

So you want to form a union

People form unions because they want to make positive changes in their workplace.

- ✓ **A Voice on the Job.** Only union workers have the right to negotiate with their employer over wages, benefits, and working conditions. Without a union, employers get to make all the decisions alone.
- ✓ **Equitable Pay.** By working together, staff can negotiate higher, transparent wages and ensure that all employees are being paid fairly.
- ✓ **A Legally Binding Written Contract** that defines and guarantees the terms of our employment. The union members at each workplace, with help from union staff, decide what gets proposed, elect our own bargaining team, negotiate our contract, and vote to approve the contract.
- ✓ **Protection and Support** to ensure our workplace rights are being upheld and to challenge any unfair or questionable decisions or actions by management.
- ✓ **Improve Industry Standards.** Unionizing strengthens and improves health and safety, economic and other standards within our industries and professions.
- ✓ **Issues Important to You.** Each workplace's priorities are different. Our members have bargained for mechanisms to strengthen diversity and inclusion, subsidized transportation, flexible working hours, sustainable workloads, paid days off after a traumatic event at work and more.

Your right to form a union is protected by long-standing labor law.

**Office and
Professional
Employees
International
Union
Local 8**



5 Steps to Form a Union

1 Talk to Coworkers/Gather Information

What are the issues facing your coworkers? Any common themes? Approach trusted colleagues to talk about the idea and collect personal contact information. Contact a Local 8 organizer with any questions.

2 Form the Organizing Committee

The Organizing Committee educates coworkers about what forming a union means, motivates coworkers to take action with confidence, identifies common workplace issues and helps plan how to build a union in your workplace. You will want the Organizing Committee to be representative of the whole workplace so you can communicate with all coworkers.

3 Build Majority Support

Once your Organizing Committee is in place and you have a good plan, you're ready to take action and make your efforts public by talking to all your coworkers to make sure everyone has an opportunity to have their questions answered. Cards or petitions are signed to show support for having a union.

4 Make Your Union "Official"

When you can show a strong majority support for creating a union, you can request a secret ballot election conducted by a neutral government agency, and/or request your employer voluntarily recognize your union. OPEIU Local 8 organizing staff can help you decide which method might be best for your situation.

5 Win a Strong Union Contract

Once your union is officially certified, it's time to bargain a strong contract. You and your coworkers will elect a negotiating team and decide what changes and improvements you want to see. The final agreement will be ratified by a vote by union members before it's put into place. You can count on OPEIU staff to provide support every step of the way.

What About Union Dues



OPEIU Local 8 is a non-profit employee organization that operates solely from member dues.

- No one pays any dues until after your first contract is negotiated, voted on and approved by you and your coworkers. You get to see the results before paying any dues. Since 1994, the member-voted dues rate has been 1.5% of gross monthly salary—an easy way to figure this is \$7.50 for every \$500.
- There are no initiation fees for newly organized groups coming into the union. There are no other fees or assessments of any kind.
- The members of the union decide the dues structure and how dues are spent.

Know Your Rights!

Workers have the legal right to join or support a union, and to:

- Attend meetings to discuss joining a union.
- Read, distribute and discuss union literature in non-work areas during non-work times.
- Sign petitions or cards asking your employer to recognize and bargain with your union.
- Ask coworkers to support joining a union.

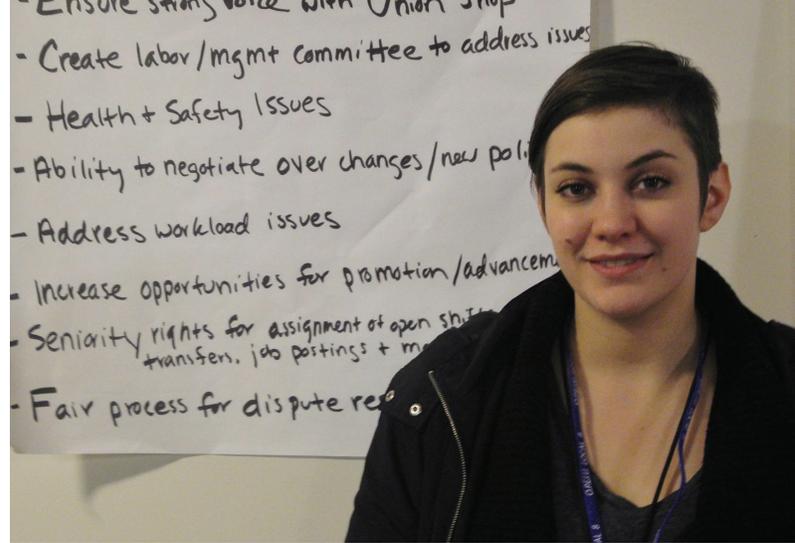
Most employers, even good ones, feel threatened when they find out employees want to share some power. Most will try to convince you not to form a union by using a variety of tactics designed to create doubt. However, employees get the final say on whether or not you have a union. We know that workplaces are actually stronger and more effective with a union. When staff are given respect at work, a living wage, and a seat at the table when decisions are made impacting the communities they serve, they're able to focus their energy on their work and are less likely to leave for other opportunities.

Your employer cannot legally punish or discriminate against any worker because of union activity.

Your employer cannot:

- Threaten to fire, lay off, discipline, harass, transfer, or reassign employees because they support the union.
- Favor employees who don't support the union over those who do in promotions, job assignments, wages, hours, enforcement of rules, or any other working condition.
- Shut down the work site or take away any benefits or privileges employees already enjoy in order to discourage union activity.
- Promise employees a pay increase, promotion, benefit, or special favor if they oppose the union.

Your legal rights are enforced by the National Labor Relations Board www.nlrb.gov, a neutral federal government agency, or the Public Employment Relations Commission www.perc.wa.gov, for public employees.



Local 8 members work at:

- Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Care Center and Cannon House
- Casa Latina
- Crisis Connections
- Samaritan Hospital
- Behavioral Health Resources
- Cascade Regional Blood Services
- Providence Regional Medical Center Everett
- Valley Medical Center
- Kaiser Permanente Washington
- Trios Health
- Tri-Cities Community Health
- Willapa Harbor Hospital
- Coastal and Olympic Community Action Programs
- Senior Life Resources
- CDM Home Care
- Waterfront Credit Union
- Welfare and Pension Administration
- YouthCare
- Compass Housing Alliance
- Solid Ground
- Plymouth Housing
- Metropolitan Development Council
- Low Income Housing Institute
- Northwest Justice Project
- Northwest Immigrant Rights Project
- Seattle, Tacoma, Bremerton and Pierce County Housing Authorities
- Thurston County Juvenile Courts
- City of Ellensburg
- King County departments
- Washington State Ferries
- Trade Union, Insurance and Law Offices

...and many other organizations!

Union noun \yün-yən\
A union is a non-profit, employee organization - protected by law - where workers join together to improve and safeguard their wages, benefits and working conditions. A union also gives employees a way to achieve respect and fairness on the job and a stronger voice to impact employer decisions.



**Office and Professional Employees
International Union Local 8**

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