



# Union Q&A

*Frequently asked questions by library staff attempting to unionize.*

## **Does filing the petition mean our library staff have a union?**

No, it does not. Filing the petition is a request to have the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) conduct an election. Workers must have a majority of YES votes in an election ballot count in order to be union.

## **How do I know if I can be in the union?**

The Library Workers Empowerment Act (LWEA) provides for both supervisory and non-supervisory employees to unionize. Eligibility is based primarily on your duties and responsibilities, not necessarily your job title. So, unless you're a manager or an executive with responsibilities that include setting policies, hiring, firing, determining discipline, deciding promotions, etc., you are likely union eligible.

## **Can I get in trouble at work for supporting the union?**

It is your right to join with your coworkers and try to form a union. It's also reasonable for management to expect you to work during working hours. However, court rulings allow for employees to talk about and organize during personal time (before & after work, lunch and breaks). It is unlawful for your employer to discipline you for exercising these rights during these appropriate times. You can also wear union branded items provided the employer allows for similar non-union items.

## **If workers elect to have a union, are dues deducted immediately?**

No. Workers do not pay union dues with the IAM until a contract has been negotiated and a ratification vote is successful.

## **How do we know what will be in our contract if we unionize?**

Staff will be asked to fill out a negotiation prep survey. Your contract will be based on your priorities, negotiated by a committee of library employees, assisted by IAM Union Reps. The final acceptance of the contract is determined by a ratification vote of eligible employees. So you decide what goes in your contract and you have a vote in the decision to accept it.

## **The employer wants a chance to “fix” the problems, what do we do?**

If your employer expresses remorse and truly wants to make positive change, that is great! Coming to the bargaining table and negotiating in good faith is the best way to show honest intent. Only when wages, hours and working conditions are detailed in a legally-binding union contract are they guaranteed.

## **Have questions not answered here?**

Contact IAM union organizer Bridget Fitzgerald from your personal device. Call or text 301-213-4189, or email [bfitzgerald@iamaw.org](mailto:bfitzgerald@iamaw.org).



Courts have ruled in favor of workers making union materials available in certain employee-only areas, such as break rooms or locker room. Employers interfering with that right could be found guilty of an unfair labor practice. **Please do not throw away or destroy this flyer.**