

## Conversation Starter Kit >

There's a lot of misunderstanding when it comes to unions. And sometimes, folks hold negative opinions about unions because of how they can be politicized or because of how they are perceived when workers go on strike.

This guide aims to help you navigate those conversations, dispel some myths, and help connect the personal stories of Minnesota's blue-collar building and construction trade unions to how we all benefit from their hard work.

## Starting the Conversation >

One of the easier ways to bring up Minnesota's trade unions and the benefits they bring to all of us is when someone makes a statement that sounds inaccurate or uninformed.

**If someone brings up a union, ask them a follow-up question:**

"Why do you feel that way?"

"Do you know anyone in a blue-collar union?"

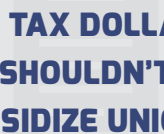
"I actually think they bring a lot of value to the state and to my day-to-day life. Would you be interested in learning a bit more?"

**If you'd like to initiate the conversation, try the following starters:**

"Have you ever thought about the men and women out there building the buildings and roads you and I depend on every day?"

"How do you feel about Minnesota's blue-collar building and construction trade unions?"

## Responding to Common Myths >



**MY TAX DOLLARS  
SHOULDN'T  
SUBSIDIZE UNIONS.**

The unions that make up Elevate Minnesota—your blue-collar building and construction trade unions—are not public entities, meaning they and their top-notch training programs are not funded with tax dollars. They rely on partnerships with private sector construction firms and other contracts, secured through their quality work, for their livelihoods.



**UNIONS PROTECT  
LOUSY WORKERS.**

Not our unions. If you don't meet the standards of a job site, produce quality work, or demonstrate professionalism, you won't have a job with a Minnesota building trade union. Our relationships with our contractor partners are too critical to keep low-performing workers on board.

**CONSTRUCTION WORKERS  
ARE LAZY. I SEE THEM  
LEANING ON SHOVELS WHEN  
I DRIVE BY PROJECTS.**

You try working 12-hour shifts in the extreme heat or cold! They work incredibly hard doing the work you and I haven't signed up for, and if they aren't hacking it, they won't have a job with a Minnesota trade union. Period.

**UNIONS ARE  
TOO POLITICAL.**

Our unions care most about executing quality projects, training a skilled workforce, ensuring safe working conditions for their members, and leaving Minnesota a better place than they found it. Sometimes that means working with politicians to ensure their workers are protected. And in today's political climate, that means working with any politician of any party, and only to ensure a thriving construction industry for Minnesota workers.

**ALL UNIONS DO  
IS GO ON STRIKE  
AND STRONG-ARM  
POLITICIANS.**

It's just not true. Nearly 100% of the time, our members are out working hard to build a better Minnesota for you and me. But when their workplace safety or wages are threatened, when special interests are looking to profit off Minnesota's workers, the union will step in to defend them. I sure wish I had a union in my corner!

**RIGHT TO WORK  
IS GOOD FOR  
MINNESOTANS.**

It really isn't. Right to Work means that workers are able to collect union benefits without paying dues into the union. That's not teamwork.

**UNIONS WASTE  
MEMBER DUES.**

Not true. Minnesota's private-sector building trade unions invest union member dues in training and development, in better benefits, and more. In fact, for every \$1 a member pays in dues, they receive \$5.59 back in benefits, including no-cost training, insurance, their pension, and more.

## Bring It Home >

Finally, encourage them to learn more. A great way to better understand unions is to learn about the men and women who are union members. Visit [www.elevateminnesota.org/stories](http://www.elevateminnesota.org/stories) to see how your union friends and neighbors are raising the bar for all of us.