

ORGANIZING HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

INCORPORATE VALUE OF WORK

In identifying which aspects of work they value the most, healthcare professionals chose "making a contribution and having an impact." They were also much more likely to value providing quality service. Organizers should craft organizing messages that combine the aspects of work most valued by healthcare professionals with what professionals would want from a union.

EXPLAIN UNION BASICS

Healthcare professionals reported knowing little about unions representing professionals. Thus, healthcare professionals are likely to need more information about unions representing healthcare professionals. Organizers should take the time to communicate the basic, positive message of who their union is and what it does; how it is structured; and what a collective bargaining agreement is.

WHAT HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS WANT FROM A UNION

Compared to all professionals, healthcare professionals had higher satisfaction with their salaries and annual raises, but lower satisfaction with their benefits and work-life balance. Among healthcare professionals, the most convincing reasons to have a union were:

- » **To receive better salaries and annual raises.** Although healthcare professionals were more likely to be satisfied with their salaries and annual raises, this was still the most convincing reason to have a union.
- » **To receive better benefits.** Better benefits, such as lower-out-of-pocket healthcare costs and guaranteed pension plans for retirement, were a convincing reason to have a union.
- » **To improve work-life balance and paid leave.** A majority of healthcare professionals believed improving work-life balance, along with paid vacations and paid family and medical leave, was a convincing reason to have a union.

ADDRESS CONCERN ABOUT UNIONS

Dues are not worth the expense. The biggest concern healthcare professionals had about having a union was that paying union dues would not be worth what they get in return. Organizers should make a convincing case that joining together is the most effective way to improve wages, benefits and working conditions.

Poorly performing employees. Healthcare professionals were concerned that having a union could mean protection for poorly performing employees. Organizers will need to explain how due process clauses work and emphasize the protection received is from arbitrary actions by management.

Reward for individual achievement. Healthcare professionals, when compared to all professionals, were more concerned that with unions it is difficult for employees who work hard and do a good job to be rewarded. For healthcare professionals who receive merit or bonus pay, organizers should emphasize that those systems rewarding individual achievement can be preserved.

This information was developed by DPE using data from an October 2016 attitudinal survey by Hart Research Associates of 1,004 professional and technical employees of which 158 were healthcare professionals. The respondents represented a cross-section of professional and technical employees who were not union members. For more information visit the DPE website, www.dpeafcio.org.

