

UFCW Local 1445
2024 - 2025 Essay Scholarship Application
(High school seniors only)
Suggestions regarding essay content

General instructions: This UFCW Local 1445 scholarship will be awarded to college-bound high school seniors who are Local 1445 members, or the spouses, children, or grandchildren of members. Scholarship winners will be selected based on the content and ideas expressed in their essay, and will be announced at the Local 1445 quarterly membership meeting held in July. The person who qualifies the applicant must be a UFCW Local 1445 member in good standing, or a retiree from a Local 1445 employer; **applications must be returned to the address on the application and postmarked no later than July 12, 2024.**

Students: Your 750 – 1000 word essay should be double-spaced and printed out on single-sided sheets. It should be on the theme “**How I Would Convince a Skeptical Friend That *The Union’s Got My Back***” (or “...**My Parent’s Back**”, or “...**My Grandparent’s Back**”, depending upon who’s the union member in your family - you get the idea.)

What should you include in your essay? *Think about how you would talk to your friend about the union. Let’s say your friend doesn’t know anything about unions, only what s/he might have heard from other people.* **You could explain the history of unions – when they were originally formed in this country, and why:** What conditions led workers to organize into unions, even at the risk of being seriously injured or killed by company agents and dishonest law enforcement personnel? What were some of the scandals and tragedies that eventually led to the public support and passage of laws protecting workers and their right to organize, such as the NLRA? Why was it necessary to actually pass laws to guarantee these protections? **Then you could describe conditions today:** What legal rights do workers have that will help to guarantee living wages, benefits, safe working conditions, and respect on the job? And how do these rights help to protect the American middle class and give everyone a shot at “The American Dream”? What are some of the advantages ALL workers enjoy today – such as overtime pay, days off, paid holidays, etc. etc. etc. –thanks to the Labor Movement? **You could add the benefits of being in a union:** Unions make sure workers are covered by collective bargaining agreements (contracts) - what’s the advantage of that? What’s so great about “seniority”? If nonunion workers are treated unfairly all they can do is complain, while union workers can file “grievances” – what’s that all about? What’s the advantage of having an outside professional representative, i.e., a business agent, to handle any disputes and resolve any problems you or your coworkers might have with your boss? Even if you’ve never had to contact the union, being a union member means the union is there for you if you ever need help – who can nonunion workers call to protect their interests if they get into trouble? **You might go on to explain what’s involved in organizing:** How do workers at a nonunion employer organize into a union? Can just one person decide to call in the union? Does everyone have to agree? Why would a company object to having workers unionize? **Etc. etc. etc.:** OSHA is supposed to protect all workers – how is having a union an advantage? And more, such as the fact that a union is completely democratic and all members are considered equal, regardless of where they work or their job description.

These are just some of the points you might want to discuss in your essay – you may have personal experiences you can include or other issues you feel are important to address. All in all, your essay should demonstrate your understanding of the history and evolution of the Labor Movement, and why worker solidarity today will be crucial in the fight to save America’s middle class, and **why you are proud to be associated with UFCW Local 1445.**