

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE IN A UNION?

## What is a union?

An organization made up of workers who come together to negotiate better pay, benefits, and working conditions from their employer. CRI and Raglan employees are members of the United Steel Workers (USW) union.

## Union structure

Unions are democratic, so workers vote on issues like their contract and union leaders. In a workplace, members are divided into groups called “bargaining units,” and each has their own leaders to help them manage workplace issues.

## What does a union do?

- **Negotiates a contract:** The employers and the union agree to a contract with rules about wages, benefits, and working conditions. Because of this, unionized employees have higher pay, better benefits, and better working conditions on average than non-unionized employees.
- **Enforces the contract:** The union holds the employer accountable for following the contract. If the contract is violated, the union represents the workers to fix the issue.
- **Gives workers a voice in the workplace:** In non-unionized workplaces, the employer has all the power in decision making. Unions give workers the power to have a say in their working conditions and raise issues without fear of discipline.

## Union Stewards

There are representatives in your workplace called union stewards who are there to help you fix workplace issues. Whenever you face an issue in the workplace, you should always let your steward know, even if you speak to your supervisor directly. This way, they will know about recurring issues and can better support you in the future.

## Union Dues

Unions need money to do their work, so a small share of members' wages goes toward the union. This allows the union to hire staff and lawyers that help you and your fellow workers get better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Some of your dues also go toward strike funds: a pool of money the union saves to pay workers some of their lost wages when they go on strike.

## What is a strike?

If a contract cannot be agreed on, the union may organize a strike. This means that workers will refuse some or all work until a fair agreement can be reached. Members must vote to authorize a strike.

# The difference between a union and an IBA

The Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) is the agreement between the mining company and Inuit stakeholders that aims to prioritize and protect Inuit rights in mining within Inuit territories. The IBA covers some Inuit-specific workplace issues, like:

- Ensuring that Inuit are prioritized in hiring and promotions
- Language: not speaking French should not be a barrier to work, and your supervisors should be bilingual
- The Inuit kitchen
- Cultural leave

For any Inuit-specific issues, you can speak to the company Inuit Employment and Training Officer.

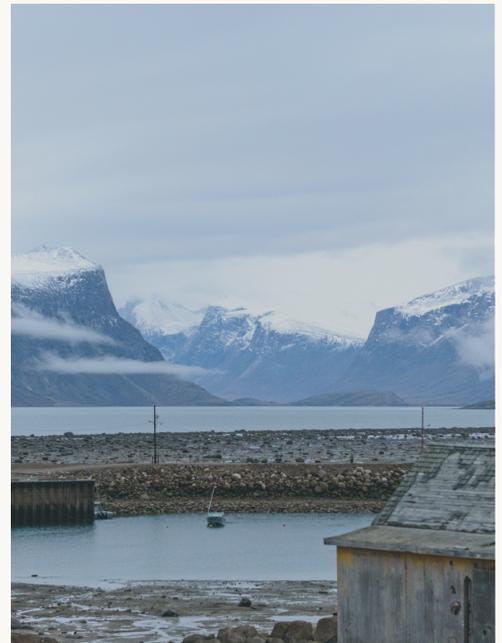
## When should you go to your union?

You should talk to your union steward if you have any other issue in the workplace, such as:

- Disciplinary action
- Health and safety concerns
- Seniority disputes
- Pay problems
- Termination

## How can your union help?

If you talk to your union steward, they will represent you in communication with your employer. Hopefully, the issue can be resolved informally. If the employer has violated the contract, the union may file a grievance (a formal complaint) on your behalf.



## Discrimination or harassment: Who should you talk to?

If you experience discrimination or harassment at work, the first person you should talk to is the company's HR department or the Inuit Employment and Training Officer. If the issue does not get resolved this way, then you should talk to your union.

## Main Takeaways:

- Unions get employees better pay, better working conditions, and a voice in the workplace.
- If you face an issue at work, you have the right to have someone from your union with you. If you try to resolve the issue with HR or your supervisor and it doesn't get resolved, talk to your union steward. Your union will represent you and advocate for your rights.
- As a member, you can get involved with your union. You know what issues Inuit face in the workplace better than anyone - if you run for a position in the union, you can help make sure Inuit are better represented.