



Gord Currie, President,
Unifor Local 414

Ready to Bargain

Our union, Unifor Local 414, is gearing up to negotiate a new contract for nearly 4,000 members working at Metro stores throughout the Greater Toronto Area. The previous four-year collective agreement between Unifor and Metro is set to expire on July 13, 2019. Over the past several months, our union held meetings across the GTA (and ran an online survey) where members could submit their ideas on how to improve working conditions in our stores. The proposals we received are unsurprisingly bold. Our members work incredibly hard, and are the driving force behind Metro's remarkable financial success. They are proud of the work they do, but feel left behind. Wages for many full-time workers have not kept up with the cost of living. Schedules are still too erratic, with paid sick days taken away. Disruptive technological change is looming. There is an over-reliance on part-time work and a need for more full-time jobs. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

As the bargaining process unfolds over the coming weeks, the union will be preparing and distributing a series of short leaflets to help members stay informed. The Unifor-Metro

collective agreement is one of the largest, and most influential, collective agreements for retail workers in Ontario. As it was in 2015, we expect a great amount of public attention on these negotiations – especially in light of major rollbacks to worker's rights by the current Ontario government. Members have given their elected Bargaining Committee a very ambitious mandate for progressive changes to our collective agreement, and we expect this to be a challenging round of talks. The better members are informed, the stronger we will be to make the changes we need. Together, we can secure another good deal at Metro.

What is Collective Bargaining?

As union members, we have the right to negotiate – as a group – the terms and conditions of our work with our employer. This includes things like wages, vacation pay, scheduling rules, and much more. The ability to bargain collectively is a right only available to union members, which in the Canadian retail sector, is unfortunately a small fraction of the workforce (under 15%). Without a union, employers set working conditions as they see fit and have no obligation to negotiate with employees. The *Ontario Labour Relations Act*, a provincial law, sets out the rules by which collective bargaining negotiations must take place.

Our collective agreement with Metro covers nearly 4,000 union members, working in 27 different stores throughout the Greater Toronto Area – including stores located in Orangeville, Newmarket, Mississauga, Brampton and Brantford. Ours is an important collective agreement – and one of many that our union, Unifor,

negotiates in the supermarket sector. It is the largest supermarket agreement in the entire union, and one

of the largest supermarket agreements in Ontario. The terms and conditions of this agreement help set a pattern for other supermarkets in the province to follow. What we are able to negotiate in our contract matters to supermarket workers everywhere.

Our current four-year collective agreement, which came into force in July 2015, is set to expire on July 13, 2019. As required, the union has submitted a formal 'Notice to Bargain' with the employer to renegotiate and renew our contract. Talks between the union and employer will begin on July 2, with a deadline set for 12:01 a.m. July 14, and will be held in Mississauga.



What are the Union's Objectives in Bargaining?

As in every round of contract talks, our union will be seeking notable improvements to wages, benefits and working conditions. Our demands will be generated from the hundreds of individual proposals submitted by members at meetings held earlier this year (meetings open to all 4,000 members) as well as online surveys. Our bargaining demands will touch on the needs of all members, part-time and full-time, junior and senior.

In 2015, our union made significant wage and work standard gains for low-wage part-time workers – an improvement that was necessary and long overdue. While much work still needs to be done for part-time workers on wages, scheduling, leaves of absence,

benefits and access to full-time work, a heavy focus in this round will be on full-time workers – for many of whom wages have failed to keep up with the cost of living, and benefits have lagged.



Many Unifor members expressed outrage at the unfair rollbacks to workers' rights introduced by the provincial conservative government – rollbacks that our union intends to address, head on, in bargaining as well.

If the union cannot reach a decent settlement with the employer, we will take strike action (more details on strike votes and strike preparation will be circulated in the coming weeks). Our objective, as always, is to secure a deal without labour disruption.

Who is leading negotiations for the union?

The elected Bargaining Committee – a committee that includes eight union members working at Metro – is responsible for directing negotiations for the union (see side bar for Bargaining Committee names).

Christine Connor, a long-time Metro worker and former President of Local 414, will serve as lead negotiator. Christine will work with the Committee alongside Gord Currie, current President of Local 414; Tony Falcone, Vice-President of Local 414; Keith Osborne, Local 414 consultant; Angelo DiCaro, Research Analyst; and David Leacock, Pensions and Benefits Analyst. Chris MacDonald, Assistant to Unifor National President, will support the committee's work on behalf of National President Jerry Dias.

Bargaining Team

Deb Henry - Store # 752
Mary Leonard - Store # 720
Michelle Charles - Store # 325
Helen Love - Store # 728
Joanne Valliere - Store # 758
Vito Renda - Store # 804
Renee Gloyns - Store # 720
Kim Coughlin - Store # 334



How do I stay informed?

Stay tuned for further membership updates, delivered to your store, over the coming weeks.

Visit the Local 414 website for other relevant info www.uniforlocal414.ca, and follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/UniforLocal414 and Twitter @UniforLocal414.

Members can also reach out anytime by emailing 414contact@uniforlocal414.ca or calling the Local, toll-free, at 1-866-875-0420.