



Strength through Unity

WELCOME TO BIGWU





Welcome to the membership of the Banking, Insurance and General Workers' Union (BIGWU), this booklet is geared towards providing YOU, **our newest member**, with an overview of who we are, what we do, and what this Union has done and can do for you.

OUR VISION

To continue to be a **progressive** unit of the **Labour Movement**, by protecting and advancing the **class interests** of our members and promoting **social justice** for our society.

OUR MISSION

Bounded by **collectivism**, we strive for **fairness** and **equality**, practice **working class solidarity** and seek **social justice** for all.

OUR CORE VALUES

- **Fairness and Equity** (what we strive for)
- **Collectivism** (what binds us together)
- **Solidarity** (what we practice)
- **Social Justice** (our mission defined)

What We Do?

BIGWU works hard to ensure that we make your working life better. We bargain and negotiate with your employer for fair collective agreements and work toward improvements and benefits that workers want and need.

We strengthen your voice at work!

Unions have fought for many things that we now consider basic, such as: the eight-hour workday, weekends, sick days, maternity leave, health and safety laws among other things. And we're not done - there's more we can and must still do to protect and improve the lives of working people and their families.

If a matter arises at your workplace, please ensure that you speak with your Branch President and/or Shop Steward to guide you, or to answer any questions that you may have.

WE WORK WITH YOUR LOCAL BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES TO:

- *Protect your interest in the workplace;*
- *Represent you to the fullest of our ability;*
- *Defend your rights vigourously;*
- *Ensure that your terms and conditions of employment conform to "good industrial relations principles and practices";*
- *Ensure that you always have a hearing;*
- *Ensure that your employment status does not depend on the whims and fancies of your employer;*
- *Ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed;*
- *Ensure that you receive a fair salary for your hard work;*
- *Make you an employee who is more aware of your obligations, rights and entitlement;*
- *Utilize our local, regional and international affiliations to plan and implement education programmes that will ensure your personal and organisational development.*

WELCOME TO BIGWU

BIGWU's History

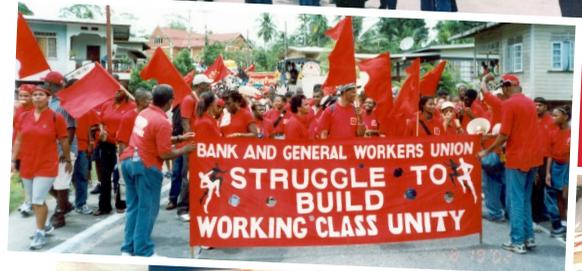
- the *concise and very abbreviated* version.

Our Union, the Banking, Insurance and General Workers Union (BIGWU), has its beginnings in 1974 with the formation of our two (2) heritage/foundation Unions – the Bank and General Workers Union (BGWU), and the Bank Employees Union (BEU).

Both Unions were registered in 1974, (April and May respectively) with an original focus on defending workers in the local banking sector. The BEU started off as a staff association for the workers at Barclay's Bank DCO (now present-day Republic Bank Limited) and remained an in-house Union, while the BGWU (initially registered as the Bank Workers Trade Union (BWTU)) evolved to representing workers outside of the banking sector, such as supermarkets, media houses, insurance companies, and other general offices and companies, etc.

Each Union, having developed their skills, resilience, and capacity in defending worker's rights over a twenty-five (25) year period, was seen as a leader in the Trade Union Movement, making it beneficial to merge into one powerhouse Union. These discussions commenced in 2000, and were completed in 2002, forming the amalgamated Union now known as BIGWU.

BIGWU has since been one of the Caribbean's premier finance sector Unions, also representing workers in the media and professional sectors, and with a Union membership of approximately six thousand (6,000) workers (approximately 70% female) and representing more than sixty (60) companies throughout Trinidad and Tobago, we are respected locally, regionally and internationally.



Organize. Mobilize. Consolidate.

WELCOME TO BIGWU



Over the past 50 years, our cadre of experienced Industrial Relations practitioners, have achieved numerous victories realising improvements in terms and conditions of employment for workers. Apart from cultivating a new sense of dignity in the working environment and well-earned respect from their employers, which did not exist before, BIGWU has also had three (3) of our Executive Officers being called to serve at the level of the Industrial Court of Trinidad and Tobago (ICTT) - with two currently sitting.

Among the number of improvements that BIGWU has negotiated for workers, it includes increases in:

- o Salaries and Wages
- o Cost of Living Allowance
- o Profit Sharing
- o Pension Benefits
- o Medical Plan Benefits
- o Paid Leave: Vacation, Sick, Maternity, Paternity, Study & Child Care, etc.
- o Uniforms and Uniform Allowances
- o Multiple Allowances: Meal, Housing, Travelling, Dislocation
- o Vacation Savings Plan
- o Passage Grant
- o Compensation for Injury on the Job

BIGWU MEMBERSHIP DISTRIBUTION

Sector	Members	Percentage
Finance	4317	75%
Insurance	233	4%
Media	335	6%
General	865	15%

Data as at Sep 2022

Membership Rights

BIGWU is Your Union and You Have Rights!

An informed and active membership is the foundation of a democratic and dynamic trade union.

BIGWU's foremost priority is to advance the interests of our current membership and to assist prospective members into organising new bargaining units at their workplaces.

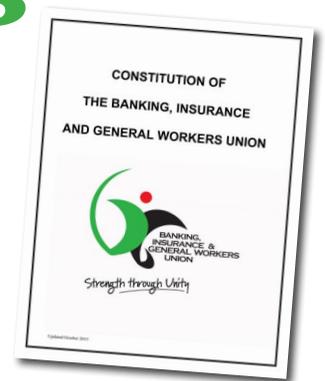
Rights and Responsibilities of Members

According to the Union's Constitution (2013), Rule 3, each member is entitled to:

- i. *to representation in matters concerning their terms and conditions of employment;*
- ii. *to seek or to hold office in the Union ...*
- iii. *to enjoy any benefits that may be provided under and in accordance with these rules,*
- iv. *To obtain a copy of these rules upon payment of the appropriate charge, if any.*

Additionally,

- Members have the right to fully participate in the democratic debate and decisions of the appropriate body or structure of which they are a member or a delegate. All members have a right to free speech including the right to criticize the policies or governance of the Union.
- Members shall uphold the democratic decisions and rules of the Union, pay dues and fulfill obligations set out in the Constitution, and respect the provisions of their freely negotiated collective agreements.
- Members shall support the solidarity and the collective actions of the Union in collective bargaining, and in its efforts to protect the jobs of members.



- Any member who is elected or appointed to represent other members or participate in the administration or governance of the Union shall defend the Constitution and organizational integrity of the Union.

Unions are **democratic organizations**, so you have the right to elect your branch president and other branch representatives.

Make sure to participate – it's your democratic right as a union member.

Branches of the Union are required (according to the Constitution) to have meetings that are open to all members to attend, at least once every six (6) months. This forum is a great way to find out more about what the Union is doing and find something that interests you.

Attend your Branch Meetings and get involved with your Branch Representatives. **Remember, We are stronger when we work together!**

Who Represents You

At your workplace, the Union has fought for recognised majority union (RMU) status for different categories of workers, therein your workplace is called a “Branch” of the Union.

At your Workplace/Branch

There will be an elected **Branch Executive Committee** which comprises of six (6) persons:

- Branch President;
- Branch Vice President;
- Branch Secretary;
- Branch Education Secretary;
- one (1) Shop Steward and
- one (1) Committee Member.

These branch representatives are your first step as it pertains to representation in grievances and the dissemination of Union-related information at your job. At some Branches, multiple Shop Stewards are elected based on the numbers of members/locations/units/departments, or as needed. These Shop Stewards liaise with your Branch Committee and assist with the proper functioning of the Branch.

You should always familiarise yourself with who is/are your Shop Steward(s) and/or Branch Executive(s), as they may be located in a nearby department or Unit, or even in another floor or building.

Each Branch is also assigned a **Labour Relations Officer (LRO)**, from the Union’s Office, as a resource, to oversee and manage the activities at the Branch, as well as to facilitate Collective Bargaining and handle worker grievances when the Branch Executive are unable to . Both your Branch Committee and LRO report to the Union’s Central Executive Committee.

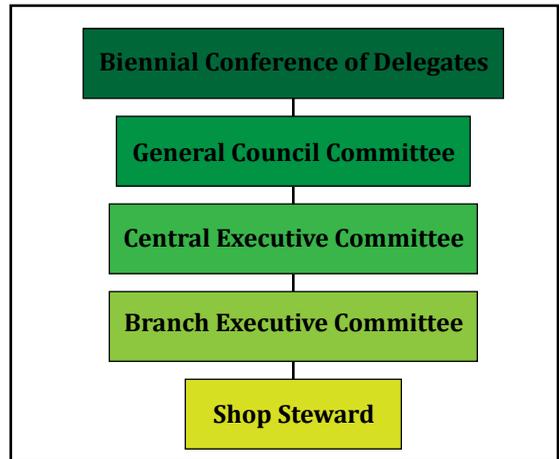


Diagram: Chain of Command in Union.

At the Union Office Level

BIGWU is democratically led by a team of seven (7) Central Executive officers who are elected from within the membership every four (4) years.

This Committee is headed by the Union’s President, and is made up of two (2) arms - the Presidency (*manages the Union’s Labour Relations, Collective Bargaining and political aspects*), and the Secretariat (*manages the business of the Union - accounts, correspondence and the general office*).

Through these two channels, the officers, working along with the Union’s staff, deliver on member-driven campaigns and initiatives and lead effective strategies for bargaining and political action.

Union Finances (UNION DUES)

BIGWU's operations are primarily funded from the receipt of dues paid by our members in the various branches of the Union. This is a set rate, which is predetermined by the Union's highest decision making body, the Conference of Delegates.

As set out in the Union's Constitution:

Entrance Fee - Ten dollars (\$10.00)
Fee payable to become a member is and is payable upon submission of your membership application form.

Monthly Dues
Recognised Majority Union (RMU) Status
- Two per cent (2%) of basic salary/wage to a maximum of Ninety Dollars (\$90.00)

No RMU Status
- Thirty Dollars (\$30.00)

Affiliations

In order to ensure that we are always doing our best, BIGWU is affiliated locally with the Joint Trade Union Movement (JTUM), and globally with the Union Network International (UNI) Global Union.

These affiliations help us to build our Union's power to improve our members' lives by using our collective strength to expand collective bargaining interests, making advances in social and economic justice, holding Companies and Corporations accountable and transforming an unfair global economy.

We get the local and global support in our actions, while assisting and supporting other local and Global Trade Unions, via these two Union Federations.



BANK COSTS, LOAN
Bank Charges
New Car Loan
Motor Loan Pay
PO24411 (Sold)
Motor Vehicle Lo
Motor Loan Pay
PE242716 (Sold)
Blkg Addition Lo
Blkg Addition Lo
Sub-total:
GENERAL
Death Benefit
Donations
Periodicals
Postage
Travel: Intern
Travel: Overse
Travel: Gas Ac
Entertainment
General Offic
Miscellaneous
Honoraria
Sub-total:
Total Outfit
Total Inflow
Less Total O
Surplus / D

DRAFT
BIGWU
BUDGET

Committees

Providing networking and mentorship opportunities for their constituents, these two committees are meaningful resources for education tools, social media campaigns, and community outreach and activism.

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE



YOUTH COMMITTEE (18-35 yrs)



Our Annual Activities

The Union has an annual list of activities which caters to the welfare and interest of our membership. Information on these activities are shared on the Union's social media pages and via bulletins to the branches, which include:

UNION EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Between March - September Annually



LABOUR DAY RALLY/MARCH

Annually celebrated on June 19 in Fyzabad



MAY DAY DEMONSTRATION

Observed on May 1 annually



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Late November to Early December.



Your Branch Information

Know Your Branch Executive (KYBE) and Contact Information

As an employee at: _____

You are a member of: _____ Branch

You are covered within: _____ as per the Certificate of Recognition _____

As a member, your terms and conditions of work are guided by the Collective Agreement that is negotiated by your Branch Executive, who is supported by skilled, trained and experienced Labour Relations Officers. BIGWU is very proud of our strong record of negotiating good collective agreements.

Your Collective Agreement covers your wages, benefits, hours of work and other terms and conditions, including your rights as a worker. This Agreement is a legally binding contract and your employer must follow it.

In your workplace/unit there should be an assigned shop steward. Your Union steward is a trained member who has volunteered to help you and your co-workers as they ensure enforcement of your Collective Agreement. If you have any questions, make sure to ask your shop steward or a member of your Branch Executive.

To ensure you know your rights and benefits please read your Collective Agreement.

Please note the following:

The current Collective Agreement for your Branch is for the Period: _____

Your current Branch President is _____

and can be contacted via Email: _____ and/or Phone: _____

Your current Branch Secretary is _____

and can be contacted via Email: _____ and/or Phone: _____

Your Workplace Representative (steward) is _____

and can be contacted via Email: _____ and/or Phone: _____

OTHER KEY BRANCH INFORMATION YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Notes

All BIGWU Branches are assigned a Labour Relations Officer at the Office who will handle matters at your Branch / Company. They liaise specifically with your local Branch Executive to ensure that the operations at the branch run smoothly and issues are attended to in a timely manner.

The Labour Relations Officer assigned to your Branch is: _____

and can be contacted via Email: _____ and/or Phone: _____

Connect with Your Union

Get updates on our social media channels

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Affiliate of:

