



# The Professional Union You Need

[ona.org](https://ona.org)

The Ontario Nurses' Association (ONA) was founded back in 1973 by 85 independent nurses' associations from across Ontario to fill a much-needed void: providing representation and services *to nurses by nurses*.

We have grown tremendously since then. In fact, ONA is now the largest provincial nurses' union in Canada – and the only union in Ontario with a sole focus on health care. Today, we represent 68,000 nurses and health-care professionals, and 18,000 nursing student affiliates, who provide care at hospitals, long-term care facilities, community health, public health, home care providers, clinics and industry across the province.

Quite simply, there is no other union that can better represent the unique needs of registered nurses, nurse practitioners and registered practical nurses in all sectors than ONA. Read on to find out why!



## How to Reach Us



### ONA Provincial Office

85 Grenville Street, Toronto, ON M5S 3A2

Toll-free telephone number: 1-800-387-5580

Toll-free fax number: 1-866-964-8864

Email: [organizer@ona.org](mailto:organizer@ona.org)

Information on how to join ONA: [ona.org/join-ona/](https://ona.org/join-ona/)

Addresses of all ONA offices are available at [ona.org](https://ona.org)



## You have a strong voice

A union is formed in a workplace when the employees decide they want to speak with one strong, collective voice. It's the very definition of solidarity!

When you are on your own, you have little choice but to accept the wages, benefits and working conditions arbitrarily determined by your employer. Not so with a union.

Instead, those wages, benefits and working conditions are negotiated between your employer and your union, representing your collective interests. Being in a union means being part of a professional team your employer must listen to.

With ONA, you have a voice and the real ability to use it!

## We campaign for care...together

We know how tough it is on the front lines. As a powerful union, ONA advocates for the government to hire more nurses and health-care professionals to improve our understaffed health-care system. We speak up where we see employer policies and government decisions that impact our members' abilities to provide quality care. And we don't give up.

After all, when we all come together on a common issue, we're hard to ignore, evidenced by our multitude of successes over the years.

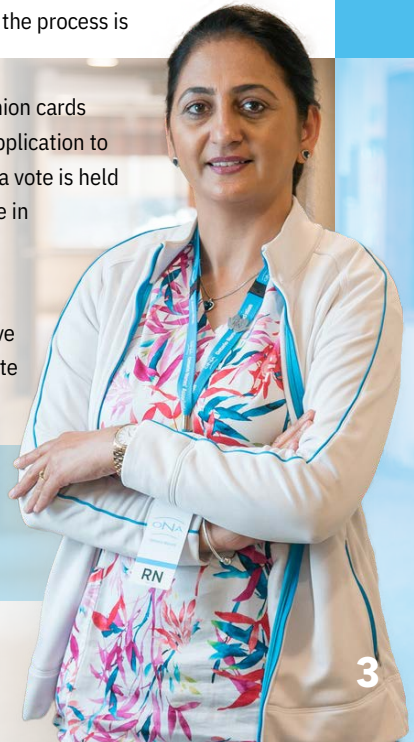
## The majority rules

Joining a union is a majority – and private – decision. And the process is simpler than you might think.

When at least 40 per cent of a group of employees sign union cards indicating their interest to join, the union can submit an application to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). A week later, a vote is held for those employees. With 50 per cent of the vote plus one in favour, the union becomes their legal representative.

The entire process is completely private. The province's *Labour Relations Act* protects the identity of those who have signed union cards. Your employer will never know. The vote is done also by secret ballot, and conducted by the OLRB.

**Rest assured you cannot be fired, disciplined or treated differently for participating in union activities. You are exercising a very important democratic right!**



## It's a democratic process

Your say doesn't end when you vote to join our union. In fact, it just begins!

One of your first orders of business will be to elect the representatives on your Bargaining Committee to negotiate a collective agreement, which you will have the opportunity to accept or reject.

Our members' wants and needs drive our bargaining priorities, obtained through our regular *Have Your Say* survey. So, even if you aren't physically at the bargaining table, your voice is very much present.

You are also entitled to vote for your representatives on other committees, such as Health and Safety, Professional Development and Labour-Management, which also bring your concerns forward.

Of course, members are welcome – and encouraged – to let their name stand for a position on any of these committees. Your input is needed!

## It protects you and sets out your rights

Your collective agreement is a very important, legally-binding document. We can't stress that enough.

It sets out your conditions of employment, including pay rates and entitlements to such benefits as statutory holidays, vacations, sick leave, short- and long-term disability, pension and mileage. It contains clauses about seniority rights, job postings, job security, hours of work and the grievance procedure (including arbitration) used to enforce collective agreement rights.

It also includes unique language about professional responsibility and workload — critical tools to protect nurses and patients/clients/residents that you won't find anywhere else.

ONA's collective agreements are negotiated recognizing that nurses work in facilities that operate 24/7, 365 days per year. Scheduling language ensures that work schedules are more predictable and help balance your personal life, which is so important to your overall well-being.





ONA provides an exhaustive list of services to improve the working lives of our members, but the reality is those services cost money. To fund them, members pay dues once a month through payroll deductions. Most of those dues are tax deductible.

The collection of union dues is a democratic and transparent process, from start to finish. ONA members decide at our Biennial Conventions on the structure and amount of dues, along with how they are spent.

As of January 2024, dues rates are as follows:

Straight Time Hourly Rate	Monthly Dues	Tax Deductible
Equal or greater than \$32.50	\$122.13	\$118.63
Greater than \$26.00 but less than \$32.50	\$89.69	\$86.19
Equal or less than \$26.00	\$72.60	\$69.10
Stand-by Pay	\$5.00	\$1.50

How dues are allocated	TOP TIER Equal or greater than \$32.50/hour		SECOND TIER Greater than \$26.00 but less than \$32.50/hour		THIRD TIER Equal or less than \$26.00/hour	
Operating fund	\$97.44	79.8%	\$65.00	72.5%	\$47.91	66.0%
Local portion	\$18.69	15.3%	\$18.69	20.8%	\$18.69	25.7%
Supplemental fund	\$2.00	1.6%	\$2.00	2.2%	\$2.00	2.8%
LEAP fund	\$4.00	3.3%	\$4.00	4.5%	\$4.00	5.5%
TOTAL	\$122.13	100.0%	\$89.69	100.0%	\$72.60	100.0%



## What dues do for you

And what exactly do you get for your monthly dues? A lot, including:

- Collective agreement negotiating teams and bargaining support.
- Assistance with professional practice concerns.
- Grievance and arbitration handling.
- Education workshops and training.
- Assistance with Workplace Safety and Insurance Board matters.
- Access to our Legal Expense Assistance Plan (LEAP).
- Long-term disability (LTD) base coverage for members without employer LTD plans.
- Excess malpractice insurance.
- Critical illness coverage.
- Advocacy through lobbying, media relations and government relations.
- Publications, including *Front Lines*, mailed to all members quarterly.
- Regular eNewsletters.
- A website full of information and resources ([ona.org](http://ona.org)) and a strong social media presence.
- Provincial Coordinators Meetings, Provincial Leadership Meetings, Leadership Summits and Biennial Conventions.
- And so much more!

## Dual dues defined

Some of our members work at more than one facility. If both are unionized with ONA, those members are eligible for an automatic refund of the operating portion of union dues paid at each additional employer if the total dues deducted exceed a full year's dues (from January 1 to December 31).

Members who qualify automatically receive a dual dues refund no later than May 31 of the following year. We also produce an annual list of those we have not been able to contact. We want to ensure they receive these funds!

For that reason, it's very important that members entitled to a dual dues refund ensure that ONA's Dues and Membership Team has their current name, personal email and address on file. In fact, it's a best practice for all members to let us know of any address or name changes at [ona.org/update](http://ona.org/update).

## Legal Expense Assistance Plan

ONA is very proud of our Legal Expense Assistance Plan (LEAP) – and rightfully so. This unparalleled program assists our nurses and health-care professionals who are faced with legal problems arising from their employment. Since its inception in 1980, LEAP has, quite literally, helped hundreds of members.

As one of those members put it, “You don’t ever want to be in a position where you need LEAP, but when you do, you’re so glad it’s there.”

Subject to the conditions and limitations of the plan, LEAP may provide help to members faced with employment-related legal issues stemming from:

- An issue before the regulatory colleges.
- A coroner’s inquest or investigation.
- A criminal investigation or criminal charges.

LEAP is just one more way that ONA takes care of you!

For additional information on LEAP and the insurance coverage ONA provides, please ask for our brochure or access it at [ona.org/leap](https://ona.org/leap).

## Malpractice Insurance

It’s not something we like to think about, but sometimes in the course of employment, unfortunate situations can and do arise. And when that happens, ONA members have access to our professional excess liability insurance plan.

Malpractice insurance protects ONA members who, as a result of practising their profession, are found negligent and must pay damages. This insurance provides up to \$1.5 million in coverage per incident to a maximum of \$6 million per member (punitive and exemplary damages are excluded).

Provided they regularly pay dues or the equivalent to ONA, all members are automatically covered (subject to the conditions and limitations of the plan).

It’s one less thing on your mind during an already difficult time.





**ONTARIO NURSES'  
ASSOCIATION**

# The Professional Union You Need

**ONA provincial office**

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