

BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY, TOBACCO WORKERS AND GRAIN MILLERS INTERNATIONAL UNION

BCTGM
News

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ORGANIZE.



the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Organizing, Solidarity and **FIGHT:**

THE BCTGM WAY

Back in the early 2000's, I remember working on an organizing campaign with John Price, who would later become the Director of Organization for the BCTGM International Union. At the time, he was an International Representative and one of the best organizers we had in the field.

I was always impressed by the way John would interact with non-union workers, telling them honestly and earnestly about the benefits of belonging to the BCTGM and why it was important not just for their workplace—but for the larger labor movement in North America. John could make such a compelling case for non-union workers to join the BCTGM because he honestly believed that no worker should be without a Union. He felt a responsibility to explain the benefits to all workers in a way they could understand.

On December 2, 2024 Brother Price passed away, leaving behind a legacy that will be tough to match. John may be gone, but the lessons he taught everyone around him can help guide us in our attempts to build and strengthen this great Union.

It is with John in mind that we are going to intensify our organizing efforts, try new tactics and utilize new technologies to grow our Union density.

To start with, BCTGM International Secretary-Treasurer David Woods has taken on the responsibilities of Organizing Director. He has hit the ground running and already contacted every Local Union about internal and external organizing opportunities.

Secondly, we are going to galvanize our organizing efforts in Right-to-Work (for Less) states where we have BCTGM members working side by side with non-members. Every worker who benefits from a Union contract should be paying their fair share and belong to the Union.

No one knows the benefits of belonging to the BCTGM better than our own members. Seniority, scheduling and hours of work are

all protected. Annual wage increases: protected. Retirement security: protected. Holidays and vacations: protected.

As such, no one can explain those benefits to non-union workers in our plants better than our own members. We want every single one of our members spreading the word about the BCTGM.

Next, we are going to conduct an “organizing blitz” across North America. I want every worker in our industries to know that the BCTGM is the Union for them. We will promote this Union from small towns to big cities and everywhere in between.


We will be mobilizing the latest technologies, our International Staff and our Local Unions in these efforts.

Our industries are changing. Companies that were dominant twenty years ago have disappeared, or been merged into other companies. Automation and bad trade laws have closed plants.

Organizing new members, growing our union density and restoring our power at the bargaining table must be our highest priority.


The challenges are many, but just like our Brother John Price used to say, “the BCTGM has never backed down from a fight.”

—Anthony Shelton, BCTGM International President



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IN MEMORIAM

BCTGM INTERNATIONAL
DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZATION

John Price

April 25, 1960 - December 2, 2024

The BCTGM International Union is saddened to announce the passing of BCTGM International Director of Organization John Price, who died on December 2, 2024. He was 64.

John was a tireless organizer and someone who never backed down from a challenge, particularly if there was an opportunity to bring new members into the BCTGM.

John began his Union career in 1979, as a member of BCTGM Local 6 employed at Bake Rite Rolls in Philadelphia. He was hired by the International Union as an Organizer in February 1990, and became a Region Two (now East-Central) International Representative in September 1990.

In 2013, John was named Director of Organization by International President David B. Durkee—a position he held until his passing.

John dedicated his entire working life to the BCTGM and was a good friend and Union Brother to many. He will be remembered in this Union for his unrelenting energy and enormous passion for unionizing workers across the U.S. and Canada.

He will be deeply missed.



Training BCTGM Local Union leaders at an Organizing Conference in 2018.



PHOTO CREDIT: ANTHONY DOWNING

Rallying to save our pensions in Columbus, Ohio on July 13, 2018.



Celebrating the 2002 Organizing Victory at Rich Products in Murfreesboro, Tenn. Workers in this facility would become members of BCTGM Local 25 (Chattanooga, Tenn.).

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: STEWAR

With the passage of time, the needs of workers and workplaces alike are ever-changing. The only way to stay at the forefront of this change is to gather often and learn together.

The BCTGM prides itself on its commitment to education. In 2024, the International Union co-sponsored 36 Local Union training programs involving over 850 shop stewards and officers from 44 Local Unions.



Local 196T (Owensboro, Ky.)

Taught by: Tobacco Sector International Representatives Randy Fulk and Derrick Byrd

Number of Students: 22

Shop Covered: Swedish Match

Local 37 (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Taught by: Western Region International Representative Karrie Setters

Number of Students: 18

Shops Covered: Von's, Vie de France, Bimbo Bakeries, Sugar Foods, Stater Bros., Western Bagel, General Mills and Franz.



Local 111 (Dallas)

Taught by: Southern Region International Representative Jason Thomas

Number of Students: 48

Shops Covered: Ardent Mills, Dallas Shipping, Mondelēz and others around Rockwall, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Grand Prairie and Arlington, Texas.



STUDENTS TRAIN FROM COAST TO COAST

The International provides resources and materials for these trainings, which are taught by highly capable International Vice Presidents and International Representatives in the field

with the support of Local Union leaders.

Below are classroom scenes and group photos from various steward and leadership trainings in the last half of 2024.

Local 358 (Richmond, Va.)

Taught by: East-Central Region International Representatives Jared Cummings and Chuck Reeves

Number of Students: 34

Shops Covered: Mondelēz, C.F. Sauers, UNFI, Porex and Supra-Strip.



Local 68 (Baltimore)

Taught by: East-Central Region Vice President Roger Miller, Local 68 Business Manager/Financial Secretary Gary Oskoian

Number of Students: 31

Shops Covered: Automatic Rolls, H&S Bakery, Mid-Atlantic, Bakery Express, Canteen Vending, Crispy Bagel, Schmidt, Bimbo Bakeries and Giant Food.

Local 42 (Atlanta)

Taught by: Southern Region International Representative Darrell Copeland

Number of Students: 28

Shops Covered: Golden State Foods, Pilgrim's Pride, Vie de France, Bimbo Bakeries, Treehouse and Sonoco.



Local 317T (Greensboro, N.C.)

Taught by: Tobacco Sector International Representatives Randy Fulk and Derrick Byrd

Number of Students: 18

Shops Covered: ITG Brands locations in Greensboro, N.C. and Danville, Va.

BCTGM Members Offer Worker-Friendly Legislative Priorities for a New U.S. Congress

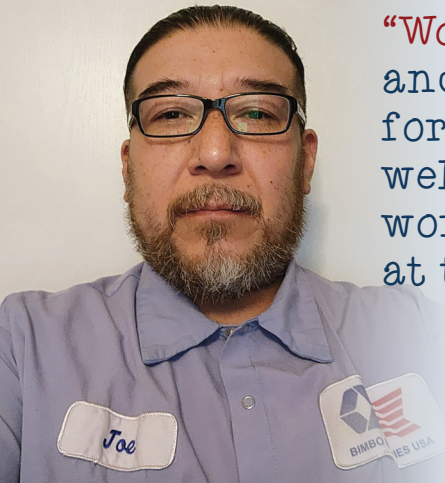
Regardless of who is in the White House—or which political party holds power in Congress—the BCTGM has a duty to advocate for legislation that benefits workers and their families.

According to BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton, the Union’s policy has always been to listen to the needs of the membership.

“In all my years in the field working with Local Union members, the priorities of workers have seldom changed,” Shelton says. “Our members want a good quality job that provides for them and their family. They want to retire with dignity and security, and they want a safe workplace so that they can make it to that retirement in good health.”

On these pages, BCTGM members tell the International Union what they want prioritized in the 119th Congress. **For more content like this, follow the BCTGM on Facebook, X, Instagram and bctgm.org.**

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY



“Workplace safety laws and regulations are crucial for ensuring employee well-being and facilitating workers’ safe return home at the end of each day.”

— **Jose Martinez**, Chief Shop Steward, BCTGM Local 37 (Los Angeles, Calif.); Bimbo Bakeries U.S.A.

“Better safety laws. Employees should not feel intimidated to report an unsafe working condition, especially if it affects production. Workers should not have to fear retaliation for refusing to do work that feels unsafe to them.”

— **Luke Gronwald**, Union Safety Coordinator, BCTGM Local 100G (Cedar Rapids, Iowa); Ingredion, Inc.

RETIREMENT SECURITY

“Without Social Security senior citizens would be in a constant financial strain that could cause them to suffer hunger, mental distress or homelessness.”

— **Maybel Thomas**, BCTGM Local 84 (Columbus, Ga.); J.M. Smucker



STRONGER LABOR LAWS



“The NLRB should have more accountability for companies that break our contracts, instead of just leaving it to the Union to go to arbitration.”

— **Sue Watanabe**, BCTGM Local 22 (Minneapolis, Minn.); Cub Foods

“It is important to fight for better organizing protections because many of us were born workers, we’re going to die workers and no one should have to be a NON-UNION worker! There is no substitute for hard work—and there is no substitute for fair pay and good benefits in return.”

— **Aaron Reddick**, BCTGM Local 232 (Phoenix); Bimbo Bakeries U.S.A.

“Affordable Healthcare. Too many working-class people have medical insurance but still can’t afford to go to the doctor.”

— **Tony Smith**, BCTGM Local 22 (Minneapolis, Minn.); Dakota Growers Pasta



“We need trade laws that protect domestic industries like candy and baking. Laws that preserve national security while raising living standards for Americans.”

— **Adalberto Coron**, BCTGM Local 83 (San Leandro, Calif.); See’s Candies

FIX BROKEN TRADE LAWS



“We need better trade laws that will help protect U.S. workers’ benefits and jobs, while leveling the playing field with foreign countries so that they must work and compete on the same level that we are at.”

— **Robert Hunter**, BCTGM Local 118 (Washington, D.C.); Safeway

Building our UNION CULTURE with INTERNAL ORGANIZING

Internal Organizing is fundamentally about building a union culture in your workplace where, when given the choice to belong or opt out of the Union, workers would ultimately desire to be a part of it.

This is different than the external act of going into facilities where there is no Union and attempting to organize one. It is about protecting what we already have, according to BCTGM International Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization David Woods. "Internal Organizing is an essential part of Union stewardship, but Right-to-Work (for Less) laws have made it imperative to our very survival," he says.

Right-to-Work legislation makes it illegal for a Union to require membership as a term of employment at a unionized facility. "That makes it harder to sign up new hires," Woods adds, "but the

further hardship is that those who choose to opt out still must receive the same representation as the dues-paying Union members."

The slow decline in Union membership over the last century falls directly in line with more and more states adopting Right-to-Work (for Less) legislation. In those states, Unions have fewer resources and must work twice as hard to educate workers on the benefits of belonging.

Currently, 26 states in the U.S. are Right-to-Work (for Less), and on February 12, 2025 Kentucky Senator Rand Paul reintroduced his **National Right-to-Work Act** calling for enactment of the law at the federal level.

"The surest way to strengthen our Local Unions against the rising threat of Right-to-Work is to maintain strong, diligent Internal Organizing programs," Woods asserts.

On these pages, BCTGM Local Unions share how they are doing that in the Right-to-Work states of Kansas, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Indiana.

CHANTEL MENDENHALL, BUSINESS AGENT

BCTGM Local 218 (Kansas City, Mo.)

Serving in Right-to-Work State: Kansas

Right-to-Work Since: November 4, 1958

"In right-to-work Kansas, educating non-members is the best way to grow our membership. Most often, people do not

even understand what a Union is or how having one betters the workplace. Explaining that the contract came about through YEARS of struggle also goes a long way. Our biggest hurdle is those

who say, 'why bother paying when the Union has to represent me whether I pay dues or not?' We do our best to inform those people that they only have a voice in what goes into the contract if they become a dues paying member."

Internal Organizing strategies: Keep a booth in the break room to talk to new hires and non-members about joining, monthly drawings for prizes (one for current members who inspired a new member to join, and one for the new members who turned in an application that month), give every new member a free BCTGM Local 218 tee shirt once their Union card comes in.



Sarah Hosler and Eugene Geurink



Esther Fanning and Katelin Thurman

KARLOS BROTHERS, PRESIDENT
DARIAN HAGGINS, VICE PRESIDENT

BCTGM Local 366G (Oklahoma City, Okla.)
Serving in Right-to-Work State: Oklahoma
Right-to-Work Since: September 26, 2001

Karlos: “We have been strategic with our Union apparel, making sure we offer things that the younger generations will find trendy and really want to wear. It makes them feel like they are a part of something—like a brother/sisterhood.”

Darian: “Apparel can serve a dual purpose, too. For instance, we have a lot of hunters who work in our plant, so they like wearing the camo printed apparel, but

we also used that to put the company on alert when it was time to go into negotiations. The Union members all stood outside the plant with a Union banner early that first morning wearing our camo gear. It made the membership feel empowered, and also signaled to the company that we were prepared to go to battle for what we deserve.”

Internal Organizing strategies: Memorable Union apparel, member and shop steward training, informational packets and solidarity events (such as rallying with Starbucks and Amazon workers).



Karlos Brothers and Darian Haggins

ROB GASKINS, BUSINESS AGENT

BCTGM Local 57 (Columbus, Ohio)
Serving in Right-to-Work State: Kentucky
Right-to-Work Since: January 7, 2017

“The education we provide is the same from state to state, however, there definitely is a notable difference going from closed-shop Ohio to Right-to-Work Kentucky. Ohio is more Union-friendly when it comes to being able to recruit new hires into the Union. With that said, our biggest shop in Kentucky is Bimbo Bakery in London. Due to historically strong leadership among the shop stewards, we have been able to maintain 100% membership in that facility.”

Internal Organizing strategies: New hire orientations, member-to-member education, informational packets, Union branded apparel and other products.



Rob Gaskins

CLINTON LATHROP, BUSINESS AGENT

BCTGM Local 372A (Indianapolis, Ind.)
Serving in Right-to-Work State: Indiana
Right-to-Work Since: February 1, 2012

“We try to remember that new hires are walking into a contract not having any context for how we got here. I take the time to explain to them that we had to fight for everything we have to this point. We can make changes to it together, but we can only do that if we have the participation and solidarity of everybody.”

Internal Organizing strategies: New hire orientations, member and shop steward training, community service, involvement with the Hoosier Heartland Labor Federation, Union branded apparel and other products.



Clint Lathrop (right) with L. 372A Chf. Stw. Scott Sutton (left) and Member Baldwin White (center).

LISTEN TO THIS ON OUR PODCAST!

EPISODE 38: HOW BCTGM LOCAL UNIONS ARE INSULATING THEIR UNION CULTURE IN RIGHT-TO-WORK STATES

SCAN TO LISTEN ▶▶▶

“the **BCTGM VOICES** project”



Celebrating *Milestones*, ho

Being a member of the BCTGM is an honor and a commitment that extends beyond personal benefits.

It means standing in solidarity with fellow workers, united by a shared vision of justice, dignity and respect in the workplace. It often

means having difficult conversations about what to fight for in contract negotiations, and always means having each other's back when it is time to take action.

The workers on this page have given decades of their life to that honorable task.

Tony Levell (center) first joined BCTGM Local 372A (Indianapolis, Ind.) in 1975 while working at ADM in Beech Grove, Ind. Levell is shown here receiving his 50-year award from Local 372A Business Agent Clinton Lathrop (left) and Chief Shop Steward Eric Ahlgrim (right).



Lester McGowan, a member of BCTGM Local 256G (Sharonville, Ohio), is the most senior employee in all of General Mills Worldwide!

McGowan is a forklift driver with 58 years of service with General Mills and the BCTGM.



Chicago Nabisco Women Celebrate 30 Years

The women of BCTGM Local 1 (Chicago) celebrated 30 years in style—coming to work in matching t-shirts emblazoned with the phrase, “This is how good you can look after 30 years of service!”

Member April Flowers-Lewis said of this milestone, “We have come so far and worked so hard. We used to hand-pack the product, and now

we have machinery to pack it for us. We have seen supervisors retire and some get fired; seen the south side [Nabisco Plant] shut down and the north side keep standing; and we were here when Nabisco became ‘Mondelēz.’”

Pivoting to their sisterhood, she reflects, “we have seen the best and the worst, accomplished a lot, raised our families, seen our kids have kids and more.”



Rugina Smith, Tracey Whitehead and Tanya Jenkins



April Flowers-Lewis



Elvira Sosa, Sally Rivera and Maria Ortega

honoring Union *Commitment*

They are part of a legacy of BCTGM members who fought for rights and protections within our good BCTGM contracts that we often take for granted today.

These workers know that being part of a Union is not just about what is gained

individually—it is about contributing to the ongoing struggle for justice and equality in the workforce. The BCTGM thanks these dedicated members for paving the way for future generations of workers to bargain and build upon for many years to come.



Robert Scott (holding certificate) is a Checker/Loader at the Bimbo West Sacramento Distribution Center who recently reached 50 years with BCTGM Local 85 (Fresno, Calif.). Scott is pictured with fellow members (L to R) Fitzgerald “Fitz” Davis, Myron Mausisa, Jason Osorio, Robert Smith, Local 85 Financial Secretary Jerry Gil, William “Chad” Tyler, Keysha Young and Eligió “Eli” Ramirez.



Bob Alin has reached his 50-year milestone with BCTGM Local 358 (Richmond, Va). He is shown (center) with Local 358 President Keith Bragg, Sr. (left) and Financial Secretary Darlene Carpenter (right), after receiving his award from International Secretary-Treasurer David Woods and his East-Central Region Vice President Roger Miller at a union meeting last September.

BCTGM’s Longest Serving International President Reaches 50 Years

International President Anthony Shelton (left) and Secretary-Treasurer David Woods (right) presented retired BCTGM International President Frank Hurt (center) with his 50-year membership certificate and gold card at his home in Columbus, Ohio.

Hurt first became a member of BCTGM Local 57 (Columbus, Ohio) in 1972, as an employee at Kroger Bakery. He retired in 2012 after serving for 20 years as the International Union president—the longest that any one person has ever held that position.

Hurt continues to be a dues paying member of the BCTGM.



Progressive Values meet Union Artistry **AT SCHNUCK'S MARKET BAKERY**

From a single, small confectionery in 1939, Schnuck's Markets, Inc. has grown into a leading regional supermarket chain with 115 stores in Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin.

BCTGM Local 4 (St. Louis, Mo.) members at Schnuck's Market Bakery in St. Louis are behind the cakes and other sweet goods that get shipped to the chain's retail grocery stores for sale.

"Our members not only bake the cakes in this facility, they elaborately decorate them," says Midwest Region BCTGM International Representative Jason Davis.

Davis accompanied Local 4 Financial Secretary/Business Manager Josh Camden for a service visit to the bakery in January. According to Davis, Schnuck's was ramping up its production of King Cakes to prepare for Mardi Gras. "The work that goes on here is highly specialized and takes considerable artistic talents," he added.

According to Camden, progressive values may be at the heart of that artistic skill. "Schnucks was recognized as one of America's Greatest Workplaces for Diversity by Newsweek last year," Camden points out. "You can see that when looking around the bakery, but also in the unique, quality products the Union bakers put out."

In addition to creative seasonal items, the Local 4 members at Schnuck's put out a daily supply of muffins and other sweet goods for sale across the company's Midwest retail stores.



Tom McCaleb



Nikki Cox and Donna Pressley



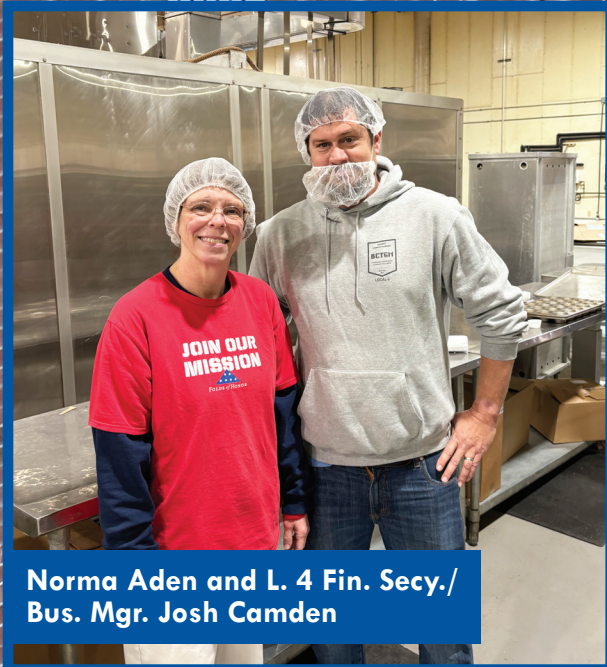
Mike Cobb



L. 4 Fin. Secy./Bus. Mgr. Josh Camden and Antoine Carrol



Myra Graham



Norma Aden and L. 4 Fin. Secy./ Bus. Mgr. Josh Camden



Stacey Tolbert



L. 4 Fin. Secy./Bus. Mgr. Josh Camden, Portia Williams and Hussein Muhammad



L. 4 Chf. Stw. Anthony Foster and Fin. Secy./Bus. Mgr. Josh Camden

STRIKES SETTLED in Buffalo, N.Y. and Springfield, Ore.

170 members of BCTGM Local 36G (Buffalo, N.Y.) at J.M. Smucker-owned Milk-Bone voted to ratify a new collective bargaining agreement on December 18, bringing an end to their strike that began on October 28.

The union members stood strong for eight weeks against an increased cost to their health care, low wages and the company's blatant disrespect for the law and its employees.

In the end, their resolve secured a record wage increase over the course of the three-year contract. The workers received a signing bonus and holiday bonus to ease the transition back to work in time for the holidays. Most importantly, the health care plan will remain affordable and the workers secured cost certainty for the duration of the contract.

Reflecting on the vote to accept the new agreement, BCTGM International President Anthony Shelton stated, "I am proud of the tenacity of our striking members at Milk-Bone and commend the Union negotiating committee for its



commitment to achieving a fair and just contract for the members of Local 36G. The members went out as one, uplifted one another throughout, and will come back to work as one."

Local 36G members received tremendous support from BCTGM Local Unions throughout North America, the upstate New York labor community and the AFL-CIO and allied organizations. "The solidarity of the Labor Movement was vital to this victory, as it always is," President Shelton asserted.

BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.) members who work at the Franz Bakery in Springfield voted to accept a new collective bargaining agreement on November 21. Approval of the contract ended the BCTGM's strike at the bakery which began on October 31.

The new three-year agreement features an historic wage increase, retroactive pay, maintenance of health benefits and retirement improvements.

"Our entire Union commends and thanks the Franz members who stood strong in this fight," President Shelton reflected. "BCTGM Local 114 embodies the principle that this Union will do what it takes to preserve a high standard of living for BCTGM families."

BCTGM Local Unions represent other Franz-owned bakeries in Oregon, California and Washington, and a number of those facilities will



be negotiating new contracts in the year ahead.

According to BCTGM Western Region Vice President Shad Clark, members at those facilities have taken note of the actions of their fellow members in Springfield. "It is my hope that Franz management will come into future negotiations recognizing the importance and dedication of their workforce, and address workers' issues and concerns in a reasonable and fair way," Clark said.

The BCTGM Power/Union Plus Auto Buying Service

Your Union benefits can help with the purchase of your next car with the BCTGM Power/Union Plus Auto Buying Service, powered by TrueCar.

Research and compare American-made, Union-made vehicles from top manufacturers and get rebates and post-sale benefits.



Take advantage of your exclusive union member benefits:

- \$100 rebate on new union-made cars.
- Remote paperwork and vehicle delivery options available.
- Enjoy up to \$2,000 in Auto Repair and Auto Deductible Reimbursements.
- Ready to sell your car? Get a cash offer from a local dealer in minutes.

Visit: unionplus.org/benefits/home-auto/auto-buying

Get a \$100 rebate on a new union-made car when you purchase using the Union Plus Member Auto Buying Service.

Consider one of these union-made bestsellers:

Jeep Grand Cherokee
Ram 1500
Chevrolet Equinox
Ford F-150
Chevrolet Silverado
Ford Escape
Ford Explorer
Chevrolet Traverse



MORE INFO: unionplus.org/benefits/home-auto/auto-buying

YOUR ORGANIZING RESOURCE: bctgm.org/ORGANIZE



BCTGM Local Unions throughout North America negotiate collective bargaining agreements that guarantee workers annual wage increases, affordable health insurance, seniority, a comprehensive job bidding procedure and retirement security.

Union density is the key to these strong contracts. The more members the BCTGM has in a singular facility, or within the same company across different locations in North America, the more leverage Union members have at the bargaining table.

Simply put:
Organizing is the lifeblood of our movement!

BCTGM.ORG/ORGANIZE is a great resource for getting workers started:

Access step-by-step 'How to Organize':

From talking to co-workers to forming a committee, workers interested in joining the BCTGM can read through the process and begin the early stages of preparing for an Organizing campaign.

Know your Rights:

Organizing can be intimidating, especially when workers face the possibility of paid Union-busting campaigns and relentless intimidation from their employer. Help workers interested in unionizing by arming them with this valuable resource.

Contact an Organizer:

Workers become prepared in their own time, but they always have access to this completely anonymous online contact form when they are ready to move forward.

Help a worker
get started
NOW at



bctgm.org/ORGANIZE