

Building a New Local Union

IN REGION 9A

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Letter from the Director

Dear newest members,

Congratulations! We are so excited that you are joining our UAW Region 9A family and forming a new local union.

You have just achieved one of the most challenging feats any group of workers can embark on—winning your first union contract after successfully organizing your workplace. So many workers who seek to form a union (and even those who win recognition!) unfortunately do not make it to this stage. They fall after intense resistance by their bosses, while our antiquated boss-friendly labor laws in this country impede progress towards a contract. But at the UAW you have now shown once again that with resilience, solidarity, and member-led organizing, you can win breakthroughs.

Now that you are here, it is completely understandable to wonder what comes next. What does it mean to run a new local union? What follows in this booklet is a guide to how to build your new local union. This booklet contains a lot of concrete information, links to further guides, and some brief summaries and overviews to key departments and resources that will be instrumental for the local going forward. More importantly, this booklet serves as advice passed down from generations of UAW members, leaders, and organizers who at one point were in your very same position.

The goal in UAW Region 9A is simple: we want you to build a strong, active, democratic and member-led local union. We will work with you every step of the way, and we look forward to you taking up the honor of serving your membership as the exemplary leaders you have been during your organizing drive.

In Solidarity,



Brandon Mancilla

Director, UAW Region 9A

Welcome to the UAW!

It is now time to set up your new local.

What is a local union?

The membership is the highest authority in the UAW. If that's the case, then the local union is the primary vehicle of the membership within the UAW. Simply put, a local union is a branch of the larger International UAW that represents workers in a specific workplace, geographic area, or set of workplaces in an industry.

The local is the primary way that members interact with their union. It is also the body that represents the membership in contract negotiations, grievances and other interactions with management, and advocates for the interests of the local membership within the region and broader International UAW.

Some locals consist of one unit with one collective bargaining agreement, and others are amalgamated locals, which are made up of multiple units with their own corresponding contracts. Locals in the UAW are governed by the UAW Constitution and respect the obligations and duties expected of them, but they are also autonomous bodies with their own bylaws.

In what follows, you will learn how to set up a local union and the component parts that make up a thriving and functioning UAW local.

UAW Region 9A

UAW Region 9A represents over 30 local unions in eastern **New York** (including New York City, Long Island, the Hudson Valley, and the Capital District area), **Connecticut**, **Massachusetts**, **Rhode Island**, **New Hampshire**, **Vermont**, **Maine**, and **Puerto Rico**.

Region 9A has several offices throughout the Region at which International staff are based. that are available to locals by reservation for meetings and events.

9A Regional Office

120 Huyshope Ave, Suite 403
Hartford, CT 06106

NYC Sub-Regional Office

245 W 29th Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Boston Sub-Regional Office

960 Turnpike Street, Suite 2C
Canton, MA 02021

Puerto Rico Sub-Regional Office

3100 Carr. 190, Suite 201
Carolina, PR 00983

Many locals also maintain their own union halls or offices in their respective areas.

Our Region comes from a proud history of struggle in New York, New England, and Puerto Rico. Our Region fuses the history and ongoing fight for industrial unionism and its manufacturing base; workers historically excluded from industrial unions; and groundbreaking organizing in new industries. Through our commitment to organizing and militant struggle, we have built one of the most diverse Regions in the UAW consisting of workers in all sectors of the economy, including higher education, auto, aerospace, defense, legal services, non-profits, gaming, cultural

institutions, government, auto dealerships, childcare, retail, and more. UAW Region 9A also represents workers in both the private and public sectors.

Region 9A Newsletter

Our Region is constantly in motion with political, educational, recreational, and other events, with locals from Puerto Rico all the way to Maine mobilizing to defend their rights and win dignity and respect on the job. Please make sure that your members are signed up for our 9A region-wide newsletter so they are receiving regular updates on activities around our union: bit.ly/uawsolidarity

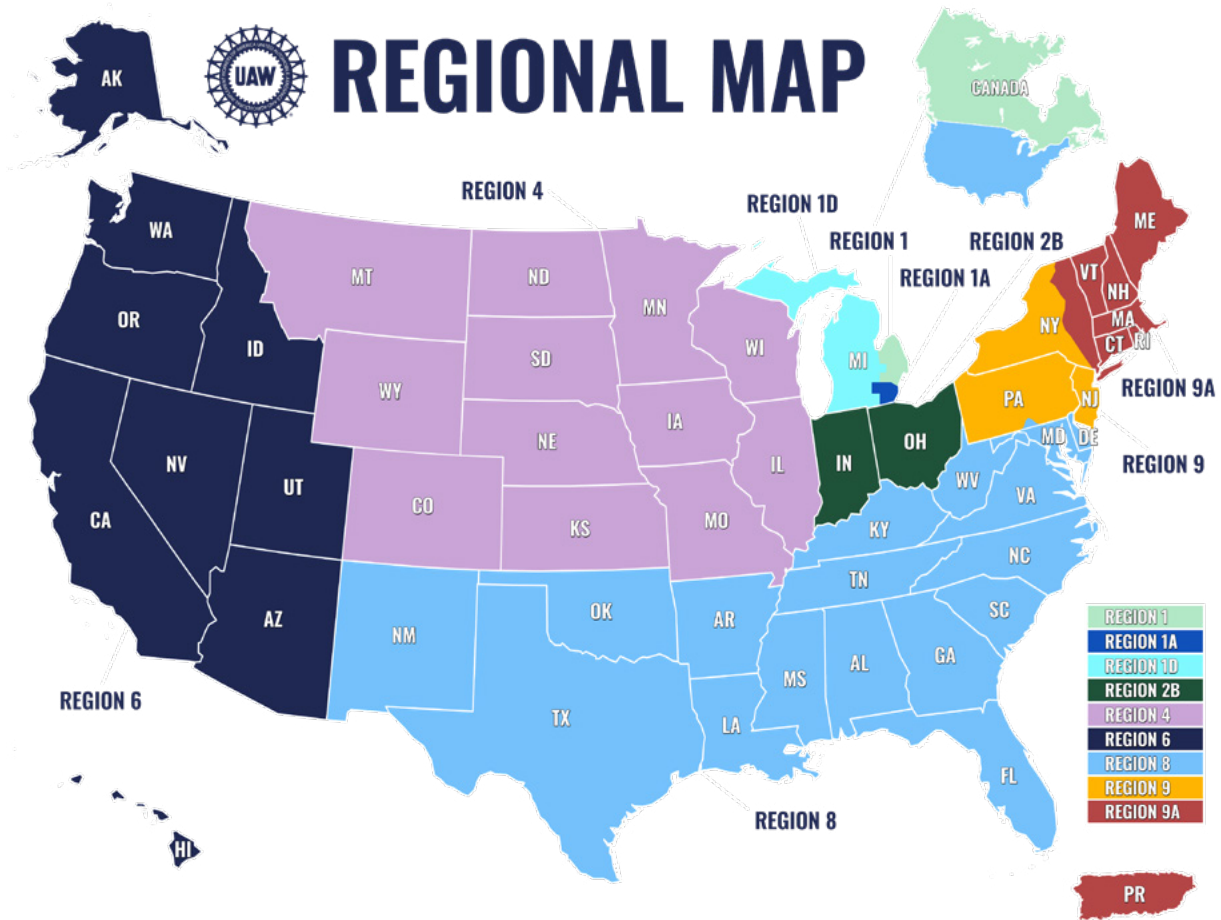
Another great reference and source of information is the UAW Region 9A website, which contains all the information on our Region and is regularly updated with resources and events from around our union: region9a.uaw.org

When You Have Questions

As a new leader you will inevitably have a million questions about how our union runs as you move forward in your new role. Your servicing representative is always there as a resource.

Who is your international servicing representative?

They are the UAW staff member who has been assigned to you as your primary point of contact with the International Union and to assist you in negotiations, grievances of sufficient complexity and which have risen to the last steps, directing you to UAW resources, and other matters as appropriate.



UAW Constitution

The Constitution of the UAW is the highest law of our union. It provides the foundation for the union’s day-to-day operations from the International to the local and unit level. Equally important, the Constitution sets forth the rights, guarantees and responsibilities of all UAW members and leaders. The Constitution is the foundation of our union democracy and applies to every member and every local equally across the union.

The UAW holds a regularly scheduled Constitutional Convention every four years where each local gets to elect delegates to send to convention to deliberate and vote on major issues concerning the union, as well as changes to the Constitution. After the 2021 referendum to change the voting system for UAW International Executive Board (IEB) members from a delegate voting system to direct voting, popularly known as One Member One Vote, the Convention is also where candidates running for IEB offices must be nominated. Direct voting by the membership occurs later in the year.

Every member in the UAW has the right to vote for the International President, Secretary-Treasurer, Vice Presidents, and their respective Regional Director. At time of publishing, there are fourteen (14) IEB positions: President, Secretary-Treasurer, three (3) Vice Presidents, and nine (9) Regional Directors.

You should make sure to familiarize yourself with the UAW Constitution, which contains many of the direct answers you are looking for, and is likely the place your servicing rep will also be going to find the answer to the question you have asked. Your new local charter kit includes a copy of the UAW Constitution, but you can also order a physical copy of the Constitution on LUIS, via your servicing representative, or refer to the online copy on uaw.net:

- [2022 UAW Constitution](#)

Getting Started:

Chartering the Local & Administrative Set-Up

Chartering the Local

The first step in setting up a new local will be to charter the local. Your servicing representative will work with you to fill out a charter application to submit to the Regional Director.

Your charter application will include:

- **The names of the members who will appear on the charter.**
These “charter members” can be anyone from the organizing committee or the inaugural bargaining committee.
- **The names of the interim officers.**
The elected interim officers must include a President, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, and Recording Secretary.
- **The proposed local union number.**
Many locals choose numbers that are significant dates or auspicious in other ways (e.g. Local 2121 for Foxwoods Casino, or Local 5118 to recognize the date of certification of the Harvard Graduate Student Union, which was May 1, 2018), while others pick at random. Whichever number you choose, your servicing representative will confirm with UAW Region 9A clerical staff to confirm it is available and not taken by another local.

After completing a charter application, the Regional Director will submit the charter application for the approval of the International Executive Board, who will vote at a subsequent meeting to issue a charter to your new local. Once a charter is approved, your local will receive a new local kit from the Secretary-Treasurer’s office including the physical charter and other necessary financial materials. Congratulations—you are now a local of the UAW!

Administrative Set-Up

In order to integrate with Region 9A’s work, you and your servicing representative will share the list of interim officers with the region so that they receive regional communications, as well as a copy of your contract and its expiration date.

Once your bylaws have been ratified (**see page 22**), you will need to hold your first official elections for leadership. If your elections happen outside the window provided in the UAW Constitution (i.e. not in May or June), please request an exemption from the Regional Director to either hold interim elections until May in order to come on cycle, or hold your triennial elections off cycle.

Once leadership is elected, there are a few final tasks that will need to be completed internally to finish setting up. Your servicing representative will be an essential resource and point of contact every step of

the way, so please keep them included in the process. If at any point in this process you get confused, please contact your representative, who is there to help.

In order to process dues payments, track membership, get notices from the International UAW, and carry out a number of other functions, you will need to set up the local on the UAW's Local Union Information System (LUIS). This can be done by contacting the UAW's ITS Department and using a personal (non-work) email address to login. Once your LUIS account has been created, you should enter all the appropriate officers' contact information so they can receive notices and upload your collective bargaining agreement. ■

Setting Up the Organization

Now that you are set up as a UAW Local, you need to take some steps to get your local legally incorporated. Once the local is officially chartered, the UAW Secretary-Treasurer's office will send you a new local kit containing within it the next steps you have to take. Below is a brief explanation.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)

First, get an Employer Identification Number through the IRS. You will need to enroll with the local union's legal name, which must be "International Union, UAW Local ____". This can be achieved by completing **FORM SS-4**. Then apply for a Group Exemption through the UAW Auditing Department. This is an exemption from federal income taxes granted by the IRS to organizations that are affiliated with a central organization so they do not need to file for their own exemption. Locals will file **Form 941** for your first quarter taxes followed by **Form 944** for the subsequent quarters if the IRS requires you to do it. At the end of the filing year you file a **Form 990**. Based on your revenue and different state laws there may be different rules to follow.

Department of Labor Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS)

For locals with a majority of members in the private sector, within 90 days of your charter, you will also need to file an LM-1 with the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS). Importantly, you will only be able to do this once you have elected officers and drafted bylaws. Once you have submitted your **LM-1**, your local will then annually submit an **LM-2**, **LM-3** or **LM-4** depending on the amount of revenue you take in each year.

State Law

Once non-profit status has been confirmed, the local should register its status as a non-profit 501(c)(5) to ensure tax exempt status as well as filling out any required forms in your state, applying for state/city business or employment licenses as required. The UAW Auditing Department in the Secretary-Treasurer's office can assist you and your servicing representative to understand the particular laws in your state or city that apply.

Additionally, for our purposes we will need a bank that will work with a two signature requirement on disbursements, as the UAW requires two officers (President and Financial Secretary-Treasurer, Recording Secretary and Trustee, etc.) to sign off on all checks. In order to avoid confusion when opening a new account you will need to bring all potential

documents including the bylaws, officers' list, SS4 Form (EIN designation), and Group Exemption letter. The newly elected President and Financial Secretary will also need to be there in person with their photo IDs in order to open the account and be put on the account as authorized signers. Because your local has likely not taken in any dues a member may have to put a small amount of their own money into the account to open in and get reimbursed once dues start flowing into the account.

Banking

The new local will need a bank account to take in dues and issue checks. When looking for a bank to hold the local's funds consider:

- **Accessibility.** Is the bank physically close to your workplace or union office for ease of depositing checks?
- **Financial outlook.** Will this bank be a good guardian of our members' union dues?
- **Social responsibility.** Does this bank have an open labor boycott against it?

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Employer Set-Up

Your legal infrastructure is now set up, but you will still need to finalize some points with your employer. This means directing the employer clearly on how

dues check-off will work, how often to transfer dues (preferably monthly), how to send member lists, etc. If you need the employer to send paper checks, make sure to give them the relevant information, and the same for ACH (electronic) transfers.

Be sure to enforce your contract if it has applicable language on list turnover and the schedule of dues transfer. Your employer will almost never do this willingly, and left to their own designs, their schedule will almost always be slower than yours, so be sure you have a plan to follow up and keep track of dues payments from the employer. As a bargaining consideration for your next contract negotiations, tighter and more specific schedules of dues transfers, sending of lists and information to be included, and other details can be bargained over and improved upon. ■

Making the Ask:

Orientations, 1-on-1s, & New Member Process

As you build your new local, don't wait to sign up new members formally. Take the affirmative step directly after ratifying and signing your contract to have members enroll in the Union and then develop a clear process going forward. By the time everything is set up administratively, the large majority of members should have already been enrolled.

Member Orientations

As you develop your ongoing union sign-up process, one of the most foundational moments a union member can have is the orientation where they learn about their union for the first time. A new worker who is introduced to their union and met at work by their steward or fellow members who take the time to review their benefits and rights in the contract will have such a different relationship to the union than someone who only finds out they are part of a union when they have a problem—or doesn't learn they are in a union at all. Local unions should set up an effective process for union orientation, whether that be the stewards meeting with new members on their first day or within their first days of work, or a periodic presentation with a handful of new members that includes a know-your-rights training.

The logistics of orientation should not be left up to chance, but rather programmed clearly in advance, with an ongoing group of leaders, stewards and rank-and-file members who are responsible for bottom-lining and bringing in new members. Locals can also consider bargaining for new employees to be released from work to attend union orientation or have union orientation programmed into the general new employee orientation. This could look like a short meeting of new workers with their union stewards, or, if feasible, a whole day or afternoon at a reserved space or the union hall.

Orientations should cover:

- Making the ask to sign a card to join the union.
- The basics of the local union and its structure.
- The past victories of the local.
- How people can address issues if they have any and who they can contact.
- Reviewing highlights of the CBA and benefits.
- Most importantly, how members can get involved in the union and continue building worker power in the workplace.
- Do not forget to make a card ask:
Join your union! Join the majority!

Enrolling New Members

Of course, the actual union sign-up process is one of the most critical parts of this process, and can be done via a union enrollment form and authorization for dues check-off like the following:

- **Application for Membership (Pub. A5758)**

Other locals also have designed their own card with options for electronic sign-up or including other local specific demographic information.

Conducting union orientations and talking to new workers on a one-on-one basis is essential for building worker power. Building and maintaining a supermajority membership will empower the local to take on the fights ahead with confidence, unity, and resources. Unfortunately, if this basic task of orienting new members and signing them up for the union is not carried out, as the union membership turns over it can lead to disengagement from the union. Rather than feeling engaged, these employees will often rely on past experiences they have had with unions or perceptions of what union workplaces are like, turning instead to management when they have a problem. If we meet new employees quickly when they begin working, introduce them to the union, and continue engaging them often, we are starting them on a path to become active members and leaders within our locals.

Orientation materials are available and can be ordered or downloaded through LUIS including:

- **New Member Kit (Pub. 607MK)**
- **Welcome to the UAW (Pub. 603)**
- **New Member Magazine (Pub. Summer 2023)**

You most likely will not get every member to sign a card during orientation or on their first day of work. That does not mean you should give up. After orientations, one-on-one organizing is essential to building your membership. While sending email reminders or texts may seem easier, there is no substitute for the power of approaching workers directly to have a conversation with them about joining the union. You will want to get into the habit of stewards and other organic workplace leaders conducting these one-on-one conversations often, especially when contract negotiations come up or in advance of a big campaign around a workplace issue. During contract campaign time, these conversations are a great way to engage and reengage with workers about their concerns and questions. But remember, if they are not yet a member, make the ask to join the union!

We cannot overstate how crucial a strong organizing-focused membership orientation can be to building your union and growing membership support for the fights ahead! ■

Setting up for Success: Building the Local's Infrastructure

When you are setting up a new local you are really starting from scratch building the infrastructure that will allow the membership to operate and organize. This means having strong processes in place, covering all bases and liabilities, planning for the future, and taking care of the administrative work of running a local union.

Physical Space

Having a physical space where members can meet to serve as a central point for the union is a powerful tool. Although the union is the membership and not defined by a location or person, a union hall or office allows for members to envision the union in physical form as they gather together. Practically, it can also allow you to store materials and files, hold monthly union and committee meetings, meet with members, and other needed purposes.

Although the benefits are large, renting (or purchasing) a union hall is a serious endeavor that requires careful consideration and review of any proposed lease or mortgage to ensure the best possible terms. Additionally, having a union hall or office may require commercial insurance to mitigate liability. Remember that not having a dedicated space to meet also has a cost, as you may have to depend on others for space. You may have to regularly rent space for membership meetings, bargaining sessions, arbitrations, or other

in-person activities, or spend resources looking for spaces to do union activities as simple as sign making, rather than having the space available. Please note, no agent or official of the Local Union is authorized to execute a real estate lease, deed, service or maintenance contract or other long-term agreement unless the proposed agreement has been reviewed by an outside expert or attorney and approved by the Local Union Executive Board.

If your local decides that a union hall is not possible at this time due to cost or other considerations, assess whether it is appropriate to temporarily rent a storage unit and a P.O. box to meet your needs. Locals may also consider bargaining for guaranteed locked and secured office space within their place of employment, even in addition to their union hall, so they have a place on site to store files and meet with members. Importantly, the union address should be a designated site, not an officer or member's home address.

Bookkeeping

As detailed in the following section, assuring our union's financial integrity is one of the most important tasks of our union. An accurate accounting and bookkeeping system is also a practical concern of a local to ensure that vendors are paid on time, members who make authorized financial expenditures on behalf of the local are reimbursed in a timely manner,



and revenue and expenditures are tracked in order to accurately budget. Local unions can look forward to the yearly Secretary-Treasurer's Financial Officers Conference to receive training, or alternatively contact the region for more training opportunities.

Some locals may choose to hire a bookkeeper (either an internal staff hire or an external contractor) to help with this financial work. Many locals additionally use accounting software like Quickbooks or RCS Union Software (commonly known as "Roberts") for their bookkeeping needs, including tracking funds and issuing checks. The most important obligation is that your local has an efficient method for accounting that works. Members, officers, and staff submitting reimbursements should have a clear process to do so that prioritizes identifying original receipts, proof of payment, and their business purpose. A similar

process should be developed for the payment of vendors, including a schedule of regular payment to make sure the lights stay on and important annual payments do not lapse due to negligence.

Fighting Back Against Anti-Union Legal Attacks

Although unions are grassroots groups we are still serious organizations handling complex issues involving millions of dollars in wages and benefits. Just because we are organizations that are fighting for economic justice does not mean we don't ourselves have important obligations and decisions to make as institutions.



While we don't have the financial standing our employers enjoy, our power comes from our labor and ability to withhold it.

Nevertheless, a strong local could be bringing in millions of dollars in revenue through our union dues, which make us a target of lawsuits and propagandistic attacks from a constellation of enemies. These include the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation and Liberty Justice Center, which were specifically set up to pursue litigation against unions. As such, it is important to hold union liability insurance (many locals use ULLICO), even in moments where it seems that a lawsuit is completely unlikely, to offset the potential risk.

Under the current law, it is not only the union as an institution that is liable, but also individual union officials and local leaders who can be sued individually. As such, it is strongly recommended that the executive board and officers handling grievances and the finances of the union get labor leader liability coverage. This must be paid for by the individual, not the local union, and different levels of coverage are offered.

Throughout the course of running your local union, many legal issues are going to arise whether in bargaining, dealing with a complex arbitration, addressing NLRB proceedings, or other liabilities. Always

contact your servicing representative who can get counsel from the UAW Legal Department. We also encourage locals to hire local union counsel and get a retainer for legal services when appropriate. Always speak to your servicing representative about legal counsel options.

Membership Data

Storing and updating member information is a critical task that challenges every local union. The good news is that you do not have to start from scratch, and you should be working with UAW organizing and servicing representatives to transition membership data so you don't lose all the important information, lists, and tracking you gained during the organizing drive and contract campaign.

Locals will have to determine what system to use to track member information going forward. This can be done using LUIS or through an outside vendor like Google Drive, Knack, Jotform, etc. Locals will also need to establish a clear process as new members sign up for the processing of enrollment forms, whether through manual entry or online sign up to ensure that data is recorded on your system and check-off forms are forwarded to the employer in a

timely manner. The UAW Membership Department is also currently in the process of rolling out a new membership system.

Once you establish your membership list, you will need to plan for how to maintain and update it. A simple way to maintain an updated list is to build in employer checks and updates at regular intervals (every quarter, every six months), so you can remove inactive members and add active members who may have fallen through the cracks. (Don't forget you now have to talk with them about joining the union!)

Using the contact information from your membership list, you may want to sign up for a Mailchimp, Action Network, or other mail subscription service to facilitate mass emailing and member-facing communications (see Section XX on Communications). If you had an organizing campaign website and social media, decide how to transition those accounts to fit your new identity as a local union.

Staffing

Running a union can be hard work. Your servicing representative will continue to be your primary contact and the key to reaching all International Departments that can serve as resources to your local. Nevertheless, whether it is ensuring your internal organizing continues or having additional support with representational work and enforcing the contract, locals may decide to hire local union staff. Some locals also employ bookkeepers or administrative employees to help maintain internal business and records.

If the local union is going to hire staff or employ officers, whether full- or part-time, you will need to set up a payroll system (using ADP, Paychex, etc.) as well as appropriate benefits if necessary. Providing benefits can be as simple as reimbursing the employer (depending on your contract) for a portion of those benefits, or as complicated as purchasing a health care plan and setting up a 401k or contribution to a pension plan on behalf of staff. Additional benefits may be necessary depending on approval or need to mirror those provided by the employer (pre-tax commuter benefits, FSA/HSA, etc.).

To ensure compliance with the UAW Constitution, make sure that staff pay and benefits are approved in your local union bylaws. To guarantee even more

clarity, locals may also develop an employee personnel manual to be approved by the executive board that delineates all personnel procedures and benefits.

AFL-CIO

Locals are part of a larger labor movement beyond the UAW. In your locality you may join a local labor federation or council. The American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) is an umbrella organization of labor unions that advances the political and social mission of the labor movement as a whole. The UAW is an affiliate member of the AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO has state and area level bodies known as state federations, central labor councils, or area labor councils. Depending on the locale, UAW regions and locals may be quite active in these bodies. Please speak with your regional CAP representative to determine whether Region 9A is affiliated with the relevant labor council and whether the local needs to do so too. In some areas, the CAP Councils cover per capita taxes to these larger bodies, and in others locals must pay their own fees. ■

Dues & Budget

How Dues Work

Our members' dues are sacred and with them comes a great responsibility. Our local unions do not rely on employer funds, private philanthropy, government assistance, or other outside support to operate. Although we will never match the billions of dollars of the bosses, we can collectively support our defense and the operation of the local union by each contributing a few dollars a month. Unions are member-financed organizations. Our self-financing through member dues ensure our democracy and independence. We have no shareholders or funders to report to—only our membership.

UAW members currently pay the equivalent of 2.5 hours per month or 1.44% of gross pay in union dues (or, 1.9 hours per month or 1.095% of gross pay where public sector members have no right to strike). Per the UAW Constitution, 38% of dues remain with the local union, while 32% go to the International Union General Fund and 30% go to the International Union Strike & Defense Fund (together known as “per capita”). However, as long as the International Union Strike & Defense Fund remains over \$500 million, 95% of the revenue received by the Strike & Defense Fund is rebated and split between locals and the International Union General Fund, so that the actual amount paid in per capita by locals is below 50%. For more information about UAW dues, please refer to:

[Your Dues @ Work \(Pub #356B\)](#)

Locals may additionally after a vote of membership, and only with the approval of the Regional Director, opt to increase dues above the constitutionally

mandated 1.44% to pursue special projects and plans. Locals cannot lower dues below the constitutionally required amount.

Spending Union Money

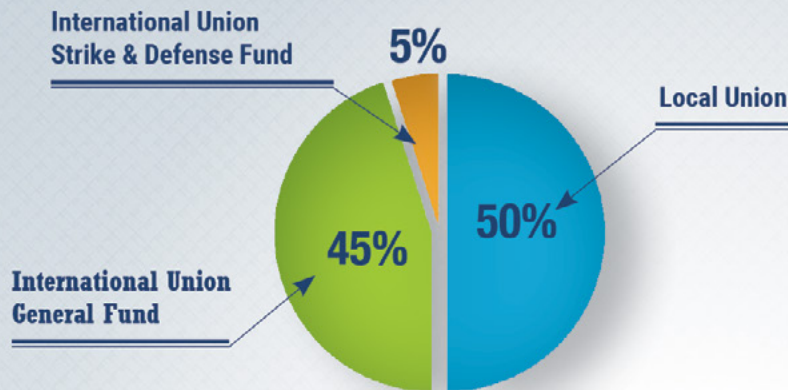
The membership, either directly or through its representatives on a joint council, depending on local bylaws, must approve all expenditures made by a local union. If the local union bylaws require direct membership approval this can be done at the monthly membership meeting, while an amalgamated union's approvals may have their approval executed at their joint council. Local union bylaws may also designate certain amounts below which the executive board or officers may directly approve, while higher amounts require membership approval. A motion in your minutes or your bylaws may give standing approval for items such as paying bills.

Good financial administration is critical both to the smooth functioning of our union and to ensure resources are available to our members when we need to organize. The day-to-day recordkeeping, reporting and sign-off of financial documents will largely fall on the constitutional officers of the locals. For more detailed information, officers can refer to:

- **[Basic Procedural Instructions for Financial Officers \(Pub. A-100\)](#)**
- **[Basic Procedural Instructions for Trustees](#)**
- **[Financial Officers Manual](#)**

Union funds should be budgeted and spent based on the needs of each individual local. Remember, every local that preceded you has had to make similar decisions. Through your servicing representative you can

HOW UAW DUES ARE ALLOCATED*



► In addition, when the UAW Strike and Defense Fund is under \$850 million, the additional half-hour or .29% in dues goes entirely to the Strike and Defense Fund until it reaches \$850 million.

learn from examples by taking a look at how similarly-sized, geographically close, or industrially similar locals shape their budget. Paired with budgeting and a strong understanding of revenue and expenses, our members are most often best served when their dues dollars are working for them: organizing new members, defending members in an arbitration, educating members about their rights, and building solidarity amongst the membership and ties to the community; not collecting dust in a bank account. Saving for a rainy day, or having a fund associated with a specific plan like buying a union hall or planning for a strike is also important, but a leadership team that accumulates funds just to have a larger balance this year than the last should remember we are running a democratic workers' organization, not an investment firm. However, dues cannot be used for just any purposes, as the finances of unions are strictly governed under the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA), and must be used solely in line with the benefit of the union and for a direct union purpose

New locals should adopt a proposed budget for the year based on projected dues in order to ensure that all potential projects the local has planned are possible. This might include officer and staff pay, rent and office/administrative expenses, a budget for arbitration costs, legal fees, union t-shirts and other swag, reserving some funds for member travel

to conferences and the Constitutional Convention, educational programming and training, etc. Additionally, per the UAW Constitution, all locals are required to maintain some mandatory budgeted funds at minimum:

Citizenship and Legislative (CAP)	5¢ per member per month
Education	2¢ per member per month
Recreation	1¢ per member per month
Retired Members	1¢ per member per month
New Member Orientation	\$5.00 from each initiation fee received

These funds will likely be insufficient to support the activities designated (e.g. in a 1,000 member local the Recreation Fund will only accumulate \$120 per year), but are good to keep in mind when budgeting. ■

Elections

As a democratic organization, our members elect their local leadership from the president to stewards. In order to maintain the integrity of our voting process, elections are guided by the UAW Constitution and your local bylaws.

The election for all local union officers who serve on the local's executive board (and Constitutional Convention delegates) must be conducted by a democratically elected Election Committee. Local union officers serve three-year terms. All other elections of elected officials (stewards, committee chairs, etc.) may be conducted via the election committee or as specified in the local bylaws. The local's bylaws should delineate the number of members on the election committee and the procedure for their election. A dedicated election committee performs one of the most critical functions in the entire union!

Election Committees should conduct all local union executive officer elections in compliance with the UAW Constitution including appropriate notice. The date of the election should be noticed to membership at least 15 days in advance, providing at least 7 days for nominations and 7 days for campaigning between the end of nominations and the date of elections.

Local unions planning to hold their triennial elections for their executive boards online should be sure to follow the established guidelines and contact their servicing reps to ensure compliance with the LMRDA. For more guidance, local leaders and election committees can refer to:

- [Guide for Local Union Election Committees \(Pub #349-06\)](#)





Bylaws

Clear local bylaws are essential for union democracy. Although it may seem like a lower priority than enforcing the contract or bargaining, a clear and delineated set of bylaws lays the foundation for how you will run a strong democratic culture based on membership participation and accountability. The bylaws should not be an arcane document only accessible to those in the know, but a living document that creates a participatory environment where members can understand some of the basic functions of their local. Your bylaws should meet the reality of running your local in the here and now, but also set up your union for long term success. If you are drafting bylaws, it is important to think whether those changes will stand the test of time, or whether they will only address an issue that will be out of date a year from now.

In order to balance membership input while avoiding gridlock, it can be a good idea to elect or appoint an odd-numbered bylaws committee rather than organizing a group of volunteers. The bylaws committee can collect direct input from members via surveys, discussions, and then draft the bylaws, taking votes on contentious issues. It may seem difficult at first to know where to even start in drafting the bylaws, but it is important to remember that the main task of the bylaws committee is to ensure that the local can work as a functioning democratic organization, both empowering the membership and allowing for the realistic day-to-day business of the local. The committee should take on each article as suggested here in the following guide:

- [**Guide for Drafting Local Union Bylaws \(Pub. 354\)**](#)

Central to the committee's consideration should be balancing membership participation with aspirational goals. For example, when thinking about the quorum required to hold a membership meeting, a committee may consider a very high quorum in order to ensure that every member's voice is heard. The reality of our member's schedules, family and work commitments, and even other issues like event space, will likely make it hard to transact the basic meetings of the local with such a high quorum. This does not mean that a local should not value or focus on membership turnout or consultation before making decisions, but rather that codifying such a requirement in the bylaws may result in unforeseen difficulties. High participation should be a high priority organizing goal, but not an obstacle or barrier to the functioning of the local.

While especially new locals may have an instinct to open bylaws drafting to all members and lack formal structure, this can lead to a drawn out drafting process and without a method for resolving disputes on the committee, leaving a new local without needed guidelines for operating for an extended period of time.

The local bylaws should also cover basic information like the time, date, and location of union meetings, the structure and duties of the executive board, the process of holding elections, etc. Local bylaws should conform with the UAW Constitution. Once the bylaws have been drafted they must be approved by the membership. After membership approval, the bylaws are in effect practically, but we are not done yet. The next step is to email the bylaws to your servicing rep and the Regional Director. The Regional Director will send them to the UAW President's Office for final approval. The President's Office may have corrections, feedback on revisions, or even rejections of certain

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From **MDA Bylaws**

bylaw sections. The President’s Office will follow up with you with that feedback. If changes are necessary, please make sure to attend to them promptly so that you can receive final approval.

Amalgamated locals may want to additionally refer to the following resource when considering their overall structure and unit bylaws:

- [**Amalgamated Local Unions \(Pub. 519\)**](#)

Some other local bylaws to consider and compare may include:

- [**6950 Bylaws**](#)
- [**MDA Bylaws**](#)

The bylaws need not be a static document and can always be altered through the bylaws committee and membership vote, but a strong foundation will set up the local for success. ■

Leadership

The members elect the local executive board to lead and administer the work of the local union, which should include at minimum the following:

- President
- Vice President(s)
- Recording Secretary
- Financial Secretary
- Treasurer (may be combined with Financial Secretary)
- (3) Trustees
- Sergeant-at-Arms
- Guide

The precise roles of each of these positions are detailed in Article 40 of the UAW Constitution. In addition to these Constitutional Officers, a local union executive board may include shop or unit chairs from amalgamated units or at-large representatives. For more on some of these roles, see:

- **[Leadership Kit \(Pub. 606LK\)](#)**
- **[The President's & Vice President's Roles \(Pub. 188\)](#)**
- **[The Recording Secretary's Role \(Pub. 397\)](#)**
- **[Basic Procedural Instructions for Financial Officers \(Pub. A-100\)](#)**
- **[Basic Procedural Instructions for Trustees](#)**
- **[Financial Officers Manual](#)**

While each of these executive board roles has other functions (for example, trustees perform the local audit), the primary function of every executive board position is to work for the membership. A recording secretary should be great at taking minutes, but should also not hesitate to speak up about important strategic questions that may arise. The most important role of the executive board is to be an accountable, democratic leadership body. This means fulfilling all of the duties required, showing up to executive board meetings, keeping the local union functioning, and ensuring that members are well-represented and organized to take action.

Leadership should also engender a democratic culture where members are encouraged to participate, share their opinion, and have the space to do so with well advertised meetings, opportunities to participate in different union functions, and open leadership development. A true leader inspires others to get involved and rather than keeping information and resources close to the chest, shares their knowledge willingly, building up leadership around them.

Due to the large administrative task of running a local union, locals may choose to make some of these positions full time, securing release from their jobs where possible (see your contract). A local considering creating full-time union positions for officers has some important considerations to weigh to preserve the democratic leadership of the union. Full-time union positions will add capacity to the local. But this may come at the expense of other financial or time considerations for getting more release time on a non-full time basis for more people.



Generally, unions fight for more release time to do union business on work time (paid by the employer). We also fight for the right to determine how many people can be on a paid or unpaid leave or have access to release time. Release and leave language are important because they ensure that the employee has the right to return to their job when they are no longer performing the role because the role was temporary, or, their term in office ended. Unions want the ability to determine who is on leave because it should be our choice, not the employers', to decide who represents us and who performs work on behalf of the union. This creates a democratic atmosphere so that any member has the right to lead the union through a leave of absence with the right to return to their job when their service ends.

If full-time office is not an option, some locals have opted for “stipended” compensation for time worked for the union. This may work well in cases where this allows officers to avoid picking up additional shifts or an additional job and therefore devote more time to the union. Additionally, some locals tie officers’ wages, and future advancement in wages, and benefits, to

the conditions of the working members of the union to avoid distinction between the bargaining unit and being in full-time union office.

These additional costs may place a large financial burden on a local union, especially new or smaller locals, and so another consideration may be to consider bargaining with your employer or employers to pay the cost of part or whole of the salary of officers. Whichever route you take for compensation of officers and other roles, the decision must be clearly spelled out in the bylaws and approved by the membership.

For more information for local union elected officers, please see:

- **[Building Your Local Union A Handbook for Local Union Elected Officers \(Pub. 516\)](#)**

Union Democracy: Meetings & Collective Decision-Making

The day-to-day work of the union—bargaining, grievances, speaking to members and organizing—can oftentimes feel all-consuming. However, the union, importantly, is not a one-person show, nor do members completely entrust all judgement to their leadership until the next round of bargaining comes up. Building an inclusive culture of collective decision-making, where members organize, take on tasks, bring forward ideas to advance the local, and build solidarity and community with each other, is one of the essential components of building a strong local.

Scheduling Meetings

Stand-alone (one unit) locals should be holding membership meetings once per month (although meetings may be postponed during the summer). Amalgamated locals should either be holding a membership meeting at least every three months, or their joint council/workplace council meetings monthly with a full membership meeting at least once per year. These meetings allow members to directly bring motions for the consideration of the membership and to vote on priorities collectively, determining the future of the union, its finances, and its strategic direction.

Monthly union meetings should be scheduled at an appropriate time and accessible to as many members as possible given their work and life schedules. The same goes for the location of meetings. In-person meetings are preferable for camaraderie, fellowship, and tough decision-making, but if most members

are commuting from far away, perhaps the location of meetings can be changed, rotated, or the local can invest in technology and procedures for hybrid meetings. If possible, another consideration can be to bargain with your employer for union release time for your monthly union meeting to ensure that all members are able to attend.

Facilitating Meetings

A union meeting should feel open and welcoming, not like the proceedings of a clique or club. For this reason, union meetings need a structure, order, an agenda, and a chair/facilitators. When planning to facilitate an official union meeting (executive board, joint council, membership meeting, etc.), although it may seem archaic at first, it is important to use Robert's Rules of Order. It is also critical to explain to new members how the local runs meetings. Consider an orientation process for new members or voting delegates (if an amalgamated local) that can be assigned to an officer like the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Members may confront Robert's Rules as a web of confusing rules, or an obstacle to participation, but actually, using Robert's Rules allows for a democratic structure where the members run the meeting. The Chair of the meeting is there to provide direction and facilitate discussion, not dominate. Nevertheless, you should not fall into the opposite problem of too loose a facilitation style, which can leave the meeting stuck on a point without ability to move on or ultimately lead to a few people able to dominate the discussion anyway. You may well be the most versed in them as President or a very active union



member, but remember to patiently explain the process to a newcomer, and show them how the rules and structure of our meetings can actually help them make the points they want to make and exercise their democratic rights.

As part of planning a meeting, the leadership should develop an agenda. A standing agenda may be incorporated into your bylaws for simplicity. As an example, an agenda might look like the following:

Agenda

Call to Order

Roll Call of Officers

Minutes of Last Meeting

Initiation of New Members

Reports

— *President's Report*

— *Financial Secretary-
Treasurer's Report*

— *Reports from Committees*

Old Business

New Business

Meetings should also have a time limit, which can be proposed at the beginning (or through the bylaws) and if need be, modified by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote. Remember that any issue not resolved during this month's meeting can always be taken up next month under old business. Although some issues may be more pressing than others, in order to build a culture where people want to come to meetings, it's important that they don't drag on for hours and hours, and that people know they are able to go to other commitments if they come to our local union meeting. However, you should also avoid the opposite problem where an agenda is rushed through with very little room for substantive discussion.

Just like in bargaining, remember to take notes. Keep minutes of your membership meetings, executive board meetings, and union-management committee meetings so that you keep record of everything that is important to representing your members and effectively doing the work of the union.

For more detailed information on union meetings and Robert's Rules please see:

- **[Planning and Running an Effective Union Meeting \(Pub. 512\)](#)**
- **[Parliamentary Desk Chart \(Pub. 1210\)](#)**

Contract Enforcement

Most of your time in a union will not be spent in bargaining or on a picket line, but enforcing your contract. Our collective bargaining agreement is just words on a page if we do not enforce what we have won in bargaining. Management will not do this work for us. We have to constantly be vigilant and hold them accountable to the legally binding document they agreed to.

Make sure your contract is accessible. Consider putting it on your website. Ask your employer to produce contract books. The point is for every one of your members to have their contract available for them to read and refer to.

Although we try our best to write our contracts in as clear and simple language as possible, often the concepts within can be very complicated, and so it is important to educate our members on the rights contained within the contract. This can take lots of forms, but a simple step would be to hold a know your rights workshop directly after contract ratification to educate members on the new rights and benefits they have gained. Hold trainings on how to read and enforce the contract for your stewards and officers—those who will actively enforce the contract in the workplace—so that they know the contract like the back of their hand even if they weren't the ones who were on the bargaining committee.

Although we have just won these new rights through negotiation with management, this does not mean that management will be respecting these newly gained rights and benefits. Therefore, we need to make sure that we have a strong contract enforcement structure and that our membership is organized to defend our gains. Most locals have elected union stewards who are the first point of contact for members when the contract is violated, and also serve as member-organizers, communicators, and shop floor leaders, taking on grievances and contract

enforcement at its initial stage. Other locals may consider converting their organizing committee or contract action team into a grievance committee through which all official grievances flow.

Whatever the structure your local chooses, it should be delineated in your bylaws and management should have a clear point of contact to work with to resolve workplace issues, rather than having to contact an amorphous “union” without a specific representative or representatives. This will allow you to work out simple issues while representing members with accountability. Your grievance-handlers should also be well-trained, continually building their technical skills in handling complex grievances and situations, and organizing membership to support issue campaigns.

Should the local's grievance advance into the stage of arbitration please notify your servicing representative so that you can determine together how to proceed and how the arbitration will be organized to ensure the best possible representation for the member and/or union. Once you get a decision from the arbitrator, make sure to send a copy to your servicing representative, if they are already not included, so that we can keep a record and others can learn from your experience.

The Region 9A education representative can support locals in training officers and grievance-handlers. ■



Facing Management & Organizing Our Members

Management may be very hesitant to carry out even basic administrative functions required in the collective bargaining agreement—remember, although they signed, they might not be too happy about it! You may struggle to get them to remit dues in a timely manner, send membership lists or other basic information. Management may also go on the offensive, aggressively breaking the contract or trying to layoff members to claw back the economic gains you just won. Remember, these are your hard won rights and your members fought for them, so it's important not to be discouraged but to rely on contract enforcement, one-on-one organizing, member mobilization, and diligence to ensure that we hold management's feet to the fire. If there are deadlines in your contract by which they must remit dues or pay retro, make sure you don't let them extend their excuses into infinity.

Membership organizing also has its own unique challenges, especially when we don't have a broad active campaign like bargaining that captures the imagination of membership. Rather than allowing membership to fall into apathy, you should keep flexing your organizing muscles. The organizing committee or contract action team that helped take your membership across the finish line for your contract needs to be kept alive in some form that facilitates you building your membership. Whether that is a group of stewards, a continued organizing committee, or some other form that fits your locals conditions, we must continue to do one-on-ones with members to build power and union presence especially in those places where you may have struggled throughout your initial campaign, so that we are well-rooted for the fight ahead. This organizing group should restart

meeting after contract ratification and host a membership organizing training and set membership and leadership goals.

For more information on building an activist base and organizing network in your workplace, you can see:

- **Member-2-Member 2.0: A Guide for Building a Membership Communication Program (Pub. 518)**

A strong local should also stay in direct communication with members, letting them know of challenges and victories regularly so they know that the union belongs to them and is advancing on all fronts. As part of that, the local should continue to lead campaigns to enforce your contract and grow your membership: rally members around an unfair termination, stand up to an unreasonable policy change, organize a non-union job title, so that you can build leadership and maintain the strength of the union for the contract campaign to come. Finally, make sure that the local union doesn't become a distant phone number or an office somewhere that is difficult to reach. Be responsive to membership concerns and grievances and aggressively and effectively enforce your contract, being present and accessible to membership. ■

Committees

The union is the membership. Leaders cannot do union work alone. How can members get involved to build power? We now turn our attention to committees that rank-and-file members can join and carry out essential union work through. Active committees give members a path to participate in the union.

Standing Committees

The UAW Constitution sets out a number of Standing Committees to help your local function and build the life of your union. These are: Constitution & By-laws, Union Label, Education, Conservation & Recreation, Community Services, Civil & Human Rights, Citizenship & Legislative (CAP), Consumer Affairs, Veterans, Women's, and Organizing.

Each committee has an important role to play in critical moments in our union. For example, the Community Services committee is often tasked with collecting food and funds for members on strike or during a lay-off. The election committee, discussed below, is also laid out in the UAW Constitution as exercising important tasks.

More information on standing committees can be found here:

- **[Standing Committees: The Building Blocks of a Strong Union \(Pub. 501\)](#)**

In addition to these constitutional standing committees, a local may develop its own committees based on need: a “flying squadron” to coordinate participation in solidarity actions, a membership organizing or contract action committee, etc. or give their own names to the constitutional committee to fit the local

context (e.g. “political action committee” instead of CAP committee, “social committee” instead of conservation & recreation). These committees may want to fundraise in order to support their activities, and/or they may be assigned a budget to carry out their work.

However, especially for new locals or depending on the size of your local, you may not have the capacity to create all of these committees all at once, or some may not apply to your local. The important thing is to prioritize the needs of the local and build up capacity through these committees, devoting resources and energy to build the committees correctly, rather than embarking on a million projects at once.

Another issue to consider is the leadership structure within a committee in order to keep committees active, engaged, and accountable to membership, rather than embarking on separate priorities only reflective of a few committee members. Each local may have a different answer to this, but some locals have every committee member elected by the membership or at membership meetings or at minimum have the chairs or officers of each committee elected by the membership or at a membership meeting. Other locals have the committees and committee leadership appointed by the President or Executive Board. Locals should additionally ask committees to regularly report back to general membership at each membership meeting and give feedback and direction so that a committee is functioning as an organ of the larger union, rather than a separate body, ensuring that the democratic process is respected.

Members working to get a committee off the ground can refer to this guide to help build the structure of their committee and recruit new members:

- **Running Effective Standing Committees (Pub. 505)**

Labor-Management Committees

Finally, your Collective Bargaining Agreement may lay out a number of joint labor-management committees (sometimes referred to as union-management committees), where the union appoints its representatives and management appoints theirs. If there are multiple of these kinds of committees, local union leadership should make a list and identify each and every labor-management committee listed in your CBA. You won the right to have these committees, so don't let management avoid this obligation!

While some committees likely make sense to appoint the union's leadership to, if members are going to serve it's important to fill them with committed, prepared, and trained members, who will know and represent the union's perspective and viewpoint, rather than just taking volunteers or people who might advocate for their own point of view. When you are a representative of the union you are always speaking on behalf of the collective membership, never out of self-interest. As with any confrontation with management, our union representatives should discuss our position beforehand, work out any disagreements or points of clarification, prepare thoroughly, come up with a plan to avoid management stonewalling, set goals and priorities with clear action plans in the event of challenges, stay united in front of management, and be prepared to report back to membership.

Crucially, for labor-management committees, you'll need to remember that these committees are important places to work on topics related to the implementation and enforcement of the contract, but they are neither grievance meetings nor bargaining sessions. Grievance meetings are held as spelled out in your collective bargaining agreement's article on grievance and arbitration and have their own sets of timelines and obligations. While grievances can and often are a point of discussion in LMCs, they are not

the official "step" meeting, and thus you should be prepared to talk about a wider set of issues, not just an individual problem.

Furthermore, LMC meetings are not bargaining sessions. You cannot change the contract once it has been ratified, except for rare circumstances as agreed to by the union and management. You are not at these meetings to reopen the contract and renegotiate it. You will discover through experiences in contract enforcement and the LMC that there are a number of issues you want to tackle in bargaining next time, or language you want to amend, because management's interpretation consistently differs from yours. Management may also insist on reading the contract in bad faith or misrepresent what we agreed to. In order to address these problems we have two routes: grievance and arbitration during the life of the contract, and bargaining for changes when contract negotiations come back around. The LMC meeting will never be the place where management agrees to change the contract. And thus you should approach it with a different set of expectations and strategy than bargaining where changes are very much up for grabs as negotiations unfold. No matter how we feel about certain provisions of the contract, we, the union, will always be its best enforcers and the outcomes of grievances or workplace issues also rests on our ability to mobilize pressure, not because of conversations with management.

And always remember: even if you are under contract, no committee or meeting with management can substitute for the power of an active and organized membership ready to take action. Management can be pressured to settle a dispute in the union's favor, well beyond anything they wanted to give at the start, if you have an organized membership showing strength through unity in a campaign. ■



Good Communications and Membership Lists

In order to build strong locals and prepare for successful contract campaigns, we need to have a membership that is informed, engaged, and organized. We need to be able to speak directly to the demands and interests of our membership, and in turn, as leaders, articulate back to the membership our common goals as a union. Often, when it comes to effective communications work we struggle to know where to begin.

The basis of a good communications program starts from answering the question: how can I reach the membership directly? Certainly management could communicate to every member without a problem in under 48 hours. Essential to this is the building and maintenance of an excellent membership list with contact information for each member.

When members sign up for the union, we should be collecting the relevant information that will allow us to contact them directly if necessary: phone number, email address, work location, etc. It is then up to the local union to store that information in a useful way and constantly update our lists. This can be as simple as a spreadsheet for smaller locals, or involve database tools like Knack, ActionBuilder, etc. for larger locals.

A simple way to maintain an updated list is to build in employer checks and updates in certain intervals (every quarter, every six months), so you can remove inactive members and ensure new members are getting updates. If you are sending mass text updates about bargaining, and numbers are coming

back bad or as wrong numbers, you can also use that information to follow up with the member in person to update their information.

There's also no need to start from scratch: if you have an older list you can work with your organizer or international servicing representative to transition from the organizing database to a local data system so you don't lose all the important knowledge, lists, and tracking you used during the organizing drive and contract campaign.

We should also think about how we get information out to members in the most effective way according to local conditions and work environment. If you are a local of office workers, we can easily email our members. In a plant setting, sending text updates and/or posting on the union bulletin board may be most effective.

When attempting to convey a message to members, even one as simple as letting them know about a union meeting coming up next week, we also want to make sure our communications don't fade into the background, so we should consider multiple avenues. Does our local have a presence on social media that we can develop, where our members are constantly scrolling anyway? Perhaps we can make a newsletter that we pass around or send out on a regular basis that talks about all kinds of concerns?

Communication strategy shouldn't be left to chance, but rather we should go about planning our messaging in an intentional way both in terms of what we want to say, how we want to say it, and how we are going to reach the members. It's also not enough to just ask everyone to spread the word, and locals should think about the best way to ensure their communication work is effective. Should you set up a communications committee? Is there a particular executive board or staff role in charge of comms? There is no cookie cutter answer, but we have to commit to designating this task to a responsible and accountable group.

Training and other resources are available to locals looking to build their communications strategy by request to your servicing rep and regional leadership.



Legislative and Political Program

Our struggle as trade unionists is not confined to the bargaining table. There are fights that can only be won by engaging in bigger political fights in our society at large. These may be very specific and discrete, complementing our bargaining strategy, like ensuring government investment in a product or securing federal funding for our workplace. Or these fights can be more general, like addressing the need for affordable housing for our members as tenants or new homeowners in their community.

As a union, we cannot afford to be neutral in the political arena, as one of our union's longest-serving Presidents, Walter Reuther, once said, "There's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls." This means that if we stay out of political issues, fearing they may be divisive to our membership, or take our focus away from the basic functions of our union, we may end up losing the very rights we are working to gain. After all, how much worth does a great collective bargaining agreement have if the National Labor Relations Board rules that employers have the discretion to ignore the rights you have won?. How much difference does a substantial wage increase make, if the company wants to offshore your production or budget cuts force layoffs at your workplace?

These questions aren't fatal. They are an invitation to our members to understand the importance of engaging in political action and participating in our union's political process. For our union, politics is not

the same thing as patronage, parties, or candidates. It is about understanding the power between a government run for the interests of the bosses, and one run in the interests of workers. We make endorsements at the federal, state, and local levels, but we do so in a way that builds power for the interests and needs of our members and the larger working class, not to support a particular party or candidate for partisan or personal reasons.

Every year, UAW Region 9A makes a difference when and where we organize politically. Our union has been critical to legislative efforts that have won housing reforms supporting legal services workers in Locals 2325 and 2320; labor time warranty modifications benefiting auto technicians in Local 259; funding for cultural institutions staffed by Local 2110 members; winning the right to organize and collectively bargain for graduate workers; and many more. We also engage in advocacy efforts that benefit workers beyond our union, such as campaigns to win unemployment insurance for striking workers, or launching coalitions for paid family leave expansion and student debt relief. Whatever the issue, we cannot afford to be neutral and must engage in political issues that benefit the working class as a whole.

Our vehicle to engage in political campaigns is our Community Action Program (CAP). Each state/area has a CAP council which collects funds from locals and voluntary member donations in order to wage campaigns and elect pro-labor candidates. Although each CAP Council has a slightly different structure, every local is entitled to at least one delegate to their



area CAP Council to ensure their voice is heard. Your local president is your default representative. Locals who want to have UAW Region 9A endorse candidates or issue campaigns bring motions through their representative on their CAP Council. The representative CAP Council deliberates and decides on priorities collectively. All members are invited to attend and observe their area CAP meeting to keep informed and get involved in the political work of our union.

Campaign contribution rules limit the use of union dues for federal political campaigns, and also in state and local races in some jurisdictions. For that reason, our Union has a voluntary program called “V-CAP” by which members can contribute via dues check-off to support our union’s political program. This is important to help build our union’s political power and serves as our fund to run campaigns to support our political and legislative priorities:

- **Pub. #C2000 – V-CAP Authorization**

UAW Region 9A does not hire outside consultants and lobbyists to do political advocacy work. Our staff and locals work together through the CAP program so that our political efforts are always member-led and all decisions not only representative, but accountable to our membership’s will.

While only Area CAP Councils make candidate endorsements and donations, local CAP Committees in conjunction with their area CAP Council and the Region 9A CAP Representative should work to determine legislative priorities for the year and develop a campaign working backwards from our goals: lobbying turnout, public comment and hearing days, following up with elected officials who we helped get elected to discuss how we can collaborate, and finally identifying priority races that we need to get involved in to change the balance of power on our issue. Our UAW Region 9A CAP representative and your servicing representative are also available to work with locals to strategize and plan campaigns more specific to locals.

Education

Building a local union requires a well-trained local union leadership, stewards who know how to enforce the contract and organize members, and members who know their rights at work. Members should be educated on the basics of labor law, the contract, and politics in order to help build a cohesive and powerful union. At the heart of an effective education plan is a commitment to member-led organizing and mobilization, not relying on the law, politicians, leadership, and definitely not the company, to save the day.

As discussed on [page 26](#), your local can create an Education Committee to bottom-line this work, putting on educational events and opportunities for members to understand the contract, learn more about their Weingarten rights and other legal rights they have as union members, and to train shop stewards on member representation. Ideally, the Education Committee will work to build an ongoing schedule of trainings and resources that assists members, stewards, and other leaders in gaining this education. An education committee may not be immediately possible, but even an ad hoc group of leaders may be able to offer training to members in conjunction with the Region 9A Education Representative or your Servicing Representative.

The UAW International Education Department has a large catalog of trainings that can be offered to your local:

- [UAW Education Website](#)
- [Pub #ED-WM—UAW Education Catalog](#)

Although labor knowledge is best learned through experience in our campaigns and struggles, it's always important to ensure that training on basic concepts like grievance-handling, organizing, bargaining, labor law, and other important modules is available to members who want to learn more and get involved. No shop steward should be learning how to write their

first grievance in a trial by fire situation when we can offer them training on how to properly represent a fellow member.

Outside of the local, the UAW International also has a number of educational opportunities available to members throughout the year where members can get additional training. These include Regional trainings held in the cities and areas where our locals are located, and conferences held at the Walter & May Reuther UAW Family Education Center located in Onaway, Michigan, often called “Black Lake.” Many of the conferences held at Black Lake are extremely affordable, with local unions only being responsible for the less than \$100 registration cost, while the International Union will cover all lodging and food costs and reimburse almost all travel costs. Subsidies to help cover lost time are also available. In order to assist members and stewards in building their labor education, locals should consider bargaining for paid or unpaid union release time so that members can take advantage of educational opportunities without conflicting with their work responsibilities.

For more information on Black Lake see:

- [Member Guide to Black Lake \(Pub. 1015\)](#)
- [UAW Family Scholarship Program \(Pub. 545J\)](#)

Gearing Up for Bargaining

Sooner than you know it, it will be time to start bargaining your next contract. As a new local leader, you may have served on the inaugural bargaining committee previously, or the upcoming contract campaign may be the first you are confronting at the negotiation table.

Whatever the case, it is critical to be trained and united as a bargaining committee on the goals and strategy. However, the most important factor in building for a strong contract campaign is to involve the membership in a meaningful, democratic, and participatory manner. It's important not to wait to get the membership involved only when things seem most dire, but rather to build an intentional contract campaign with escalating actions, a clear bottom line, and a plan and strategy to achieve our goals.

The bargaining team and the membership are like jumper cables—they only work when they are connected. That means we have to bring our workplace power into bargaining, and we need to bring bargaining into the workplace. We do that by building a representative bargaining team and clearly communicating updates in real time.

We should do our best to avoid company traps like “black out bargaining,” where members are kept in the dark about negotiations, or signing restrictive ground rules where the bargaining committee is prohibited from disclosing proposals and the status of negotiations to membership. All the historic gains we've made across sectors have occurred when the bargaining committee, in lock step with the membership, builds an escalatory contract campaign that successfully creates a crisis for management. Only a strong contract campaign mobilized by a powerful united membership forces the bosses to concede to our demands. We have many successful examples

of this in the UAW and in Region 9A specifically. You can read about how some of our union siblings took on the bosses in these case studies:

- **Winning a Record Contract: A Case Study of the 2024 Contract Bargaining Campaign at Daimler Truck**
- **Winning a Record Contract: A Case Study of the 2024 Contract Bargaining Campaign at The Bronx Defenders**
- **Winning a Record Contract: A Case Study of the 2023 Contract Bargaining Campaign at Mount Sinai**



New Organizing

As you build your local union, it's more likely than not that you are starting out with just one workplace, a workplace that organized itself, fought off the bosses' anti-union campaign, and won what no one thought could be possible to deliver change at work for your co-workers. As unionists, it's our responsibility to deliver that kind of change to the entire working class. We can do that by assisting our fellow workers in forming their own unions and helping them organize. Region 9A has a strong history of organizing, with over 20,000 members joining in the last 10 years alone, many through local-led campaigns in legal services, cultural institutions, higher education, auto dealerships, and more.

When thinking about new organizing, your local should consider targets that help build the strength of the local union. Perhaps organizing more workers in a particular geographical area will help us establish a de facto city-wide minimum wage, or by organizing all of the workers in our particular industry we can turn the power of the whipsaw back on the employers who try to make us compete against each other. The first place any local should look to when considering new organizing is within the companies they already represent. Are there any non-union workers who want to organize, so that next time we bargain our contract, our strike threat will be that much more effective?

The reality is that unions that do not organize will wither away over time, through layoffs, transfers, closures, changes in market conditions, and other issues. Many of our union's bargaining issues that seem impossible to resolve now could be much better tackled with a higher union density—the percentage of union members in the workforce—as it would increase our leverage and negotiating power. In other words, our union's density is our destiny.

To effectuate new organizing, locals can consider building the Organizing Committee provided for in the UAW Constitution (discussed on [page 26](#)) or even hiring organizing staff to work on that project. The UAW education representative can provide training to your Organizing Committee to get it off the ground. The UAW Organizing Department may also already be working with workers in your sector seeking to unionize, especially in our manufacturing, gaming, and higher education industries. Be ready to support these efforts when they become public or when they advance to the next phases of their campaigns!

If you meet a worker who wants to organize, but aren't sure they are a great fit for you local, please connect them to: region9a.uaw.org/organize



UAW Resources

You are not alone in taking on your employer or facing whatever challenge your local may come across! As an organization of over a million active and retired workers, we pool our resources to give your local the resources you need to take on the fights at your workplace, your city, and your state.

If you are facing a problem—for example, a safety concern at work, a legal question you are not sure of the answer to, or assistance analyzing a health care plan—the first step is to contact your servicing representative. Your servicing representative is the person who will point you in the right direction and help you in gaining assistance from the appropriate UAW department. We do not expect you to know the answer to your own question or know who it is that will be able to help you. We are here to listen to your issues and ideas and build a plan to tackle them. We then call on the support from national departments when they can be helpful.

Our national departments serve over 500 locals nationwide, dealing with thousands of issues on a daily basis. In order to make sure that you get the help you need, it's a good idea to narrow down the specific problem or question you are seeking the solution to, rather than exploring a more amorphous set of issues. This will help your servicing representative and the department best support you, as well as prioritizing the work needed.

Some of the more relevant UAW departments to locals include:

Auditing—LM2s, Strike Assistance, Tax Filings, etc.

Industry/Company-Based Departments (Higher Education, Aerospace, General Dynamics, Stellantis, Ford, Gaming, TOP, IPS, etc.)—Sector-Specific Knowledge and Assistance

CAP and Legislative—Political and Legislative Work (*primary point of contact is the 9A CAP representative*)

Communications—Developing Strong Messaging, Video, Social Media Strategies

Education—Membership Training, Education and Mobilization

Health & Safety—Response to Unsafe Work Conditions, Health & Safety Training, Arbitration Support

Bargaining Strategies—Support in Developing, Organizing, and Running a Powerful Contract Campaign

Research—Financial Analysis, Costing, Corporate Research, and Other Investigation

Social Security—Healthcare and Pension Analysis and Support

Sourcing—Business Analysis of Suppliers and Customers

Arbitration—Support in Arbitration Proceedings

Legal—Legal Assistance

Appeals—Bylaws, Constitutional Questions, Appeal of Decisions, Article 30, Trials

Organizing—Assistance With Organizing Leads

Retirees—Assisting Retiree Members and Chapters With Benefits, Closed Locals, and Other Needs

