# Welcome to OPEIU

*Achieving economic justice together*

**The Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, CLC**

Welcome to the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU), an AFL-CIO affiliated, member-driven union of more than 90,000 workers in the United States and Canada.

As a member of OPEIU, you join clerical staff, bank tellers, case managers, university administrators, utility workers, insurance claims processors, guide dog trainers, tech industry workers, film production crews, helicopter pilots and mechanics, nurses and other healthcare professionals and so many more in continuing the legacy of the first and largest union to organize office professionals.

We believe all workers deserve a voice in the workplace, fair compensation and dignified working conditions, and we are not afraid to stand up and fight collectively for those rights.

OPEIU is a democratic union comprised of local unions representing thousands of working people just like you. At OPEIU, your perspective will always matter and play a vital role in guiding our union's future.

# MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of OPEIU is to improve the lives of working families by bringing economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our communities. Acting as a strong and united voice in the workplace and in the communities in which we live, OPEIU seeks to bring the benefits of representation to all working people and their families.

# WHO WE ARE

OPEIU is a United States-based international labor union of public and private sector workers in more than 50 local unions spanning from Hawai'i to Maine, Florida to Washington and most states in between.

Our strength comes from the diversity of industries our members play a vital role in and the range of perspectives that come from that diversity. If you believe you and your co-workers deserve to have a say over your working conditions, you belong in OPEIU.

By organizing with OPEIU, our members gain a voice in the workplace they simply would not have access to as individuals. This voice translates to power they bring to the bargaining table, leading to strong contracts with wages, hours, benefits and working conditions that are no longer dictated solely by management.

Through the collective bargaining process, OPEIU members have achieved contracts with quality healthcare and retirement benefits, higher salaries, more paid time off, job security, safer working conditions, better schedules and so much more.

# THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

The international union provides support to locals throughout organizing, bargaining and legislative campaigns. It also coordinates educational opportunities, administers valuable membership benefits, publishes a quarterly magazine, conducts strategic research and helps us coordinate our actions to harness our collective power as effectively as possible.

OPEIU is governed by an executive board comprising a president, secretary-treasurer and 17 vice presidents representing all eight of OPEIU's geographic regions, with seats distributed proportionally to the regions' memberships. Vice presidents are elected by delegates from their regions and the president and secretary-treasurer are elected by all delegates. Delegates are elected within their local unions.

OPEIU hosts a convention every four years where delegates vote for board members, policy statements, resolutions and constitutional changes and bylaws that govern and guide our union. The executive board meets twice per year to make decisions on how to implement the agenda agreed upon at the convention.

OPEIU is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and the Canadian Labor Congress (CLC), the biggest federations of unions in the United States and Canada, which advocate for workers' interests in each country's legislatures.

# HISTORY

OPEIU began when stenographers, typists and bookkeepers in Indianapolis, Indiana, decided they also deserved the benefits of a union and organized, receiving the first federal charter for a clerical workers union in 1906 from the AFL and eventually becoming OPEIU Local 1.

Their movement spread to union offices, paper mills and credit unions across the country and accelerated in 1935 when the passage of the Wagner Act guaranteed American workers the right to organize. In 1945, the AFL issued a charter to the 22,000 members to become The Office Employees International Union (OEIU).

In 1965, the OEIU was renamed the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) to reflect the fact that more and more professionals were interested in forming unions. Over the coming decades, OPEIU expanded into insurance, utilities, healthcare, non-profits, education and many other industries. By the 2000s, OPEIU could claim success in dozens of strikes, countless negotiations and Supreme Court decisions, all of which brought working Americans closer to achieving the economic justice they deserve.

Together, these actions have brought higher salaries, job security, reasonable time-off policies, healthcare, retirement benefits and a voice in what we receive in exchange for our labor to countless members and their families across the United States and Canada. Beyond OPEIU, our work has inspired others to organize and provided a model of what standards workers should accept.

# REPRESENTATION

Our union is the only thing ensuring we have a seat at the table where decisions are made over our employment, giving us the ability to demand what we know we deserve.

To support members exercising this right through their local union, OPEIU is available to assist with bargaining, negotiations and organizing. OPEIU attorneys represent members and local unions on a myriad of issues in both state and federal courts, and local unions often call on them for legal advice related to contract disputes.

OPEIU's communication team can also help gain public attention and pressure behind your campaign by generating media attention and helping your local union produce powerful photos, videos and social media posts to support these campaigns.

Representatives from your local union are available in between contracts to assist elected stewards in advocating for members through grievance procedures.

A majority of your union dues go toward employing local union representatives who are trained to help you with management disputes, including unfair firings, demotions, harassment or denial of rights guaranteed in your contract.

With an OPEIU contract, management no longer has the final say.

OPEIU

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

All OPEIU members are eligible for benefits provided directly by your union.

These include:

- College discount program and scholarships
- Student debt reduction program
- Two free towings per year
- Identity protection solutions
- Accidental death and dismemberment program
- Wireless carrier discounts
- Union Plus discounts

In addition, members across the country have achieved historic wins in their individual contracts, including:

- Employer-paid health insurance
- Pensions and employer-matched 401(k)s
- Four-day workweeks
- Generous paid family leave
- Salaries surpassing industry averages
- Protections against artificial intelligence (AI)
- Safe staffing levels
- Strong anti-discrimination language
- Just cause protections

# LEADERSHIP

OPEIU's top elected positions are the president and secretary-treasurer, who are voted on by delegates at each convention.

The president oversees the international union and is responsible for representing our union externally, directing organizing, chairing the executive board, establishing educational and research services and approving all local constitutions, among many other duties.

Tyler Turner has served as president of OPEIU since February 2025 and as president of Local 277 in Fort Worth, Texas, since 2017. Turner first became a member of OPEIU in 2007 while working at Kaiser Permanente.

The secretary-treasurer is responsible for overseeing and safeguarding OPEIU's assets and investments, managing recordkeeping and issuing charters to local unions, among many other duties.

Mary Mahoney has served as secretary-treasurer of OPEIU since January 2010 and as president of Local 6 in Boston, Massachusetts, since 1995. Mahoney first became a member of OPEIU while working at the Massachusetts Trial Court, where she served as a steward.

# DUES

Member dues are an investment in our collective futures. They provide us with the necessary resources to stand up against well-funded companies and achieve what we deserve. They are also what enable us to organize new workers.

Your dues are collected by your local and the majority stay there to represent your local's members. Your dues will never be used for political contributions.

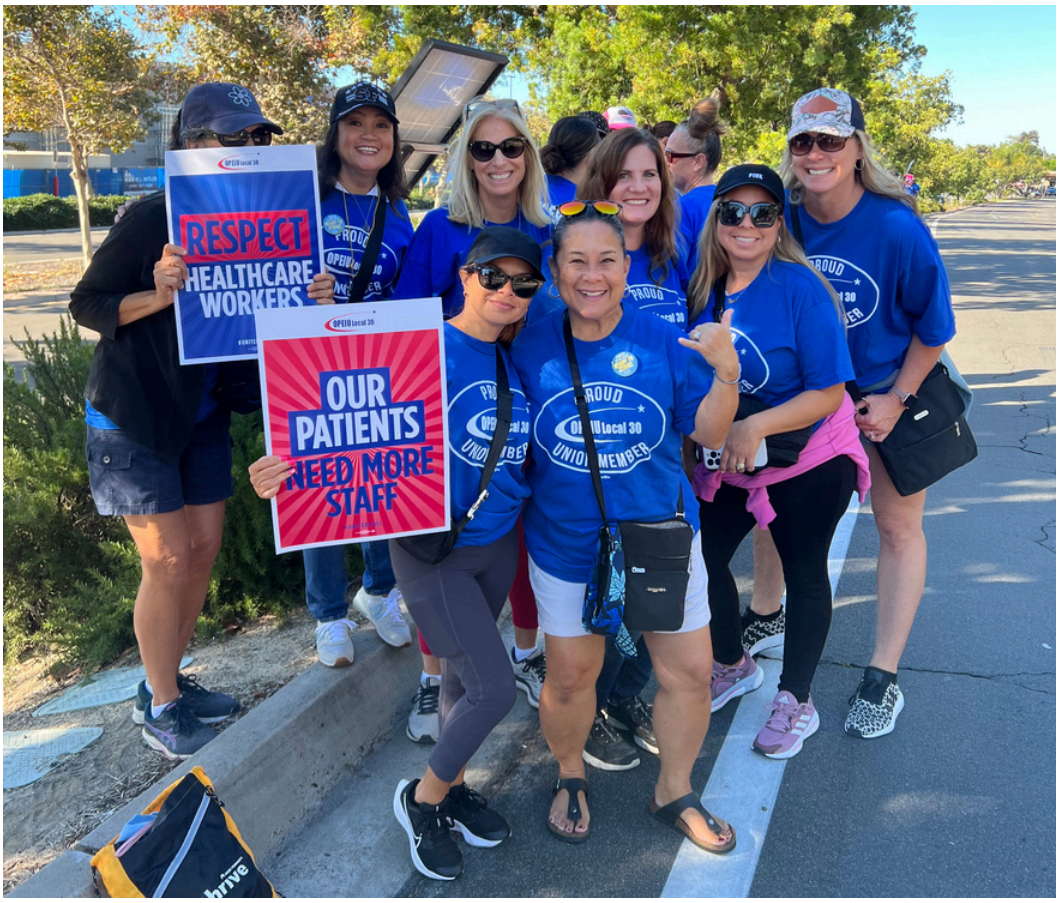
Because we are funded only by our members, we are accountable only to our members.

# YOU ARE THE UNION!

# GET INVOLVED

You are OPEIU. All of OPEIU's success comes from ordinary members participating in decision-making and making their voices heard. To get involved, consider some of the following:

- Attend local union meetings
- Join volunteer committees
- Participate in bargaining and vote in contract ratifications
- Read your contract and constitution and educate your co-workers about what's inside
- Stand by your co-workers when the moment demands



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**What is a union?**

A union is simply an employee organization — protected by law — where a group of workers joins together to improve and guarantee their wages, benefits and working conditions. A union also gives employees a way to achieve respect and fairness on the job and a stronger voice to impact employer decisions. Without a union, employers have 100 percent control.

**Is there a risk in supporting a union?**

It is against the law for your employer to ask you about your union activity or to threaten, harass, fire, discipline or discriminate against you because of union activity. The National Labor Relations Act protects workers trying to form a union. When workers organize with OPEIU they can depend on support and back up if needed.

**Can I talk about the union at work?**

The law gives you the right to talk about the union at work when other non-work related talk is allowed or during non-work times such as breaks, meal times or before or after work.

**What about strikes?**

Employers love to scare workers thinking of forming a union with strike talk. In reality, strikes are rare. OPEIU settles more than 99 percent of its contracts without ever going on strike. Strikes only happen if the vast majority of your colleagues vote to do so. Union leaders cannot "call a strike," nor can union members from other workplaces. Only you and your co-workers can make that decision.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**How will my employer react?**

Most employers, even good ones, feel threatened when they find out employees want to share some power and control. Most try to convince you not to participate in the union by using a variety of tactics designed to create doubt. However, workers successfully form unions all the time. The key is to stay united and focus on the reasons you wanted a union in the first place.

**Who runs OPEIU?**

The members of the union guide the decisions made at their local unions. As a member, you and your fellow workers elect your own negotiating committee and decide on contract priorities. You elect the officers and leaders of your local union.

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