

Illinois Education Association (IEA) Resources

IEA has a comprehensive program of services available to its members and local associations. Below is a brief description of these services.

UniServ Field Services

IEA affiliates receive direct assistance through their service regions. Each service region has approximately 1,200 members and a UniServ Director (professional field representative) who is directly responsible to the locals in that region. The UniServ Director's accountability to the locals is a direct result of IEA hiring practices.

When a UniServ vacancy occurs, a hiring committee, which consists of local leaders from the service region, interviews candidates. A new UniServ Director is not hired until a consensus has been reached by the hiring committee. Once hired, local leaders participate in regular evaluations of their UniServ Director's performance.

Since hiring decisions and evaluations are conducted by local leaders rather than the state organization, there is a great deal of accountability of IEA field staff at the local level.

Negotiations

A major responsibility of the regional UniServ Director is to assist locals with bargaining. However, the local association determines the role of the UniServ Director in the bargaining process. Most locals have the UniServ Director at the table.

Instead of a "one size fits all approach," IEA assists locals in developing a bargaining style that best suits your local needs. Many locals still use traditional positional bargaining. However, IEA has helped many of its affiliates develop an alternative collaborative approach called "interest based" negotiations. There are many variations of these two basic models of bargaining. Your local decides which approach to take.

Legal

IEA has 7 full-time attorneys on its staff, which enables it to deliver a level of legal service that few unions can match. Besides handling cases such as discipline and dismissals, arbitrations and unfair labor practices, IEA attorneys also work directly with local leaders. They conduct legal workshops and training programs for locals. They often meet with local leaders to provide advice and write legal opinions for affiliates. The IEA legal department also keeps local leaders apprised of the latest legal decisions through regular updates. *Being "in house," IEA legal staff is very accessible.*

IEA also has 8 "out of house" labor law firms on retainer to assist our legal staff with its caseload.

Health Insurance Consultant

IEA retains a professional insurance consultant to work with bargaining teams especially when the employer has threatened to reduce health benefits. The insurance consultant will analyze the local's current insurance policy and suggest ways to maintain or even improve coverage at a reasonable cost to the employer.

Political Action

Upon request, affiliates receive an annual \$2 per member rebate from the state for political action. Many locals use this money to lobby their governing boards. IEA assists its local affiliates developing strategies to influence board members. There is also a Government Relations Department staffed by lobbyists working to push legislators to honor their commitment to education.

Training Programs

Each year IEA and NEA host professional conferences and conduct leadership training programs for its locals. But, in order to reach its members across Illinois, IEA also provides comprehensive leadership training programs available as needed at the local level

Membership Benefits

Each year, many IEA members save hundreds of dollars by using NEA Membership Benefits such as low cost home/auto insurance, credit cards, money market certificates and travel. With 2.7 million members, NEA is able to use its bargaining power with companies to get great deals for its members.

Research

IEA has a research staff which works directly with local associations in conducting membership surveys and developing data for their bargaining teams. IEA research staff also train leaders in school finance and send regular reports on state funding and other relevant information.

These are some of the most important ways in which IEA directly assists its local affiliates. There are others. If we choose IEA as our representative, our association is guaranteed the best help available delivered in a timely manner.