

For the majority of my life the jobs I worked did not have a union, so learning about what a union was happened for the first time less than a year ago. I found working underneath a union made it much more structured and ensured my voice was always taken into consideration.

Unions play an important role within the workplace; from ensuring that there is no discrimination, including marginalized voices and advocating for fair wages. All of which help to have a supportive, inclusive and fair environment.

The first ways union create such a supportive and balanced environment is by ensuring there is no discrimination or harassment within the workplace. This is implemented by having policies in place that ensures everyone is treated fair regardless of race, gender, disability and more. They give workers a safe way to report discrimination or harassment without fear of consequences. Unions also ensure there is no discrimination or harassment within the workplace by raising awareness around the situation. Many unions have mandatory classes or seminars for employees to attend and learn about their rights and what are the grounds for discrimination and harassment. For instance, many times before I worked a job with a union I would often face harassment comments and being so young, I never knew there was the ability for me to report these comments and get help.

Secondly, unions foster a positive environment by listening and including marginalized voices. The main way this is done is by ensuring there is a diverse group included within the process of changing things, adding things and meetings. Additionally, with these added measures it leads to stronger policies against discrimination and an equitable working environment. The use of unions ensures that everyone's voice is heard, and no one is overlooked despite their

background. Moreover, unions have fair hiring processes to ensure that there is no preference given to one side compared to the other. This makes the workplace have more diverse voices and backgrounds heard.

Lastly, one of the most important ways unions create a supportive environment is by advocating for fair wages. Unions ensure that they're paying their employees fairly based on factors such as responsibilities, credentials and skills and not on gender, race or sex. By setting fair wage standards it ensures everyone is entitled to what they deserve and that they're not being under paid. Additionally, unions follow the cost of living and minimum wage, ensuring their wages align with the ever-changing inflation. By having fair wages and reducing pay gaps within the workplace, it contributes to employees being more financially stable and creates a more positive work environment.

In conclusion, unions play a very important role in having an inclusive, fair and supportive environment. By ensuring there is no discrimination or harassment, listening to marginalized voices and advocating for fair wages, they create an environment where everyone can be their best selves. My personal experience showed how working with a union allowed more positive benefits compared to when I did not. Ultimately, unions don't benefit individuals but benefit communities as a whole and allow us to do our best work.