

What is the IWW?

The I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World) is a member-run union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially. This means we organize all workers producing the same goods or providing the same services into one big union, rather than dividing workers by skill or trade, so we can pool our strength to win our demands together.

Since the I.W.W. was founded in 1905, we have made significant contributions to labor struggles around the world and have a proud tradition of organizing across gender, ethnic, and racial lines long before such organizing was popular .



Want to Join the IWW?

Having trouble at your workplace? Feeling like you might want to start a union? Wishing you had a way to get more involved in organizing going on in your community?

Contact the Portland IWW and we'll be more than happy to talk to you!

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The Industrial Workers of the World

Portland, Oregon



An Injury to One
Is an Injury to All



Why Join the IWW?

A union could make your job better. Workers standing in solidarity with each other is the way to improve job conditions, be it through higher pay, greater workplace safety, better benefits, or combatting harassment. We believe in building worker power on the job to accomplish these goals.

Also, a union could make somebody else's job better. Even if you feel pretty good about your work, joining the IWW will give you a way to stand up alongside workers fighting for their dignity as human beings.. You can help make very real changes in a lot of people's lives.

What Do We Want?

The preamble to the IWW begins, "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life."

The IWW wants to change this. We do not believe that the workers should suffer while the bosses thrive. We believe in workers organizing themselves to change this, fighting for their own rights and the rights of all workers, and building a better world in the process.

How Do We Do Things?

The IWW believes in solidarity: that people standing and fighting together can accomplish more than fighting alone. We believe in direct action, that politicians or the courts will not save us, and the only way to make a better world is to make it ourselves. We believe in democratic organizing, and in abolishing the hierarchies within the union that we are trying to bring down outside of it.

We are a volunteer-driven union, and this means we, not union bosses, run the union. The IWW is not controlled by or affiliated with any political party or political movement. No money goes to politicians. Membership dues are used to maintain the union and assist organizing campaigns. As a result, monthly dues are low.

The Portland IWW

The IWW has a rich history in the Pacific Northwest, dating back to the union's founding in 1905. The famous IWW organizer Joe Hill, for example, joined up with the union's Portland branch in the early 1900s. Back then the union was deeply involved in organizing the logging industry in and around Oregon.

The Portland branch as it is today was founded in 1997, and continues to expand its energy and capacity as a fighting union. Current organizing efforts include the Burgerville Workers Union campaign and the Janus Youth Programs, which stands as an IWW shop.

