



GRADUATE EMPLOYEES' ORGANIZATION  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

### **G.E.O. Full-Time Union Organizer**

Graduate Employees' Organization, IFT/AFT Local 6300, AFL-CIO Champaign, Illinois, USA

**Summary:** The Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign seeks to hire a *temporary* full-time **Union Organizer**. This position is funded by a grant from the Illinois Federation of Teachers and the American Federation of Teachers. The appointment length is approximately 480 hours over the course of 3 months.

The target start date for this position is **February 22, 2016**. The Union Organizer will work with members of the union and community allies to increase our collective power and win economic and social justice campaigns.

The Graduate Employees' Organization (GEO) represents approximately 2,800 Teaching and Graduate Assistants employed at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It is a member-led union with paid professional staff that works under the direction of elected, volunteer officers. The GEO is a democratic, activist, and social justice union, with a strong sense of solidarity and active community involvement.

In 2009, the GEO led a two-day strike with over 1,000 members (one of the 5 largest strikes in the US that year), and more recently in 2012, the GEO prepared for a strike but was able to secure a fair contract before that happened. The GEO has also participated in various community and campus campaigns such as:

- Increasing protections for nursing mothers, parents of various genders, access to health benefits for LGBTQ partners of employees, etc.
- Raising the grad minimum wage in excess of inflation and protecting tuition waivers.
- Advocating against racist imagery such as the "Chief" as the UIUC mascot.
- Fighting for immigrant rights, including expelling federal deportation agents from the Champaign County Jail, and preventing them from being able to divide families here.
- Stopping the expansion of a 20-million dollar jail that would have disproportionately affected African-American residents, and also fighting for a re-entry program.
- Working with student organizations to add gender confirmation surgery to the student insurance plan.
- Organizing in solidarity with other unions to fight against IL Governor Bruce Rauner, who, like Wisconsin's Scott Walker, has demonstrated that he will undermine our rights as organized workers and attack our union.

The Union Organizer will actively organize, recruit, and foster economic and social justice activism of this nature.

**Job Duties:**

- Increase membership by recruiting bargaining unit members to sign membership cards.
- Build and activate GEO members. Recruit and train union members and community allies into leadership positions.
- Help GEO leadership plan and implement union activities such as social events, general membership meetings, rallies, volunteer nights, and work-actions.
- Represent the GEO to the UIUC admin, to other unions, and to community groups.
- Help with contract negotiation and enforcement, including finding and filing grievances, assisting the bargaining team, assisting with arbitrations, and research.
- Build and activate involvement through town hall meetings, office visits, home visits, departmental events, membership drives, work actions, campaigns, etc.
- Help GEO, unions, and community organizations plan and implement campaigns.
- Help maintain accurate records of union activities, members, database, etc.
- Help with communications, including writing/editing press releases, designing flyers and brochures, taking meeting minutes, and developing other materials.

**Qualifications:**

- At least one year of organizing experience
- Ability to manage multiple tasks in a fast-paced environment
- Excellent verbal communication skills
- Ability to use word processing, spreadsheets, databases, and social media
- Strong one-on-one organizing skills
- Flexible schedule; ability to work evenings and/or weekends as needed
- **Preferred Qualifications:**
  - A Bachelor's degree or higher
  - Experience as a graduate student/employee, or other contingent employment.
  - Experience working as an organizer for a labor union or a volunteer-run organization
  - Experience organizing membership drives, work-actions, direct action, civil disobedience, marches, etc.
  - Experience working with communities of color, on social justice campaigns, as well as worker's rights campaigns, and/or Get Out The Vote campaigns.

**Application Process:** To apply please send your cover letter, resume, and contact information to [geo@uigeo.org](mailto:geo@uigeo.org). Also provide names and contact information for at least two references. Please email [geo@uigeo.org](mailto:geo@uigeo.org) if you have questions. In order to ensure full consideration, applications materials must be received by **February 1, 2016**. Applications will be considered after this date on a case-by-case basis. In your cover letter, describe your experience working in labor organizations, social justice organizations, and your experience working with communities of color, and/or otherwise marginalized or low-income communities. The letter length is whatever you deem appropriate.

**Salary and benefits:**

\$28.58/hour plus health, dental, and vision benefits and cell phone/driving reimbursement.

**Affirmative Action Statement:** The GEO is an AA/EEO employer. Women, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals are strongly encouraged to apply. Furthermore, the GEO is a social justice union that is committed to increase the participation of women, people of color, and LGBTQ individuals in all aspects of the union. The GEO is also committed to organizing in solidarity with community members around a variety of issues that deal with racial, economic, and gender justice.

For those reasons, the GEO encourages all applicants to use the cover letter, resume, references, or an additional info sheet in a format and length of your choosing, to disclose any information (voluntarily) as it relates to:

1. Any relevant facts about the applicant's identity as it relates to the applicant's experience organizing around racial, gender, and economic justice;
2. Any past experiences organizing to address issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, etc, and how that organizing experience empowered those people who are directly affected by institutionalized discrimination (women, people of color, LGBTQ individuals, etc), and put those affected individuals at the forefront of organizing efforts.
3. Your potential future role as you see it as an organizer with the GEO and how you would address institutional forms of racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.

The GEO has historically organized around social justice issues, and is committed to continuing that tradition and, in any way possible, increasing those efforts. The GEO encourages applicants to share similar organizing experiences and goals. Sharing this information is voluntary. Applicants should share as much information as they deem relevant to the job. Preference will be given to applicants who exhibit experience, passion, and an ongoing desire to overcome institutional and interpersonal forms of discrimination.