- Resolution #78

Listening Sessions Overview PAGE 12

- Naming the Barriers
- Being Responsive and Open
- Local Meeting Access and Participation
- Finding Solutions in the Issues Raised by Members

Recommendations PAGE 16

- Recommendation 1: Ensure appropriate response to racism, harassment and discrimination
- Recommendation 2: Support Stronger Locals
- Recommendation 3: Develop Targeted Communication Tools
- Recommendation 4: Good Governance
- Recommendation 5: Monitoring and Evaluating Impacts
- Recommendation 6: Leadership Development
- Recommendation 7: Connecting Members with Support
- Other Considerations

Helpful Terms to Know

HEU Hospital Employees' Union

Local Local groups that are connected to a national union. Locals may speak for workers in a certain area or a certain group of workers within the bigger union.

Standing Committee A committee is a group of people who come together to work on a project. Standing committees are permanent committees.

FBA The Facilities Bargaining Association

Constitution & By-Laws The union's goals and how the union works.

Privatization When a service goes from being run by the government to being owned by a corporation.

Discrimination Action or decisions that treat a person or a group badly for reasons such as their race, age or disability.

Bias

Being in favour of, or against, one thing compared with another, usually in a way that is unfair.

Advocacy

Helping members to stand up for their rights.

DEIA

Focusing on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) is a way to include people from many backgrounds.

Equity-Seeking Groups

People who know that discrimination stops fair access to resources and opportunities. They seek to fix these problems and want social justice. These people might be women, non-binary, transgender, racialized, disabled, young workers, 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, or Black.

Recommendation

A plan for the best thing to do made by a group with authority.

Representative

Any representative of the union.

Message From the President

The work that HEU has been doing to enhance its equity and inclusion is work that I am proud to be a part of.

HEU is the leading voice for health care workers in B.C. Throughout our eight decades, we have used this voice to fight for equity.

We fought against racism and discrimination affecting health care workers in the 60s and 70s.

We established pay equity for health care workers in the 80s and 90s. And we championed same-sex benefits for our members in the 90s.

When our union was under attack by a right-wing government in the 2000s, we made sure that collective bargaining became enshrined as a Charter right for workers across the country, and we fought back against privatization efforts that disproportionately affected our racialized workers.

Fighting for equity and social justice has always been part of our story as a strong, social justice union.

HEU members know that we can't advocate for equity and fairness for all health care workers if we don't have equity and fairness within our union. This is why our diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility work is a core part of our union's work.

Our union initiated our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work at the 2018 convention. This work resulted in a historic change in our constitution that created six equity seats on our Provincial Executive. At our 2021 convention, delegates adopted Resolutions 1, 2 and 78 to further our equity and inclusion work to better understand the barriers to making our union more inclusive, and to make changes to remove those barriers.

This report sets out the path for our union to move forward on this. It integrates the lived experiences of members from equity-seeking groups within our union. It sets out concrete ways for us to move forward that will improve access to the union's services and support and education to more members.

The work ahead for our union is hard but necessary. It is not straightforward, but it needs to advance. There will be challenging moments, but HEU members are ready for it. This is because we know that solidarity means that when we lift our most marginalized members, we lift all members.

The work that lies ahead will help us continue to build our union as a space where everyone feels welcomed, where everyone has a voice, and where everyone plays a role in fighting for worker justice and solidarity both in and outside of our union. We can be proud that our union has been leading the way in advancing equity in our labour movement, but we need to continue this work.

This is how we've won important changes for workers in the past and how we'll continue to win in the future.

BARB NEDERPEL

President

Hospital Employees' Union

Summary

This report shares real-life stories of union members from equity-seeking groups. It gives us clear steps to take that will make it easier for more people to use the union's services and get help.

In November 2021, there were three resolutions passed by the HEU (Resolutions 1, 2, and 78).

HEU looked at its *Constitution and By-Laws* in order to identify changes needed for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA). HEU also wanted to make union spaces safer for all. A plan was made to stop violence, abuse, and unfair treatment of women.

This report is important because it:

- Shows that racism, discrimination, and violence against women and gender diverse people are still happening in the union.
- Includes comments from HEU members given in 13 meetings explaining many problems that make it hard for people to take part in the union.
- Gives recommendations for how to solve these problems.
- Will help the union better serve all its members and make it easier for everyone to work together.

Members talked about a lot of problems that make it hard for them to participate with the union, such as:

- The union's lack of speed and openness.
- Issues with attending local meetings.

Members stopped joining events after a bad experience with the union or when having trouble getting information.

We all need to take charge and make things better. HEU wanted to hear from these members and learn their stories.

In response to comments from members, the recommendations include:

- Dealing with racism, harassment and discrimination.
- Creating targeted communication tools.

- Promoting good governance.
- Checking in on what happens.
- Developing leaders.
- Suggestions for union bargaining and advocacy.

The recommendations in this report are taking place in 2025 and 2026. We will report on how well they worked at the 35th biennial convention of the HEU in 2026.

In talks with HEU leaders, they told us that this work could help:

- Make decisions that are more representative of union members.
- Make the union stronger in the long term.
- Make our resources stronger.
- Get rid of gatekeeping (limiting or controlling access to something).
- Find biases.
- Make sure one group doesn't have too much power.
- Support safer meetings.
- Give all members the feeling of unity.

Background and Context

Health care workers are very important. But their work isn't always recognized. Health care work continues to be under-valued and made to be invisible. The system has a history of leaving many people out. The history is sexist and racist. This history still affects our neighborhoods, workplaces and unions today.

HEU – Power in Collective Action

Because of unions like HEU, health care workers now have:

- Better pay, job security, and working conditions.
- Access to ways of dealing with unfair treatment.
- Cost of living raises and higher wages.
- Better workplace rights.
- Benefits related to their jobs.

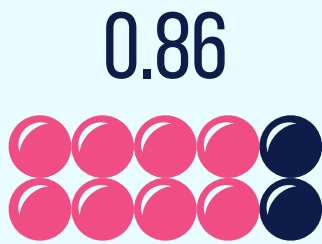
HEU includes more than 60,000 workers. More than 90 per cent of members come from an equity-seeking group. These people might be women, non-binary, transgender, racialized, disabled, young workers, 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, or Black.

For the past 80 years, HEU has worked for fair treatment of health care workers and their jobs. HEU's work on pay equality has led to changes in the law.

- For example, the government updated the Human Rights Code to make it illegal for private and public employers to pay men and women different wages.

In 1992, HEU negotiated with health employers and the NDP government to make pay fairer. The committee agreed to use one per cent of the yearly payroll for pay equity adjustments. This was done to close the wage gaps found after a full review of all HEU jobs. It took 10 more years to end pay discrimination.

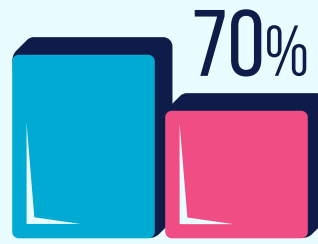
During the BC Liberals' term, all members faced privatization, pay cuts, and longer hours. Privatization hit women and people of colour the hardest. Nearly 10,000 HEU support workers lost their jobs. Then, the private companies outsourced these roles and hired new workers at lower wages.



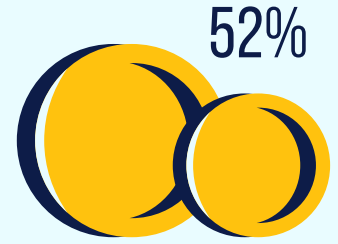
Women make **.86 for each dollar** men made in hourly wages.



University-educated racialized people earned **.86 to their White peers' dollar.**



People with disabilities earned **70% of those without disabilities.**



Indigenous women living on reserve earn **less than 52%** of non-Indigenous men.

Ongoing Unfairness

In 2021, the B.C. Human Rights Commissioner released the “State of Employment Equity in B.C.” report. It says that:

- B.C. has one of Canada’s largest gender pay gaps. Women earn 86 cents for every dollar men make in hourly pay, even in fields where women are more common.
- In British Columbia, the pay gap between races is bigger than in the rest of Canada. College-educated people of colour earn 86 cents for every dollar their white peers make.
- People in B.C. with disabilities made 70 per cent of what people without disabilities made.
- Indigenous people make up four per cent of workers. Indigenous women on reserves earn less than 52 per cent of what non-Indigenous men make.
- Women earn \$17,500 less annually than men and make up 78 per cent of the health sector.

In 2023, the HEU conducted an FBA member survey. It says that:

- 15 per cent of health care workers hold two jobs.
- 56 per cent of health care workers live in households with an income of \$60,000 or less before taxes.

In the FBA collective agreement, the lowest wage is paid at Grid 10, which is currently \$24.34 per hour (\$47,460 per year). Mostly women have Grid 10 jobs and mostly men have the higher-paying jobs.

Private sector pay matches public sector pay with government wage-levelling. But their benefits aren't as good. The BC Liberals targeted women and racialized workers by stopping pay equity.

From 2001 to 2017, the BC Liberals attacked HEU members, and they became privatized. HEU fought to bring workers back to the public sector and fought for wage equality. Our work for FBA members also improved contracts in the community health and social services sectors. It also helped our members in the private sector by matching their wages to the public sector.

Some important things HEU has been working on when it comes to equity in the union are:

- Setting up six Equity Standing Committees.
- The union's first Diversity Vice-Presidents (six positions) are on the Provincial Executive.
- Starting to focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.

The work that health care workers do and the help they need is real and pressing. HEU keeps driving social change to make care work more visible and rewarding and HEU keeps calling out unfair situations and calls on the government to fix them by:

- Finding and addressing barriers.
- Raising wages and improving working conditions.
- Putting money into leadership and training.
- Changing the way things operate.

HEU has a very diverse membership in private and public sectors. For the union to truly represent this diversity, our members need to be able to fully participate in the union. The recommendations in this report give HEU a chance to get rid of things that make it hard for members to take part in union opportunities they want.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Project Resolutions

HEU's 2021 Convention Resolutions 1, 2, and 78 are about:

- Identifying and Addressing Barriers
- Constitutional Review
- Governance
- Leadership Development
- Training and Tools
- Union Safer Spaces

Resolutions 1, 2, and 78 are detailed below:

Resolution #1

Carry out the second part of the union's project on diversity, equity and inclusion. Report at the 33rd biennial convention on success to improve its DEI work.

The union will:

- Survey members to find out what stops equity-seeking groups from taking part. Change policies to fix the problems.
- Use demographic information on members and union leaders. Set equity goals and get union groups to support them.
- Make a plan for everyone in the union to learn about DEI concepts and how to use union structures and procedures. This includes members, local executives, and staff.
- Make DEI tools for member activists. The tools should help equity-seeking groups feel safe and connected. They should foster a sense of community among all members.
- Improve the union's introduction for new members. Add a part about inclusion led by local executives and stewards.

- Find people from equity groups who could be good leaders and support them to get those roles. Plan leadership paths. Help members of equity groups learn and grow. Offer other types of mentorship.
- Update role descriptions and committee terms of reference for better inclusion and cultural understanding.
- Help members of equity groups in the labour movement to network and work together. This will make them stronger.

Resolution #2

Look at the union's *Constitution and By-Laws* through the lens of DEI to find things that make it hard for young workers and people from equity groups to join.

The Provincial Executive will set up the Constitutional Review Committee. It will have members from equity groups, young workers, and the Provincial Executive.

The committee will also get help from experts and a local survey. They will find participation problems that a change to the constitution could fix.

At the 33rd biennial convention, the Constitutional Review Committee will give a report on its ideas and results.

Resolution #78

Make a policy on sexual misconduct and talk about it at union events.

The policy needs to include consent, harm reduction, intoxication, and community responsibility.

Hold workshops to talk about how to fix systemic problems caused by sexual abuse and misconduct.

Members who need housing for union events should be able to get support.

Listening Sessions Overview

We held 13 listening sessions with people who said they wanted to be part of the union but had problems. This was done to learn more about their experiences. Like focus groups, listening sessions are for small groups of people to talk about their experiences.

Union polls with HEU members confirmed the themes from the focus groups. They showed that members feel safe because HEU speaks up for health care workers and supports them. Good experiences with HEU are help with things like:

Naming the Barriers

The listening sessions showed that there are two main things that need to be better for members:

- The union being responsive and open.
- Members being able to attend and take part in local meetings.

Being Responsive and Open

Union members said a big reason for not participating was their interaction with the union.

It was very frustrating that some members had no union representative or didn't know who theirs was. For those who did, some people got little or no response to the issues they raised. Some people turned down union opportunities because they didn't feel supported by the union.

Many members said they had unsafe, toxic and racist experiences where they were:

- The only one on the outside.
- Wrongly accused of a crime.
- Taken advantage of, bullied, or micromanaged.
- The target of malicious gossip and ridicule.
- Treated with indifference or ignorance.

Members said that some leaders were not living up to the anti-racist values they talk about. They talked about how sad it was that the union wasn't doing anything about the problems they brought up. Being ignored did not make them want to take part again.

The union leaders must learn more about these values. They must take more responsibility for their actions.

Members talked about how not having a safe way to discuss bad experiences made it harder to report problems. When it comes to safe reporting, people need ways that do not cause harm.

Local Meeting Access and Participation

It is hard to attend local meetings when there is no advance notice or reminders about the date, time and location. Members also say there is not enough variety to the locations, dates and times of meetings. There needs to be variety in these things to help those with shift jobs or unpaid care duties.

It is hard for people to take part at local meetings. Members talked about experiences of:

- Not being invited.
- Favouritism.
- Not being listened to.
- Not being able to see how decisions are made.
- Racism.
- Discrimination.
- Cliques.
- Being told to just vote for the incumbent.
- Lack of representation from many equity-seeking groups.

Members said that language barriers kept them from joining union events. Many felt unsafe speaking English because they had trouble sharing their views due to the language barrier. They struggled to understand the union materials, which were in English. Members felt very alone due to the language issue. They said they would be more likely to join union events if they could get materials in their first language. People said that being able to speak in their first language would make them more likely to share their thoughts.

Members said that fear was another thing that kept them from joining union activities. Some members didn't do more in the union because they:

- Thought they needed more education first.
- Were afraid of making a mistake.
- Feared being judged or disrespected.
- Thought their English wasn't good enough.
- Felt unimportant.

Some worried that union staff were not patient with members who had non-dominant personalities.

- People who didn't have strong personalities felt like they were not valued. This makes it likely that not all leadership styles are valued in the union society.

Members said that union activities discriminated against them:

- Some people were denied leadership roles or were stopped from taking part.
- Others were excluded from union events because of their physical ability.
- And others because they did not speak English well.

Members from rural areas said that it is hard for them to get to union events because they have to drive farther and for longer periods of time. This means that members have to miss out on paid and unpaid work because the meetings are so far away. The union didn't pay for the unpaid caregiving or the cost of getting back after 9:00 p.m. without public transit or other means of getting there.

Finding Solutions in the Issues Raised by Members

Most people who are part of HEU are satisfied with the union. But there are things we can do better to work with, help and serve members. It is important to find out what is stopping a person from participating when they say they want to but can't. This way we can help them.

The surveys and focus groups brought up problems like the union not being responsive or open. As well as issues with getting to and participating in local meetings.

We need to do things better, like:

1. Responding appropriately to racism, harassment, and discrimination;
2. Supporting stronger locals;
3. Developing targeted communication tools;
4. Promoting good governance;
5. Monitoring and evaluating impacts;
6. Leadership development
7. Connecting Members with Support.

HEU can affirm that members should not have to experience additional hardship, discrimination, injustice, or inequities in order to access union opportunities. With the recommendations in this report, HEU has the opportunity to improve our welcome of new members and reconcile relationships with existing members who have been dissuaded. We can and must do this work consistently and effectively across the union including at local, committee, executive, and staff levels. The recommendations held in this report seek to offer specific and measurable activities to be developed and implemented in 2025 and 2026 to engage the most marginalized members in service of lifting up all members. The next steps will include completion of 2021 Resolutions 1, 2, 78 and related resolutions with direction provided by members through this report.

Members shouldn't face unfairness in union activities. The recommendations in this report can help HEU across the union, at all levels: local, committee, executive, and staff. The recommendations can improve our welcome of new members. They can also fix issues current members are having.

The recommendations are planned for 2025 and 2026.

Recommendations

<p>Universal Institutional Change</p>	<p>1. Respond Appropriately to Racism, Harassment, and Discrimination</p>	
	<p>a. Revise policy</p>	<p>2025</p>
	<p>b. Develop and deliver ongoing training</p>	<p>2026</p>
	<p>c. Develop and implement process to address racism, discrimination and harassment</p>	<p>2026</p>
<p>Targeted Institutional Change</p>	<p>2. Support Stronger Locals</p>	
	<p>a. Enhance capacity of all union representatives</p>	
	<p>b. Develop guidelines for inclusive union practices</p>	<p>2025</p>
	<p>c. Support locals to develop yearly calendar of meetings</p>	<p>2025</p>
<p>d. Grants for locals to address specific barriers to participation</p>	<p>2026</p>	
<p>Targeted Operational Improvement</p>	<p>3. Develop Targeted Communication Tools</p>	
	<p>a. Update and share multi-lingual descriptions on union roles, recognitions, elections</p>	<p>2025</p>
	<p>b. Develop and delivery multi-lingual “Welcome to HEU” online orientation sessions</p>	<p>2026</p>
	<p>c. Multi-lingual communication about updated policy</p>	<p>2026</p>
	<p>d. Align all documents with anti-harassment, anti-racist, anti-bullying messaging</p>	<p>2025</p>
	<p>e. Develop language based response to member questions</p>	<p>2025</p>
	<p>f. Communicate broadly about open application process for all courses except SS</p>	<p>2025</p>
<p>g. Communicate widely about funding available for small-town, rural, and remote members</p>		

Universal Institutional Change

4. Good Governance

- a. Future Constitutional Amendments reviewed with DEIA lens 2025
- b. Review electoral models and test alternatives 2025
- c. Update local meeting practices and remove barriers to participation 2025

Targeted Operational Improvement

5. Monitor and Evaluate Impacts

- a. Collect and report out on demographics 2026
- b. Measure adherence to inclusive practices 2026
- c. Audit on implementation of policy and reports 2026

Universal Member Support

6. Leadership Development

- a. Offer training and workshops for potential candidates 2025
- b. Provide greater support to potential leaders 2025
- c. Conduct focus groups with member in local elected positions 2026
- d. Develop training and materials to improve member participation and update Article, Policies, Education with clear descriptions on all union positions 2026
- e. Review limited opportunities for participation and develop successorship and mentorship planning 2026

Universal Member Support

7. Connect Members with Support

- a. Create Social/Equity Steward Positions 2025

Recommendation 1

Respond to Racism, Harassment and Discrimination

- a. HEU needs to review and update the *Human Rights and Mutual Respect Policy*. A goal of this is to stop discrimination based on Indigenous identity, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, and class of people. It protects everyone by ensuring privacy, consent, and support for the complainant.
- b. Train all local leaders, like table officers, shop stewards, and staff on updated *Human Rights and Mutual Respect Policy* and provide ongoing training on anti-racism, anti-discrimination, gender, and active bystander issues.
- c. Train shop stewards and all staff to handle cases of racism, discrimination, and harassment. Make sure all cases get full investigation and follow-up. Refer people as needed while keeping privacy. Create member care places with group therapy and professional support.

Recommendation 2

Support Stronger Locals

Make it easier for all union representatives, including internal organizers, to help groups with these things:

- a. Have rules, in writing and electronically, for the union's outreach. They should cover inviting people to meetings and running them. This includes a written notice of absence for two meetings.
- b. Help locals make a yearly schedule of meetings that include both online and in-person times and places.
- c. Fund grants for locals to address specific barriers to participation.

Recommendation 3

Develop Targeted Communication Tools

- a. Update and share clear, multilingual descriptions of union roles, time commitments, awards, election methods, and results.
- b. Create and run a monthly, multilingual, live and recorded online introduction called Welcome to HEU. This way, new and current members can learn about the organization's structure, support, contacts, and opportunities.
- c. Tell members about the *Human Rights and Mutual Respect Policy* and how it will be put into action in more than one language.
- d. Align all union publications, including the website and social media. Also, align posters, important dates materials, statements, and other union materials. They must all align with anti-harassment, anti-racist, and anti-bullying messages. Let members know that these problems are happening in our union and what they can do to help.
- e. During telephone town halls, offer language options for members. OR offer members a non-urgent language-based voicemail and response service.
- f. Spread the word about the open and direct application process for all courses, except Shop Steward, which needs local approval.
- g. Tell everyone that members from rural areas can get money to join union events through local support grants.

Recommendation 4

Promote Good Governance:

- a. Before the next convention vote, we will review all future constitutional changes through the lens of DEIA. We will assess their impact on people and our union's work.
- b. Look over the voting models. Test different ones for committee elections.
- c. Change how local meetings are run. Remove barriers to representation for all in the *Constitution and By-Laws*. We can do this by:

- Letting people run for office and go to conventions without having to attend a certain number of meetings. This is to be more like other unions of the same size, like the B.C. General Employees' Union, the B.C. Teachers Federation, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees. These don't require meeting attendance for union roles.
- Make sure the local delegate ratio includes equity-seeking members.
- Have more members from the Equity Standing Committee on the FBA, CSSBA, and CBA bargaining committees.
- Give guidelines for inclusion to include everyone in union work.
- More information on concurrence and non-concurrence.
- Look over our principles to make sure they are fair, include everyone, and are not racist.

Recommendation 5

Monitoring and Evaluating Impacts

- a. Get the social and racial identity information on the Provincial Executive and its committees. Think about how to use data to make conferences, education, training, and the local executive better. Report at every convention.
- b. Do an independent analysis of how well the new inclusive practices are being followed. Hold focus groups every two years. Focus groups should find out how the changes affect new members, especially newcomers. Report at every convention.
- c. Do an audit of how the new *Human Rights and Mutual Respect Policy* is being used. Check how often and how early reports are being made.

Recommendation 6

Leadership Development

- a. Create training and workshops before the convention and equity conference. Training should help people who want to run for election learn about the jobs, campaign tools, and mentorship.
- b. Support potential leaders by giving them leadership chances, like EDMP, OHS, Shop Steward, and Elected Roles. Pay for their related costs.
- c. Hold focus groups with people who have been elected in their local but have not joined any other HEU activities like convention or committee work. Focus groups will let us know the things that make it hard for members to do their jobs. And the things that make it hard to get involved in HEU activities and leadership.
- d. With input from members and executives, make training materials and workshops for all union officials. Encourage more members to join. Update articles, policies and education. Include a list of all union roles, the selection process, and recognition of the roles.
- e. Review the ways union members can take part, like how people can only be on standing committees for a set amount of time. Plan for who will take over leadership and committee roles. Also, plan for mentorship opportunities.

Recommendation 7

Connecting Members with Support

- a. Set up test roles for Equity and Social Stewards. They will help members while keeping their information private.

Other Points to Think About

Bargaining Demands

- a. Make sure 15-minute orientations happen. Fully staff the job of the local inductor so orientations happen.
- b. Increase the number of independent inspectors in the FBA 4.03.

- c. Advocate for better child care coverage, and care for disabled and extended family members.
- d. Better training to help stop racism and discrimination at work. Train staff on how to handle workplace injury or illness caused by racism and discrimination.

Advocacy

- a. People with disabilities should be able to take on union roles without losing their benefits.
- b. Advocating for enough staff so members can do union work.

Other

- a. Check and make sure orientation is happening for new members.

PROUD
STRONG
UNITED

HEU CONVENTION 2024