

# What about Union Dues?

The dues that Communications Workers of America (CWA) members pay provide the resources that CWA needs to represent its 700,000 members who are covered by more than 2,000 collective bargaining agreements.

It takes money to run any organization, and CWA, as a labor organization, exists only to serve its members. The amount of dues members pay; when members start paying dues; and how their dues money is spent, are all laid out in the CWA Constitution and By-Laws, and are ultimately determined by CWA members.

Employers frequently try to frighten or mislead employees about union dues during an organizing campaign because they don't want them to form a union and eliminate their absolute control over the workers and workplace.

They especially don't want their employees to have the right to negotiate a contract with them that will govern their pay, benefits, working conditions and company policies.

Regardless of what your employer may tell you, here are the facts about CWA dues as per the CWA Constitution:

## How much are dues?

The amount of union dues CWA members pay is 2.25 hours per month (about 1.3 percent) of base wages, excluding overtime or premium pay. The amount of CWA dues has not changed for years, and can only be changed with membership approval.

## What about initiation fees?

There are no initiation fees to be a CWA member.

## When do workers start paying dues?

Workers do not pay any union dues after they vote to get a union. Dues begin only *after* workers negotiate their first contract with their employer and approve it in a contract ratification vote.

## Who decides how dues are spent?

CWA members elected by their co-workers – as Local Union officers and as CWA Convention delegates – decide how dues dollars are allocated.

## What do dues pay for?

CWA dues are allocated to ensure that union

members have the kind of support they will need to have strong representation in their workplace, a voice for their concerns, and the means to improve their working conditions through contract negotiations. Here is a brief summary of programs which CWA dues support:

- **Contract negotiations** to improve members' wages, benefits and terms and conditions of their workplace. A field staff of 200 professional representatives support Locals during negotiations.
- **Enforcing contracts and representing workers.** Making sure members' contracts are followed by employers, representing workers in grievances, covering legal fees and arbitration costs.
- **Safety and health programs.** Programs to ensure that workers are provided a safe workplace and are protected against on-the-job hazards.
- **Education programs.** A wide range of training programs for local union members and officers.
- **Mobilization support.** Strong support to help workers reach their bargaining goals during contract negotiations.
- **Organizing.** Organizing is key to increasing the power of our members and all working families in our communities.

## How Dues Are Allocated:

