

## COLLECTING AND REPORTING MORE INFORMATION ON UNIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE U.S. ECONOMY

### What We're Doing

- The Department of Labor is committing to collecting, producing, and analyzing more information about labor unions, worker organizing, and collective bargaining.
- This includes exploring opportunities to better use existing resources, including data that we already collect from unions, employers, and workers, as well as new collections, in the form of surveys, enhancing reporting from our grantees, and more.
- We are also exploring partnerships with other federal agencies, like the Department of Commerce (which includes the Census Bureau), for new data collection opportunities.
- We're also planning on making all the data and analysis we produce more accessible to members of the public to increase awareness of the impact unions have on workers, the economy, and our society as a whole.

### Why We're Doing It

- Because of the important effects unions have on workers, employers, and the labor force, information on unions and collective bargaining helps the Department of Labor carry out its mission to protect and promote the wellbeing of workers.
- While the federal government **reports** national trends in union membership, current federal statistics make it difficult to look at the demographics of union members at a more localized level – for example, across different industries or specific counties within a state. And we lack easily accessible information about membership for specific unions.
- In a similar vein, the federal government only tracks limited information about worker collective actions, like strikes or other work stoppages. Right now, the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics typically reports on strikes that involve at least 1,000 workers – missing many smaller labor actions and those that involve irregular work stoppages.

### Why It Matters for Worker Organizing and Collective Bargaining

- High-quality data on union membership, collective bargaining, and collective action is critical to understanding the state of the labor movement in the United States, as well as the effect of unions and worker organizing on workers, workplaces, and the economy.
- A broad **body** of research indicates that women and people of color benefit a great deal from union membership, but the lack of more detailed, localized demographic information makes it harder to describe the impact of unions on specific populations and communities.
- Better data on unions can be an important tool for supporting worker organizing and collective bargaining in several ways:
  - » Unions can use this data to understand particular regions, industries, or occupations where efforts at new organizing might be especially productive based on the combination of economic conditions and worker interest.
  - » Unions and their members can use the data to inform collective bargaining efforts as they craft demands around working conditions.
  - » Policymakers, advocates, researchers, and the public can use the data when considering the design and impacts of worker policies at the local, state, and federal levels.
  - » Workers can use this data to better understand the benefits of unionization, building support for forming and joining unions where workers want to do so.

