

We invite you to join us.

The IWW is a democratic, fighting, direct-action based union, committed to winning better conditions today while fighting for democracy on the job tomorrow.

LOCAL CONTACT



Get in Touch
Return this form to:
IWW General Headquarters
Post Office Box 13476
Philadelphia, PA 19101
or your local contact

☐ **Yes!**

Please get in touch with me
about organizing with the
IWW in my industry

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SOLIDARITY



Industrial Workers of the World

**Industrial Union 640
Restaurant, Hotel &
Building Service Workers**

Hospitality Workers: Organize and Fight!

We work in an area of the economy — *an industry* — that includes those businesses that deal with “hospitality.” This includes hotels and motels, restaurants, taverns and bars; it also includes workers in tourism and tourist-oriented entertainment. Whether a waitperson or a bartender, a cook or a dishwasher, a desk clerk or a housekeeper — all of our labor combined produces the wealth in our growing industry.

The hospitality industry is a vital part of the service sector — the fastest growing part of the U.S. economy, and one based (as we know from our daily experience) on low-paid work, meager benefits, part-time and short-term work for the workers, and soaring profits for the employers. This is not a coincidence. The bosses are organized in trade associations to protect their interests. We, the workers, for the most part are not. We need to organize to protect our interests and improve our working conditions.

Why the IWW?

Over the last few decades there has been a dramatic shift in wealth from working people to the rich. This was accomplished through the employers’ direct attacks upon our working standards. Jobs were shifted to countries where wages are lower, or to prisons where workers are paid pennies on the dollar. Corrupt and weak unions were busted, and work outsourced to “temp” agencies.

We are told to “compete” for the few “good” jobs left, rather than working together to keep and make all jobs better. If we follow this advice, we all will “compete” ourselves to an early grave while the bosses laugh all the way to the bank. The hospitality industry is one of the poorest-paid industries in the country, but it is ironically also one of the ones most dependent on its workforce. If we organize, and organize right, we can win the above demands and more!

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The IWW believes in direct action on the job to resolve grievances now, rather than waiting for some suited business agent to solve our problems for us. When a manager began harassing a female prep cook in Melbourne recently, IWW members on the job refused to continue work until he was removed. In Austin, IWW restaurant workers began heaping the portions on the plates and figuring the checks on the low side until management agreed to a living wage and better scheduling. When a Portland hotel boss fired some workers unjustly last year, the IWW responded with a sit-in and a strike.

In the IWW, the workers on the job decide on their own demands and tactics, and rely on their own power — and the solidarity of their fellow workers — to win. The IWW organizes all workers on the same job into the same industrial union in order to maximize our strength and to ensure that all workers in the same industry stand together in solidarity, rather than being forced to “compete” each other to the bottom.

Who We Are

The Industrial Workers of the World was formed in 1905 by unionists from Canada, the U.S., and the United Kingdom. We are organizing all workers into “One Big Union,” with sub-unions based on industry. The IWW was founded by veteran unionists who recognized the need for a union to organize *all* workers; a union based on solidarity and direct action; a union committed to winning better conditions today while fighting for democracy on the job tomorrow. We need to organize to meet our basic needs as workers, but also must have broader goals if we are to maintain our gains and standards.

Our Demands

The following are the IWW's demands to improve working standards in our industry. These are the minimum conditions that we deserve and are entitled to for the work we do. They are modest conditions that have already been won by some workers, but they will not be given to us as gifts by the employers or the politicians. We can win better conditions only by organizing our co-workers on the job and throughout the industry in order to create real industrial power. If the following demands sound appealing, we need your help to make them a reality.

1) A living wage

We should be able to afford a decent place to live, and time with our friends, kids, and family. The restaurant lobby is in the forefront of opposition to increases in the minimum wage, in order to further line their own pockets. But the bosses couldn't live on the wages they pay us if their lives depended upon it. We should be able to afford to spend our wages in the industry where we work. If the bosses can't pay decent wages, then they shouldn't be open!

2) Time Off

Well-rested workers are happier, healthier, and work safer. That this is even an issue shows how incompetent the hotel and restaurant bosses are, especially when compared to the standards in other industries and countries. European workers receive four weeks (or more) of paid vacation per year; there is no reason why we should not

have this standard too. We demand two days off in a row, at least 12 hours off between shifts, and paid vacations!

3) Extra pay for extra work or short staffing

How often do we come to work to find that we are short-staffed? This makes us work harder while the boss pays less in wages. It results in fatigue, injuries, and accidents. We continue to pay the price when we head home, exhausted, at the end of our shifts. If we do extra work, we deserve extra pay!

4) Free Health Care

Working with the public not only means we must be healthy, but we are also more vulnerable to sickness from chemicals, second-hand smoke, and patrons. We need medical services, and we deserve them. We stand for free medical, dental, optical, and counseling coverage, and our choice of medical providers and plans.

5) Paid sick leave

We cannot receive health care if we cannot afford to take the day off. Working sick is bad for us, bad for our co-workers, and bad for our customers. Paid sick leave is a basic human right. The bosses don't work sick, and neither should we.

6) Time and a half for holidays worked

Because it only makes sense. This is a basic standard in other industries, why not ours?

7) No discrimination

Often employers in the industry will only hire minority and immigrant workers to work in kitchens, maintenance, or housekeeping, while white folks have better paying jobs out front, dealing with the public. Discrimination only benefits the boss in the long run, and by accepting it we perpetuate division amongst us. The effect is that none of us can effectively organize on the job and secure our needs. Equal consideration for work based on skill and experience!

8) Clean and Safe Workplaces

Many cleaning chemicals are harmful to our health. We have the right to know what chemicals we use and to be provided with equipment to protect ourselves from exposure. Overcrowding and disorganization mean unsafe kitchens and other backroom areas. Overwork (and understaffing) means more mistakes and in turn more injuries. We shouldn't have to work hard — we should work smart.

9) No Sexual Harassment

Bosses often play favorites when scheduling and hiring, and those not on the favorite list give up hours, or their job. We demand respect for women on the job, something which can only be won when we demand this between co-workers. Tying promotions, job security, and hiring to any form of sexual coercion is not acceptable.

10) Consistent hiring policies

Better jobs should go to those already on the payroll, based on experience and seniority. Everyone who has worked in our industry knows that promises are made for the better-paying job later if we start in the lesser-paying job, but when that "good" job becomes available someone new is hired to take the position.

11) Fair and consistent scheduling

We demand more scheduling notice, consistent hours of work, and the right to trade shifts with co-workers. We have a life outside of work!

What you can do

Building this union will not happen overnight. We are looking for workers with the vision and the commitment not only to organize their own job, but also to reach out to our fellow workers in other workplaces in our industry. We are looking for workers who can commit to building the infrastructure of a rank-and-file union, learning how to organize and build solidarity with our fellow workers in our industry. Anyone can learn how to do this!

The IWW believes that there is a conflict between those that own and run the Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism industry, and those of us who work in it. When our organized power as workers exceeds the organized power of our bosses, then we can make great strides.

We need your help to make this happen!