

## Union FAQs

### Union? Union for what? Union for who?

- A union for **ALL** Little Big Burger associates and keys who want to improve their working conditions.
- A union is nothing more than a collective of 2 or more workers working together to better their working conditions.
- A union means better pay, better working conditions, better benefits, and seats at the table for workers to decide matters that affect our daily lives and our quality of life.

### How did this happen tho?

- Not that long ago, workers from a bunch of different LBB shops in the area started to meet up and got to talking about work...
- We all agreed that our needs weren't being met, we straight up weren't having a good time at work, and we were struggling to pay for necessities like rent, student loans, and childcare. After seeing our coworkers get disciplined for standing up for themselves, we decided that the only safe way to advocate for ourselves is to do so together. Turns out, this is exactly why unionizing is a thing: **there's safety in numbers.**
- We want to elevate the voices of all workers. The whole purpose of a labor union is to facilitate organizing among the everyday, rank-and-file workers to ensure we receive the respectful and fair treatment we deserve. We achieve that by uplifting and supporting each other.

### What does it mean if I sign up?

- It means that you support the idea of workers having a collective voice at work, that you believe you stand to be treated even just a little bit better by management.
- It also means that you think the way service workers are treated is not okay, and that we deserve a higher standard of living.
- Signing up is a way of stating that you stand with your coworkers. Period. The union simply is us deciding to act together as one, like a school of fish or a flock of birds. The whole purpose is to get each other's backs, because everything is easier when we do so; work is more manageable, there's more trust, there's more support, and we can make more noise when we speak together.
- Signing up gives you a seat at the table. It means you want your voice to be heard. The table we're looking for is one at which workers and management work **together** to address workplace needs.....not the current one where it's just management deciding what's best for us. Only we can truly know what's best for ourselves in this moment.
- A "collective bargaining relationship" aka negotiations will only occur if we show Little Big Burger corporate (Chanticleer Holdings) that we are a majority of the workers by signing union authorization cards. If the company decides that our demonstration of majority membership is not enough, then we will vote in that "secret ballot election" that Adrian was talking about.

### Why do workers need a voice?

- Currently all company wide decisions are made by corporate management, board members, and shareholders, most of whom are on the other side of the country.
- We have power because we already act together every day when we take the orders, cook and serve the food, and clean our restaurants. Our work sustains the whole company, yet Chanticleer CEOs/Presidents reap all the benefits through large salaries and shares.
- With a union, next time management wants to take away paid parental leave, paid 30-minute lunch breaks, shift beers, or fire someone without any real reason, we will have a collective say in stopping that.

### Why do we need a contract? When do we get it?

- We need to be able to take time off when we are sick without the fear of not being able to pay our rent or electric bill. We need to have the freedom to make doctors appointments or family visits in advance; we cannot live with three days notice to our scheduling. We should be able to expect a certain number of hours per week. We deserve to feel

some security at work and not feel like we could be fired or disciplined without any warning. With a union contract, we the workers get to have a voice in the conditions we have at LBB.

- Now that the union is here, Chanticleer will likely try to entice us with some short term concessions (raises, promotions, gifts, etc). However, without a union contract, any of promises the company makes are empty. They can and will disappear at any moment without any recourse or accountability. Remember shift beers? We do. Remember paid lunches? We do.
- Management has dangled the carrot of “raises” for years, while they instead choose to pay us the legal minimum without any real access to benefits. Tips aren’t wages. Tips are helpful, but we should fight for better. Tips come from customers to help make up for the low income we receive. We must remember this. The company can and should do more. The only way to guarantee this is to have this spelled out in a contract. We get a contract when corporate agrees to meet workers at the bargaining table and recognizes our dignity and hard work.
- A contract means set, agreed-upon boundaries between workers and management, with a legal guarantee for management to keep their promises to ALL Little Big Burger workers.

### Dues: what are dues and how do they work?

- The company might scare you into believing that the union is third party organization that steals your money and tries to come in between **you** and **management**. This couldn’t be further from the truth. The **union** is you and your fellow workers. We are the union and we make decisions collectively and democratically. This includes choosing the cost of dues.
- Dues are how unions maintain themselves and function financially. When we pay dues, we put aside a small amount of our gains each month to keep our organization alive.
- Dues would only take effect after we secure a contract between the union and the company that guarantees a significant raise. Little Big Union members would vote to decide the actual dollar amount of our dues.
- We know that LBB workers a) don’t make enough money to pay the same dues as higher-paid workers like carpenters and teachers (who much of the time enjoy a higher standard of living set by unionization), and b) that our current conditions we work in hardly leave us extra money for essentials.
- Paying union dues is an investment for sure, but it’s one that grants access to **benefits, protection, improvements to working conditions, support outside of work, raises, and a voice on the job.**

### Can keys be in the union?

- Yes! There are lots of workers in the union who work key shifts. Keys aren’t considered managers because they don’t handle scheduling or hiring/firing. The law is very clear here, though we expect the company may try to claim otherwise.

### Can my manager fire me for supporting the union?

- It is totally illegal for you to be fired or punished for supporting the union. It’s even illegal for managers to ask if you like the union or are thinking about signing up! Being a union member or supporter is your right protected by federal law. That being said, companies violate laws all the time. Currently, without a union, you can be fired at any time for any reason, or for no reason at all. The best protection against this is the solidarity of your fellow workers as part of a strong union.
- If yourself or other workers are being treated differently because you are talking about the union or are interested, please let us know. We will pursue federal charges following any labor violations you and your coworkers have experienced on your behalf.
- Retaliation or selective treatment for union sympathizing or union affiliation is against federal labor law. Anything that could be construed in this way could land the company in hot water and result in a federal investigation into the company’s practice. It’s in everyone’s interest to adhere to the laws that protect workers’ rights to organize.
- The best defense is to act together. If you’re concerned about the repercussions of joining/supporting the union, the best way to act is collectively. Wear buttons in solidarity with your coworkers, ask for changes to your working conditions through making petitions.

- The LBB on NW 23rd Ave currently enjoys 2-week schedules because they all signed a petition asking for what is already required by Oregon law. The following week, and still to this day, NW 23rd is the only location with 2 weeks schedules for all employees.

**But my manager told me I can't/shouldn't be in the union.**

- First of all that's illegal. See above.
- That's also really messed up! Management, especially store-level managers, stand only to gain from their coworkers unionizing. Workers who have a voice in their workplace are happier and better workers. If we get improved working conditions, then so do they! Why would your manager want to hold you back from working together for collective gains? The reason store-level managers would discourage you from joining the union is because it lessens their power over you. Corporate wants them to because they know unions achieve material gains for their workers, which they mistakenly view as a loss in profits (it's actually a long term investment in overall happiness, which everything else follows from). Any manager heard asking about union affiliation or threatening their workers for joining the union will be held publicly accountable.
- Please get in touch with the union immediately if you see any retaliation happening at work. It's both abusive and illegal, and there's no reason any manager should be acting in this way.

**Are we hurting the company by unionizing?**

- The idea that workers coming together to demand better treatment is somehow harmful to the company is nonsense. That's a manipulative and dishonest thing for someone to say. That sure sounds a lot like something a boss would say to make you feel guilty for taking action with your coworkers....
- When Little Big Burger hurts it's because corporate doesn't take care of workers, and instead tries to expand the company too quickly. We think they need to step back and consider working conditions at the restaurants they **do** have before setting their sights so much on expansion.
- How many times have you needed something from management only to be told that X manager is in Y new store and simply doesn't have the time to help with your essential workplace issues?

**But a boycott would hurt the company!**

- What boycott? There's no boycott, folks! This appears to be an old wives tale: The Boss Who Cried Boycott.
- We're not sure where this idea came from, but it's true that LBB regional manager Adrian Oca has publicly discouraged workers from asking customers to boycott the company. That makes sense. We don't believe a boycott would help anyone at the moment, though it is very heartening to see customers ready to support the union by doing whatever it takes, even if that means getting burgers somewhere else for a short period of time.

**Where does the money go from the gofundme go towards?**

- Right now our fundraising goes towards our "Strike and Hardship" fund. This a fund that we'll use for workers who are struggling under adverse circumstances, have been fired unfairly, or are on strike.
- We created a Strike and Hardship fund because we want to support and compensate workers who might take a financial hit for speaking up for the betterment of all workers at LBB.
- We don't anticipate needing to use these funds frequently because we expect the company to act responsibly. But we do want to be prepared in case they don't.

**Why is this the first time I'm hearing about unions? Why haven't I already been in a union?**

- Unions have been under fire from the federal government and private corporations since the 1800s.
- In the 1980's under the Reagan administration, organized labor was dealt a crushing blow when Reagan fired tens of thousands of striking Air Traffic Control workers because they refused to return to work until their demands were met.
- Ever since, union power hasn't been what it once was. As a result, stable wages and benefits practically disappeared, while corporate profit and executive salaries continue to skyrocket.
- Unions are uncommon in fast food for several reasons. Some of the big ones are high turnover in employees, and social stigma around fast food work. Our work is seen as "unskilled," which is just another way of saying that we don't deserve a living wage. If other people can make ends meet doing other service industry jobs, why can't we or

other workers serving burgers and fries? There's also a rich corporate history of union busting, which often operates invisibly. Union busting is a multi-billion(!!!) dollar industry. Why? Because unions work in achieving better pay and conditions for workers. Seriously.

## **What's all this about the IWW?**

- The IWW, or Industrial Workers of the World, is the umbrella union that supports the Little Big Union!
- The IWW is one of the oldest unions in the country! The union is founded on direct democracy and full transparency, both of which are very scary to large corporations. In the early 20th century, the IWW was fundamental in organizing miners and textile workers.
- Fun fact: folk legend Woody Guthrie is a famous member. So is legendary guitarist Tom Morello of Audioslave and Rage Against the Machine.
- Members of the IWW, also known as Wobblies, are people that support gains across industries among working class folks, and believe in supporting each other across communities, regardless of our differences.
- The IWW offers training and financial assistance to the LBU, though LBU has operated and will continue to operate independently within the IWW, and is completely voluntary for LBU members to join. Many choose to sign up; many don't— it's completely up to you! Get in touch with us to learn more, or head to the IWW's website at [www.portlandiww.org](http://www.portlandiww.org).
- Burgerville workers also have an independent relationship to the IWW with the Burgerville Workers Union, which was founded a couple of years ago, and now is federally recognized in 5 Portland restaurants, including some of the busiest locations.

## **Why should we have a union if it's just a fast food job?**

- The reason fast food has been so hard to unionize is because employers maintain poor working conditions because they would rather keep a revolving door of hiring-and-firing workers instead of paying us a living wage to keep us around.
- Just because fast food unionization hasn't been done extensively doesn't mean it shouldn't happen! The fact that it hasn't happened much actually speaks to the dire need for the standards to be raised in fast food workplaces.
- And that's starting to change! In 2018 union memberships skyrocketed. In 2016 the Burgerville Workers Union (Portland, OR) announced itself and became the first federally recognized fast food union in the country!
- Food service workers all around the country know that things will only change when workers across the industry work and act together.
- Have you been told that fast food is "unskilled" or "entry-level" work? We all know that is not true. Customer service takes skill (there are even educational programs designed for teaching it!). Running a restaurant under high pressure and with a small crew takes skill. Prepping takes skill. Cleaning takes skill. And all workers, "skilled" and "unskilled" deserve a living wage. We know better than anyone that we deserve better, and we need to carry this truth with us as we move forward.
- LBB already pays Seattle workers \$15/hr, how can they justify paying us \$12? Eugene \$10.75?!
- We're the ones who make the food now's the time that we eat too!

*Please email us at [together@littlebigunion.org](mailto:together@littlebigunion.org) to ask questions or report management!*