Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

COWINS [1]

The University of Colorado's classified staff are covered by the state employees' union — COWINS. Find out what that means for you.

The Colorado Workers for Innovative and New Solutions, or COWINS, is a union that represents all covered, classified employees for the State of Colorado. The WINS union's authority to negotiate on behalf of all covered, classified state employees was established in the 2020 Colorado Partnership for Quality Jobs & Services Act [2]. The duties and limits of this union representation is outlined in greater detail in the Partnership Agreement [2].

Colorado Partnership for Quality Jobs & Services Act [2]

Partnership Agreement [2]

Generally, covered employees are employees in the state personnel system, also known as classified employees. There are exceptions, including confidential employees, managerial employees, executive employees, administrative law judges, hearing officers, state troopers, legislative branch employees, and temporary employees.

These Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been developed to assist employees with questions they may have pertaining to the Act and Agreement. They have been updated following the ratification and signing of the Agreement.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

BASIC COWINS INFORMATION

Who is COWINS?

COWINS stands for Colorado Workers for Innovative and New Solutions. It is a union representing classified, covered state employees. COWINS describes themselves as a union "working to improve the quality of services, safety, pay and benefits, working conditions, conflict resolution, staff attrition and more to ensure an effective workforce to serve all Coloradans."

How did COWINS become the union representing covered state employees?

Shortly after former Gov. Bill Ritter signed Executive Order D 028 07 “Authorizing Partnership Agreements with State Employees” in November 2007, elections of eligible state employees were held across the state.

In June 2008, more than 50% of the eligible employees who voted selected COWINS to represent them. Under Section 24-50-1105(2) of the Act, COWINS continues to be the Certified Employee Organization (commonly referred to as “union”) representing all covered employees.

How does an employee contact COWINS or find out more information about the organization?

COWINS can be reached at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547. Employees can find more information about COWINS at coloradowins.org [4].

How does an employee become a member of COWINS?

Employees should contact COWINS at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547 for information on becoming a member.

REPRESENTATION, MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

What employees does COWINS represent as a union?

COWINS represents covered employees regardless of whether they are dues paying members of COWINS. According to the Act, all classified employees are covered, except if they are designated in one of the 10 categories listed below.

- **Confidential Employee:** A person who is required to develop or present management positions with respect to employer-employee relations or whose duties normally require access to confidential information contributing significantly to the development of such management positions.
- **Managerial Employee:** Any employee having significant responsibilities for formulating agency or departmental policies and programs or administering an agency or department.
- **Executive Employee:** Any employee (a) whose primary duty is management of the entity in which the employee is employed or of a customarily recognized department or subdivision thereof; (b) who customarily and regularly directs the work of two or more other employees; and (c) who has the authority to hire of fire other employees whose suggestions and recommendations as to the hiring, firing advancement, promotion or any other change of status of other employees are given particular weight.
- State Personnel Director and employees of the Director working to implement the Act.
- Director and employees of the Division of Labor Standards and Statistics within the Department of Labor and Employment working to implement the Act.

- **Governor's Designee:** the person or people the Governor designates, in writing, as the individual or individuals who will represent the state in the exercise of the state's responsibilities under the Act.
- Administrative Law Judges, and Hearing Officers.
- State Troopers.
- Employees of the Legislative Branch.
- Temporary employees as defined in Colorado Revised Statute Section 24-50-114.

Note: Non-classified employees are not covered employees.

Can employees become a COWINS member while still on probation?

Yes.

Are covered employees required to become a COWINS member?

No. While COWINS represents all covered employees in collective bargaining in the formation and implementation of a partnership agreement, employees are not required to be dues paying members.

What is required of an employee to be a member of COWINS?

Employees can contact COWINS at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547 for information on the requirements of being a member.

If an employee no longer wants to be a member of COWINS, what is the process?

The terms of the membership are between COWINS and the employee. As such an employee must be directed to COWINS at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547 if they no longer want to be a member or to cancel their authorization for membership dues through payroll deductions and other payments. COWINS is responsible for processing these requests in accordance with the terms of the authorization and sharing that information by the 10th of each month with each agency and institution.

When can employees cancel their COWINS membership?

The Act provides that an employee can revoke the authorization for a payroll deduction, and thus membership, at least annually. Because membership is a matter between the employee and COWINS, an employee must be directed to COWINS at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547 in order to change or cancel their membership. The university has no authority to terminate a membership even at the request of an employee and must be neutral with regard to the employee's decision.

How are membership dues paid?

COWINS membership dues are paid through payroll deductions. When an employee decides to become a member of COWINS, the employee will provide COWINS with an authorization

for a payroll deduction. Authorizations for payroll deductions can include electronic authorizations, including voice authorizations, that meet the requirements of an electronic signature. COWINS will provide the university with a list of all covered employees from whom payroll deductions should be made and the corresponding amount. Employee Service's payroll team will process the list prior to payroll processing for the next payroll.

How much are membership dues?

Employees should contact COWINS at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547 for information regarding membership dues.

Are employee membership dues used for political purposes?

Employees should contact COWINS at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547 for information regarding membership dues.

If an employee shared their personal information with COWINS and no longer wishes to be contacted, what should they do?

The employee will need to contact COWINS directly at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547.

In addition, covered employees may opt in or opt out of their personal information being shared with COWINS through this web-based form [5].

What should an employee, who has requested that their membership be cancelled but dues continue to be deducted from their paycheck, do?

If an employee has concerns, they should first contact COWINS at info@cowins.org [3] or (720) 614-1547. Membership and membership dues are governed by the membership terms between COWINS and the employee.

Does the entity the employee works for affect their covered status?

No. A classified employee is a covered employee, except as described above, regardless of for whom they work or where they work in state government. For example, classified employees within the Community College System, Attorney General's Office, Secretary of State, and independent institutions of higher education are covered employees unless they are specifically exempted.

Groups audience:
Employee Services
Right Sidebar:
ES: Benefits & Wellness - State Tuition Reimbursement

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[5] https://dhr.colorado.gov/about/labor-relations/quality-jobs-services-act/wins-opt-out-form