

Instructions to reclaim the union overcharges and pay only for workplace services

Identify which union is collecting your dues. This can be done by checking your pay stub or asking your human resource office.

Put the union name in the blank in the first sentence.

Find the mailing address of the union. This can be done by internet searching, examining the mail you might receive from the union or contacting your human resource office. Make sure that the address is the mailing address rather than the physical location. Sometimes a local union has one address and the state council or association has another. Select the one which takes the most money or perhaps send a copy to both. The address will be in Washington State even though some unions have a national or international affiliate.

Put the address in the blanks.

Provide as much information as you can to help them identify you. Fill in the blanks and provide other details you think will help them recognize your workplace specifics.

Sign and date the letter.

Make a copy for your file. If you are sending it to a second location (the local *and* the state union), then copy and sign an extra.

Mail the letter and note the date. To be sure that the request does not get lost, some use certified mail, but it is not required.

Keep all correspondence and notes from any conversations related to the resignation.

What to expect next

Some acknowledgement should be received within a few weeks.

Because dues collection is the core of the union business model, most who seek the refund or dues reduction will get a sales pitch to talk them out of it. Sometimes the sales pitch includes untrue claims and scare tactics. Ask to have any questionable claims documented in writing.

Watch for the dues reduction or refund check. Contact the union if nothing happens.

All fee payers are to receive an accounting of how the union spends money which shows what is spent on workplace services and what is spent on extraneous things (called “nonchargeable” expenditures). If you do not receive this within a year, ask for it.

Some unions have tricked members into promising never to resign except during a small window of time. If this is claimed in your case, ask for documentation.

Remember, you are being charged a fee for the union-calculated cost of services. You are entitled to those services – help with contract enforcement, grievances, discipline assistance and other workplace representation.