



WHAT IS A UNION?

A union is a group of workers who come together to make decisions about the conditions of their work. Once we form our union, we bargain with management on wages, work hours, benefits, workplace health and safety, and other work-related issues. The product of that negotiation is a legally binding contract that protects us and our rights. **We are the union!**

AREN'T UNIONS JUST FOR BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS?

White-collar workers from many industries are members of CWA, including designers, engineers, non-profit advocates and researchers, lawyers and journalists.

Workers in the tech and game industries have been organizing with CWA in recent years and, by coming together, have the ability to dramatically reshape the industry for the better. Workers have successfully organized at Activision QA, ZeniMax QA, ZeniMax Online Studios, Bethesda Game Studios, Bethesda User Research, ZeniMax Customer Support, World of Warcraft, Raven Studios, Overwatch, Activision Blizzard Albany, Sega, Meow Wolf, Tender Claws, Blue State Digital, ActBlue, EveryAction, New York Times Tech, Google, and more.

WHY DO WE NEED A UNION?

It's time for workers to drive the decisions that affect our lives, especially in the gaming industry. Our industry is changing and it's critical we have a seat at the table to have a say in those changes.

We've faced many challenges at ZeniMax, such as a lack of transparency in pay, job security, layoff protections, maintaining work from home, and the threats to job security from AI.

When we act together, we have the ability to address these issues on a larger scale and become part of the solution. And with a union, we can secure these wins in a legally binding contract. That means that no matter who is running the company, we are protected. Together, we have the power to make our workplace better, not just for ourselves, but for our current and future coworkers.

Even before we win our first union contract, we gain new rights on the job like Status Quo protections and Weingarten Rights. Status Quo gives us a seat at the table with Microsoft when it comes to any changes to our wages and working conditions such as layoffs and changes to remote/work from home policies. Weingarten Rights guarantee us protections against terminations or disciplinary actions without union representation and transparency.

WHO IS CWA? WHAT OTHER WORKERS ARE PART OF CWA?

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) is a democratic union that represents hundreds of thousands of workers in private and public sector employment. CWA members work in telecommunications, tech, information technology, news media, broadcast, cable television, health care, public service, education, and other fields.

CWA has successfully organized thousands of tech and game workers at major multinational tech companies, tiny startups, small indie game studios, AAA game publishers, non-profits, progressive tech companies, equitable worker co-ops, and more, including over 2,000 video game workers at Microsoft.

From game workers at Raven Software, Activision QA, Blizzard Albany, ZeniMax, and Sega to software developers and engineers at tech companies like EveryAction Bonterra, and Change.org to artists at Meow Wolf and Tender Claws, CWA represents a broad range of workers in our industry. This includes Google workers who chose CWA when they started the Alphabet Workers Union.

IS CWA A THIRD PARTY?

No. CWA is a democratic member-run union. All of our leaders are members, elected by their co-workers. The union is us. All of us. We will choose our own shop stewards, will vote for who runs the union, will elect a bargaining team, and will vote on all contracts.

CAN'T WE GET MORE BY JUST SITTING DOWN AND TALKING INDIVIDUALLY WITH THE BOSS?

Bargaining collectively is the only way to effectively negotiate “big issues” such as health insurance, retirement, crunch, staffing, layoffs, work from home, and the introduction of new technology like AI. With a union, gains are guaranteed in a legally binding contract.

IS THIS CONTROVERSIAL? WILL MY SUPERVISOR BE UPSET?

This is not controversial at all. In fact, **Microsoft has agreed to remain neutral and not fight organizing in any way**. Microsoft publicly released a statement earlier last year where they said, “The tech sector itself is addressing a new facet that has long been important to the U.S. economy and American democracy – the right of workers to organize... We are committed to creative and collaborative approaches with unions when employees wish to exercise their rights.”

WILL MICROSOFT TRAIN THEIR MANAGERS AT ZENIMAX GAME STUDIOS TO BE NEUTRAL?

Yes. Microsoft has signed a legally binding agreement with CWA to be completely neutral in the union drive at ZeniMax. They have and will continue to train their supervisors to respect our choice to unionize as well. They did it with ZeniMax QA, Activision QA, Bethesda Game Studios, World of Warcraft, and they’ll do it here.

THIS SEEMS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. WHAT IF A MANAGER VIOLATES NEUTRALITY? CAN I BE PUNISHED?

We are confident that leadership at Microsoft wants this process to run smoothly. They made sure it did at BGS, ZOS, WoW, Blizzard, and Activision when thousands of Dev and QA workers organized and won their unions with CWA. If anyone feels like any supervisor is not being neutral, contact a CWA organizer or one of your coworkers on the Organizing Committee. CWA is confident Microsoft will remind any supervisor that they must be neutral. And remember, federal law gives us the right to organize without coercion or intimidation.

WILL FORMING A UNION CREATE TENSIONS AT WORK BETWEEN STAFF AND SUPERVISORS?

Most union members find that once a union is established, it is a less tense — and less personal — atmosphere at work. Anyone can still approach a supervisor like before, but you no longer have to raise issues as a lone individual and have the added protection of asking for union representation when appropriate. And here at Microsoft Xbox studios, we’ve seen many examples of active union members receiving promotions after union recognition.

I'M A LEAD, AM I ELIGIBLE TO SIGN A UNION CARD?

Yes! Eligibility to be in a union is determined by your day-to-day job responsibilities, not your job title, and most Leads at other ZMI studios have been eligible to join. It is not up to Microsoft or ZeniMax management to determine who is eligible to be in the union and who isn't. Federal law defines who is eligible and the terms of CWA's neutrality agreement with Microsoft spell out that if the union and management can't agree on eligibility then it will be determined in binding arbitration. Unless you have independent authority to make decisions regarding hiring/firing, compensation, and evaluations you are most likely eligible to be in the union.

What's more, the neutrality agreement protects ALL employees who sign a union card before eligibility is determined. If you are a Lead and want to have a union you should definitely sign an authorization card!

HOW DOES A UNION WORK, ANYWAY?

We are forming a democratic, worker led organization. Once we form our union, we elect a bargaining committee of coworkers, supported by CWA staff and attorneys, to sit down with management to negotiate a contract on issues such as wages, benefits, and working conditions. We will hold meetings and conduct surveys to determine priorities. Once a deal is reached, members of our union vote it up or down. After we approve our first contract, we will be the ones to enforce our contract in our workplace. Union members also participate in the broader labor movement through demonstrations, voter drives, and lobbying. A union provides us a vehicle for making change in our workplace and in our industry as a whole.

HOW DO I SUPPORT FORMING A UNION?

Sign a union authorization card! Use the QR code:

If you're interested in getting involved in our Organizing Committee, reach out to a current OC member or oc@bfu-id-cwa.org.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN WHEN I SIGN A UNION AUTH. CARD?

Filling out and signing a union authorization card means you want to join together with coworkers and form a union. In order for our union to be officially recognized by ZeniMax/Microsoft, a majority must indicate support for joining the union, by any combination of signed cards and “yes” votes through a confidential online portal.

WHAT ABOUT UNION DUES? DO WE START PAYING DUES NOW?

No one will be asked to start paying union dues until after employees at id vote on and approve our first union contract after it's been bargained. CWA dues are 1.3% of our monthly salary. Signing the union authorization card linked above will not begin dues.

What's more, CWA dues are decided democratically and haven't changed in over 40 years. There are no initiation fees or any other kind of membership fees.

DOES FORMING A UNION AUTOMATICALLY ENROLL ALL EMPLOYEES INTO PAYING DUES?

No, not in Texas. Because our studio is in a Right to Work state, we will have the option to join the union and pay dues or not, even after we ratify our first union contract with Microsoft. Employees who do not pay dues or join the union still have the same protections as members, but they are ineligible to be elected to the Bargaining Committee, fill out a bargaining survey, or vote on our contract.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO PROVE A MAJORITY WANTS A UNION?

Once we have a strong majority of coworkers signed onto union authorization, we can then notify Microsoft we're ready to open an online portal to give those who wish to vote again or those who haven't voted yet an opportunity to do so. Once this period closes, a neutral third party will count the cards and the votes in the portal and cross check it with a list of eligible employees. The neutral third party will then verify that a majority have chosen union representation, and Microsoft will recognize the union. It is important to note that Microsoft and ZeniMax management never see who has signed a union authorization card.

For more information contact an Organizing Committee member or email oc@bfu-id-cwa.org.



<https://bfu-id-cwa.org/>

www.code-cwa.org



CWA