

February 2026

1. What's happened so far in bargaining?

Bargaining for a new CUPE 1698 collective agreement has been underway since spring 2025. Here is a brief overview of what's happened so far:

July 2024: Bargaining committee formed

July 2024–May 2025: Bargaining preparations, including member surveys and proposal development

April 2025: Union served notice to bargain

May 2025: Members ratified bargaining proposals

June–October 2025: Bargaining with the employer (7 meetings) and Labour Board-assisted mediation (5 meetings)

October 28, 2025: Employer applied to the Labour Board for a last offer vote

November 13-14, 2025: Members voted 86% NO on the employer's last offer

November 18, 2025: Employer withdrew from mediation

2. Where are we now?

Since November, no new bargaining dates have been scheduled. While talks are not currently active, bargaining is **not over**. Our [2023-2024 collective agreement](#) remains in effect, and bargaining will continue until both sides reach a tentative agreement that members vote to accept. A pause in negotiations is a normal part of the bargaining process. Your bargaining committee and local leadership have continued to meet and prepare for the next stage of bargaining.

3. What happened with the last offer vote?

Under the BC Labour Relations Code, an employer can request **one** last offer vote per round of bargaining. In November, members voted **86% NO** to the employer's offer, sending a clear message that library workers want to see meaningful improvements on your key priorities, including reasonable increases to wages and benefits, and fairness for casual and newer employees. Voting NO to the employer's offer does **not** trigger a strike or a lockout.

4. Why did mediation stop?

On November 18, the employer chose to withdraw from mediation. Mediation is where a neutral third-party mediator appointed by the BC Labour Relations Board helps the parties resolve differences in collective agreement negotiations. It is normal for negotiations to pause when one or both sides need time to reassess their positions.

5. What happens next?

This stage of bargaining often takes time. While there are no new bargaining dates scheduled right now, your committee is continuing the work needed to be ready to get back to the table when there is meaningful movement from the employer. That includes:

- Organizing site visits to check in directly with members and recommit to your key priorities.
- Identifying and connecting with community allies.
- Monitoring settlements across the region and at other public libraries and municipalities. **A number of settlements reached in recent months include improvements beyond what the employer has offered CUPE 1698, and these developments represent an important shift in the bargaining environment.**

6. Could there be a strike or a lockout?

Your bargaining committee is doing everything we can to reach a fair agreement without a strike or a lockout. Job action is always a last resort. That said, the best way to avoid a strike is to be prepared for one. Staying informed and connected helps show the employer that members are serious about reaching a fair deal.

No strike action can take place without a separate vote by members. Right now, we are **not** asking for a strike vote. **If circumstances were to change, members would receive clear information, as much notice as possible, and opportunities to ask questions and get prepared.** In some cases, simply holding a strike vote is enough to demonstrate members' resolve and encourage movement at the bargaining table.

A lockout is when the employer prevents union members from working during a labour dispute. Like a strike, a lockout cannot happen without formal legal steps and advance notice from the employer under the BC Labour Relations Code.

If bargaining were to reach a stage where job action was needed or a lockout occurred, members would receive clear information, training, and support. Strike pay and other supports are available through CUPE to ensure members are not navigating that process alone.

Right now, our focus remains on getting back to the bargaining table so we can make meaningful progress toward an agreement.

7. How you can help

A strong and informed membership helps support the bargaining process. In the coming weeks, the bargaining committee will be reconnecting with members across worksites.

You can support bargaining by:

- Connecting with us during site visits
- Reading and sharing bargaining updates, and checking in with your coworkers
- Bringing questions or concerns to your steward
- Wearing your CUPE 1698 button

Visible solidarity helps show that members are engaged and paying attention as bargaining continues.

8. How to stay informed

If you have questions or updates to share, contact laurie.dyck1698@gmail.com, or use the [contact form on our website](#). Your CUPE 1698 bargaining committee is:

Laurie Dyck, (President)
Minakshi Sidhu (General Vice President)
Robin Braidwood (Member at Large)

Grace Derksen
Natalie Fouquette (Communications Officer)
Michelle Anderson (CUPE National Rep)

