

THE UFCW AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Total Time—45 minutes

Learning Goals

- Review what a union is.
- Learn more about the different roles that people have within the union.
- Consider where stewards fit within the local union's structure.
- Provide an overview of the UFCW and the broader labor movement.

Sections—Time

- I. Welcome, Review Goals of the Training—5 minutes
- II. What is a Union?—10 minutes
- III. Union Roles—5 minutes
- IV. Creating Organizational Charts—20 minutes
- V. Overview of the UFCW and Labor—5 minutes

Materials Needed

Flip Chart, Markers, Tape

Copies of the Steward Handbook

Poster-size version of the “organizing fish” image (found in the Steward Handbook); this can be hand-drawn, photocopied and enlarged, or projected from a laptop/projector

Optional: Laptop, Projector, Screen and Internet Connection (to show UFCW websites and social media)

NOTES**I. Goals for the Training—5 mins**

Post and review the goals for the training:

- Review what a union is.
- Learn more about the different roles that people have within the union.
- Consider where stewards fit within the local union's structure.
- Provide an overview of the UFCW and the broader labor movement.

II. What is a Union?—10 mins

Post or project the “organize” fish. Ask the group what this picture has to do with understanding unions and what people see happening in the image.

Ask the participants to explain/ describe what a union is and why having one matters (this can be a large or small group discussion, or a paired exercise, depending on the size of the group).



Point out that the fish image is on page 9 of the Steward Handbook.

III. Brainstorming Union Roles—5 mins

Ask the participants to brainstorm the different types of roles in the union, giving the example “members.” Add any of the following that aren't mentioned:

- Members
- Stewards
- Executive Board
- President
- Secretary/Treasurer
- Staff

As the categories are mentioned, ask the group to explain the role of each, noting how stewards, executive board members, officers and staff are selected or elected (this differs by local).

Module Icon Key

Flip Chart



Ideas



In Handbook

Worksheet/
Handout

IV. Creating Organizational Charts—20 mins

Ask the participants to work in small groups to create an organizational chart that they feel represents the relationship between these different categories of people at the local. Emphasize that they need to place themselves as stewards on the chart. Explain that there is no right way to do this; the goal is to have the discussion.



Give each group a large piece of paper and a marker and let them know that they have five minutes to complete their organizational chart. After giving a one minute warning, bring everyone together and ask the groups to post their charts at the front of the room.

Ask the group what they notice—similarities and differences. Emphasize that members are the union and that stewards are what make the union real at the workplace.

V. Overview of the UFCW and Labor—5 mins

Explain that just like there's a structure at the local, that there's also a national and global structure for the UFCW and the labor movement.

Nationally, there are approximately 13 million people who belong to unions.

There are approximately 1.3 million UFCW members in the U.S. and Canada, with hundreds of local unions, like ours.



UFCW members work in:

- Supermarkets and grocery stores
- Meatpacking and meat processing plants
- Food processing and general manufacturing
- Non-food retail stores
- Warehouse/distribution
- Healthcare

The UFCW International Union (IU) has offices in Washington D.C. International Union staff help to coordinate the work of local unions—especially through organizing campaigns, political and community coalitions, legislative and electoral efforts, member education, safety and health, communications/media and legal assistance.

The IU has an executive board, president, secretary-treasurer and executive vice presidents. Every five years, the UFCW has a convention that brings together delegates from local unions across the U.S. and Canada.

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Our union has a constitution followed by all of the locals (you may wish to have this on hand to pass around).

Project the UFCW Website and social media sites and encourage the participants to explore these further.

Mention any state-wide and/or local labor councils the local belongs to.

Conclude by reinforcing that unions are democratic organizations and that members are the union.



Point out that the list of industries represented by the UFCW can be found on page 4 of the Steward Handbook.

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