

JOIN US!

**AMALGAMATED INDUSTRIAL & TOY & NOVELTY
WORKERS OF AMERICA LOCAL 223 AFL-CIO
THE UNION FOR WORKERS**

WHAT IS A UNION?

A Union is an organization of working people who unite to get rights on the job that they could not get by themselves. As individuals, workers are no match for the employer. Without a union, the employer decides everything and the employee has no say at all.

In non-union companies, the managers can fire you, cut your wages, treat you unfairly, show favoritism or change schedules whenever they want. But when you unite as a union, you'll have the power to demand better conditions, better wages and benefits, job security, fair treatment, and **respect**.

A union can force management to provide these rights in writing – in a binding union contract that management must **respect**.

Our Union – Amalgamated Industrial & Toy & Novelty Workers of America Local 223 AFL-CIO

Amalgamated Industrial & Toy & Novelty Workers of America Local 223 AFL-CIO (Local 223 for short) is a much diversified union today. Local 223's roots were originally in Toy & Novelty workers but now represent workers with many different backgrounds such as Cargo handlers, hotel workers, different factory workers, Ambulette drivers and many more.

Local 223 was formed almost 80 years ago and has represented hundreds of thousands of workers over that course in time. These men and women enjoyed higher wages, better working conditions and excellent health care benefits because they belonged to Local 223.

Local 223 is a Union the Workers can Trust and Depend On!!

Local 223 continue to negotiate great contracts for our members. The workers represented by Local 223 have higher wages, more secure pensions and the best medical benefits and working conditions in the industries.

Our Union has an excellent reputation for enforcing its contracts and fighting for our members rights.

Know the Facts

Before you vote for any union to represent you, you should find out if the union has the resources and experience to get a good contract from your employer and to do a good job enforcing that contract. Here are some important facts and statistics about local 223's ability to represent you effectively:

NUMBER OF UNION MEMBERS.....2,500

NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS.....30,000

AMOUNT IN UNION ASSETS AS OF 7/01/07.....\$30 MILLION

NUMBER OF YEARS REPRESENTING WORKERS.....80

UNION HEADQUARTERS: ON EAST 26TH STREET IN MANHATTAN BETWEEN LEXINGTON AVENUE AND 3RD AVENUE CONVENIENTLY ACCESSIBLE BY CAR OR TRAIN.

Union Workers Have the Right to Negotiate

If you don't have the right or practical ability to negotiate, then you don't have any power, and somebody else will make decisions that affect you.

But if you have a union, you have a right that most working people don't have – the right to negotiate a contract with your employer.

And if your union is a strong one, then you have the ability to negotiate a great contract that expands your legal rights, and guarantees you excellent wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Union Contracts Protect Scheduling Rights

Our Union has negotiated strong scheduling standards in our contracts

Fact: In our contract management cannot change the workers schedule without the consent of the union and the workers.

Fact: In our contracts if an employee starts work before or after the hours of regular work days they must be paid at time and a half their regular rate regardless of the number of hours worked for that day.

Fact: In our contracts if workers are asked to come to work on a day for which they are not scheduled they might be given at least 4 hours of work or paid for no less than 4 hours.

Fact: In our contracts management cannot give the best schedules to their favorites. Scheduling must be done using a fair system based on seniority.

Fact: In our contracts if you work overtime in one day (more than 8 hours) you get paid time and a half even if you don't work more than 40 hours for the week.

Fact: In our contracts if management asks our employee to work on a day they are not scheduled to work, management cannot force them to take a different day off to avoid paying overtime.

Which Do You Think is Better?

Bosses and managers don't like having a union because they don't want to have to sign a legally-binding contract with their employees.

Non-union workers have no contract, and that means management can do pretty much anything it wants to the employees.

Most non-union companies give their Employees an "Employee Handbook", and usual, somewhere in the handbook, there is wording that states that the handbook is NOT A CONTRACT and that management has the right to modify anything in the Handbook whenever it wants. It may also state you are an employee at will which means you can be terminated for any reason or no reason what so ever.

OR

This document is a duly-executed Written contract. As such, it is a binding legal document enforceable under law. Any infringement of the provisions of this contract by the employer through the acts or any Corporate officer, manager, Supervisor, or any other agent thereof, can subject the employer and its officers and agents to liability for breach of contract, including the entry of judgment against them for monetary damages and for injunctive relief.....

Non-union “at-will” Employment

Some non-union workers think they don't need a union contract. They think the law protects them more than it does. They say, “I can take care of myself. I know my rights!”

Unfortunately, they don't find out the truth until it is too late. The truth is that non-union workers have very few legal rights. In New York State, the law says that if you don't have a contract with your employer, your boss can fire you for almost any reason or even for no reason at all. This is called “employment at-will.” If your company is non-union, you don't have a union contract, so you are “employees at-will.” This means you have no job security.

Because you don't have a contract, management has the legal right to:

- Fire you in order to hire a friend or family member
- Take back any raise they've given to you
- Reduce or eliminate your medical insurance, vacation, sick days, personal days, holidays or pension/401K
- Make you do a different type of job than the one you were hired to do
- Change or ignore rules or policies that have already been established
- Add new duties to your job without increasing your pay
- Change your schedule with little notice

Union job security

A union contract is a legal-binding written agreement between the Union and the Company that sets up rules management must follow.

Union contracts guarantee workers many important rights that non-union workers do not have like:

- Job security and protection against favoritism
- Extra protections for immigrants
- Guaranteed wages and raises
- Seniority rights
- Guaranteed and protected benefits, including medical, dental, optical, retirement, holiday, personal and vacation days
- Health and safety protections
- Scheduling rights
- Protection against unfair treatment

The Union gives real job security

“We take pride in our work and have more than 20 years’ experience between us, but if our company had not been a union company, both of us would have lost our jobs last year. The company was slow, so management had to lay some workers off. Management had just hired some new younger workers making less money than us. Despite our long records of good work, our managers ignored us and laid us both off. We were heartsick.

“Because we have a strong Union and strong grievance rights, we had the right to challenge management’s unfair treatment of us through arbitration. Union representatives and lawyers prepared our case. Among other things, they subpoenaed the company’s payroll records. The company’s own records showed that people with less time making less money were still working.

“Thanks to the Union, we won our case. Management had to call us back and pay us for all the days we were out of work. Without the protections in our Union contract and our Union’s prompt efforts on our behalf, our story would have had a very different and very sad ending.”

Job security and fairness under union contracts:

The Grievance and Arbitration System

The Union negotiates strong contracts that make it illegal for management to fire or discipline employees unjustly.

The Union's contracts set up a fair system for resolving all kinds of problems between the boss and the worker – a system the boss doesn't control. This system is called the grievance and arbitration system.

Here's how it generally works:

1. The Union has the right to challenge any decision by management to fire or otherwise discipline an employee, and management must then prove its decision was justified.
2. The rules and procedures are guaranteed legally in a contract so that management cannot ignore or change them.
3. Employees have experienced union representatives and lawyers to prepare, investigate, and present the case.
4. Management has to let the Union have access to all relevant witnesses and evidence.
5. Decisions are made by an impartial arbitrator who is not controlled by management.
6. The Union can grieve virtually any kind of case, including firings, suspensions, write-ups, back pay, job descriptions, unfair schedules, health and safety issues, etc., and management cannot refuse to arbitrate any case.
7. Management is legally required to obey the arbitrator's decision.

Don't Forget About Union Premium Pay

Overtime & Premium Pay

Local 223 has negotiated contracts that entitled its members to receive time and a half for every hour worked over eight (8) hours in a day. Union workers also get time and a half for all hours worked on a Saturday if it is the 6th day and double time for Sunday if its 7th day.

Night Differential

Local 223 has negotiated contracts that guarantee employees who work 2nd and 3rd shifts between 10% - 25% more money annually.

Holiday Pay

Local 223 has negotiated contracts guaranteeing employees up to 13 paid holidays. If an employee works on their holiday they can receive double time for that day.

Union Workers Have Rights When Business is Slow

“I worked in my company for 10 years before we had the Union. I saw how management treats non-union workers when business is slow.

“Management never called what they did to us a lay-off, but that’s what it was. They’d cut the staff so much that the workers who were not laid off had to work through our lunches and stay late just to finish while the workers who were at home had no work and no pay. This meant that it was almost impossible for people who were laid off to just go find a temporary job or collect un-employment until business picked up again.

“But when we organized, the new rights we won in our Union contract opened our eyes. Now lay-offs are completely different. Management has to give the Union five Days’ notice of a lay-off, and call us in by Seniority. If they do it wrong, they have to pay money to whoever lost a chance to work.

“I know management follows this system correctly, because after we won the Union my co-workers elected me their delegate. Under our contract, management is required to have a delegate like me present when they call laid-off people in to work. If they make an error or try to cheat someone out of work, they know I will make them pay.

“For example, I was there in April when they laid two of my co-workers off out of seniority. Under the Union contract, my co-workers should have been paid for the days to compensate for their lost wages. But management only apologized and brought them back to work. I stepped in and told the manager he had to pay each person for lost time. Last week they got the missing days pay in their checks.

“Without a Union, we would not be able to make management follow rules about lay-offs and we would not be able to make them pay us compensation when they don’t respect our rights.”

Lay-off Protections in Our Contracts

1) **No Supervisor or Manager can do your job while you are out**

In our contracts no member of management can do bargaining unit work to compensate for absence, if you are on layoff. For instance if a worker is laid off management cannot cover the work the laid off employee should be doing by having non-union personal (management and supervisors) actually do the work themselves. Instead management must call the laid off worker into work and pay them. If management breaks these rules they have to pay money to the worker whose rights were violated.

2) **Seniority Order**

Under our Contracts management must start layoffs with the newest employees. They can't give more days of work to their favorite employees or employees that make less money. If management breaks this rule they have to pay money to the worker whose rights were violated.

3) **Guaranteed Recall**

Under our Contracts management must call workers back from lay-off in order of seniority. They cannot call a less senior person back first, bring in temporary help or hire someone new. If management breaks these rules they must give the worker they tried to replace or did not call their job back and pay them retroactive compensation for the time they missed.

We Made Our Manager Respect Us

“At my company, we have an assistant manager named Alex Profit who used to be very disrespectful. He would ridicule people from other countries because of their accents. Once, when one of the ladies came to work with a new hairstyle, Alex told her, “You look so ugly!” That’s the kind of person he is. Sometimes when Alex got angry at someone, he’d assign that person the hardest jobs. Alex was mean and he thought he had the power to abuse us.

“One morning as we were getting work assignments, Alex started sniffing the air. He said, “Someone’s perfume smells awful.” He ordered us to line up so he could smell us one by one and discover who was wearing the perfume he didn’t like! When Alex got to Bernadette Collins, the woman who was wearing the perfume, in front of all of us, Alex told Bernadette “Get in there and change!” Bernadette had to go back to the locker room and put on a new uniform. She was so embarrassed.

“When Alex did that to Bernadette, we were all outraged and decided to take action –**UNION ACTION!**

“At lunch in the cafeteria I saw our union delegate, Rene Dickerson, who was not present for the morning perfume incident. I told Renee what Alex had done, and we had a public meeting about it in the cafeteria with the other union members who were there. Everyone in the cafeteria listened to us. They asked us what had happened. By the end of the day, almost the whole company knew what Alex had done and that the workers were furious about it.

“When Alex found out about our meeting, he was steaming. When he found me he said, “Why did you use my name in the cafeteria? Don’t you ever put my name in your mouth.” He even threatened to get me fired. I told him, “You can’t scare me. I have a union contract, and you’re the one who’s in trouble.”

“Renee and I called the Union and when we told our union representatives what Alex had done, they called a meeting with us, Alex and Alex’s bosses.

“In the meeting, Renee and I told the HR Manager and the Plant Manager what Alex had done. Alex gave us dirty looks, but we weren’t afraid because in a union company a manager can’t punish you for speaking your mind. I said, “He treats us like roaches.” Our union reps questioned Alex and made it clear the Union wasn’t going to tolerate his behavior. It was also clear upper management was not happy with Alex. He had caused them trouble with the Union. Alex was shocked that he was getting in trouble instead of me. He even started crying because he was so scared we were going to get him fired.

“Alex was stripped of his managerial privileges. Now he can’t make schedules or assign jobs anymore. He was forced to apologize to me and to the other women whom he harassed. Thanks to the Union, management also agreed that Alex would have to go if he mistreated any union members again.

“Today Alex is a changed person. He says hello to everyone and is very respectful to us. If he gets mad at anyone, he keeps it to himself, because he knows union workers have power. I’m proud I have a union that protects our dignity and make it possible for us to stand up for ourselves.”

The Union Fights For US!

Union Workers have the Power to Demand and Get Respect and Justice

“My name is Joe Bovet. I’m a worker at a union company represented by Local 223. Early this year, my supervisor and her assistant thought that I wasn’t wearing the right protective footwear. So’ in a public area, in front of about 10 of my co-workers, they stood on either side of me while one of them held my arm and the other untied my boots to look. I was shocked and humiliated.

“I called the Union right away. My union representative immediately came to the company to defend me. The union demanded that my managers apologize not just to me but to the whole shift for the way they disrespected me. Management wanted to keep the whole thing quiet. The GM asked if my managers could just apologize to me in private. The Union said “No way.” They took the position that since the manger embarrassed me in public; they would have to apologize to me in public.

“The GM apologized and lets us know that if any manager ever did anything like that to us again, they would be terminated immediately. The supervisor and her assistant decided they’d rather lose their jobs than be humbled by apologizing for the way they humiliated me. So they lost their jobs.

“I’m proud that I belong to a Union that has the power to make the General Manager stand up in front of us and apologize. When a manager disrespects a member of our Union, the Union makes them pay. Without the Union, workers get stepped on and spoken down to every day. With the Union, we have the power to make our managers give us the respect we deserve.”

Facts About Workloads in Union Companies Under Our Contract

FACT: Employees are required to work conscientiously and at a reasonable pace, but management cannot discipline you for failing to complete an unreasonable workload.

FACT: Management cannot create unfair job combinations by requiring employees to perform the work of more than one employee.

FACT: Employees who perform the work of another job classification must be paid the higher rate of pay for that classification.

FACT: Management cannot add new duties to an employee's job description without first negotiating with the union.

FACT: If you work before or after your shift, in addition to your eight hour shift, you get paid overtime at one and a half times your hourly rate. No one works for free in a Union Company.

The Local 223 Medical Plan

One of the Best Plans Available!

Local 223 have negotiated a Medical Plan for the benefits of their members and their families. Its only mission is to provide high-quality benefits. It does not have to make a profit for stockholders like an insurance company.

Our Medical Plan has been reviewed by other Unions and outside Healthcare providers that were so impressed that they remarked that all US citizens should have access to the same high-quality healthcare. The only way to get this benefit is to negotiate for it.

Here's a basic summary of what Local 223 Medical Plan offers its members:

All Full-time and Part-time employees: Employees who work at least 24 hours a week are eligible for this coverage after certain waiting periods.

Medical centers at no cost to members: The Local 223 Medical Plan provides Boro Medical centers conveniently located near your work or home that does not require any co-insurance payments, co-pays, or deductibles.

Full Medical for all family members: Including spouses, children up to the age of 19 (23, if full-time student), and adopted children.

Magna Care PPO Medical Coverage: Allows workers the freedom of in and out of network coverage, the plan offers Magna Care Preferred Providers Organization (PPO) with a \$10 co-pay for each doctor's visit.

Magna Care Hospitalization: In case of hospitalization, Plan participants are covered through Magna Care. This coverage includes treatment, diagnostics, and accommodation in area hospitals.

Prescription Drug Program: Under the Plan, participants only pay \$10 for generic drugs and \$20 for many brand-name drugs.

Dental Plan: Full coverage for workers and their families free of cost.

Optical Plan: Vision Screening Services network offering free eyeglasses or contacts every year and free yearly eye exams.

Facts About the Union-negotiated Pension Plan

Workers in Union companies enjoy an excellent Pension Plan with Local 223. It provides a secure supplemental income every month to retire workers and their spouses. The Plan covers employees who work in Union companies that contribute to the Pension Plan. The only way to get this benefit is to negotiate it in a contract.

1. Local 223 requires management to pay 100% of the cost of the Pension Plan. Workers pay nothing for their pension benefits.
2. The pension benefit can be left to the Union member's spouse after they die. The spouse will receive a check every month for the rest of their life.
3. Flexibility - in just 5 years, you will be vested in the pension. You can even earn additional years at different Union companies. This means that if you change jobs and go to another Union company covered by Local 223 you can continue to build your pension.
4. If you have 20 years of service or more, you can even retire at age 60 and collect nearly the full pension benefit every month for the rest of your life.

Other Great Union-negotiated Benefits

Workers in unionized companies have other benefits, too – Leaving non-union companies further behind. However, the Union can't guarantee that workers will be able to get every Local 223 benefit all at once. Therefore, the Union, with your help, must negotiate to make management pay for these benefits. You deserve these benefits too.

Escrow Benefit: In the event a Union Company closes up or goes out of business, Local 223 members' holidays, vacations, and any unpaid salaries must be paid to the worker.

Death Benefits: Every Local 223 member receives free life insurance while they are a Local 223 member. They are entitled to double the policy for accidental death or dismemberment.

Scholarship Fund: Local 223 members' children can be eligible for college scholarship of up to \$1,000.00 per year for four years.

Responsibilities of Union Members

1. Pay dues, initiation fees, and defense fund fees.

Union dues are paid monthly by every union member. Dues are currently \$26.00 per month. The initiation fee is \$100.00 and is not paid all at once. It is paid in installments of \$25.00 per week for four weeks. The initiation fee is paid only once by new Union members.

If you get a job in another company where the workers are represented by Local 223 you don't have to pay it again if you have maintained your membership. The initiation fee and Union dues pay for the expenses of operating the Union and pays for costly, but necessary drives at non-union companies, among other things.

2. Help to keep the Union strong.

Union members have a moral responsibility to help keep the Union strong. This means:

- Help the Union to preserve the Union contract and the rights and benefits that the members of our Union have fought hard to win and maintain over many years of struggle. Report contract violations by management to the Union. Support your co-workers when they are the victims of unjust treatment by management.
- Show solidarity with the members of our Union and other Unions. Actively support Union rallies and Picket lines. Help unorganized workers win the dignity of a Local 223 contract.

REMEMBER: No one will be required to pay anything to the Union unless and until the Union wins recognition and negotiates a Union contract and a majority of you has voted to approve that contract.

Unlike some managers, the Union will always be honest and up front with you, and will not make any phony promises. The Union does something that management usually will not do – it spells out in writing what it can and cannot promise. Here it is:

What the Union Promises You

1. The Union will provide the necessary resources (lawyers, negotiators and organizers) to help you organize to get a good contract from management.
2. You can help write your own contract proposals.
3. The Union will not go on strike unless a majority votes to strike.
4. If you go on strike, the Union will help you with lawyers and organizers.
5. The Union will not sign a contract unless a majority of you vote to approve it.
6. The Union will not ask anyone to pay any Union dues or initiation fees until and unless you get a contract approved by a majority of you.

What the Union Cannot Promise You

The Union cannot promise you in advance exactly what benefits, wages, working conditions or other rights will be in the contract. The contract has to be negotiated with management. We have to have the strength to get a good contract.

However, we can and will tell you what wages, benefits, working conditions and rights our Union have won in other contracts.

LOCAL 223: FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION

“Once social change begins, it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducated the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore. We have seen the future, and the future is ours.”

-Cesar Chavez

“My name is Pedro Morales. I work the overnight shift at JFK Airport. One night, my manager passed me in the hall and side he needed to speak with me. I asked if we could talk in private. He said, “There is no private here. I own you like my grandfather owned your grandfather.”

“I couldn’t believe my ears. It was one of the most racist and offensive things I’d ever heard. I was furious. I called my union representative at 4:30 in the morning. By 6 am, he was in the shop gathering up the union delegates and occupying the office of the director of human resources. We demanded that action be taken. By 7am, my manager had been fired.

“Everyday, non-union workers get treated like they’re less, because of the color of their skin or the country they come from. Because I have the Union, I didn’t have to take being treated like that. The Union gave me the power to get justice.”

LOCAL 223

A GREAT UNION WITH A PROUD HISTORY

F.D.R. was a close friend of Local 223. Here he is shaking hands with former International President Louis Issacson praising him for the strides he made in improving working and social conditions for all our members present and future.

In negotiations for one of our first contracts, which was signed in 1932, our Union fought for and won a contractual ban against employment discrimination in the work place, at a time when discrimination was commonplace, and decades before it became illegal.

Local 223 were at the forefront of welfare reform. The Union established our welfare division for its members' way before it became common place for Unions to provide these benefits. Local 223 Sick Benefit Fund was started in 1941, Death Benefit started 1945, Hospitalization and Surgical Benefits 1954, Optical Benefits 1954, Pension benefits 1954, Dental Benefits 1959. It was this foresight that kept Local 223 going till today. Let us do for you what we have done for hundreds of thousands of past members.