

# CIR NU FAQ

## Who is CIR?

- ★ **The Committee of Interns and Residents is the largest resident union in the country**, representing over 30,000 interns, residents and fellows. CIR is resident-run & resident-led, and members fight for improved working conditions and better patient care across the U.S.

## How much are dues and what are they for?

- ★ **1.6% – this was decided by a vote of CIR resident and fellow members.** They cover contract negotiation costs, union reps, legal services + more!
- ★ **No one pays dues until the union membership has voted to ratify a contract.** Would you ratify a contract with benefits that you are not satisfied with?

## What are the benefits of a union? What have other CIR residents won?

- ★ **As a union**, we have the right to bargain with management over our pay, benefits, leave time, and workplace policies, which will all be protected by an enforceable contract.
- ★ **The hospital will not be allowed to make any changes** to our working conditions unless they are first negotiated with our union
- ★ **UCSF bargained a housing stipend of \$13,000/year**; NYC Health + Hospitals bargained a \$3,500/year childcare reimbursement. Scroll through other wins on the CIR website: [www.cirseiu.org/benefits](http://www.cirseiu.org/benefits).

## I'm afraid of retaliation. Can they take away our benefits and perks?

- ★ **Taking away benefits in response to organizing (or threatening to do so) is prohibited by the NLRB.**
- ★ **With a union, we can make positive changes + protect and advance our interests.** Let's get these perks solidified in a contract so our employer will be legally accountable to preserve them for us and all future residents!!

## Will I be forced to go on strike? How will we get things done w/o striking?

- ★ **No – strikes are very rare, and occur only if a supermajority of members vote in favor of doing so.** CIR union staff cannot (and will not) "call for a strike."



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***At Northwestern, WE are CIR– this our union,  
run by-and for– NU residents & fellows.***

## How can a union improve patient care?

- ★ **A key part of many CIR contracts is dedicated patient care funds**, which are directed towards needs identified by housestaff. There's no doubt that we care about our patients, and that will be reflected in our union.
- ★ CIR residents across the country have secured improvements in patient care, such as medical equipment & access to interpreters. **Ex:** NYC H+H residents won \$1 million for new equipment and training.

## I'm an international graduate and don't want to jeopardize my position. What are my rights?

- ★ **CIR/SEIU has numerous foreign medical graduates** as members, including many who are here pursuant to an H-1B or J-1 visa.
- ★ It is illegal for any employer to retaliate against visa holders for union activity, and NW is aware of this. **Supporting a union is legal and will not jeopardize your visa.**

## I'm worried the new contract won't be tailored to our department-specific needs. Will the new contract be one-size-fits-all?

- ★ **Our current contract isn't tailored to specific departments.** What we bargain for in our new contract will be up to us, and we can tailor it as we see fit.
- ★ **Many CIR chapters have bargained for dept-specific benefits** like full time reading room assistants in Radiology at UCSF and \$1200 reimbursement for Ortho loupes at VCME, the list goes on!

## I'm happy in my program. Why should I join?

- ★ There are many reasons to support a union even if you're happy in your program, including concern for the issues your fellow residents might be facing.
- ★ Even if you are satisfied, keep in mind that benefits can be changed or taken away (ex: in transitions in leadership) without the protection of a union contract.

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

PROTECTIONS FOR RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS AS WE FORM OUR UNION

## YOU HAVE THE LEGAL RIGHT TO:

- ✓ Take action with one or more coworkers to improve your working conditions, including forming a union.
- ✓ Attend meetings during non-work time to discuss joining a union
- ✓ Talk about our union whenever other non-work talk is allowed
- ✓ Sign a card or petition to show support for a union
- ✓ Ask other employees to support our union, to sign cards or petitions requesting your employer recognize and bargain with your union

## IT IS ILLEGAL FOR YOUR EMPLOYER TO:

- ✗ Threaten to or actually fire, lay off, discipline, harass, transfer, or reassign employees because they support the union
- ✗ Promise benefits or perks to encourage you to abandon the union
- ✗ Take away any benefits or privileges to discourage union activity
- ✗ Ask employees if they attended a union meeting, support our union or any other questions about their union activity
- ✗ Refuse to negotiate with our union once employees vote to be represented