

UNIONS WIN IT: Survey for Bargaining

BACKGROUND

Working families are challenged with finding a healthy balance between work and family. People are working longer hours, affordable child care is hard to find; and the number of working families caring for an elderly relative is on the increase. Though some unions have bargained family-friendly provisions, many are unaware of members' work and family challenges. Surveys for collective bargaining help identify member needs but they rarely contain work/ family questions.

The following are sample questions that can be included on bargaining surveys and are intended as a first step to understanding the work and family responsibilities of members.

SURVEY

1a) It is difficult to balance my work life with my family life:

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

1b) Over the past 2 months I have missed work, arrived late or left early due to family responsibilities:

- Never
- 1-3 times
- 4-6 times
- 7-10 times
- 11+ times

2) Below is a list of the most common problems workers face in balancing work and family. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = "not a problem" to 5 = "a serious problem"), indicate which problems concern you:

- Long work hours
- Work shift
- Not enough hours
- Little or no notice of shift change
- Mandatory overtime
- Lack of paid leave for family emergencies
- Lack of flexible work hours in the workplace
- No paid time to care for a sick family member
- Lack of child/ elder care services available during work hours
- Cost of child care
- Availability of quality child care
- Cost of elder care
- Availability of quality elder care
- Other, please state _____
- Does not apply

3) Do you have child and/or elder care responsibilities?

- Child Care
- Elder Care
- Both
- Neither

If so, what do you find most challenging? On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = "not a challenge" to 5 = "a serious challenge"), please rate in order of importance.

- Cost of quality care
- Availability of care during the hours I need it
- Missing work because of problems with child care or eldercare
- Transportation problems
- Other, please state: _____

4) How often have you provided care for an elderly or disabled relative in the last 2 months? ("care" includes accompanying the relative to doctors appointments, supervising his/ her financial responsibilities, running errands and grocery shopping, cooking, helping with household chores, helping him/ her dress, etc)

- Never
- 1-5 times
- 6-10 times
- 10+ times
- Everyday

CREATING A SURVEY

5) If you use child care, what issues do you find to be the most challenging? Please rate in order of importance. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = "not an issue" to 5 = "a serious issue"), indicate how important each one is to you:

- Finding affordable, quality child care
- Finding child care close to home
- Finding child care close to work
- Finding care for a mildly sick child
- Getting son/ daughter to child care
- Finding extended (before/ after school/ evening/ weekend) care
- Picking up son/ daughter after school/ child care
- Maintaining back-up plans for last minute emergencies
- Other, please state: _____
- Does not apply

6) Comments

RESOURCES

[Labor Project for Working Families](http://www.working-families.org/network/) has fact sheets on bargaining and resources on how to take action.

<http://www.working-families.org/network/>

Family Values @ Work: Learn about and join efforts in states with labor-community coalitions working for paid sick days, family leave insurance and other policies that value families at work. www.familyvaluesatwork.org

An effective survey should:

- Encourage people to complete it from start to finish by moving in a logical order
- Help respondents recall their experience so they can provide accurate answers
- Offer relevant information when done

When creating a survey:

- Know what issues you are trying to solve through a questionnaire
- Don't be afraid to ask tough questions
- Make your questions as short and simple as possible
- Know that multiple choice answers make a survey faster and simpler to complete
- Make the multiple choices clear and distinct from one another
- Know that closed-ended questions are easier to tally
- Avoid technical language and jargon
- Write in a clear and friendly tone
- Don't assume everyone understands abstract concepts
- Avoid leading questions that encourage a certain response
- Don't create questions with double negatives
- Provide an answer for those that "Don't know" or "Does not apply"
- Avoid discussing too many issues in one question
- Put your questions in a logical order
- Test the survey on 10 people before using