

**UE was founded in 1936 and is the only national independent rank-and-file union in the country.**



**UE's motto,  
"The members run this union,"  
is put into practice every day in  
UE workplaces.**

# **The Members Run The Union**

Widely respected nationally and internationally, and named “America’s Most Valuable Union” by The Nation magazine, UE has committed itself for almost 80 years to member-run democratic unionism and aggressive struggle to improve the conditions of workers.

**This begins with strong constitutional protections for our members, including:**

- The UE Constitution ensures democratic functioning at all levels of our union.
- Our constitution explicitly ensures that the members, not staff, run the union.
- Salaries of UE staff and officers set at working class levels to keep them from feeling and acting like bosses.
- Union members set the salaries, benefits and expenses for all staff and officers.
- Bill of Rights for union members.
- Right to elect your own officers and stewards without staff interference.

**UE members control the finances of your union at every level.**

- Complete financial transparency and accountability at all levels of the union.
- Membership votes on the dues structures at every level of the union.
- Membership determines its own budgets, expenses and fiscal priorities.
- Regular financial reporting of all income and expenses at every level of the union.
- Regular audits of the union’s finances at every level.

**Regular opportunities for participation in decision making is critical in a rank-and-file union.**

- Monthly membership meetings, with staff present to provide assistance.
- Regular Executive Board meetings with regular staff assistance.
- Monthly state-wide UE Local 222 CILU/CIPU Executive Board meetings.
- Elected leaders are women who understand the challenges women face in the workplace.
- Statewide conferences of UE paraprofessionals from all around the State of Connecticut.

## **Training and education for workers is essential to building a strong union.**

- UE National Union has an Education Department to coordinate training.
- Regular trainings are available to all UE members and officers.
- Officers and stewards trainings several times a year throughout Northeast region.
- Customized training as needed for individual work locations.
- Comprehensive contract negotiations training conducted each year.
- Ongoing contract negotiations training six times a year for each phase of negotiations.
- Negotiations training and convergence program brings together UE members across CT.
- Nationally-recognized training on the Affordable Care Act and excise tax issues.
- Monthly UE Steward newsletter provides useful information on wide variety of topics.
- UE News mailed to all members' homes six times a year.
- Information for Workers through our national website at [ueunion.org](http://ueunion.org).
- National and local union Facebook pages with updates from the field and other info.
- Building for our future through UE Young Activist Program.
- Regular participation on the State Department of Education Paraprofessional Advisory Council, conducts assessments and makes recommendations for paraprofessional development and resources across the state.

## **How negotiations are conducted in a rank-and-file union is crucial to our union.**

- Members draft and ratify their own bargaining proposals prior to negotiations.
- UE rejects all blackouts and gag orders that bosses try to impose during negotiations.
- Staff are constitutionally prohibited from making any back room deals with the boss.
- Staff are forbidden, by constitution, from negotiating alone with the employer.

## **UE provides experienced field staff to assist all of its Locals**

- One staff person for every 450 members across Connecticut and Massachusetts.
- One staff person for every 257 members in Connecticut public sector.
- Staff accessible to all members through cell phones, email and text.
- Most calls and messages answered or returned same day, all within 24 hours.
- UE international representative on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Staff are intimately familiar with paraprofessional issues.
- Two UE staff members in Connecticut are former paraprofessionals.
- UE National Legal Department assists Local 222 regularly.
- Law Offices of Peter Goselin in Connecticut.
- UE Research Department conducts in-depth analyses of employers and their finances.
- UE Research Department participates and testifies during binding arbitration hearings.

## **Coalition Building**

**With public sector workers under attack across the country, UE works closely with other public sector unions and allies to fight to hold the line against the employer's agenda to degrade wages, reduce our health benefits and destroy our pensions.**

- Regular coalition work with other union to present a united front during negotiations.
- National meetings of UE public employees from many states to exchange information.
- UE is a leader in the Labor Campaign for Single Payer Health Insurance Reform.
- UE is an active participant with Labor Notes and Jobs with Justice.
- UE was at the forefront to win FMLA for paraprofessionals in Connecticut.
- UE was active in ensuring that paid sick leave was passed in Connecticut.