



Workers' World Today
www.workersworldtoday.com
Telephone: 866-435-3286

How to Start a Union

Publication for all workers: blue and white collar

Steps to Forming a Union

Although every workplace is unique and the reason you want to form a union may differ from another person, the process to form a union is the same. By following these steps, and working closely with us, you too can enjoy the benefits of a union contract. We advocate employees work in virtually every industry. No matter where you work, a union represents your interests, and the process to forming a union begins the same way in any workplace.



To begin forming a union where you work, you must first find out if your co-workers want to form a union. Gauge their interest by quietly talking to a few trusted co-workers who you think may be interested in improving your workplace.

Your Organizing Committee

Leaders are identified and an organization committee representing all major departments and all shifts reflecting the diversity in your workplace is established. Committee members must be prepared to work hard to educate themselves and their co-workers about the benefits of joining a union. They must also be ready to warn and educate co-workers about the impending management anti-union campaign. The organizing committee must be educated about workers' right to organize.

Information gathering is vital to a successful victory:

- Workplace structure: departments, work areas, jobs, shifts
- Employee information: name, address, phone, shift, job title, and department for each worker (employee list)
- Employer information: other locations, parent company, product(s), customers, union history



Your Issues...

The committee develops the issues at your workplace that need to be improved (the goals of improvements) and a strategy for the union campaign. A plan for highlighting the issues program in the workplace is carried out through various organizing campaign activities. These will be discussed in detail at your weekly committee meetings.



Authorization Card Drive!

Your co-workers have to join a union and support the union campaign by signing union authorization cards. The goal is to sign-up at least 60% of your workplace on authorization cards. The card campaign is done quickly, by the organizing committee with the assistance of a union representative, and is necessary to hold a union election.



Union Election Held...You Win!

The signed cards are used (and required) to petition the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hold a secret ballot election at your workplace. Once the cards are filed with the NLRB, it will take the labor board several weeks to determine who is eligible to vote and schedule the election. The union campaign must continue and intensify during the wait. If a majority votes yes for union representation, the employer must recognize and bargain with the union. Winning a union election not only requires a strong, diverse organizing committee and a solid issues program, but there must also be a plan to fight the employer's anti-union campaign.

Negotiating Your Contract

The organizing campaign continues after election victory! The real goal of the campaign, a union contract (the document the union, along with your negotiating committee, and the employer negotiate and sign, covering everything from wages to how disputes will be handled), is still to be achieved. You and your co-workers must be mobilized to support the union's contract demands (decided by you and your co-workers) and work together so that your issues will be addressed in the contract.



One Union. One Voice.

Now that you have the right to be represented by a union, your workplace is assigned a union representative that will work closely with you and your union stewards to make sure that the contract is being adhered to by your employer. You and your co-workers are now ready to see and feel first hand the benefits of belonging to a union.



CONGRATULATIONS!



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Email: info@workersworldtoday.com