

## WHY DO I NEED A UNION?

A union is an organization of employees who negotiate with an employer to try to improve their wages, benefits, and working conditions. Forming a union helps to ensure workers can be heard and represented fairly within their workplace. By working together with one unified voice, employees can bargain with employers to address key issues and concerns in workplaces, including:

❖ **A voice on the job.**

A union gives the employees a say in how the workplace operates. Employees, with the help of the union, have the opportunity within bargaining to sit down with administrators/supervisors to work out solutions and advancements as equals.

❖ **Higher pay and regular raises.**

This means rewards for hard work and a pay system that recognizes longevity and the cost of living. Average hourly wages of a unionized worker in Canada are higher than those of non-union members. This is true for both full-time employees (\$21.01 versus \$17.71) and part-time employees (\$17.74 versus \$10.71).

❖ **Benefits one can count on.**

Unions negotiate for the benefits our families need most. Union members are about twice as likely as non-unionized workers to enjoy non-wage benefits. These benefits could include coverage in an employer-sponsored pension plan or group RRSP, maternity/parental leave top-up, health care plan, dental plan, or paid sick-leave entitlement. For each of these non-wage benefits, coverage for a unionized worker is 80% compared to the 40% among non-unionized workers. Non-wage benefits generally offer advantages not only to the employee, but also to their family members.

❖ **Better staffing and workloads.**

Unions work to establish better staffing guidelines and more reasonable workloads. Creating a safe and healthy workplace is a key goal of labour unions. They help to preserve professional standards, and stand up to inequalities within the workplace.

❖ **Job security and representation.**

Unions help to set fair rules and bring employment security into our workplaces. They allow employees the opportunity to speak out about problems on the job without fear of reprisals. Most importantly however, unions have a seat at the table where cost-cutting, contracting-out, and other decisions are made.