

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Union?

An organization of employees that banded together and gained recognition under U.S. Labor Law (NLRA) to represent workers in order to improve wages, benefits, job security, and working conditions by negotiating a labor contract and by being active in society to improve the lives of all working people.

What does CWA do for me?

CWA represents you to your employer by negotiating and enforcing a contract, which creates and protects your rights in the workplace, by organizing other workers, and by being active in the political arena to advance the interests of working families.

Why do I have to pay dues whether I join or not join the union?

You get the benefits of a contract and representation whether you join or not. The Agency shop provision in our agreement, negotiated in accordance with federal labor law, requires all employees covered by the contract to pay their fair share of the representation costs. In other words, “This stuff ain’t free!”

How are CWA Local 2108’s Stewards, Chief Stewards, and Officers selected? Why don’t we get to vote on all of them?

Officers are elected in accordance with the local by-laws for three-year terms. The local by-laws can be changed by the membership. We do not elect chief stewards or stewards. An appointed steward and chief steward structure has been demonstrated to be more effective at representing the members. Members do participate in the selection of new steward or chief steward by either approving or disapproving their appointment by the Executive Board at a local membership.

How is CWA structured?

CWA is a representative democracy governed by a constitution in accordance with federal law. The order of authority created by the CWA Constitution: Convention, National Executive Board, the District, the Local, and the members. The process starts, however, with the members, who elect local officers and delegates to district meetings and national conventions. The district delegates elect the district vice president for a three-year term. The delegates to the national convention elect the national officers, each for three-year terms. The district vice-presidents and national officers form the National Executive Board, which is responsible for CWA policies between the annual CWA conventions.

What is a labor contract? How is it enforced?

The employer and union periodically re-negotiate a labor contract. A majority of voting members must then ratify the tentative contract for it to be accepted. The contract is enforced by the grievance-arbitration process, which is created by the contract and ultimately supported by federal labor law.

Why does the Union always support Democrats?

We support candidates with a record of supporting our issues whether Democrat or Republican. Labor’s selection process includes candidate interviews, evaluation of voting records, and a candidate’s commitment to support a working family’s agenda. Candidates are evaluated based on their support for labor’s agenda, not their political party. In recent years, Democrats have been more likely than Republicans to support a working families’ agenda.

You are spending my dues money on politicians who seek to restrict the constitutional right to own a gun. That’s not right!

We do not spend your dues money on politicians. We use voluntary contributions from our political action fund, COPE, to support candidates, who support the working family’s agenda. We have no position on gun control or abortion. We decide to support candidates based solely on their support of the working families’ agenda. You can contribute to COPE through a payroll deduction on a voluntary basis.