Working with Labor

William Conrad, Kenmore Teachers Association, NYSUT / NEA/ AFL-CIO
What is a Union?

Improving the Lives of Working Families

A labor union or trade union is an organized group of workers who unite to make decisions about conditions affecting their work. Labor unions strive to bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our nation.

The Union Difference

Union members work together to negotiate and enforce a contract with management that guarantees raises, affordable health care, job security, and a stable schedule.
A Brief History of Unions

The labor movement in the United States grew out of the need to protect the common interest of workers. For those in the industrial sector, organized labor unions fought for better wages, reasonable hours and safer working conditions. The labor movement led efforts to stop child labor, give health benefits and provide aid to workers who were injured or retired.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiqzDsO3xhs
Courage in Union Leaders: Frances Perkins

First Female Cabinet Member

FDR’S Secretary of Labor

Principal architect of the new deal

“I came to Washington to work for God, FDR and the millions of forgotten, plain common workingmen”
Courage in Union Leaders: A. Philip Randolph

Planned and organized 1963 March on Washington

Credited with seeing through The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act 1965

“The essence of the trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, and the poor.”
Courage in Union Leaders: Walter P. Ruether

“You can’t opt out of life, you’ve got to make up your mind whether you're willing to accept things the way they are, or whether you are going to change them”

UAW president

Financed Freedom Marches and Cesar Chavez UFW movement

Influenced LBJ’s War on Poverty Programs
AFL-CIO

The Most Famous Labor Union in History

American Federation of Labor (AFL), founded in 1886 by Samuel Gompers. At its pinnacle, the AFL had approximately 1.4 million members. The AFL is credited with successfully negotiating wage increases for its members and enhancing workplace safety for all workers. Coined phrase “Bread and Butter” Unions

The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) under John L. Lewis and the larger AFL federation underwent a huge expansion during World War II. The AFL-CIO merger occurred in 1955.
Who is in a union?

Public and Private Unions

- Mechanics
- police officers
- nurses
- electricians
- construction
- airline pilots
- truck drivers
- firefighters
- janitors
- plumbers
- carpenters
- teachers
- doctors
- pharmacists
- IT/computer
- bakers
- engineers
- writers
- actors
The Union Difference

BUILD POWER FOR WORKING PEOPLE

ADVOCATE FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE
“Right to work” is the name for a policy designed to take away rights from working people. Backers of right to work laws claim that these laws protect workers against being forced to join a union. The reality is that federal law already makes it illegal to force someone to join a union.

The real purpose of right to work laws is to tilt the balance toward big corporations and further rig the system at the expense of working families. These laws make it harder for working people to form unions and collectively bargain for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

15.3%
Higher poverty rate in right to work states compared to 12.8% in non-right to work states.

In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as ‘right to work.’ It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and collective bargaining...

- Martin Luther King Jr.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eG73hhpGrRc
Building Strong Locals: Kenmore Teachers Association
Kenmore Teachers Association

NYSUT
NEA New York
American Federation of Teachers
AFL-CIO
WNYALF

718 Full time members, representing teachers, social workers, school counselors, psychologists, and speech language pathologists.

418 - dues paying retirees

200 - per diem substitute teachers

Elected Offices

5 officers and 5 at large Executive Board Members

70 building representatives

After 2008 Economic collapse, 160 teachers laid off and district consolidation closed four schools.
The Kenmore Teachers Association is a union of professional educators dedicated to providing high quality public education and a common voice for advancing our core values for our students, members, and community. Democracy, solidarity and integrity are the hallmarks of the KTA.
NYSUT LAP: Local Area Project: Building Coalitions

Power Analysis and Community Engagement

1. First Book
2. Mitigation Fund
3. Grassroots Meetings
4. Solidarity Fund NYSUT 20k-Lobbying
5. Tonawanda Tomorrow
First Book: 30,000 Brand New Books

Teamsters

United Steelworkers

Tops International

AFT / NYSUT

Clean Air Coalition
Mitigation Fund

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfv52KF5fHM

The Town of Tonawanda is considering using eminent domain to take over the former Huntley Power Plant to ensure the plant continues to provide the 19 million gallons of untreated water used every day by nearby manufacturers.

Even if the town is successful, acquiring the generating station from NRG Energy through eminent domain is only a short-term solution, according to town officials. Over the long term, the town wants to upgrade its water treatment plant.
Common Values

- Members
- Community
- Unions
Where is the Power?

Labor Movement?

1. What Unions are Strong and Influential?
2. What is our relationship with them?
3. In what ways do we work with AFL-CIO and Central Labor Councils?
Where to Look? For Unions

AFL-CIO/State Feds/Central Labor Councils: http://www.aflcio.org/aboutus/unioncities

AFL-CIO Constituency Groups: Philip Randolph Institute (www.apri.org),

Alliance for Retired Americans (www.retiredamericans.org),

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (www.apalanet.org),

Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (www.cbtu.org),

Jobs With Justice: http://www.jw.org A multistate and national labor/community coalition

Interfaith Worker Justice:

www.iwi.org A local and national network of pro-labor religious leaders
Where to Look: Political Contributions

Political Contributions: who the entities and individuals support with contributions
Search: The following databases

For State and Federal contributions: www.transparencydata.org -

For PAC donors, recipients, and information: www.opensecrets.org . Retrieve: Records of donations made by the organizations and individuals.

Look for: Donations to politicians involved in relevant activity or decision making.