

## ORGANIZING PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

### DEMONSTRATE UNION EFFECTIVENESS

Women want a union that is effective. Organizers should provide tangible examples of how their union has improved wages, benefits, and working conditions for women in the same or similar professions. In an internal organizing campaign, organizers should detail the gains that have been achieved by the union.

### EXPLAIN UNION BASICS

Women, especially younger women, report knowing little about unions that represent professional employees. Thus, professional women are likely to want more information about unions. Organizers should take the time to communicate the basic, positive message of who your union is and what it does; how it is structured; and what a collective bargaining agreement is.

### WHAT PROFESSIONAL WOMEN WANT FROM A UNION

**Pocketbook improvements.** Professional women identified better salaries and annual raises and improved health and retirement benefits as the most convincing reasons to support having a union at work. Organizers should demonstrate to potential members the effectiveness of joining together to improve wages and benefits.

**Workplace improvements.** Professional women want a union that can help to ensure fairness and equal treatment in the workplace. In fact, in identifying the values a union would have, professional women most wanted a union that would stand for fairness and equality. Organizers should emphasize that joining in union can address:

- » **Equal pay for equal work.** Professional women ranked receiving equal pay for equal work as a convincing reason to have a union at work. Organizers should show how a union at work can help to close the wage gap between women and men.
- » **A voice at work.** Professional women are more likely than men to support a union at work to gain a stronger voice in decisions on the job. Organizers should emphasize that a union gives members a voice in decisions that affect them.
- » **Management relationship.** Professional women see the need to have a means of collective representation to management. Organizers should communicate how a union can establish a way to raise concerns to management and be a means to cooperatively resolve issues.

### ADDRESS CONCERNS ABOUT UNIONS

**Protection of poor performers.** The greatest concern professional women had about having a union at work was the fear that unions protect poor performers. Organizers should educate potential members about due process clauses in collective bargaining agreements.

**Workplace disruption.** Women are concerned that having a union could result in workplace disruption. Women were more concerned about conflict between employees and management, disruption of workplace relationships, and strikes. Organizers should address these concerns.