



Collective Agreements

Unions provide better wages and better working conditions for their members when compared to their non-union counterparts - but not every union member necessarily understands why this is the case.

The reason unions can negotiate better compensation and working conditions is because they engage in a process called *Collective Bargaining*. Without this important process, unions would not exist.

Without a union, each individual worker must advocate for him or herself. With a union, each worker is advocated for collectively and represented under a single Collective Agreement.

This agreement is negotiated during the *Collective Bargaining* process between a Union (also known as the Bargaining Unit) and an Employer (often an association of various Contractors).

Some unions bargain together. Many locals of the same national union may undertake the Collective Bargaining process together. The same applies for the employers – many employers belong to larger Contractor Associations which often reflect a specific sector.

If you are a part of a union, then you work under a specific *Collective Agreement*. A *Collective Agreement* determines your wages and benefits, obligations and responsibilities of your employer, yourself (the employee), and the local union.

Collective Agreements have an explicit start date and end date. When an agreement is approaching or past its expiration date, it must be re-negotiated via *Collective Bargaining*. This process happens throughout your career, and it is good practice to be familiar with the language and changes which are made.

Many individual unions have various *Collective Agreements*. The determination of which agreement applies to you is dependent on which sector you work in, or if you work for a special industry partner.

You can contact your union and it will provide you with a copy of the *Collective Agreement* that applies to you, or you can use **Ontario's Collective Agreements e-Library**.



Collective Bargaining

