

Organizing Efforts

The Union isn't a 3rd Party – IT TAKES ALL OF US!

During contract negotiations even employees who aren't union members are interested in the possibilities of what we can achieve. It is a perfect time to work on organizing. It is with this in mind that the following suggestions are offered to aid you in your organizing efforts. We, the workers, are the union. It is all of us, working together to secure better working conditions, pay and benefits.

ONE-ON-ONE COMMUNICATION – The most effective way to communicate is talking to workers face-to-face. This involves visiting our co-workers, listening to them, and developing a relationship with them. Be willing to listen and make the commitment to do all three. Start planning one-on-one meetings now with the co-workers you have selected to sign up into the APWU.

- 1. INTRODUCTION** – Introduce yourself. Don't assume they know who you are. Make it personal. Ask them questions. Don't start the conversation by asking them to join.
- 2. LISTEN AND GET THEIR STORY** – Get the worker to talk about issues at work. Ask detailed questions and probing follow-up questions. You aren't there to solve the problem, or debate their issue with them.
- 3. GIVE THEM A VISION OF THE UNION** – Let them know what we, together, can do. Give examples of what can be accomplished through solidarity. For example, ask them to imagine the results if *all* of us went to management *together* on an important issue instead of one on their own.
- 4. ASSESS, AGITATE & MOVE TO ACTION** – Ask them if they are ready to stand with us today. Help them make the connection to see how joining with their co-workers gets them closer to fixing their problems.

DO

- Ask fact-based questions, give the worker time to answer, listen, and pay attention, (*How long have you been at your current job? What shift do you work?*)
- Follow with opinion questions. (*Are there things you want to see changed?*)
- Learn everything about their issue. Wait until they tell you the whole story.
- Agitate (*How long have you been putting up with that? Why hasn't anyone changed it? Who suffers the most from this? Do you think that's fair?*)
- Make sure you identify other issues after you get the first one – the more the better!
- After you get their story, transition into action (*So how do you think this can change?*)
- Tie the union vision to the issues the worker has, and give concrete examples.
- Clearly define the union: **WE, the workers, are the union.** The union is a group of workers who join together to better working conditions.

DON'T

- Talk instead of listening, or talk more than the worker.
- Ask leading questions or yes/no questions. (*Don't you think that...? Do you like this?*)
- Interrupt, debate, or argue with them.
- Give a long list of everything you know about the union.
- Use contract language, or use words the worker won't understand.

Make an Organizing Plan of Action

Begin Month / Year: _____

Target Location(s): _____

Target Crafts and/or Tours: _____

Goal: _____

Means/How do you plan to reach goal: _____

Total times non-member will be contacted/reached out to: _____

CREATE A SCHEDULE

Begin / End Date: _____

Blitz Date / Time: _____

Order Supplies By: _____

Mailing Dates (if appropriate): _____

Prepare Materials By: _____

Facility Posting Date: _____

PLAN A BUDGET

Recruiting Organizers: \$ _____

Training Organizers: \$ _____

Strategy Planning Meeting: \$ _____

Loss Time: \$ _____

Travel: \$ _____

Fliers / Posters / Materials: \$ _____

(if any) Refreshments: \$ _____

(if any) Incentives: \$ _____

Other: \$ _____

Other: \$ _____

Other: \$ _____

Organizing Materials Order Form

Please indicate quantity:

- _____ APWU Form 1187 (*Authorization for Deduction of Dues*)
- _____ Welcome Folder includes Book and 1187
- _____ PSE Brochure
- _____ Lanyards (*Max 50 per order*) *FOR NEW MEMBERS
- _____ Badge holders (*Max 50 per order*) *FOR NEW MEMBERS
- _____ Armband badge holders (*Max 5 per order*) *FOR NEW MEMBERS
- _____ Retractable badge holders (*Max 5 per order*) *FOR NEW MEMBERS
- _____ Blank APWU Membership Cards

Notes:

** These items are for new members when they join. If you want to purchase additional materials for your local please visit www.apwustore.org – You should have submitted completed 1187s or increased membership strength when re-ordering.*

Labels for Welcome Folder – *This is for locals who need assistance in personalizing the Welcome Folders with labels*

Please print below how you would like labels printed:

Line 1: _____

Line 2: _____

Line 3: _____

Line 4: _____

Organizer Shirts – If you are in need of shirts for a specific organizing event, or would like to know what promotional materials we currently have available please call the Organization Department @ 202-842-4227

SHIP ORDERS TO:

State or Local President's Name: _____

State or Local Name: _____

State or Local Email Address: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Return Form to: APWU, AFL-CIO / Organization Department / Anna Smith, Organization Director
1300 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20005 / Fax: (202) 216-2639 / E-mail: organization@apwu.org

Organizing Posters Order Form

Please indicate quantity of needed items:

Red
"Union/Hands"

Yellow
"Join The Union"

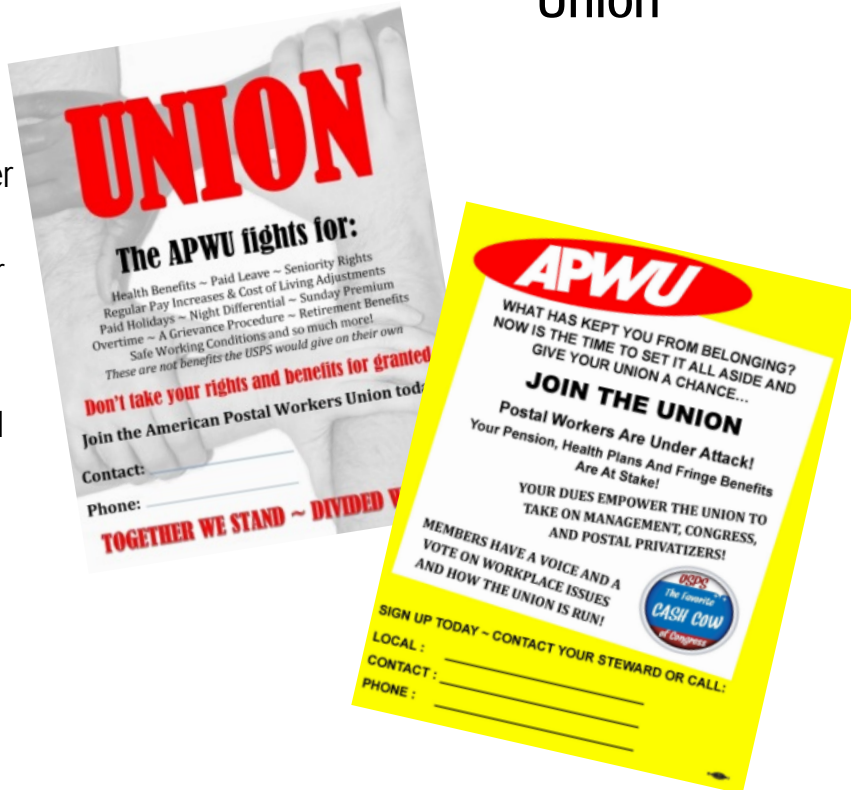
QTY:

RED "Union/Hands" 8.5 x 11 Poster

RED "Union/Hands" 11 x 17 Poster

YELLOW "Join The Union" 8.5 x 11 Poster

YELLOW "Join The Union" 11 x 17 Poster



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State or Local

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Answers to Objections about joining the APWU

These answers to objections are not exclusive, nor are they intended to be an official position of the APWU. They are simply suggestions on how to answer some of the tough questions and responses posed by non-members when faced with the request to join.

If you have other objections you have heard and/or possible answers, please feel free to send them to the Organization Department at: 1300 L Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 or by email to organization@apwu.org.

OBJECTION:

"Why should I join the APWU when I'll get exactly the same wages and benefits without joining?"

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "Right, you get all that the rest of us get. But we could get so much more if we didn't have non-members. Aren't you interested in further gains? Well, these can be won only if enough of us want them and are willing to work to get them."
- "If every worker felt as you do, we would have no union at all to bargain for us or to represent us in the grievance process. The longer you remain a non-member, the more difficult it is for the union to improve your wages and working conditions."
- "Here is the 1187. Won't you sign it so that you too can help to make the improvements we all want?"
- "If everyone belonged, the benefits would be greater and the cost would be spread among more people."
- "As a non-member, you are automatically on the side of management against the union at the bargaining table – you are agreeing that the demands made by the union are not proper and that you don't deserve any improvement in wages or working conditions. I'm sure you want to join with us to help make improvements possible rather than be counted as one who is against better wages and working conditions."
- "The union needs you. Your involvement and participation will make the union more effective. By being a non-member, you miss the sense of belonging, the friendship, the feeling of being fully accepted by your fellow workers."
- "Each person has an obligation to share equally the cost of supporting the organization that wins the benefits. It's just downright unfair to accept benefits that others are paying for. Suppose your next door neighbors paid no taxes on a house and yet sent their children to the public schools, used the roads and other public services. Would this be fair? Of course it wouldn't. Nor is it fair for a person to enjoy all the benefits of unionism and but refuse to pay a fair share of the cost of gaining these benefits."
- "As a non-member, you have no vote and no voice in contract ratification or in election of representatives."

OBJECTION:

"I can't afford to join. I've got a family to support and my check just isn't big enough." "The dues are too high."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "Everything of value has a price. Compare the value of union membership with dues. If you do this, I'm sure you will agree that union dues are a sound investment."
- "Compare the cost with your returns on this investment. Your return each year is far greater than the annual dues. And we're just talking about wage increases. We haven't begun to talk about the advantages of increased job security, seniority, better working conditions, etc. These are all extras that you get in return for your dues investment."
- "Did you ever stop to think how much less money you'd be making if it were not for the union? I'm sure that neither you nor I could afford to work for this employer at the rate we would make without a union. If it weren't for our union, our wages would be far less than they are, and we would receive no fringe benefits. You owe it to yourself as well as to us to set aside a small portion of your higher wages to help raise wages even higher in the years ahead."
- "You say you have a family to support. You owe it to your family, above all, to be a member of a union that ensures job security, wage increases, and fringe benefits. Your family benefits directly from all of these."
- If the non-member makes a specific reference to an inability to pay bills, mention how union members with financial problems are afforded help.

OBJECTION:

"I don't believe in unions."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- Point out what unions have done historically. Describe how things were in American industry before unions. Workers were fired at the whim of management or arbitrarily at the age of 40. Describe the extremely low wages, long hours, no fringe benefits, no unemployment compensation, no Social Security, and no workers compensation. Emphasize not only the contract gains, but also labor's efforts to enact better laws and create better communities.
- "Unions are just associations of people banded together for mutual protection and benefit. Everyone—farmers, merchants, bankers, lawyers, utility companies—everyone joins together today to increase their effectiveness. Why not workers?"
- "The newspapers do their best to make unions look bad, and this is understandable since employers spend a lot of money on ads. But prove things for yourself—join us, come to our meetings, and then decide whether unions are good or bad."
- Try to find out the specific reason behind this objection, and then try to correct the false impression the employee has.

OBJECTION:

"I don't need a union; I stay out of trouble."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "This is a good place to work now, and the union played a big part in making this so. But of course, that's no reason why we shouldn't try to make it an even better place to work. Your job has been made more pleasant and secure because of the union representation afforded you on the job. Your supervisor has to treat you fairly since the contract requires that he or she do so. The employer is fair because the union is always looking over its shoulder. Even so, almost every employee at one time or another has a grievance or complaint. That's where the union comes in."
- Rely on history, and point out the job security clause in the contract, including the final step of arbitration. Explain about conditions of work, including low wages and poor working conditions. You might want to call in an older worker to give a first-hand account. Discuss the history of bargaining in the specific bargaining unit. You might contrast the first offers of the employer versus the final settlement and show the difference in terms of cents per hour or dollars per year. Point out that the employer often admits that the union forces them to grant more than they would like to grant. You might want to use a prepared sheet showing union gains over the years. Also point out specific grievances the union has won. (Use cases that you personally are familiar with.)
- You never know when you might need the help of the union. The union has been able to get a clause in the contract that assures employees fair treatment if the need should ever arise. If too many people felt the way you feel, there would be no union and no protection for anyone."
- Point out that very frequently personality clashes arise between employees and supervisors. Ask: "What would you do if this should happen to you? What would you be able to do to help yourself if the employer fired, demoted or mistreated you?"
- "Individuals may not know their rights under the law and under the contract. In today's complex world, organizations of all sorts are necessary to achieve any important objectives. This is the reason for the union. The union has to be able to bargain from a position of strength in order to adequately protect employees from arbitrary treatment, to get better wages, longer vacations, more adequate pensions, and so on."
- Point to Article 1 in the Collective Bargaining Agreement where it identifies the APWU as the sole bargaining agent. This means that the employer as well as the government recognizes that only this union is able to speak for the employees. The employees can't by law negotiate directly with the employer.
- Explain that the strength of any union is in its numbers. In order to keep fighting for dignity and respect in the workplace, decent pay and benefits, and safe working conditions, we need the support of all of our members. Explain the consequences should we lose our right to collective bargaining.

OBJECTION:

"I'm only going to be working here a short while."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "Even if you leave within a few months, you are receiving pay and benefits negotiated by the APWU, and we think it's only right that you pay your share while you remain on the job."
- "While you are with us, we want you to be one of us. We want you to fit in with the group and be an equal. You will enjoy it more and we will enjoy having you."

- "Whether you stay here six months or 30 years, you'll get benefits and protection while you are employed."

OBJECTION:

"My spouse would divorce me." "My parents don't like unions."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- Find out why the spouse or parent objects. Offer to sit down and talk things over. Offer to go home that very evening with the non-member to discuss the matter with the relative. (House calls are very successful.)
- "Your (husband, wife, father, etc.) lets you work and accepts your contribution to the household. They should let you do your part to make your job more pleasant and better paying. You're the one who is working on the job. You put up with the working conditions. You get the paycheck. You know better than anyone else whether a union is good for you. Let me visit your home and discuss this matter with you and your family this very evening."

OBJECTION:

"The union doesn't do anything for you (as in, grievances are not settled satisfactorily)." "I don't like the people who are running things in the union."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- Insist upon the specific grievance the non-member has in mind. Check out the problem, obtain the facts, and report back to the non-member. Concede that unions can make mistakes, but point out that many grievances have been won, again being specific.
- "Officers and stewards do their jobs the best way they know how. If you or someone you know has not been treated fairly, tell us about it so that it can be remedied."
- "Your local officers and stewards work for this employer just as you and I do. They need lots of training, experience, and help from you to do the job well. Your signature on this card will give you the right and the opportunity to help in running this union better." Point out that the members have an obligation to replace those officers and stewards who continue to do their job poorly.
- "You are the union. You can get involved and run for office to help change the things you don't like."
- Enumerate the contract and benefits—choice of hours, vacations, sick benefits. Remind the non-member that these didn't come automatically.
- Discuss the need to use the grievance procedure properly. We frequently receive complaints about grievances because the proper procedure was not followed.
- "Hundreds of grievances are settled satisfactorily. But with 100 percent membership, we could do an even better job of investigating and processing grievances."

OBJECTION:

"I can handle my own affairs. I can take care of myself. I'll make my own decisions. I don't intend to stay on this job forever; I'm looking for a promotion."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "This may be true, but the chances are that you might need help somewhere along the way. Besides, all your fellow employees aren't as fortunate. They need help. They need your help."
- "You are working in a large industry and necessarily are a cog in a very large machine. Unless you fit into this machine, you are not a desirable employee, so your future depends in large part on your ability to get along with everyone, including your fellow workers."
- "While the CBA allows you to meet and discuss grievances at Step 1, that is as far as it goes. Any other agreement or settlement must be approved by the APWU".
- "Because you do not have access to all of the documentation and evidence that the APWU does (e.g. previous settlements, attendance records for other employees), you will not be able to represent yourself as well as the APWU can".

OBJECTION:

"You support Democrats."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- Unions endorse politicians who vote to protect our collective bargaining rights.

OBJECTION:

"My religion doesn't permit me to belong to any outside organization." "You support abortions."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "Most religions teach you to love your neighbor, to be responsible for your brother's welfare, and that is what the union is designed to do. There is no conflict between the goals of unions and religions."

OBJECTION:

"I don't know, I'll think about it."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "What is giving you pause for thought? Perhaps I can assist you with any issues or questions you might have"
- "You can sign up anytime; however, I am here today and today you are being represented."
- "What can I do to help you decide?"

OBJECTION:

"My boss doesn't like unions. I've seen what happens to union members."

"Will management treat me differently?" "Will they find out?"

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "It used to be that many supervisors didn't like unions, but most of these have either changed their ways or have been transferred."
- "At one time, supervisors were virtual dictators with the power to hire or fire you on the spot. Now they must live up to the contract and treat people with respect. If a supervisor can't do this, management will get rid of them."
- "The law, the contract, and public policy guarantee you the right to join and engage in union activity."
- "It is against the law for management to discriminate against you for your union activity."

OBJECTION:

"I don't want anything to do with unions. They're all corrupt."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- Show the non-member a copy of your union's constitution and point out how the constitution assures democratic procedures and membership control of the union.
- Point out that membership in the union gives you a right to choose your own officers and to correct abuses.

OBJECTION:

"I don't like that you defend people who deserve to get fired"

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "That is an interesting attitude, but when we defend someone you might deem lazy or deserving of removal, we are actually defending the contract and enforcing the rules. We cannot let management break or bend rules for one person, and then insist management follow the rules for another."
- "I understand your concern, but I would like you to consider that who is or is not a good worker is subjective. I would not want union representatives who could pick and choose who they will represent and to what degree they will represent them."

OBJECTION:

"I don't know enough about the APWU or the union movement."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "The officers of the local and I will be glad to sit down with you anytime, anyplace, and tell you everything you might want to know about our union and answer any questions you might have. After you've learned some of the history of the union and how it operates, I'm sure you will want to become a member of our union"
- "What do you need to know about our union? Our union is a large union; it is honestly run; it is efficient; and it is democratic."

OBJECTION:

"I'm not interested." "I just don't want to join."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "You can't afford not to be interested in the union. What happens in the union and between the union and the employer affects you; it affects all employees. Contract negotiations, grievances, etc.; concern everyone in one way or another."
- *Take the opportunity to make this personal and explain why you joined the union.*

OBJECTION:

"Where are my dues going, are they paying for people to sit around all day?"

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- A portion of your dues goes to our national organization; this covers things such as, contract negotiations, representation, and our Legislative and Political Department representing us on Capitol Hill, because we can't be there ourselves. A portion of it goes to your state organization, which provides training and represents the offices that don't have a local, because helping everyone in need makes us stronger. A portion of it also goes to the local; this helps cover expenses with running the local, and training our officers and stewards so that they can better represent us. A portion also goes towards membership appreciation.

OBJECTION:

"I don't agree with the contract."

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- "There are some issues with the contract; personally I don't agree with every aspect of it myself. One of the most important aspects of the contract that we managed to hold on to is the "no-layoff clause," which is significant. Unfortunately, in this day and age unions are struggling to hold onto what they have. This is why it is so important for us to have the support of all of the employees in our bargaining unit. Can you show your support by joining the union today?"