"I've been a part of the union at my charter school for over 10 years, and we've taken our solidarity as educators across Chicago to new heights. Coordinating contract proposals across our unionized charter schools in Chicago has helped us push for and win things we wouldn't have won otherwise, including pay approaching district schools, enforceable class-size limits and, in some cases, guaranteed wraparound services like counselors and social workers, and sanctuary protections for students. More and more educators in the city are organizing because they want to win these things too."



—Jen Conant, math teacher at Chicago International Charter School Northtown Academy and chair of the Chicago Teachers Union Charter Division

"Workers speaking up as a group, through a union, can do what one voice cannot—participate with management in making decisions to enhance the education of students and the lives of the workers. Here in D.C., we are building a movement that raises our collective voices to impact our schools and our lives."



—Kelley Ukhun, teacher at Mundo Verde Bilingual Public Charter School in Washington, D.C., and president of District of Columbia Alliance of Charter Teachers and Staff

## … then we NEED to organize with the AFT!

As educators and staff in charter schools, we're proud of the work we do. But let's face it, sometimes our work can be challenging and isolating. We want the kind of professional voice, job stability and due process that all educators and school staff deserve.

Alone, we can't win all these things. Together as a union, we can. It's the way we can start building power, voice and respect.

## We *can* change our work lives and our schools for the better—by joining the AFT

We have a choice. We can keep the status quo. Or we can find our voice and our power by joining the many educators and staff who work in charter schools who are saying "Union Yes" with the AFT. We can be part of a community of colleagues facing the same challenges, sharing our strength and banding together to make a difference for the students and families we all serve.








Education | Healthcare | Public Services

AFT, AFL-CIO | 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W. | Washington, DC 20001 | www.aft.org

aft.org @aft.org AFTunion @AFTunion @AFTunion

06/26

# Why organize with the AFT?

# Why belong to the AFT?

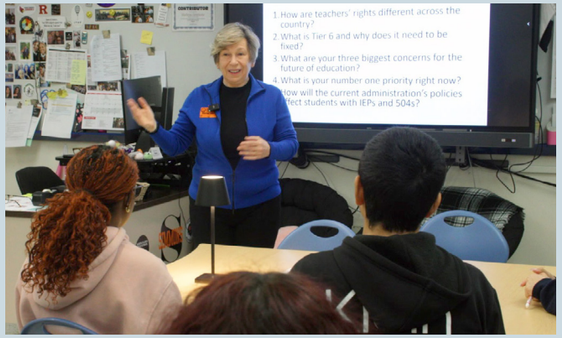


Education
Healthcare
Public Services

*CHARTER EDUCATORS AND STAFF*

Our union, the AFT, fights to secure a better life for those we serve and those we represent. Our members make a difference every day: educating students, caring for patients and strengthening communities—work that touches nearly every family in America.

The 1.8 million-strong AFT fights for good wages and benefits, a real voice at work, strong public schools and services, and accessible, affordable healthcare and higher education. We fight for a democracy that works for the people—not just the powerful—and we fight for the opportunities and pathways that allow all our students, families and members to thrive.




That mission is even more urgent today. Families are being squeezed by rising costs, new technologies are reshaping work and learning, and divisions are deepening across our country.

You are a vital part of this work. When members like you are involved, we build the power to achieve together what no one can accomplish alone.

Thank you for being part of your union—the AFT.

–Randi Weingarten
AFT president

## If we WANT …

- More stability in our working conditions and
- in the education we provide our students
- The power to make our schools better and further student success
- A real voice in workplace decision-making
- Fair and transparent salaries and pay for extra duties
- Safe and healthy schools and welcoming environments
- A mutually supportive community of colleagues who teach and work in charter schools

## What's a union? And why a union?

A union is a group of workers who join together to win what we need to be successful educators and fight for the resources our students deserve. Research shows that union workers have higher pay, have better healthcare and retirement benefits, and feel more satisfied at work than nonunion workers. And they are empowered to fight for safe, welcoming and fully funded public schools for all kids.

*Without a union:*

- We have little decision-making power.
- If we advocate as individuals, we might be labeled "troublemakers."
- We can find it intimidating to raise concerns or ask for more pay.
- Our pay, benefits and workplace policies aren't necessarily fair or consistent.
- We don't have strong processes to address health and safety risks, from poor air and water quality to gun violence.

*With the AFT:*

- We have the power and voice to advocate for the resources and supports our students need to thrive.
- We have a built-in support system at our worksite.
- We negotiate a legally binding union contract that spells out fair pay, benefits, working and learning conditions, and workplace rights.
- We fight to protect our kids and communities, defend public education and invest in community schools, career and technical education, and literacy programs to prepare our young people for college, career and life.




"I started as a parent, was recruited to teach and found my passion. But seeing my colleagues mistreated lately, I knew we needed an organized way to protect each other and protect our right to speak up for our students and community."

—Tanesha Ryland, algebra teacher at Codman Academy and member of the Boston Teachers Union



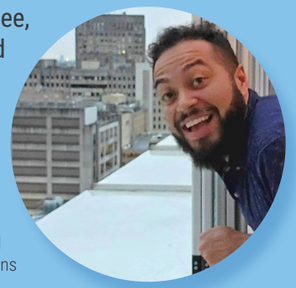
"The highlight of my career was when 90 percent of my charter network chose to unionize with UTLA last year. Now the enthusiasm that Citizens of the World teachers bring to our fight for a strong first contract warms my heart. Our charter network has taken and taken from students by stripping away staff and services every year. I am thrilled that with this contract, we will finally be able to mandate that our students get what they deserve from our schools."




—Leslie Libaw, special education teacher at Citizens of the World Charter School and member of United Teachers Los Angeles

"Having a union means that when our CEO decided to step down, we were able to secure a seat on the CEO search committee, ensuring that the needs and voice of teachers were a crucial part of the hiring process."

—Sean Duplantier, math teacher at Bricolage Academy and chair of Bricolage Academy Educators United, a chapter of the United Teachers of New Orleans



## Why the AFT?

The AFT is 1.8 million educators, public employees and health-care workers strong. What unites us is our purpose: a better life for all. We fight for and win contracts, policies and legislation centered on our students, patients and communities. We use our collective strength to advocate for the essential programs, services and supports that help all children thrive.

The AFT is the principled, fearless union ready to go to the mat to protect our kids, communities and professions. **It's our fighting spirit that has made us the fastest-growing union in the AFL-CIO.**




## The AFT is a grassroots union led by members

In AFT local unions, we negotiate our own contracts and vote for leaders from our ranks who determine our priorities and seek assistance, when needed, from the national AFT's legal, strategic and organizing experts. When organizing a union, we have found that employers may feel threatened and claim that the AFT is an outsider, a "third party." This is not true. Members run our locals, and that practice is protected in our constitution. All AFT members are empowered to:

- Be leaders and elect our leaders;
- Serve on committees and help negotiate contracts; and
- Participate in labor-management problem-solving.

## Charter school educators and staff are choosing the AFT

More and more staff and educators in charter schools across the country have been forming unions with the AFT in the past decade, from Arizona to New York state to New Orleans! Together, we are starting to change the landscape in our schools. Together, we are building on what's right and fixing what's not working.

## The AFT helps empower us to grow and lead in our professions, our schools and our communities

Being part of a national union connects us to a vast network of peers and top-notch professional development programs.

- The AFT offers dozens of courses rooted in evidence-based educational, cognitive and social science research, guided by cutting-edge experts and designed by frontline educators who know firsthand what goes on in classrooms every day.
- The AFT Teacher Leaders Program empowers small groups of educators to assume active leadership roles in their schools, unions and communities, as coaches, peer evaluators, mentors, specialists in curriculum and instruction, advocates, activists, union leaders and more.
- The AFT's Reading Opens the World and First Book initiatives provide the latest literacy-related professional development, sponsor nationwide book giveaways, and make books and learning resources available for a fraction of the normal cost.
- Share My Lesson is the AFT's award-winning platform where educators and school staff can exchange lesson plans, ideas and best practices; join free professional development webinars; and access thousands of standards-aligned lesson plans and activities.

Our union membership also offers benefits through Union Plus, including credit card and insurance discounts and savings on everything from flowers and movie tickets to computers and vacations. There are also services such as free trauma counseling to help us with personal and workplace challenges, and free student debt assistance that has already saved members tens of thousands on their student loan payments.

(Explore the full range of AFT professional learning programs and benefits at **aft.org/education** and **aft.org/member-benefits**.)

## Helping our members beat the affordability challenge

Being part of a union means having support when life gets harder. The cost of living keeps rising—and for many working families, debt is piling up fast. Through the AFT's new Fight for Affordability campaign, members can access tools, videos and resources to help navigate medical debt, credit card debt, debt collectors and other financial challenges—including support and protections many people don't realize they're entitled to. Our campaign includes free, live Affordability Clinics with help on reducing medical debt, managing student loans, dealing with your credit score and understanding your consumer rights. For more, go to **aft.org/affordability**.)

## Building a unified community

A union is you, me and our co-workers. We look out for each other, our students and our communities. We are visible: standing together, wearing buttons and defending our principles together. As we come together to organize a union, we are building the community and culture that we want to have in our schools.