STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Every member of the IFT is essential to the strength of the union. The information below will help you understand how you fit in and why your involvement is so important.

YOU
Members of the Illinois Federation of Teachers are an important part of a much larger picture. As a member, you are part of a local union of colleagues. By getting involved in your local, you help determine which issues are addressed within your workplace. You also have the chance to share your concerns and experiences with your colleagues.

YOUR LOCAL
The local unions and councils in the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) are distinctly different from one another, but they share a common characteristic. Every IFT local—from Chicago to Galion, East St. Louis to Peoria—operates autonomously, with each local’s governing body and its members making decisions in their local’s own best interests. Local size ranges from less than 10 members to more than 21,000 members. Some large locals, called federated locals, consist of several smaller groups, called councils or chapters. Every local receives support and assistance from the IFT.

THE ILLINOIS FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (IFT)
The IFT is a 193,000-member union comprised of PreK-12 teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel (PSRPs), higher education professionals, public employees and dental hygienists across Illinois in local unions. The IFT supports—not does govern—local unions and their members. The IFT is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the AFL-CIO.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS (AFT)
The AFT is a national organization comprised of more than 1.4 million members, including PreK-12 teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel, higher education professionals, public employees and healthcare workers. The AFT is based in Washington, D.C., and is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO.

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS (CLCs)
Central labor councils, also referred to as central bodies, are comprised of AFL-CIO affiliated locals in a county or region. CLCs work to organize new members and support existing union members so that workers and their families have a voice in their communities.

THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO
The Illinois AFL-CIO is a state affiliate of the AFL-CIO with more than 1 million members. Like the national organization, the Illinois AFL-CIO represents workers in many different jobs across the state. All IFT members are part of the Illinois AFL-CIO.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO)
The AFL-CIO is a national labor organization with more than 15 million members. The union and its affiliates represent workers in nearly every profession, from the building and electrical trades to education professionals and public employees.