

Why GSU is asking for a Dues Increase

After years of careful budget management, GSU's Joint Executive Council (JEC) has concluded that GSU's current dues rate of 1.75% — which has remained unchanged since 2003 — is no longer sustainable.

To keep our budget balanced in the face of rising costs, we have already made significant cuts to various programs and services. However, we cannot continue to cut without directly impacting the protections our membership relies on.

We often operate a bit like a duck—gliding smoothly on the surface while paddling like mad underneath. That paddling isn't just about balancing the scales with management so GSU members are treated fairly; it's also about running worker education, training our shop stewards, navigating complex workplace issues, funding our grievance and arbitration services, and building a stronger community.

To maintain our proactive presence and ensure we keep leveling the playing field for our members against their employers, we must address our funding.

That is why the JEC is asking members to approve a 0.25% dues increase (to 2.0%)—not just to protect what we have, but to actively invest in the future of our union.

How We Got Here

[GSU has been doing more with less for a long time.](#) The industry consolidations at the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool of the 1990s hit our membership hard, and while the union survived, something was lost along the way — a generation of engaged, active members who were the lifeblood of their Locals. In the years since, the JEC has worked hard to keep the union financially stable and services running, but our budget has left increasingly little room to grow without continuing to cut current services.

[For the past three years, the Joint Executive Council has reviewed budgets carefully and tightened spending wherever possible.](#) Despite that, we are consistently running up against the limits of what the current dues rate allows us to fund. Legal costs in particular have outpaced our budget.

[The bottom line is that we've done what we can with what we have.](#) We risk losing ground, and to move forward quickly and effectively, we need additional resources.

What The Extra Dues Will Actually Do

We aren't just trying to maintain our current setup, or simply restore the programs we had to cut to balance the budget. [This is about moving well beyond that to actively strengthen our union and make our Locals more effective at supporting our membership.](#)

The core focus of the increase is revitalizing GSU through member engagement and education.

1. Increase the Local/Sub-Local's Dues Rebate from \$2 to \$5 per member per month, giving Locals and Sub-Locals more resources for the activities that build a stronger, united membership
2. Providing the time and resources for members and officers to do the real work on the ground. This includes funding new member orientations, officer worksite visits, steward mentorship, local events and BBQs, and collective bargaining action.
3. Expand member education with a multi-year training plan — more seats, more courses, more opportunities for members to build skills and step into leadership to improve their skills and better their Locals.
4. Build organizing capacity so GSU can continue to grow and bring more workers under the protection of a collective agreement.
5. Stabilize our legal budget so we can continue to fight for members and defend Locals without sacrificing other services.

Why is this needed

This dues increase is not about new ideas and new technology. It is about going back to the tried-and true way of getting more union officers and resources in the workplace so Locals can fight harder at the bargaining table and make real improvements in each other's lives. It's also about ensuring we have the resources it takes to legally defend our collective agreements and protect our members through the grievance and arbitration process, especially now that we are often up against high-paid corporate lawyers.

"When members say "I don't see my union in the workplace," or "No one welcomed me when I first started," or "The union doesn't do anything for me," these are symptoms of our current funding problem.

This is what happens when we lack the resources, time, and money for officers to build a real presence where it matters most. This dues increase will allow us to put funding directly back into our Local officers who do this vital work day in and day out—whether that's welcoming new hires, celebrating retiring colleagues, or simply being right there on the shop floor to help you every single day.

Questions and Answers

We know you have questions about the proposed increase—such as what our union will do with the additional funds, or why this is happening now. To help, we have attached a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to this email, which is also available on our website. Please check it out to see if your questions are covered.

We welcome your questions and feedback. If your specific question isn't answered in the FAQ, please reach out to your JEC Rep, Local Officer, or Staff Representative. They will gladly get you an answer, and we will continue to update our FAQs as more questions come in.