

YOU

be LONG in a union

Being in a union enables workers to come together to advance their common interests with collective power. A union is not an outside organization or a third party; it is a democratic organization run by its members who make decisions and set direction on their own behalf.

Over many years, the collective action of union members has had a substantial impact on wages, benefits, equality, and workplace protections. In fact, unions have played a pivotal role in securing important gains that benefit everyone, though we may take them for granted.

So whether or not you're a member, unions have played an instrumental role in fighting on your behalf!

Strong unions mean strong communities because unions help all workers, not just their members, earn higher wages. For example, an average worker in a "right-to-work" state makes about \$6,000 less per year than they would in a free bargaining state.

As the inequality gap between the very rich and very poor widens, unions today have become more important than ever for middle-class families. And by promoting equal pay for equal work, unions help reduce inequalities and close the wage gaps faced by women and people of color.

Unions also help protect members' rights and voices in the workplace, as well as the ability to advocate for those they serve.



Illinois Federation of Teachers
A Union of Professionals

ift-aft.org [facebook/iftaft](https://facebook.com/iftaft) [@iftaft](https://twitter.com/iftaft) [instagram/iftaft](https://instagram.com/iftaft)

WE ARE #IFTSTRONG

member benefits

Our professional development programs train and support working people in all stages of their career. We provide opportunities for our members to gain valuable skills to become leaders in their unions, advocate for workers' rights, and become forces for good in their communities.

But, the benefits of being an IFT member extend beyond the workplace.

Being a part of the IFT gives our members access to savings on high-quality consumer benefits and services.

Visit ift-aft.org/iftstrong for more information and scan the QR codes to learn more about how each of these benefits can help you.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Training that helps you stay on the cutting edge of your profession and be effective in your local union is an important benefit of union membership. That is why the IFT offers a wide range of training opportunities designed to fit you. Trainings and courses vary, but core programs include:

- » Union Leadership Institute (ULI)
- » AFT Leadership Education and Development Program (LEAD)
- » Communications Support
- » Professional Issues Training & Support
- » Worksite Leader Training (WSL)



POLITICAL ADVOCACY

Advocating for our members is the IFT's top priority. That's why we work to elect legislators in Springfield and Washington, D.C., who will stand up for the best interests of our members, our professions, and those we serve.



RETIREMENT SECURITY

As your union, the IFT is your partner and advocates from your first day on the job until the day you retire — and beyond. By providing you with pension information and resources, the IFT gives you the tools you need to make important decisions about your retirement.



MEMBER BENEFITS & SCHOLARSHIPS

IFT, AFT, and AFL-CIO have developed programs that offer a broad variety of cost-saving options. In addition, check with your local union, many locals have negotiated discounts or benefits from merchants or services providers in your community. Benefits vary, but include:

- » Travel
- » Loan Forgiveness
- » Insurance
- » Mortgage & Home Services
- » Scholarships
- » Education
- » And more

10 Benefits of Belonging to a

UNION

1

A POWERFUL VOICE ON THE JOB

Union workers have the right to negotiate with their employer over things like wages, benefits, & working conditions.

2

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

As one of the largest labor unions in Illinois, IFT has strength in numbers & a history of affecting positive change from the workplace to the Capitol.

3

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS

IFT has helped thousands of members secure economic gains and other improvements for themselves and those they serve.

4

A CONTRACT

IFT members elect their bargaining team, negotiate terms, & democratically vote to approve their collective bargaining agreements, which provide fair wages, benefits, work rules, & job security.

5

PROTECTION & SUPPORT

The IFT provides support to help protect you against employer discrimination, questionable behavior, unfair labor practices, and more.

6

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

IFT provides professional development training to enhance members' workplace and leadership skills.

7

LOBBYING & POLITICAL ACTION

IFT empowers you to make your voice heard by legislators on issues that impact members, education, & public services.

8

CONSUMER BENEFITS

IFT & AFT offer members savings on a wide range of consumer benefits & services, as well as multiple scholarship programs.

9

PUBLIC RELATIONS

IFT works closely with media outlets to ensure our members' perspective is included in news coverage.

10

RACIAL JUSTICE ADVANCEMENT

IFT fights to end systemic racism & to ensure fair & equitable treatment for people of color and other marginalized persons.

VISIT ift-aft.org/iftstrong FOR MORE BENEFITS OF BEING IN A UNION.