

## 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 that are actually relevant to our day-to-day work.

- The AFT offers dozens of courses featuring cutting-edge experts and frontline educators who know firsthand what goes on in classrooms every day; each is rooted in evidence-based educational, cognitive and social science research. New teachers can learn classroom management basics, and educators with all levels of experience can pick up valuable skills for behavior management, differentiated instruction, best uses for assessments, supporting social and emotional well-being and more.
- 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.
- The AFT's Teacher Leaders Program supports small groups of educators as they 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.



Our union membership also offers benefits through Union Plus, including credit card and insurance discounts and savings on everything from flowers and footwear 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 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](https://aft.org/education) and [aft.org/member-benefits](https://aft.org/member-benefits).)

## Building a unified community

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

## Join the union today!



*A Union of Professionals*

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO  
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Washington, DC 20001  
202-879-4400



# Why organize with the AFT?

# Why belong to the AFT?



*A Union of Professionals*

**AFT Teachers**

“The AFT is the home of the people who make a difference in other people’s lives: 1.7 million educators and support personnel, healthcare workers and public employees fighting and caring about what kids and communities need. Showing up when it counts. Taking on the extremists who want to destroy public education, dismantle our democracy, defund public services, demonize the vulnerable—and the privatizers who are more concerned about healthcare profits than patients.

“So if you want respect on the job, a voice in our democracy or simply better pay, then join a union. That’s our job—fighting for a better life for all. If you want the respect and resources to do your chosen work and your best work in a safe and welcoming environment, join the AFT. If you want to protect your professionalism and the future of your profession, join the AFT. If you want to fight for the good of our students, patients and communities, join the AFT. And if you want to defend our democracy and ensure everyone has the freedom to thrive, join the AFT.



“We’ve got your back. We see you. And we know that in this world of fear and despair, the road to a better future is our unity. Together, we can accomplish what is impossible alone.”

—Randi Weingarten  
AFT President

## What’s a union? And why a union?

A union is a group of workers who join together to support each other on the job, 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.

*Without* a union:

- We have little decision-making power over working and learning conditions.
- If we advocate as individuals, we might be labeled “problems” or “troublemakers.”
- We can find it intimidating to raise concerns about workplace problems or ask for more pay.
- Our pay, benefits and workplace policies can change on a dime and aren’t necessarily fair or consistent.
- We don’t have strong processes to address health and safety risks that can occur in schools, from poor air and water quality to gun violence.



*With* a union:

- We have the power and voice to advocate for what our students need to thrive.
- We advocate together for the tools and resources we need.
- We have a built-in support system at our worksite.
- We negotiate a legally binding union contract that spells out fair pay, benefits, working conditions and workplace rights.
- We can make our schools safer and healthier, whether it’s through gun violence prevention, “green” cleaning programs or indoor air quality improvements.

## Why the AFT?

The AFT is 1.7 million education, healthcare professionals and public employees strong. That’s a lot of people fighting side by side for working families! What unites us is our purpose: We fight for and win contracts, policies and legislation centered on our students, patients and communities. We use our collective strength to demand investments in the American people and promote the essentials of a better life for everyone.

The AFT is the principled, fearless union ready to go to the mat for what our profession and our community need. **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

Employers may tell us that the union is an “outsider.” But the fact is, when we form a union with the AFT, we’re in charge. We determine our own priorities, negotiate our own contract and vote for leaders from our own ranks. And when needed, we have assistance and backup from the national AFT and our AFT state federation, which provide staff, resources and expertise on organizing, bargaining, mobilizing and connecting with our communities.

All members are empowered to:

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



## If we WANT...

- The resources we need to do our jobs
- Safe and healthy schools and welcoming environments
- A real voice in workplace decision-making
- Less paperwork and fewer tests
- Fair and transparent salaries and pay for extra duties
- A mutually supportive community of colleagues

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

We’re proud of the work we do. But let’s face it, sometimes our work can be challenging, and we don’t always have the resources and support we need to do our best. We want to build a strong foundation for our students, but we need reliable tools and a voice in how that foundation is built.

*Alone, we can’t win all these things. Together as a union, we can.*