

# The Benefits of Union Membership



Cecilia Mattias, a member of Board of Education Employees Local 372, stands outside her Staten Island home, which she purchased through the union's Municipal Employees Housing Program.

DC 37 is about more than winning a raise. Through negotiations with the city over many years, the union has built up a comprehensive benefits package, which serves as a model for unions around the country.

Here we highlight many of the benefits and protections DC 37 has won at the bargaining table or established on its own.





# What the Union Does for You and Your Family



In New York, 93 percent of the public sector workforce is unionized.

## THE WORKWEEK

- DC 37 has fought for a fixed workweek so members can enjoy more leisure time and time with their families. The typical workweek for full-time workers represented by the union is 35 hours.
- For non-union workers, the 40-hour workweek is a myth. Nearly 20 percent work 60 hours a week or longer—and less than 50 percent have overtime pay.

## HOLIDAYS

- Most DC 37 members have 11 or 12 paid holidays, depending on when they were hired.
- The typical private-sector worker in the United States has six paid holidays. Unfortunately, many workers without union representation have even fewer than that.

## VACATION

- The typical DC 37 member with a 35-hour workweek gets 15 days of paid vacation (annual leave) per year during his or her first five years on the job. After five years of employment, additional days are added on certain anniversary dates.
- One in four non-union workers do not have any paid vacation days — or even holidays. Workers at private companies get 10 days.



## UNION RECOGNITION

- Workers whose job titles are represented by DC 37 have the right to join the union on their first day on the job.
- Nationally, only 7 percent of the private sector workforce has union representation. The union membership rate for public sector employees is 34.4 percent.

## SICK DAYS

- DC 37 members earn 10 days of sick pay annually during their first five years on the job. Additional days — up to 12 — are added as they continue to work for the city.
- In the United States, 36 percent of the workforce — 41 million people — do not have paid sick days.



## JOB SECURITY

- DC 37 members have due process rights that protect them from wrongful termination. In addition, the city must notify the union 30 days before layoffs. During that period, the city and union explore alternatives, such as reassignments.
- In the United States, workers lack job security unless they have a written employment contract. That means they can be fired without cause, notice or an independent hearing.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

- DC 37 members do not have to make premium contributions for their health-care coverage. DC 37 fights to preserve benefits and adequate funding for health coverage.
- In 2016, the average annual premium contribution of a worker in the private sector was \$1,129 a year for an individual health-care plan and \$5,227 for a family plan, according to the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

## RETIREMENT SECURITY

- DC 37 members and retirees enjoy a traditional pension, which guarantees them a steady income based on their years of service and salary. The New York State Constitution protects our retirees from benefit reductions.
- DC 37 trustees sit on the boards of the New York City Employees' Retirement System and the Board of Education Retirement System to monitor investments and look out for the interests of retirees and future retirees.



- Today, the most common employer-sponsored retirement plan is the 401(k) plan — which subjects account holders' savings to the volatility of the stock market — instead of a traditional pension. Forty percent of employees have only \$10,000 in their accounts — far below what is needed for a comfortable retirement.

About half of working-age households in the United States don't have a retirement savings account.

## GRIEVANCES

- Our grievance system allows DC 37 members to fight workplace abuses, out-of-title work, improper disciplinary action and firings.
- Grievance systems are rare at non-unionized companies. Aggrieved workers must hire a lawyer to deal with cases of serious workplace abuse and wrongful termination.

## EXTRA PAY

- DC 37 members earn extra pay through night-shift and assignment differentials, overtime pay, and pay increases based on years of service. Over time, these permanent payments can add thousands of dollars to a worker's salary.
- Non-unionized workers in the private sector are left on their own to negotiate additional pay.



## DC 37 PROGRAMS AND BENEFITS

- DC 37 bargains with the city to provide funds for a number of benefits, including legal assistance, dental, vision and drug coverage, and counseling. These benefits save members hundreds of dollars — even thousands, in the case of the drug benefit.
- Non-unionized companies generally do not offer such a comprehensive benefits packet.

## Here are some of the union benefits:

### LEGAL HELP

DC 37 offers free help for wills, real estate closings, Chapter 7 bankruptcy, citizenship, identify theft, uncontested divorces and housing court cases.

### EDUCATION

The DC 37 Education Fund provides many courses for members, including prep classes for civil service exams. Members receive up to \$800 a year for college courses. Over the years, the union has helped thousands of members earn college degrees.

### COUNSELING

DC 37 offers free short-term individual counseling and free group sessions on such matters as bereavement, anger management and stress management.

### HOUSING

DC 37's Municipal Employees Housing Program provides members with affordable housing services. The program has helped hundreds of members with both rentals and purchases.

Through this program, members are eligible for a 5 percent preference for Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development rental apartments, which are available through an online lottery.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY AND PROTECTIONS

- DC 37 enforces the right of its members to clean, safe and sanitary working conditions.
- Workers assaulted on the job are entitled to up to 18 months of paid leave. Members working extensively with computers have the right to periodic breaks, eyeglasses and ergonomic equipment.
- In the private sector, workers generally do not have such rich programs as DC 37 members enjoy.



**For additional information, go to [www.dc37.net](http://www.dc37.net)**



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# DC 37 at Your Service

For information about DC 37 activities, news, events, and benefits for members, visit [dc37.net](http://dc37.net) or call our Hotline at 212-815-7555. All of these programs are at DC 37, 125 Barclay St., New York, N.Y., unless stated otherwise.

## • GRIEVANCES

For grievances and job-related problems, see your shop steward or chapter chairperson, or call:

**Blue Collar:** 212-815-1010  
**Clerical-Administrative:** 212-815-1020  
**Hospitals and Health Care Professionals:** 212-815-1030  
**Professional:** 212-815-1040  
**Schools:** 212-815-1050  
**White Collar:** 212-815-1060

## • HEALTH & SECURITY PLAN BENEFITS

Information on coverage and how to apply for all Health & Security Plan benefits, including **drug, optical, disability** and **dental** benefits, may be obtained by calling the Inquiry Unit at 212-815-1234 or by visiting Room 300.

Be sure to have the member's PID number or Social Security number handy when you call. You may also visit the union's website at [www.dc37.net](http://www.dc37.net).

**Forms and optical vouchers:**  
Call 212-815-1531

**Death benefits:**  
Call 212-815-1373 or 212-815-1374

**Hearing-impaired:** If you have a teletypewriter, call 212-815-1266 for info or forms.

**Retirees outside the N.Y.-N.J.-Conn. area, call 1-877-323-7738 toll-free.**

**DC 37 Second Surgical Consultation:** Members of any health plan can get a second opinion at no cost for any elective surgery from the DC 37 Second Surgical Opinion Program at 212-815-1355.

## • HEALTH INSURANCE AND PENSION

For assistance with health insurance coverage, claims problems, pension issues and for pre-retirement pension counseling, call 212-815-1200 or come to the DC 37 Annuity Health/Pension Unit in Room 314. Please schedule an appointment for pension counseling.

Important notice for members in GHI-CBP: For maximum benefit coverage, you must call NYC HealthLine at 1-800-521-9574 prior to any hospital admission or within 48 hours of an emergency admission.

## • AUDIOLOGY SERVICE

Take advantage of the union's hearing benefit. The audiology benefit is offered at the DC 37 Health Center at 115 Chambers St. in Manhattan.

This benefit is for members only. It provides a hearing evaluation by an audiologist and, if necessary, a hearing aid. Call 212-791-2126 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for an appointment.

## • VISION SERVICE

The DC 37 Vision benefit is available at participating vision providers. The benefit is available to members and their eligible dependents.

The standard vision benefit provides an eye exam, lenses and frames every two years.

To use the vision benefit at a participating vision provider, call 212-815-1531 for a list of providers and a voucher.

## • COUNSELING SERVICES

At the DC 37 Personal Services Unit, professionally trained social work staff can help with emotional and family concerns, alcoholism, drug abuse, health problems and adjustment to retirement.

Short-term individual and group counseling and referrals are available. Call 212-815-1260, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a screening evaluation.

## • MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES HOUSING PROGRAM

DC 37's Municipal Employees Housing Program provides one-stop affordable housing services for city employees. MEHP is a partnership of the union, Neighborhood Housing Services, and the NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development.

Through MEHP, city employees have a 5 percent preference for HPD rental apartments available through lottery.

For information, call 212-815-1814.

## • WORKPLACE SAFETY

To report serious accidents or unsafe or unhealthy working conditions or to request workplace inspections, call your union rep. For occupational safety and health information, call 212-815-1685.

## • MEMBERSHIP RECORDS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS

For any inquiries about your membership status, which local you belong to, updating your mailing address or to request a membership card, please call 212-815-1570.

For appointments, call: Manhattan at 212-766-4440 or Brooklyn at 718-852-1400.

## • FAMILY DENTAL CENTERS

The DC 37 dental centers, operated by Joralemon Dental Services, P.C., are at two locations: 186 Joralemon St. in downtown Brooklyn, and 115 Chambers St. in lower Manhattan.

Both offer comprehensive dental care to members and eligible dependents and are open Monday through Saturday.

## • LEGAL SERVICES

Municipal Employees Legal Services lawyers represent full-time and part-time employees and retirees on personal legal matters.

Call 212-815-1111 to check on eligibility and coverage or to make an appointment.

## • EDUCATION COURSES

For a listing of education courses or to download an application, members can go to the DC 37 website at [www.dc37.net/](http://www.dc37.net/)

[benefits/education/edfund.html#pdfforms](http://benefits/education/edfund.html#pdfforms).

For course information, call 212-815-1700. For tuition reimbursement, call 212-815-1663 or -1664.

For career and educational counseling, call 212-815-1644.

For the DC 37 Education Fund Library, call 212-815-1641 or -1699.

**Programs offered at CUNY:** The union, in partnership with the City University of New York, is offering courses at Medgar Evers College and computer classes at the City College of New York's Division of Interdisciplinary Studies at the Center for Worker Education.

For information, call 212-815-1710.

## • RETIREMENT

**Pensions, pension counseling and health insurance:** 212-815-1200

**GHI, HIP, Blue Cross:** 212-815-1200

**Dental, Drug and Optical,** 212-815-1234.

**Educational activities:** 212-815-1683

**The DC 37 Retirees Association** represents retirees in maintaining and improving their pensions and health services. Email: [retassn@dc.37.net](mailto:retassn@dc.37.net).

All DC 37 locals pay your first year's dues after you join. Inquire from your local or phone 212-815-1781 or come to Room 980. The association's office is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday to Thursday.

Union Services		Private Sector Cost
	<b>Will</b>	\$500 - \$1,500
	<b>Real estate closing</b>	\$1,500 - \$2,000
	<b>Chap. 7 bankruptcy</b>	\$1,500
	<b>Uncontested divorce</b>	\$1,500 - \$3,000
	<b>Housing Court case</b>	\$5,000
	<b>Dental work</b>	\$1,200 - \$1,800
	crown	\$130
	cleaning	\$100
	oral exam	\$130
	complete X-ray	
	<b>Individual counseling</b>	\$150 - \$350 per session
	<b>Group counseling</b>	
	Bereavement	\$50 per session
	Anger management	\$50 per session
	Stress management	\$50 per session

## Cost to Members: \$0