

Labor's Language: A Glossary of Union Terms

Labor agreements, publications, and even officials often use terms that are almost exclusive to the labor arena.

To help stewards become more familiar with these terms, "Labor's Language: A Glossary of Labor's Terms" will be a regular feature of the *Steward Update*.

Award: The final decision of an arbitrator which is binding on both parties.

Back Loaded: Providing a greater wage increase near the end of a contract.

Bargaining Agent: A union certified by a government agency, such as the National Labor Relations Board, or recognized voluntarily by the employer, as the

exclusive representative of all employees in the bargaining unit for the purpose of collective bargaining.

Bargaining Rights: The rights outlined in Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act. Rights of workers to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment through chosen representatives. The bargaining agent is designated by a majority of the workers in a bargaining unit to represent the group in collective bargaining.

Bargaining Unit: A group of workers who bargain collectively with the employer. The unit may include all the workers in a single location or in a number

of locations, or it may include only the workers in a single craft or department. The final unit is determined by the National Labor Relations Board, or agreed to jointly by the union and the employer.

Base Rate: The straight time rate of pay, excluding premiums and incentive bonuses.

Benefits Cafeteria Plan: A benefit program that offers a choice between taxable benefits, including cash, and non-taxable health and welfare benefits. The employee decides how his or her benefits dollars are to be used within the total limit of benefit costs agreed to by the employer.



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Steward Conference Reminder

Your annual Steward Conference is scheduled for Tuesday, November 1, 2011, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The conference will be held at the UFCW 951 Grand Rapids office. The Steward Conference is your 2011 steward holiday, so you will be reimbursed per your collective bargaining agreement. Please see your union representative if you have any questions regarding the conference.

STEWARD UPDATE

UFCW 951

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Organizing Update

JBS Workers Elect 951 Representation

Workers at the JBS slaughterhouse and production facility, located just south of the city of Plainwell, voted for 951 representation in an effort to improve working conditions at the plant.

The vote ends the workers' two-and-a-half month union organizing campaign.

"There has been tremendous support for the union among the JBS workers," John Cakmakci, UFCW 951 Secretary/Treasurer and Organizing Director, said. "They view the union as their best option to improve their working conditions and bring a sense of fairness to the workplace."

Among the workers' complaints were unjust terminations, unsafe working conditions and an unfair compensation system where new employees earn more than workers with upwards of 15 years of seniority.

"Our efforts will now

turn to negotiating a first contract with JBS that addresses the workers' concerns," Cakmakci said. "We are confident the union and the company can work together to achieve an agreement that is fair and balanced, and are looking forward to establishing a productive, long-term relationship with JBS."

By electing representation, the approximately 1,000 workers at the West



Michigan JBS plant will join with 28,000 other JBS workers and 250,000 meatpacking and

poultry workers across the country who already enjoy the benefits of UFCW union representation.

Valley City Linen Workers Need Your Help

Valley City Linen workers persevered through their employer's fierce union busting campaign to elect UFCW 951 representation earlier this year. Unfortunately, the employer is continuing its union busting tactics, stalling and delaying contract negotiations.

"From their approach to contract negotiations, it's clear that Valley City Linen is intent on denying its workers the union representation they elected," John Cakmakci, UFCW 951's Secretary/Treasurer and Organizing Director, said. "We are filing charges where appropriate, but also plan to educate the public and Valley City Linen's customers about this employer's anti-worker, and potentially illegal, practices."

The Grand Rapids-based company has customers across the state, including numerous restaurants, hotels, hospitals and resorts, where UFCW 951 will conduct informational leafleting. Stewards interested in helping leaflet should call the union office at 1.800.999.0951.

Union's Events Add Value to 951 Membership

UFCW 951 is always looking for ways to add value to union membership. Throughout the year the local offers members the opportunity to enjoy time with family and friends by subsidizing the cost of various outings. We urge stewards to talk to their coworkers about these events.

"Stewards play a key role in publicizing the union's membership events to their fellow coworkers," Marv Russow, Local 951's president, said. "It's very important that members know that UFCW 951 is working to improve the quality of our members' lives by providing fun activities for them to participate in."

Flyers detailing the events listed below are available from the union office for stewards to distribute to coworkers.



UFCW Michigan Young Workers Cosmic Bowling
Thursday, November 10
Star Lanes @ Emagine
Royal Oak, 6 to 9 p.m.

UFCW 951 members and their guests ages 15 to 35 are invited to bowl the night away and meet with their fellow young workers. The discounted \$12 UFCW ticket includes three hours of bowling, shoe rental, pizza, salad, popcorn and pop.

Pre-registration by November 2 is required. Registration forms are available from union representatives, the UFCW 951 office, and at www.ufcw951.com.



UFCW Michigan Day at Ford Field
Sunday, November 20
11 a.m.

Join UFCW Michigan for a full day of football fun as the Detroit Lions take on the Carolina Panthers. The reduced rate \$60 UFCW ticket includes admission, round trip bus transportation from the Local 876 union hall in Madison Heights, and an all-you-can-eat lunch -- an \$83 value!

Tickets are limited and will be sold on a first come first serve basis. In fairness to all members, there is a two ticket limit per member. Ticket order forms are available from union representatives, the UFCW 951 office, and at www.ufcw951.com.

Kroger Contract Extended

The current Kroger contract has been extended on a day-to-day basis as contract negotiations continue between UFCW 951 and the company.

"We have reached tentative agreement on two of the three big issues: pension and health care," Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "However, wages remain a big sticking point. Our proposals are very far apart when it comes to wages."

UFCW 951 is committed to closing the gap in the current wage schedules, while Kroger is looking to continue its pattern bargaining. Recently-settled Kroger contracts across the country have included bonuses with a wage increase in the third year of the agreement.

"It is going to be tough to get Kroger to move from its current position," Russow said. "But we are going to do all we can to reach an agreement we can recommend to the membership. Our goal remains a fair and just contract for UFCW 951 members at Kroger."

Members Impacted by Blue Cross Blue Shield Error

A recent Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) computer error made it appear members working at Fry Krisp, Harding's, Kroger and Plumb's no longer have coverage through BCBSM.

BCBSM sincerely apologizes for the error and is diligently working to correct the situation. Until the problem is resolved, stewards should tell members to instruct providers to use BCBSM's automated telephone system, CAREN, to verify their eligibility. They cannot use webDENNIS.

CAREN has different numbers for facilities (1.800.249.5103), and professional services (1.800.344.8525). Members who have an emergency or encounter a provider who refuses to use CAREN should contact the Health and Welfare Fund Office immediately at 1.800.322.8190 for help resolving their issue.

Your Role as a Union Steward

What it Means to be a Steward

It is often said that UFCW 951 stewards are "the eyes and the ears" of the union, both in the workplace and in the community. Never has that been more true than today. With attacks on the middle class and the push of big business' agenda, we are living in tough times. UFCW 951 counts on their stewards to make things happen.

"In these times of rapid change for our Union, our employers and our society, we look to empower and expand the role of stewards more than ever," Marv Russow, UFCW 951's president, said. "Stewards are leaders, and as such we count on them to make things happen."

A steward's knowledge, skill, judgment, attention to responsibilities, and ability to work with people are crucial to the success of the Local and the protection of members' rights.

The following are guidelines stewards can use while working with fellow members:

As a Communicator and Educator

- Uniting and inspiring members to work together.
- Staying informed and providing a communications link between the members you represent and other members, Stewards, and staff.
- Educating members about their contract rights, union efforts and important issues affecting working people.
- Distributing contracts.
- Distributing and encouraging members to read Union publications.
- Listening to members' concerns and ideas.
- Leading by example by participating in Union campaigns and other activities.
- Keeping Union staff and officers informed about members' issues and concerns.
- Striving to keep members unified.

As a Community Activist

- Contributing to, and getting members to contribute to, the UFCW 951 Foundation.
- Informing members about the Union's Community Service Program and educating them about why UFCW 951 gets involved in the community.
- Volunteering to organize, publicize and participate in Community Service programs and fundraisers to benefit members at your unit.
- Offer dedicated, consistent support for UFCW 951, its leaders, programs, and services. As a Steward, you have a responsibility to your members and UFCW 951.

As a Political Activist

- Contributing to, and getting members to contribute to, the Union's Active Ballot Club (ABC).
- Informing members about the Union's legislative programs and educating them about why the Union gets involved in politics.
- Volunteering to go door-to-door, work phone banks, make telephone calls, and attend rallies.
- Getting members to register to vote and encouraging members to vote on election day.

As a Representative

- Being aware of issues affecting members and, when necessary, taking action.
- Enforcing the contract, and protecting members' rights along with their health and safety.
- Investigating and documenting members' problems.
- Resolving grievances, informally where possible.
- Presenting grievances to management and trying to resolve workplace problems.
- Bargain and negotiate in good faith.
- Organize members to support Union programs and the grievances you file.

As an Organizer

- Mobilizing members to work together to solve common problems.
- Building member turnout to support important campaigns.
- Welcoming new members and educating them about UFCW 951 and what the Union does for them.
- Identifying and referring potential organizing campaigns.