

# OPEIU *on the move!*

Since 1945 the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) has stood at the forefront of the movement to organize professional workers, helping them attain the wages, benefits and workplace conditions all working people need and deserve.

OPEIU nurses, clerks, teachers, pilots, umpires, engineers, accountants, librarians, podiatrists and bank tellers, as well as tech, museum, nonprofit

and university employees, government and manufacturing workers and many others are leading the fight for a decent standard of living in the industries we work in — industries affecting our lives and the well-being of our communities.

Nearly 80 years ago, we received our charter from the American Federation of Labor, establishing what was then called OEIU as the premier union for professional working people. Today, the approximately 100,000 members of OPEIU work throughout the United States and Canada.

OPEIU's demonstrated, decades-long commitment to working people in professional, technical and clerical roles is embodied by our democratic structure and is driven, as any union should be, by members like you.

A new economy has created new problems requiring new solutions. Thanks to the work of OPEIU members, stewards and representatives, however, OPEIU is fortunate to have renewed energy to combat the many issues facing working people.

As we emerge from the worst depths of the Covid-19 pandemic, inequality defines our economy now more than ever. Thanks to actions approved during our last convention, however, OPEIU continues its commitment to organizing the unorganized and raising living standards and the quality of life for all working people. OPEIU is truly on the move!

**1906**

The American Federation of Labor (AFL) issues its first federal clerical charter to a local union — Stenographers, Typists, Bookkeepers and Assistants, Federal Labor Union No. 11587, which becomes Office Employees International Union (OEIU) Local 1 in 1945.

**1935**

*In the throes of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs into law the National Labor Relations Act, which extends collective bargaining and organizing rights to millions of workers in the private sector, though it excludes many professions held by women and people of color to appease white Southern Dixiecrats.*



**1941**

The union's first organizing director, Henderson B. Douglas, on the stump organizing for the union.

**1943**

The first issue of *The Office Worker* (which becomes *White Collar* and is now known as *OPEIU Connect*) is published in March. The International Council opens its first office in Washington, D.C.



**1945**

On January 8, AFL President William Green officially issues a charter to the Office Employees International Union, which begins with 22,000 members meeting for the first convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. Ninety delegates attend from 54 local unions. Paul Hutchings is elected first president of OEIU and Howard Hicks is elected secretary-treasurer.

**1937**

Several locals are chartered by the AFL, including ones in New York City (which would later become Local 153), Los Angeles (Local 30) and Chicago (Local 28). At the AFL Convention in Denver, the American Federation of Office Employees International Council — a loose organization of the newly chartered locals — is created.



**1929**

*The Great Depression begins, disrupting the global economy, leaving working people across the world in a persistent state of precariousness and poverty.*

**1947**

*Congress overrides President Harry Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act, which severely restricts many of the rights granted to working people by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. The anti-union bill, passed in concert by lawmakers in both parties to rein in workers' power, allowed states to enact so-called "right-to-work" laws, forced union officers to sign non-communist affidavits with the federal government and heavily restricted legal rights of strikers.*

**1951**

The first-ever written International union contract is reached with the Tennessee Valley Authority, a federally owned corporation created to provide flood control, electricity and economic development to the Tennessee Valley during and after the Great Depression.

**1965**

At its 10th Convention in San Francisco, OEIU changes its name to the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU). Delegates vote to create an International strike fund.

**1968**

*Dr. King is assassinated while standing in solidarity with striking AFSCME sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee.*



**1970**

*200,000 postal workers stun the nation by going on an illegal, but effective, strike for higher wages and better working conditions. Bowing to pressure, President Nixon signs the Postal Reorganization Act, granting full collective bargaining rights to postal workers across the U.S.*

**1980**

OPEIU holds its 15th Convention in New York City, where John Kelly is elected president.

**1981**

*President Ronald Reagan, a former union president himself, fires 13,000 striking air traffic controllers in PATCO, emboldening employers, industry groups and anti-union politicians to launch sustained attacks on labor unions nationwide. Subsequent research determines Reagan's actions resulted in lower wages for union and nonunion workers as bargaining power declined.*

**1963**

*President John F. Kennedy, who by executive order the previous year recognized federal employees' right to bargain collectively, is assassinated in Dallas, Texas.*



**1953**

*U.S. union density reaches an all-time high; about 35 percent of all U.S. workers are union members.*



**1954**

The first issue of *White Collar* is published.

**1955**



The union holds its convention in New York City, where the International headquarters are moved. *The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations merge after a nearly two-decade-long split over strategic differences, forming the AFL-CIO.*

**1957**

OPEIU wins a Supreme Court case on behalf of Local 46 guaranteeing the right to bargain. The union records membership of more than 50,000 members. The International Pension Fund is established.

**1959**

*The Landrum-Griffin Act is signed into law. Its provisions require unions to submit annual financial reports to the Department of Labor, prevents communists and those with felony convictions from holding union office (the former was ruled unconstitutional in 1965), and guarantees to union members a bill of rights.*

**1962**

Former President Truman addresses OPEIU delegates.



**1961**

The union's political action fund, Voice of the Electorate (VOTE), is established.

**2001**

The Industrial Technical Professional Employees Union (ITPEU) affiliates in July, becoming ITPEU/OPEIU Local 4873.

**1995**

OPEIU celebrates its 50th birthday. The Federation of Catholic Teachers (FCT), comprised of 3,000 teachers within the Archdiocese of New York, affiliates with Local 153.

**2003**

Nancy Wohlforth is named OPEIU secretary-treasurer, becoming the first openly gay woman to hold international office in any U.S. labor union.

**1987**

A sex discrimination lawsuit filed by OPEIU in 1984 leads to a settlement in which thousands of female OPEIU members at the Tennessee Valley Authority receive a total of \$5 million in pay equity raises.

**1994**

Michael Goodwin is elected OPEIU president, a position he holds until his retirement in 2015.



**1997**

Thousands of podiatrists form within OPEIU the first-ever American union for doctors, known as The First National Guild for Healthcare Providers of the Lower Extremity/OPEIU Guild 45.

**2006**

The first helicopter pilot strike in history begins on Sept. 20, involving hundreds of pilots employed by PHI, Inc. in Lafayette, Louisiana, and represented by Local 108.

## 2009

*The Employee Free Choice Act—which would have made card check, rather than National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) elections, the standard for union representation certification—fails narrowly in the Senate, in part due to the Obama administration's lack of vocal support. It also would have strengthened enforcement mechanisms against employers' unfair labor practices.*

## 2010

Mary Mahoney is named OPEIU secretary-treasurer, a position she holds to this day.



The Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA) affiliates with OPEIU, adding 4,000 nursing professionals to our ranks, becoming HNA/OPEIU Local 50, as Hawai'i is the 50th state.

The Association of Minor League Umpires (AMLU) overwhelmingly votes to affiliate with OPEIU, becoming AMLU/OPEIU Guild 322.



## 2015

Richard Lanigan is named the fifth president of OPEIU, a position he holds to this day.

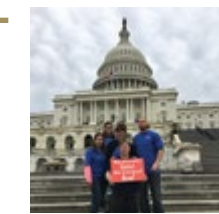
## 2016

Local 8 joins historic Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions.



## 2017

The OPEIU Nurses Council lobbies for safe nurse-to-patient staffing ratios on Capitol Hill.



OPEIU extends its defense fund benefit to furloughed government employees and introduces new identity protection benefit for all members.

## 2020



*Covid-19 is declared a worldwide pandemic.* OPEIU members across industries work tirelessly, at great personal risk, as essential workers providing critical services throughout the uncertainty of the pandemic's first year. Nurses, medical staff, radiology and lab technologists, search and rescue helicopter pilots, nonprofit workers and other essential workers face an array of challenges posed by the growing crisis.

*The World Health Organization (WHO) designates 2020 as the "Year of the Nurse and Midwife," in honor of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, considered the founder of modern nursing.* OPEIU represents approximately 27,000 nurses and other health care professionals in local unions across the U.S. who serve on the front line of the pandemic.

Kickstarter employees win an NLRB election, becoming the first wall-to-wall tech company to unionize in U.S. history. The group, Kickstarter United, joins Local 153.



Employees of Eagle Pro Clean at the Biggs Army Airfield in El Paso, Texas, form a union with Local 4873 in June.



## 2019

OPEIU expands in the nonprofit sector by launching Nonprofit Employees United, a central hub for existing and new members to coordinate, educate and strategize.



Employees at BookPeople, Texas' largest independent bookstore, vote to join Local 277.



OPEIU launches its National Retirement Savings Plan, a 401(k) option for members.

*The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, a transformational labor law reform bill, is first introduced in Congress by Rep. Bobby Scott and Sen. Patty Murray.*

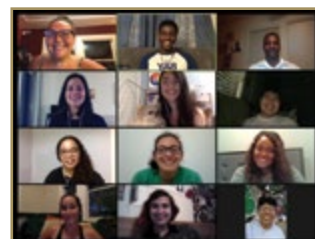


## 2018

OPEIU members gather in Memphis in May to honor civil rights leader and champion of workers' rights, Dr. King.



OPEIU launches the Apprentice Organizer Program, devoting significant resources to the goal of organizing the unorganized—a program that has brought membership growth and new energy to OPEIU and its local unions.



Nonprofit employees across the U.S. continue to organize and win strong contracts with OPEIU, including those at LYRIC who form a union with Local 29 and Crisis Connection who join Local 8.



OPEIU conducts its first-ever national member survey to democratically guide the union's presidential endorsement process. Members list handling the Covid-19 pandemic as their most pressing concern heading into the 2020 elections.

*Joe Biden is elected as the 46th president and Kamala Harris is elected as the first woman vice president of the U.S.*

## 2021

In January, OPEIU launches Tech Workers Union Local 1010, an arm of the union with a mission to raise industry standards and provide all tech workers a better future in their workplaces through collective bargaining.



Code for America staff join Local 1010, becoming first "civic tech" union in the U.S.

OPEIU's 401(k) plan reaches \$100 million in assets.

Employees at Augsburg University make history by forming a union with Local 12, making them the first unionized professional staff at a private university in Minnesota.



*The PRO Act is introduced in Congress for a second time.*

Employees at Secretly Group, a family of American independent record labels based in Bloomington, Indiana, win voluntary recognition of their union with Local 174. The group becomes the first-ever independent record label to unionize.



*Liz Shuler becomes the first woman to lead the AFL-CIO.*



Student workers overwhelmingly vote to join Local 153.



Kickstarter United ratifies a historic first contract.

*Union approval reaches a modern high—68 percent support unions and a majority of Americans report wanting a union in their workplace.*

In the wake of the Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, staff at Guttmacher Institute, the nation's foremost reproductive rights research institute, unionize with Local 153.



## 2022

After 68 years, OPEIU's magazine gets a new name, *OPEIU Connect*.

*NLRB elections are on the rise, outpacing the already underfunded NLRB's ability to efficiently process workers' election petitions. An AFL-CIO campaign leads to the agency receiving its first funding boost in more than a decade.*



Secretly staff win first union contract in indie music.

## 2023

*The PRO Act is renamed in honor of the late AFL-CIO President Richard L. Trumka and is reintroduced in Congress for a third time.*

In a major ruling, the NLRB states in *McLaren Macomb* employers may not offer severance agreements requiring employees to waive their labor law rights. Local 40 brought the case to the board on behalf of its nurses at the Michigan hospital.



Tufts University resident assistants overwhelmingly vote to join Local 153.

Workers at Bandcamp unionize with Local 1010.

OPEIU's 29th Convention is held in Philadelphia.

