

Bargaining for the Common Good



Why Bargaining for the Common Good?

This is a moment of incredible, rapid change and challenges. Powerful individuals and corporations are taking over public services, profiting while draining the resources we have to spend on the essential needs of our communities like education and healthcare. Universities have begun serving corporate interests more than the common good. Wealthy, private investors and corporate landlords took advantage of the Great Recession to drive our national housing crisis, threatening the middle class and working families. Climate change and environmental racism threaten our homes, livelihoods, and the very existence of our communities, particularly communities of color.

We must unite to take on these challenges. Union members are recognizing their dual roles as both workers and key leaders in their communities. In a changing and stratified economy, we are expanding collective bargaining to address the challenges we face as workers, neighbors, and families. Labor and community organizations are collaborating to advance unified demands that are relevant to both workers and the broader community.

This way of coming together is called **Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG)**. Common good bargaining updates a long history of partnering to advance common goals through and beyond the bargaining process. A new generation of activists is building on that legacy to create a movement that confronts concentrated economic power, and the urgent environmental, social, and political challenges it has raised. In 2019, we saw the power and energy of BCG in the Los Angeles and Chicago teachers' strikes that brought community members to the bargaining table with unions and thousands of community and union members into the streets to take on corporate power, and fight for the schools, housing, and cities we all deserve. Across the country, unions and community organizations are working together to advance demands that defend and empower whole communities.

How are unions and community groups *Bargaining for the Common Good*?

At the center of BCG campaigns are intentional, long-term alignments between unions and community organizations. We connect at all levels, starting with membership, to build strong, lasting partnerships based on trust and an understanding of shared concerns, challenges, and goals. BCG campaigns are centered around joint community-labor planning that brings diverse partners to the table in union bargaining, builds power, and addresses the crises we all face. BCG work centers racial justice because we must collectively confront structural racism to create a powerful, unified movement.

Building strong, sustainable relationships isn't easy. Effective BCG campaigns require unions to educate their members about their dual identities as workers and community members, seeing bargaining process as a tool that engages both. Community organizations must educate members about unions and how they can bargain together. Both groups must work to overcome any historic animosity or mistrust to develop a shared framework, from membership to leadership, that sees corporations and the wealthy elite as the perpetrators of injustice in our communities and workplaces.

How can I find out more?

Check the resources at www.bargainingforthecommongood.org, and sign up there for our listserv to be notified about our convenings, which create space for local unions and community groups to build partnership and learn how to create BCG campaigns together.



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