

What is the Manitoba Federation of Labour (MFL)?

The MFL is an organization that brings unions together on issues of common concern, so that they can work together collaboratively and have a stronger voice on behalf of their members.

The MFL coalition includes close to 30 unions (known as affiliates). MFL unions collectively represent over 100,000 workers in the public and private sectors in Manitoba.

The purpose of the MFL is to advance the interests of its affiliated unions and to act as a strong voice for better working and living conditions for all working families.

The MFL accomplishes this by:

- lobbying government for legislation, policy and funding decisions that benefit working people,
- providing educational opportunities that engage members of affiliate unions and enhance their understanding of their rights in the workplace, and
- coordinating public awareness campaigns on issues that are of common interest and benefit to multiple unions.

Founded in 1956, the MFL is the provincial arm of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), which is Canada's national coalition of labour unions, representing more than 3 million workers across the country.

Benefits of the MFL's Work

In addition to leading these recent campaigns, for decades the MFL has been a leading voice on workplace health and safety, secure pensions, strong public services, collective bargaining rights and better employment standards for all workers.

The MFL plays a critical role in our province ensuring worker and labour rights are protected through advocacy, research, and coalition building, and working to make continuous gains for working families. The MFL has championed issues like opposing cuts and privatization of public services, establishing paid sick leave, enhancing the Canada Pension Plan, raising the minimum wage, and winning the first-in-Canada paid leave for workers experiencing domestic violence.

The MFL also plays a formal role on behalf of the labour movement in board appointments to many government and community agencies, such as the Manitoba Labour Board, the Labour Management Review Committee, the Workers Compensation Board and the United Way.

The work of the MFL has greatly benefited all union members in Manitoba, both affiliates and non-affiliates alike, as well as all Manitobans in general.

A Seat at the Table

By affiliating to the MFL, unions can contribute to this important work in a formal way.

Affiliated unions have an official seat at the table as part of the MFL's leadership group, helping to set priorities and direct resources.

Becoming an affiliate to the MFL provides an opportunity to inform and gain support from other unions on issues of importance, and a process for learning and sharing with other unions facing similar challenges. Affiliates also gain access to MFL conventions, conferences, educational workshops and other events that bring labour unions and members together to work on issues of common concern.

Solidarity

The political landscape in Manitoba has changed dramatically in recent years, and a strong, united labour movement is needed now more than ever before.

Unions must work together to protect the interests of working people.

There is strength in numbers – it's the basic principle that drives all unions – and by joining the MFL, affiliates will contribute their fair share to the MFL's work on behalf of all working families.

How much does it cost to affiliate with the MFL?

The per capita cost to affiliate to the MFL is \$1.10 per member per month (\$13.20 per member per year). This rate is reviewed periodically and can only be changed by way of a majority vote of delegates to a triennial MFL convention.

Affiliation to the MFL also requires affiliation to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) within a period of three years, at a cost of \$0.75 per member per month (\$9.00 per member per year).

Affiliates of the MFL and CLC also become affiliates to local Labour Councils. In Manitoba, Labour Councils exist in Winnipeg, Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk and Thompson. Affiliation with local Labour Councils will add approximately \$0.29 per member per month (\$3.48 per member per year).

Does affiliation with the MFL change an affiliates' status as a non-partisan organization?

Becoming an affiliate has no effect on non-partisanship. MFL affiliates include some unions that are partisan and some that are non-partisan. Those decisions are made by individual unions, based on the will of their membership and the MFL does not interfere in those decisions.

Provincial laws prohibit any union or labour organization (including the MFL) from providing financial resources to any political party.

That said, the MFL is a political organization in that it regularly engages with government and elected representatives from all political parties and advocates in favour of legislative, policy and funding decisions that benefit members and all working people. The MFL's advocacy often covers topics such as strengthening public services, protecting worker and labour rights, improving pensions, making all workplaces safe and healthy, and more.

MFL affiliates that have maintained their non-partisanship: MNU, MGEU, CUPW, UMFA and WAPSO.

Would affiliating to the MFL bind an affiliate's actions to the MFL?

No, being an MFL affiliate means that the affiliate has a direct voice and vote on the MFL's Executive Council and at MFL Conventions, which set policy and priorities. As a coordinating organization for labour advocacy in Manitoba, the MFL Executive Council provides union leaders an opportunity to work together on setting the direction of the MFL in between Conventions. Individual unions maintain their autonomy and are accountable to their membership, not to the MFL.

How can I learn more about the MFL?

Visit the MFL website at www.mfl.ca for more information about the MFL's advocacy, values, and mission to improve the lives of working Manitobans. You can also follow them on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.