

# your USW dues dollar: the BEST INVESTMENT

It's true – it takes money to run a strong, progressive union. Union dues give the United Steelworkers (USW) the power to fight for your rights. And the money you contribute comes right back to you through a collective agreement and a wide range of union services.

You have a say in where your money goes. Dues are set democratically at the union's convention by delegates from your Local Union. As a union member, you help to oversee how your dues are set and how they are administered. Keep in mind you don't pay a cent in dues until you have voted to accept your first collective agreement.

Here's how each dollar is split up:

## 44¢ TO THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

This share funds the general operations of the union both in the United States and Canada. It supports specialized departments in the union like Corporate Research, Legal, Health, Safety and Environment, Education, Rapid Response, etc. These departments provide:

- The strength and resources of an international union capable of taking on the global corporations;
- Protection for Local Unions to maintain their autonomy, to set their own priorities and make their own decisions;
- Copies of *USW@Work* to keep you up-to-date on union developments;
- Expertise and advice on legal issues, arbitration, negotiations, public relations, education, health and safety, research and assistance; and
- Trained full-time representatives to help Local Unions with bargaining, arbitration and other matters.

## 44¢ TO YOUR LOCAL UNION

When a group of workers joins the Steelworkers, a new Local Union is formed or the group joins an existing Local. This Local elects its own officers and runs its own affairs. Almost half of every dollar paid in dues\* – 44% – comes back to the Local Union so that it helps pay for:

- Administration of Local Union Affairs;
- Collective Bargaining;
- Member Education Programs;
- Arbitration; and
- Sending delegates to important conferences and International Union Constitutional Conventions.

It's clear that the Local Union is the mainstay of the whole organization. And so, a large part of your dues dollar goes toward keeping the Local Union active and effective.

Your Local Union spends its money according to your priorities. Financial controls ensure that the membership oversees all spending. Local Union books are audited regularly. So are the books of the entire union. In addition, the International Secretary-Treasurer issues an audited public report to the Local Unions each year. And all of this financial information is available to you.



## 7¢ TO THE STRIKE AND DEFENSE FUND

A healthy Strike and Defense Fund means a strong union. As one of the largest unions in the U.S., it's essential that we keep this fund well supplied. With 7% of your dues money\* plus .15% of gross earnings going into the fund, we are confident that we can keep it healthy. The fund currently exceeds \$150 million.

At the bargaining table, an ample strike fund gives us more influence and respect. Companies know we have money behind us and they know they have to consider our proposals seriously. Because of this strength, 98% of our collective agreements are settled without a strike. But, if a strike can't be avoided, and you vote to strike, the fund helps our members get by while negotiations continue. It's comforting to know that although strikes in the Steelworkers are rare, the Strike and Defense Fund is there if the need arises.

This fund is also for the Defense of our members' collective bargaining agreements. The USW is well known for its long-standing commitment to resisting employer abuse. A primary way the USW does this is through "strategic campaigns." These are generally initiated when an employer strongly resists reaching a labor agreement. The USW Strike and Defense fund helps the Strategic Campaigns Department involve an organized and mobilized membership to intervene in an employer's key relationships in order to generate pressure on them to act fairly and reasonably.

## 1¢ TO POLITICAL AND LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The USW takes a stand on governmental policies that affect working people, their jobs, their economic security, their retirement and issues of social justice. One cent of each dues dollar\* helps promote pro-worker political action.

## 3¢ TO ORGANIZING

Just as you are now considering Steelworkers membership, other workers across North America want the same chance. To bring the benefits of the Steelworkers to new members, 3% of each dues dollar\* (in addition to 2 cents per hour) pays for the resources needed to keep the Steelworkers growing in all sectors of the U.S. and Canada.

## 1¢ TO EDUCATION

The workplace is changing rapidly and our members need the skills to properly take care of their interests. That's why the Steelworkers offer the most extensive education program of any union. Courses on collective bargaining, labor law, Local Union leadership, health and safety, human rights, women's issues, and many other topics are available to all members. A 1% share of each dues dollar\* supports this vital activity.

Note: \*Refers to dues of 1.3% of gross earnings. Additional amounts are directed to the Organizing Fund and Strike and Defense Fund. See outside flaps of this brochure for further explanation.

Your fighting  
**UNION**  
doesn't cost ...  
it **PAYS!**

## How much are dues?

The current USW standard dues structure is 1.45% of a member's earnings (\$1.45 per \$100.00 of earnings). Members pay **NO MORE THAN 2.8 times** their average hourly earnings (this is a monthly "cap" that lowers dues for members who work a lot of overtime).

Members also contribute 2 cents per hour (about 80 cents per week for a member working 40 hours) to help fund organizing campaigns which aid to strengthen our collective voice within common employers and sectors where our members work and to enable new workers to enjoy the benefits of a union contract. Some USW local unions may have alternate approved dues formulas.

For more information on calculating dues, please contact your USW representative.

For more information about the USW,  
visit our website at:  
[www.usw.org](http://www.usw.org) or call 1-877-511-8792



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your  
**USW**  
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**INVESTMENT**

**F**or many years, the USW has been at the forefront of challenging the growing power of global companies and the potential negative impact employers' actions can have on our members and their families. To continue our union's leadership in helping USW members maintain and increase their bargaining power in these increasingly tough economic times, our locally elected workplace leaders voted democratically at the 2008 Constitutional Convention to modify our regular dues structure from 1.3% to 1.45% of each member's earnings. The modest supplement of .15% (that's just 15 tenths of one percent -- or 15¢ per \$100.00 of wages) is dedicated to financially strengthening the USW's unique Strike and Defense Fund. This Fund is available to all USW members to defend their hard-earned wages, benefits and working conditions. The Fund has paid for successful legal actions and campaigns to win fair union contracts for our members -- actions and campaigns for which the USW is well-known and respected. As spelled out in the USW's Constitution, the remaining 1.3% of each member's earnings is allocated on a percentage basis for the exclusive benefit of all USW members. See inside this brochure for more details.