

# STEWARD COMPETENCIES



## WHAT ARE COMPETENCIES?

A job or role description outlines the tasks and responsibilities of a particular position. Competencies, in turn, are a description of the combined **skills, experience, attitudes and traits** that a person draws upon in order to do well at the specific work their job or role involves.

New stewards are not expected to be highly competent in all the areas described below when they enter the role. What is essential is that all stewards possess a willingness and desire to learn and grow in these key areas – through education, team work and experience doing the work.

These steward competencies help individuals to plan and track their own development. Growth in these competency areas benefit stewards in their professional and personal lives, as well as in their union roles. These competencies also help to guide worksite steward team coordinators, BCNU regional leaders, and BCNU as an organization, in their efforts to provide support and training to stewards – our crucial frontline leaders.

### LEADERSHIP

Leadership means the ability to motivate self and others, build trusting relationships, use personal influence, and maintain a positive attitude in challenging circumstances. Leadership requires strong communication skills, keen self-awareness and self-management abilities. The three components of the BCNU steward leadership role include the ability to lead self, lead others and be the face of the union at the worksite.

### LEADING SELF

Self-aware stewards are adept at examining their own emotional triggers, assumptions, biases, values, principles, strengths and limitations, and apply this awareness to managing their behaviours and interactions.

### LEADING OTHERS

Stewards engage others through relationship building, personal influence, teamwork, communication, and role-modeling. Stewards pay active attention to the overall health and well being of the membership at their worksite.

### REPRESENTING BCNU

Stewards operate with a leadership understanding that they are the face of the union at the worksite. They actively support the goals and positions of the organization, and work to enhance BCNU's positive reputation with members and others, at the worksite and beyond.

### LABOUR RELATIONS PRACTICE

Stewards proactively work and advocate for just and healthy workplaces through formal and informal channels. They guide members through the collective agreement dispute resolution process and other collective agreement processes (e.g. PR process, DTAs) – from initial assessment of the issue(s) through to identification and implementation of solutions. They make clear, informed and well-documented decisions, including when to refer a matter on to an LRO or other staff. Stewards ensure that issues receive timely attention, and are tracked and followed-up, through effective file management and communication with members.

### TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Stewards understand their role and legal responsibilities as union representatives. They are (increasingly) familiar with how to read and interpret collective agreement language, and other supporting documentation (e.g. employer policies). They know where and how to access the information and support the need to conduct their labour relations work thoroughly.

### CRITICAL THINKING/PROBLEM SOLVING

Stewards carefully examine presenting issues and problems, probe for related issues, and think strategically about potential outcomes and best courses of action. Stewards form opinions and make decisions through investigative research, critical analysis of information, and the careful testing of assumptions and facts.

### RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Stewards purposefully build connections, partnerships and networks to create results. They recognize that building and maintaining

effective relationships is essential to strong labour relations practice and the building of an engaged membership at the worksite.

### ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Stewards create systems that support the effective and efficient completion of work.

### CONFLICT FLUENCY

Stewards are able to draw on various skills, abilities and tools in responding to conflicts arising from differences in viewpoints, priorities, values, desires, and needs.

### COMMUNICATION

Stewards convey information and ideas in a clear and timely manner. They are aware of their own communication style and observant of the styles and needs of those they are engaging with, seeking input and feedback from others to strengthen exchanges. Stewards deliver information through a variety of different media and forms, selecting the one that best supports their goals and parameters.

### ORAL COMMUNICATION

Stewards can communicate information, thoughts and ideas clearly in different contexts to different stakeholders. They listen carefully and work to ensure they understand what others are saying, thinking and feeling.

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Stewards write in a clear, concise, organized and convincing manner for the intended audience.