

## Organizing the unorganized

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Sometimes, being a union organizer can be hard work, but it can also be one of the most satisfying and enjoyable jobs in the HSA office. Janice Davis, HSAs Organizer, enjoys every minute of her job.

Often, non-union employees contact her directly to seek advice on how they can join HSA. But sometimes, she meets with employees who are uncertain about joining a union and want information about the benefits of a unionized workplace.

It is the Organizers job to explain to non-unionized workers the benefits and protections offered by a union contract, like better wages, improved working conditions, job security, and mechanisms to end discrimination or favouritism in the workplace. The Organizer meets with non-unionized workers and gives them an overview of what it means to be part of HSA. She provides workers with as much information as possible about the benefits of joining HSA, so they can make an informed decision.

She distributes information about the union along with membership application cards. Prospective members can complete and return these application cards directly to the Organizer with full confidence that no one else ... not the employer, nor any of their co-workers ... will know that they have filled one out.

If 55 per cent of employees return completed cards, the Organizer makes an application at the Labour Relations Board (LRB) for an automatic certification. After the LRB verifies the number of completed cards with the number of employees indicated by the employers payroll records, and the LRB decides the union has met several other requirements regarding the appropriateness of the proposed bargaining unit, the group is certified to be represented by HSA. This means HSA is certified to represent the employees in all future talks with the employer concerning wages or working conditions. The new members will also benefit from the expertise of the unions Labour Relations Officers if other issues arise. They are also given access to a wide variety of educational opportunities and scholarships offered through HSA, in addition to other benefits familiar to HSA members.

If between 45 and 55 per cent of employees return completed cards, the Organizer makes an application for certification. In these cases, the LRB usually orders a vote among all eligible employees asking them if they would like to be represented by HSA. The employees become certified if the majority of employees vote for HSA.

In addition to these duties, the HSA Organizer advises the union on policies relevant to organizing, and in evaluating future organizing efforts. She also represents HSA at the BC Federation of Labour Organizing Institute.

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