



Union dues are a necessary part of operating a labor union. They are used for wages and benefits of staff, building and maintenance of the meeting hall, money for training the representatives and organizers, money for donations to charitable and youth organizations, funding for charitable projects and numerous other uses.

We are asked when we are organizing new members (and sometimes by our own members) "What do I get out of all those dues?" First and foremost, you have a fair and reasonable contract negotiated on your behalf. That goes hand-in-hand with the training issue for staff. The representatives have to be educated in labor law, how to negotiate effectively, skills needed for dealing with people and how to "read" different personalities. Many of these same areas have to be extended to the office staff as well; all phone calls and interactions with members and the general public can pose potential liabilities for the Local Union.

The unrepresented workers pay what we would call "non-Union dues"; they (typically) have to take money out-of-pocket for family health care, put money away for retirement, pay a considerable amount more for license related training, pay for tools (that our employers provide), and other things we take for granted.

The expenditure of your dues is closely regulated by the Department of Labor, the Bylaws that our members pass, the Executive Board, Business Manager/Financial Secretary and of course, we cannot forget the IRS. The Local Union finances are required by law to be public record; the Business Manager/Financial Secretary will disclose finances upon request.

Dues are comprised of three parts: Basic Dues, Working Dues and an assessment for the Electrical Industry Advancement Program (EIAP) or usually known as Market Recovery. Each of those sections will be discussed.

Basic Dues: Basic Dues are due and payable every month that you are a member; because of that, they are often *erroneously* referred to as "Non-Working Dues". The IO portion of those dues are set by the Constitution and can only be raised by an amendment passed at the International Convention by the delegates present. Those delegates are elected by the membership of the



individual Local Unions. As of January 2013, the International portion is \$30.00 per month for A members and \$15.00 per month for BA members forwarded to the International who uses it for such purposes as International recordkeeping, paying into the International Pension Benefit Fund in your name (A members only), paying wages and benefits of International officers and staff, maintaining the International office building and expenses.

Another portion of your Basic dues are for the Local Union. These parts can only be changed by an amendment to the Local Union Bylaws approved by members of the Local. This part of your dues is for the same purposes as the IO portion (except for pension). As an example, when you receive mail announcing social events, Bylaws meetings, voting on your CBA and other such information, your basic dues *help* to cover those costs. On the Local level, along with the death benefit portion, you pay into the jury duty fund. Unlike the International, your death benefit and jury duty assessment are shown as a separate item.

Your Basic Dues are due and payable, in advance, by the 7th of each month.

Working Dues: In accordance with the Bylaws, the amount of working dues varies based on the CBA you are working under. The "construction agreements" (Inside, Residential, Sound & Communications) pay 2.25% of gross earnings (Apprentices in these classifications pay 1%), other CBAs pay 1.5%. Why both Basic and Working Dues? When people are on the jobsite, the need for jobsite visits increases, the odds of a grievance being filed increases and the need for recordkeeping increases. Job site visits are needed for safety and compliance (i.e., drinking water, adequate restrooms, enough tools and ladders, etc.) and to make observations (that takes pressure off the journeyman to report such conditions). Grievance handling takes a considerable amount of time; investigation, correspondence, meetings. Recordkeeping includes compiling and sorting wage and fringe reports, eligibility for medical benefits, dispatching workers, and related paperwork. The amount of staff may need to increase in that a lot of representative and organizing job duties change depending on the number of members that are working. Working dues are now deducted directly from the check and forwarded to the Local Union.

E.I.A.P. EIAP or Electrical Industry Advancement Program is often referred to as "Market Recovery". The history of EIAP goes back many years to, at that time,



the worst recession seen in construction history since the Depression of the 1930s. Funds were needed for a joint effort of the NECA contractors to successfully bid work. Why did the IBEW agree to "pay" for them to get work? The premise is simple. If they have work that needs performed, they will hire IBEW electrical workers. The money was used primarily for job subsidies, in effect, workers paying themselves" for work performed. That may sound counter-intuitive, but that system allowed the contractors to keep the higher Union scale instead of lowering wages to compete successfully for available work. If the wages were lowered, the leaders of the IBEW then saw that it would be the proverbial "race to the bottom". That cycle would occur if we lowered wages in response to the unrepresented contractors lowering their workers' wages to get the work. Why does the Union still collect and/or pay market recovery during the periods of adequate even more than adequate work for our members? It was realized that it is easier to build a savings account when members are working! Just like your home budget, it is easier to save money when you have more money coming in.

How much is enough to save? The Local uses some of the money during times of full employment to break into new and/or markets that do not have much Union density. This is difficult at best. Our members may pass on the steady jobs in order to work overtime on larger jobs to be able to save more for the slack times. That is both good and bad. Non-Union employers build loyalty among themselves (sub-contractor) and the general contractors and developers. When large jobs are done and our members get laid off, that relationship on the non-union side remains in place. They continue doing the small work; we have no work. Therein lies the reason we need to collect market recovery funds during times of full employment. At that point it could be called market "securing" instead of "recovery". EIAP is deducted by your employer and forwarded to the Local Union.