

Talking Points for New Hires that don't join CSEA

We know that there will be new hires that may choose not to join CSEA at your new employee orientation meeting. Here are some common arguments made for why they are not joining along with some responses that you can convey as to why they should re-consider joining. Our movement to reach 100% membership in all CSEA workplaces will always be the goal, but we understand that there are fundamental reasons why employees choose to be a non-member.

Reason not to join: "Costs too much money, can't afford the dues."

Response: As a union, we understand that every penny counts – we encourage you to think about how important union membership is. Your dues dollar plus the union's strength in numbers, means strength in terms of political power and as public employees, this is critical! In addition, our members-only benefits are really money saving programs that members can use for themselves and their family members. Membership dues authorize CSEA to service its members in contract negotiations, contract enforcement including handling of grievances and legal protection.

Reason not to join: I get most of those benefits anyway. Let someone else foot the bill.

Response: If everyone adopted this "freeloader" attitude, the benefits including a decent and well-enforced contract wouldn't exist for you to enjoy. Every free-loader weakens the union's position with management and everyone suffers as a consequence. Management often judges a union's strength by the number of free-loaders. Every free-loader is a signal to management that the union may be weak. It's only fair that everyone pay their share, instead of expecting their co-workers foot the bill for everyone else.

Reason not to join: I don't need a union. I'll do my job and have no complaints about working conditions or my employer.

Response: You may indeed feel you don't need a union, but chances are you feel that way because most of the benefits, wages and rules under which you work have been negotiated by the union. Your salary increases, your fringe benefits, hours, working conditions, accident and health safeguards, sick leave, vacation leave and much more are there because the union worked in your behalf. If the union weren't on the job, there would no doubt be a steady erosion of these hard-won benefits. In addition, many conscientious public employees are wrongly accused of misconduct every year and threatened with penalties including loss of their jobs. CSEA is there to safeguard its members' rights.

Reason not to join: I don't agree with the union's politics and feel like I won't be heard.

Response: CSEA wants to hear what you have to say. CSEA is one of the most democratic labor unions in the country, one that allows the average rank-and-file member to play an active role in their own future. Members elect officers at every level – unit, local, region, and statewide. Delegates and Board members, elected by rank-and-file members, represent their member-constituents on issues and programs covering a wide range of matters affecting public employees. CSEA members have input on contract negotiations and are a part of bargaining in every step of the process.



An Activist Guide to New Employee Orientation

CSEA
Local 1000 AFSCME, AFL-CIO

Mary E. Sullivan, President
cseany.org



New Employee Union Membership Kit Includes:

- New Employee Orientation booklet:**
 - Why they should join CSEA flyer
 - It's Better to be Union statistics
 - Quick Guide to Member Benefits
 - Pearl Insurance information
 - CSEA member testimonials
 - MyCSEA smartphone app information
 - \$10,000 Accidental Death Benefit form and postage paid envelope
 - PEOPLE application
- CSEA Membership Application – to be handed out and collected from new hire(s) once completed.**
- Union cling and CSEA reusable bag (only after they have signed membership application)**
- We also recommend you give them:**
 - A list of current union officers and representatives – include names, phone numbers, email addresses, and pictures when possible
 - Union office hours (if applicable) – please include how members can locate the CSEA office so they use it as a resource at the workplace
 - A copy of their contract
 - A contract card that highlights benefits of their current contract – email annemarie.raymond@cseainc.org to place your order

Quick Reference Talking Points

Together we negotiate and gain access to:

- Job security
- Paid time off (vacation, sick, personal, bereavement)
- Free union/legal representation on the job (MEMBERS ONLY)*
- Fair pay/negotiated raises
- Health insurance benefits
- Retirement security benefits
- Discounted insurance products designed just for CSEA members.*
- Three levels of advocacy – national advocacy, statewide advocacy, and local advocacy – on OUR behalf for health insurance, worker's compensation, safety and health, retirement security, career/professional development, legal, and legislative action
- Exclusive discount programs: enjoy benefits such as discounts for ball games, theme parks, movie tickets, home improvement services, and flexible payment programs*

* ONLY members are entitled to union/legal representation, union-only insurance programs, discount programs, educational programs, union voting privileges, union meetings and social events.

How long have we been organized as a union and what do we do?

Since 1910, workers have been joining together in CSEA to better their lives. We have improved our pay and retirement security and to this day allows us to keep protecting and defending our working conditions and the public services we provide.

How to Conduct a New Employee Orientation:

1. Welcome them to their new job.
2. Introduce yourself, give them a brief explanation of who you are and how they can contact you.
3. Ask them why they applied for this job. Also ask what they know about unions and if they have experience as a union member. If they respond by saying benefits, pay, security – make the point that these benefits have been fought for and won by the union members who work there! That means we can join together to make change and have input.
4. Hold up a copy of the contract/contract card and explain that this is as much a history book as it is a contract. Explain the only reason we have a contract is because workers like them join our union.
5. Inform them of any “wins” over the past years; prevented layoffs, secured paid time off, added longevity step, prevented outsourcing, avoided pay cuts, secured a break room, got a refrigerator fixed, a safety and health issue addressed and resolved, anything that meant something to the members at your worksite.
6. Highlight Member Benefits quick guide/listing of all the member savings that CSEA members have access to – you can reference the member testimonials in the NEO booklet
7. Hand out CSEA application and ask them to join our union by completing the form now and collect them.
8. If the new hire has filled out the membership application, give the CSEA union cling and reusable bag.
9. **COLLECT SIGNED CARDS BEFORE THEY LEAVE.** Anyone who does not sign up, be sure to schedule a follow-up meeting with them before they leave!

Follow Up Plan for those new hires who do not sign up for CSEA membership:

- Have an officer or activist who works in the same department/area follow up within the first 2 weeks of employment. Introduce themselves and check in to see how the first days of have been. Answer any other questions the new hire may have and ask them to join the union again.
- Invite the new hire to come and meet other CSEA members/co-workers at the next union event (non-members can join the event during a “social” time before any business of the union is conducted).
- If the member still refuses to join, have leaders and activists continue to revisit the non-members every few weeks and document the reason(s) why they refuse to join.
- Always leave the door open for conversations with non-members in hopes that they reconsider joining CSEA and understand the value of union membership and power in solidarity, to build a better future for all!

What are my rights as a union member?

CSEA members get to vote on their own leadership as well as their contracts. If you have any workplace questions, you can contact a union representative where you work. The members at each workplace oversee their own union. The union is not an “outsider,” the union is YOU!