



We cook, serve
and wash.

We collect, distribute
and deliver.

We stock, sell
and bag.

We think, write
and educate.

WE ALSO ORGANIZE!



ABOUT THE IWW

Founded in 1905 in Chicago, THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD is open to all workers. Don't let the "industrial" part fool you. Our members include teachers, social workers, accountants, bartenders, and computer programmers. Only bosses are not allowed to join. Although IWW members support each other and do things locally, we are also part of a community that stretches around the world.

You have a legal right to join a union and your membership is confidential. It is up to you whether you discuss your union with your coworkers. If you are currently unemployed, you can still join. Membership dues are used to maintain the union and assist organizing campaigns. Because union work is done by members, dues are very low. Most working students pay \$6 or \$12 a month.

Nothing will change until we organize. Think it over. Get in touch with us and do your part. The sooner you do, the sooner things will improve and the sooner all of us will enjoy the good things in life.

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WORKING STUDENTS AND THE IWW



WHY ORGANIZE?

You don't need a high school or college degree to realize that workers and their employers do

not have the same interests. We want shorter hours, higher pay, and better benefits. We want our work to be less boring, less dangerous, and less destructive to the environment. We want control over how we produce goods and provide services. Our employers want us to work longer, harder, faster, and cheaper. They want fewer safety and environmental regulations and they demand absolute control over the decisions, speech, and actions in the workplace.

This conflict of interests is especially true for the typical student job. Whether we work on campus, in a restaurant, or in an after-school program, our employers take advantage of us because they know we would sooner quit than stick around to make things better. When we ask each other about our jobs, we often shrug our shoulders and say, "I only work here to earn money for books and a few expenses." Or "It's pretty bad here. I am going to quit soon."

Think about your workplace for a moment. You have no or little say in scheduling, safety, and wages and there is likely room for improvement in respect from the boss and fair and equal treatment. On our own we can change little, but together we can prevent our employers from treating us like dirt. Our labor, not our bosses, is what makes our workplaces tick and we can use the power of our labor to improve our jobs, our communities, and the environment. If we don't organize, nothing is going to change. It might even get worse.

We must also stand up for our coworkers. Not all our coworkers are working for book money. Ask around on your next shift. How many people have two or three jobs? How many rely on their paycheck to support their family? We have a duty to our coworkers, and those who will follow in our footsteps, to make things better in our workplace. When we band together around our common experiences and interests, we can improve our jobs and set an example for other workplaces. Solidarity is our most effective weapon, and in a lot of ways that is what a union is all about.



UNION BENEFITS

It is hard to deny the benefits of a union. That is why employers fight so hard, and spend so much money, to stop union drives. The labor movement was responsible for the eight hour day, workplace safety laws, and the weekend. Today, workers with unions generally have higher pay and job security, better benefits, and fewer scheduling problems. More pay equals fewer hours at work and more hours for studying and a social life. Union workplaces are safer and have less harassment, discrimination, and favoritism. They are this way because union members have power to influence workplace conditions.

When overworked teaching assistants in a History Department at the University of California organized for a reduced workload in the 1990s, they presented a petition of their demand to the department chair. Their collective action won a twenty-five percent reduction in their workload with no cut in pay.

Portland workers on a school's paint crew wanted to have their paychecks directly deposited into their bank accounts and at the end of the month to coincide with rent and bills. Although it took a few visits to the payroll office, their collective and direct action eventually changed the policy.

An IWW cook in La Crosse, Wisconsin was fired when she complained about not getting paid. The local IWW picketed that bar during a Friday happy hour. She got her paycheck and every worker there got a 50 cents an hour pay raise!

The union also provides mutual aid and community to its members. This means members receive assistance with problems at work, but it could also mean help with a community project, a problem with the landlord, or maybe even a class assignment. Union members often form baseball teams, join bowling leagues, and sponsor socials; they make art, music, and even films.

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There are several reasons why working students make the Industrial Workers of the World their choice when joining a union. As students, we tend to move from job to job to job to job. How many jobs have you had in the last two years? When you are in the IWW, you take your union benefits (mutual aid, voting rights, news of jobs, IWW publications, etc.) with you from job to job.

You can also take your IWW membership to your job after school. Most of us attend classes to learn the skills for working in a profession and we look forward to the day when we no longer have to wash dishes, flip burgers, and punch tickets. What grads quickly learn is that professional work has many similarities to typical student jobs. There is still a boss telling you when to work, for how long, and for what compensation. Workplace decisions will still be undemocratic. And many workers around us and in our communities will still be working too long for too little pay. The kind of work you do will likely change after school, but the need to be in a union will continue.

The IWW is a practical union run by members who volunteer their time, energy, and ideas and who know and practice solidarity on and off our jobs. The members, not paid union leaders, decide what issues to address and what campaigns to support. Members directly vote on office holders, from local and international representatives to the newspaper editor. It is a democratic union at the local and international level.

In contrast to the typical labor union, we are not affiliated with any political party and no union money goes to politicians. The vision of the IWW sets it apart from the typical labor union. IWW members organize for higher pay, shorter hours, and better working conditions. We are also committed to democratic workplaces. We are, after all, the ones doing the work and for that reason we have a right to say how that work is to be done. We say that if democracy is important for government, then it's just as important for our workplaces. It is this vision of economic democracy that offers hope for a better world, a world without bosses, poverty, and war.