

FRONT COMMUN



**PUBLIC-SECTOR
CONTRACT TALKS**

**WHAT'S COMING
UP THIS FALL?**

FRONTCOMMUN.ORG



UPDATE ON BARGAINING TALKS

The *Front commun* presented its demands to the government in the fall of 2022. One year later, where will we be in terms of contract talks? Will we have reached a settlement – or will we be getting ready to strike? No one can predict the future, but here’s some food for thought.

As of June 9, thirteen bargaining sessions had taken place at the central table. The *Front commun*, consisting of the CSN (*Confédération des syndicats nationaux*), the CSQ (*Centrale des syndicats du Québec*), the FTQ (*Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec*), and the APTS (*Alliance du personnel professionnel et technique de la santé et des services sociaux*), has presented all of its demands, and the government has provided some details about its offers.

In terms of pay, the government hasn’t budged on its wretched offer of 9% over 5 years. It is not proposing any kind of cost-of-living indexation, implying that this would be too risky from its point of view. Neither has it put forward anything to ensure a general catch-up with other economic sectors, or to provide real gains for public-sector workers who have been getting poorer year after year. Stubbornly, it continues to offer the same pay increases that are totally disconnected from workers’ needs and will continue to impoverish them.

Based on government offers and the government’s own expectations in terms of inflation, by the end of the proposed collective agreement, public-sector workers would be poorer by at least 7.4%.

The *Front commun* believes that this is simply unacceptable – especially since the government took action in early June to vote an immediate 30% increase in MNAs’ pay, on the basis of the very principles that justify the demands of public-sector workers.

In terms of retirement issues, the government has decided to attack pension benefits even as it acknowledges that the RREGOP (Government and Public Employees Retirement Plan) is in excellent financial shape. Arguing that recent improvements to the QPP (Québec Pension Plan) will induce people working in the public system to take early retirement, the government is taking back with one hand what it gave with the other. It wants to reduce benefits paid by the RREGOP so that workers will not retire until they’re older.



As if this weren't enough, the government is putting even more pressure on workers who have accumulated 35 years of service – it wants to force them to work until age 57 before they can retire without being penalized.

When you decide to save money at the expense of public services, you're definitely passing up on your opportunity of being an employer of choice. And you're also fuelling the exodus of workers from our institutions!

In terms of insurance, the government argues that current benefits are generous enough, and that improvements were granted during the last round of bargaining talks. But the cost of insurance premiums keeps going up and the employer's contribution is very small, or even non-existent in some cases.

Regarding our other demands, the government has had little to say. It has shown little or no openness regarding our other demands, about which it has said almost nothing. In fact, it is stubbornly committed to dealing exclusively with priorities based on its political program. In terms of conditions of work and practice, it likes to say that it's bringing solutions, but it's keeping quiet about the major setbacks it's trying to impose.

AS YOU CAN SEE, DISCUSSIONS ARE PROCEEDING SLOWLY AND WE'RE NOWHERE NEAR A SETTLEMENT.

WE'LL HAVE TO CHANGE THIS DYNAMIC IF WE WANT TO GET A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT IN THE FALL, AND THIS WILL ONLY WORK IF LARGE NUMBERS OF US GET INVOLVED.

WE NEED THE GOVERNMENT TO GREATLY INCREASE ITS PAY OFFERS, TO REMOVE PUNITIVE MEASURES REGARDING RETIREMENT, AND TO PROVIDE CONCRETE AND SATISFACTORY ANSWERS TO OUR DEMANDS.

AS FOR CONDITIONS OF WORK, EMPLOYERS WILL HAVE TO REVIEW THEIR PROPOSALS FOR SETBACKS IF THEY'RE LOOKING TO SETTLE.

STEPPING UP THE PRESSURE TACTICS AND PREPARING FOR A STRIKE

Since the middle of May, each *Front commun* union has gotten a mandate to ratchet up its pressure tactics and prepare for strike action should it prove necessary. Throughout the summer, but especially early in the fall, pressure tactics will therefore intensify: this is the scenario we can expect in the short term. Hundreds of actions have already been organized across Québec to support demands at the central bargaining table (pay, pension, insurance, etc.) as well as sectoral demands (conditions of work and practice). As the pace steps up, we will be heard and seen, and increased pressure on the government will make it impossible for it to ignore our demands.



**A NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION IS PLANNED IN MONTRÉAL ON SEPTEMBER 23.
TOGETHER AS ONE, WE'LL TAKE TO THE STREETS TO MAKE THE GOVERNMENT
UNDERSTAND THAT WE NEED BETTER — IN FACT, WAY BETTER — OFFERS.
A VERY LARGE TURNOUT IS NEEDED TO IMPROVE OUR WORKING CONDITIONS.**

SAVE THE DATE!



ARE WE GOING TO STRIKE?

Even if contract talks aren't advancing as we'd like, it's important to leave time for a period of intensified pressure tactics, both in the workplace and in the public space. It's obvious that a range of strategies should be tried before we choose to go on strike. Then, depending on what's happening at the bargaining table, a strike might become necessary. At that point, there would be a consultation to obtain a strike mandate from members. As set out in the Labour Code, members would vote on the strike by secret ballot at a general assembly.

In the public sector, acquiring the right to strike is strictly regulated. Under the law, several months' work are required before any strike action can take place, with various steps to be taken. Essential services must be maintained in health and social services, and these must be covered by an agreement. This work is well under way. In addition, a mediation process must be implemented, and this has been done.

WHEN COULD A STRIKE TAKE PLACE?

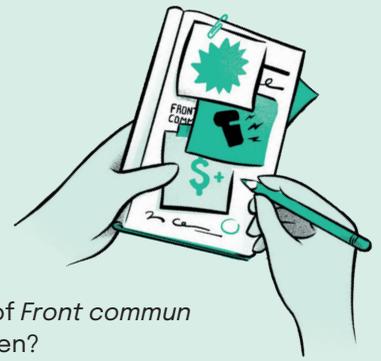
Given the various time constraints, the right to strike would be acquired by September 2023. However, if a strike is to take place, several weeks will be needed to consult all members and obtain a strike mandate. It will be up to you, *Front commun* members, to decide if there will be a strike or not.

A key point is that strike action must be carried out to support negotiations. Choosing when to go on strike is a strategic decision that is based on ongoing analysis of the general situation and what's happening at the bargaining table. In any case, if the government leaves us no choice but to go on strike, this could happen, at the appropriate time, as soon as consultations have ended in the fall of 2023. Should that be the case, full details (schedules, conditions for carrying out a strike action, etc.) will be communicated to you in due course.

Solidarity between 420,000 *Front commun* members is an immensely powerful force enabling us to carry out this fight.

We're facing the government – together as one.

BARGAINING TALKS QUIZ



A. THE FRONT COMMUN

1. In what year was the first *Front commun* established?

1959

1972

1998

2010

2. How many people are members of the *Front commun* in 2023?

150,000

350,000

420,000

600,000

3. What is the average income of *Front commun* members?

\$32,000

\$44,000

\$58,000

\$79,000

4. What percentage of *Front commun* members are women?

44%

51%

78%

90%

5. According to the *Institut de la statistique du Québec*, in terms of pay, what is the gap between *Front commun* members and other wage-earners in Québec?

-5%

-9%

-10%

-12%

B. DEMANDS

1. What are we demanding in terms of pay increases?

A. 2023: \$100 a week or CPI +2%
2024: CPI + 3%
2025: CPI + 4%

B. 2023: 2%
2024: 3%
2025: 4%

C. 2023: CPI + 2%
2024: CPI + 3%
2025: CPI + 4%

2. What is the government offering in terms of pay increases?

A.
2023: CPI + 3%
2024: CPI + 2%
2025: CPI + 2%
2026: CPI + 1%
2027: CPI + 1%

B.
2023: 9%
2024: 0%
2025: 0%
2026: 0%
2027: 0%

C.
2023: 3%
2024: 1.5%
2025: 1.5%
2026: 1.5%
2027: 1.5%

3. The RREGOP is in good financial shape.

TRUE or FALSE

4. The government plans to increase RREGOP benefits.

TRUE or FALSE

5. The government has gotten back to the *Front commun* regarding all of its demands.

TRUE or FALSE

C. STEPPING UP THE PACE OF MOBILIZATION

1. It is VERY likely that we'll reach an agreement with the government by the fall.

TRUE or FALSE

2. A stepped-up mobilization will be in full swing by early September.

TRUE or FALSE

3. A national rally will take place in Québec City on September 23, 2023.

TRUE or FALSE

4. It's important to step up the pace of our mobilization before resorting to strike action.

TRUE or FALSE

D. STRIKE ACTION

1. Unions will decide for their members whether or not they go on strike.

TRUE or FALSE

2. A strike could be called as of today.

TRUE or FALSE

3. If there is a strike vote, it will be by show of hands.

TRUE or FALSE

4. Essential services will have to be maintained in health and social services institutions AND in schools.

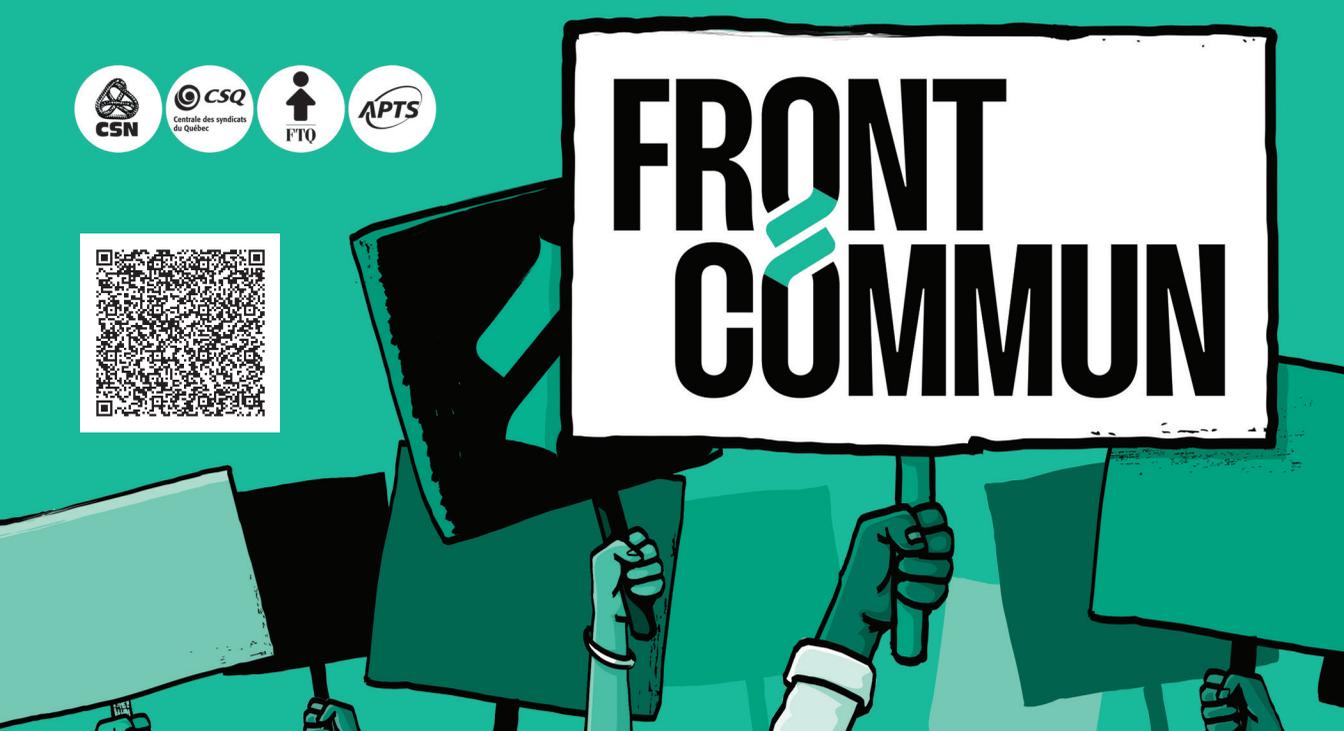
TRUE or FALSE

ANSWERS: A1 1972 · A2 420,000 · A3 \$44,000 · A4 78% · A5 12% · B1 A · B2 C · B3 TRUE · B4 FALSE · B5 FALSE
C1 FALSE · C2 TRUE · C3 FALSE — IT WILL BE IN MONTRÉAL · C4 TRUE · D1 FALSE · D2 FALSE · D3 FALSE · D4 FALSE

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NATIONAL RALLY FOR OUR PUBLIC SERVICES

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2023
JEANNE-MANCE PARK – MONTRÉAL

An illustration at the bottom of the poster shows several hands of different skin tones holding up various signs. The central focus is a large white sign with the text 'FRONT COMMUN' in bold black letters. The word 'FRONT' is on the top line and 'COMMUN' is on the bottom line, with a stylized logo consisting of two overlapping teal and white shapes between the words. Other signs are partially visible in shades of teal and black.

**FRONT
COMMUN**