



General Information about Unions

About unions

A union is a group of workers who form an organization to gain:

- * Respect on the job
- * Better wages and benefits
- * More flexibility for work and family needs
- * A counterbalance to the unchecked power of employers
- * A voice in improving the quality of their products and services

What is a labor union?

A labor union is an organization of workers who work to achieve the common goals as stated above. The labor union, through its leadership, bargains with the employer on behalf of union members (rank and file members) and negotiates labor contracts with employers.

This may include the negotiation of wages, work rules, complaint procedures, rules governing hiring, firing and promotion of workers, benefits, workplace safety and policies. The agreements negotiated by the union leaders are binding on the rank and file members and the employer and in some cases on other non-member workers.

History

The traces of trade unions' existence could be traced from the eighteenth century. The rapid expansion of industrial society drew women, children, rural workers and immigrants to the work force in larger numbers and in new roles. This pool of unskilled and semi-skilled labor spontaneously organized in fits and starts throughout its beginnings and would later be an important arena for the development of trade unions.

What is Apprenticeship?

Apprenticeship is a structured system of training designed to prepare individuals for skilled occupations. It combines on-the-job training under the supervision of experienced journey workers with related classroom instruction.

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