FAQ re. Transgender Fund
November 12, 2021

"A fund in an annual amount of $5,000 will be available to support health services and other costs associated with gender transitioning not covered by OHIP or any other government program. Unused funds shall be carried over with the fund amount not to exceed $15,000. The Parties will establish a subcommittee of Joint Committee to determine the procedures for the administration of the fund."

What is the Transgender Fund?
The Transgender Fund was added to the Extended Health Benefits as part of the 2016-19 TUFA collective agreement. It is available on a first-come basis to support TUFA members and their families requesting financial assistance for trans-related surgeries and/or other transition-related expenses that are not covered by OHIP, insurance, or any other government program.

How do you define 'trans'?
We understand 'trans' to be a broad and inclusive term that includes genderqueer, transgender, transsexual, and gender variant among others.

Why is the Transgender Fund important?
Trans people face immense barriers and challenges. Public-health funding for trans-related needs in Ontario – and all of Canada – remains inadequate. Costs for everything from surgery-related travel and accommodation, to legal name changes, to purchasing new wardrobes are prohibitive.
Both parties at the bargaining table recognized the value of practically demonstrating our commitment to an inclusive campus by establishing a fund to help members and their families defray some of these costs.

Who is eligible to apply to the Fund?
Consistent with the other Employee Benefits offered to TUFA members, individuals who are members of TUFA at the time that they apply for assistance under the fund as well as their domestic partners and dependent children.

What sort of expenses are covered by the Fund?
The Fund may be used to support members in acquiring gender-affirming everyday life necessities as well as for incidental costs related to surgeries that are not covered by provincial health care. The intent of the parties is that a broad range of expenses should be eligible, including but not limited to electrolysis, binders, packers, jane belts, wigs, and breast forms.

Are clothes covered too?
Yes, but there is a lifetime maximum limit of $500 for clothes for members, $250 for dependents and domestic partners.

Are change-of-name and associated expenses covered?
Yes.

Is surgery eligible for coverage?
Yes, where not covered by the province.

What about costs that you haven't listed here?
All requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

How do I submit an application for assistance under the fund?
Requests for assistance under the Transgender Fund may be submitted to Trent's Pension and Benefits Advisor at any time. Requests will be authorized on a reimbursement basis provided they conform to stated limits elsewhere in this document.

I'm concerned about who is going to see my application. What measures do you take to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of my application? Who could possibly see my application – and especially my name – during this process?

Once delivered to the Human Resources office, the application and all subsequent and related correspondence shall be treated confidentially in the same manner as medical records. These items will not be included in the member's general Personnel File and shall not be available except on a need-to-know basis for the purpose of administering the fund.

Do you prioritize certain expenses over others? For instance, costly surgery over wigs or electrolysis?
Any costs incurred by a trans member in relation to their trans identity are important to that members. It is not our place to make subjective value judgments about the relative value of an expense, or to create a hierarchy of costs. The fact that a member believes an expense to be important and necessary is all that we need to know. In the event that the Fund does not have sufficient resources to meet all requests from it, the applicant will be encouraged to apply again in the following year.

Are there limits as to how much I can receive?
Yes. There is an annual maximum limit of $5,000 support for any TUFA member, and $2,500 for domestic partners and dependents.

If I have difficulty paying my costs up-front, can I apply for funding prior to making an expensive purchase or doing surgery?
No, unfortunately access to the fund is on a cost reimbursement basis only.