

U³



UCubed

Ur Union of Unemployed

“You just have to get up each day and say this is going to be the day that something good is going to happen,” said IAM Local 639’s Donna Gainer in April 2009. The nine-year aerospace worker had just

been laid off from her job at Bombardier Learjet. She’d been out of work for two weeks.

“I know I’ll be back to work,” said the Wichita, KS, resident. “It may take some time, but I’ll be back.”

It’s now been almost a year, and Gainer has yet to receive that call back – or any call back for that matter.

“I don’t think things are turning around as quickly as they thought they would for the aircraft business,” she says today. She, like thousands of other Wichita residents, is still struggling to regain her footing after the one-two punch dealt to Wichita’s private jet industry last year. One hit from the economy. The other, media backlash against the industry’s biggest customers.

“I never thought it would take this long. I didn’t. I really thought I’d be back to work by the end of summer,” she says.

For Gainer, much has changed over the last year. Morale is waning. As is money. “I have us budgeted pretty much down to the penny,” she says. “I know I’m going to

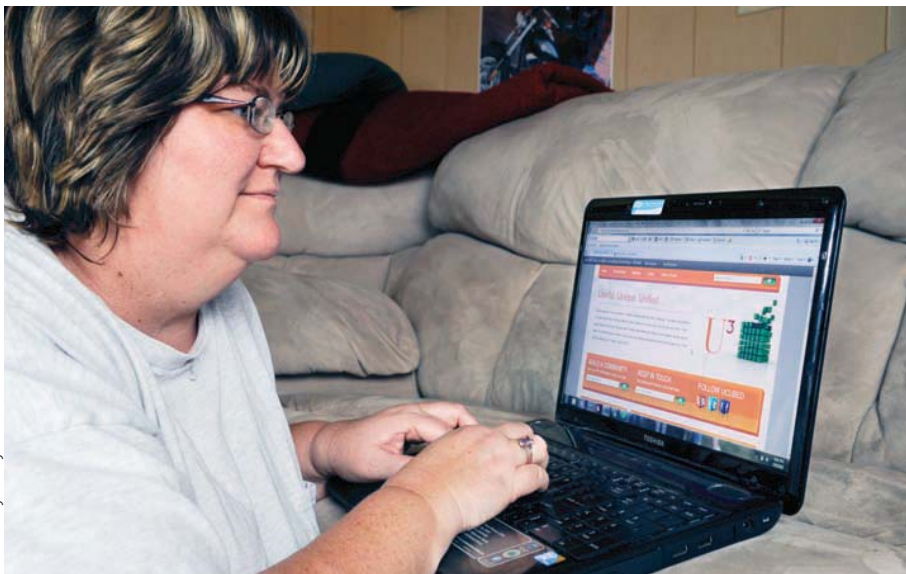


Photo by Randy Tobias

IAM Local Lodge 639 member Donna Gainer of Wichita, KS, was one of the first to join UCubed after she was laid off from Bombardier Learjet. Gainer hopes to return to her aerospace job, but the industry is slow to recover. In the meantime, “When a decent job comes up, it’s gone in a heartbeat,” says Gainer.



More than 30 million Americans are unemployed or forced to work fewer hours in the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

have to find other work for a while – but there just aren't many jobs out there. When a decent job comes up, it's gone in a heartbeat.

"Of course what saves us now is that my husband is still working." But, for how long? Gainer believes, with the economy the way it is, no one in her town is safe. "It's starting to worry me."

Sadly, she's not alone. Gainer is one of over 30 million Americans left idled by a recession the likes of which many of us have never encountered. She's also one of the current 6.1 million workers reeling from long-term unemployment after having been

"There is strength in numbers. And the more jobless Americans work together, the quicker they can end this devastating downturn."

Tom Buffenbarger
International President

out of work longer than six months.

"Being jobless is devastating," says IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger. "It robs people of their sense of worth, sense of purpose and

sense of identity. Being jobless changes everything.

"Try looking your kids in the eye as they leave for school. Try waiting for calls that never come from prospective employers. Try walking down the block knowing your neighbors know you're out of work. Try shopping NOT for groceries but for NECESSITIES – a few dollars at a time. It's not easy.

"Our country is in the midst of an historic jobs crisis," warned Buffenbarger during the 2009 No Limits Public Policy Conference in Washington, DC. "Thirty million is a crisis – a long-term crisis. Thirty million means it is

midnight in America and the dawn is a long way off.”

The Machinists Union is not without its own recession struggles. More than 35,000 of our own members have been laid off or are working fewer hours due to halted production schedules.

But as 122-year advocates for the working class, the IAM refuses to face this jobs crisis lying down. On January 15, 2010, the Machinists launched “Ur Union of Unemployed,” nicknamed UCubed, a grassroots online community that aims to unify the unemployed and underemployed in a unique and useful way.

“When you’re out of work, it’s easy to feel alone,” says Buffenbarger. “And it’s easy to lose sight of the fact that

“Working together, we can get millions of Americans back to work.”

Tom Buffenbarger
International President

millions of Americans share your strains.

“There is strength in numbers. And the more jobless Americans work together, the quicker they can end this devastating downturn. That’s the idea behind “Ur Union of Unemployed.”

Organize the Unemployed

UCubed organizes the unemployed and underem-

ployed according to their zip code into community activist groups known as “cubes.” Six activists combine to make a cube. Nine cubes create a neighborhood. Three neighborhoods create a block.

“Multiply that again and again, and what you have is a powerful community that can effect real change – a power block that politicians and merchants cannot ignore,” says Buffenbarger.

While UCubed is open to all of America’s jobless, there is an element of self-interest in its creation. “We desperately want jobs for our members, but most members will not return to work until the broader economy starts to grow again,” says Buffenbarger. “By working together, we can get ourselves – and millions of Americans just like us – back to work. We’re all in this together. UCubed is our opportunity to speak as a single voice on the single most important issue of our time: Jobs, Jobs, Jobs!”

UCubed provides a means for the unemployed to work together to rise up from the depths of this recession using their skills

The IAM’s “Ur Union of Unemployed,” or UCubed, is a grassroots online community for America’s unemployed and underemployed to join together, share resources and demand action to create jobs.



www.unionofunemployed.com



AP/World Wide Photo

Without a bigger federal stimulus program to create jobs, long-term unemployment will increase and competition for fewer and fewer jobs, such as at this job fair in New York, will get more intense.

and talents to help each other – and themselves.

By connecting and working together, jobs activists share resources while taking advantage of a wealth of employment resources available on the site.

UCubed provides information on everything from writing a resume and navigating the tough job market to budgeting and re-assessing one's skills set.

Getting Connected

Donna Gainer was among the first unemployed workers to join UCubed.

She was also the first jobs activist to complete a cube of six people.

“For me, it actually helps more to talk to other people who have been laid off because they know where I’m coming from and how

UCubed is a way for the unemployed to work together to rise up from this recession.

I feel,” she says. “I think it’s a great way to network with other Machinists and other laid-off people, getting ideas from not just people here locally, but everywhere. I am now friends with people all over, and it’s interesting to hear other stories, see how people are coping and see how their coping techniques may help people here. We all kind of learn a little bit from each other.”

UCubed jobs activists are encouraged to hold meetings to get to know one another, exchange ideas and plan events.

“About one-third of the people in my town, including some people in my family, worked for GM. When the plant closed, everyone lost their job. I have friends who lost their houses because they had to accept what work there is at half the pay they used to make. I plan to share UCubed with my fellow members, family and friends.”

Mike Mills II, Local 1943
Journeyman Maintenance Technician

AK STEEL
Middletown, OH



Turn Up the Heat

Activists can also join forces in turning up the heat on politicians. State legislators, governors, Congress and the White House need to be reminded *daily* of the reason voters – amid a plummeting economy, financial system and housing market all racing to see which can make it to the bottom first – flocked to the polls in the fall of 2008.

Many of those voters will return to the polls later this year, warns Buffenbarger. “When one-fifth of America’s workforce is idled to some degree, the full force of government, business, labor and academia must be marshaled to get them back

to work,” said Buffenbarger in response to President Barack Obama’s State of the Union address. “No such comprehensive strategy has been outlined. The growing anger and frustration of the jobless will find an outlet, most probably in the 2010 midterm elections.”

UCubed’s legislative action center enables jobs activists to command their state and national leaders’ attention and demand they act in addressing the jobs crisis immediately. Activists can e-mail leaders on important issues such as JOBS Now!, the “Jobs for Main Street” bill, unemployment compensation extensions, COBRA and food stamps.

JOBS Now!

“The American people need immediate relief from this wretched economy,” says Buffenbarger. “Already meager unemployment benefits are running out. Families are turning to food stamps or going to food banks in record numbers. Mortgage foreclosures are on the rise. And, hard-earned life savings are being wiped out.

“This country cannot rebuild its economic foundation unless the driving force behind it is based on manufacturing and selling products made by American workers. The only answer to this crisis is JOBS Now!”

JOBS Now! is a comprehensive strategy for getting millions of unemployed Americans immediately back to work by rebuilding America’s industrial foundation. The initiative calls for a second stimulus package, one focused on investing more in the manufacturing and transportation sectors of our economy. JOBS Now! also calls for a rigorous “Buy American” clause and incentives for workers who wish to return to school and upgrade their skills.

UCubed jobs activists must tell Congress a second, targeted stimulus plan for rebuilding America’s manufacturing and transportation sectors is the only way to

jumpstart the economy, and create the long-term growth and sustained job creation Americans desperately need.

Jobs for Main Street

“Jobless Americans are angry. And they have every right to be,” says Buffenbarger. “They were last in line when Washington doled out trillions of dollars to the banks, insurance companies, investment firms and government contractors. Now the politicians have the gall to say, ‘Wait! We need to focus on deficit reduction.’ What they really mean is, ‘We got the gold mine; you got the shaft.’”

“Well, the days of bailing out Wall Street, Executive Boulevard and Everybody-Else Turnpike stops here. We



AP/World Wide Photo

For many unemployed workers who have chronic health problems, keeping health care coverage is a challenge. UCubed is focused on extending the federal subsidy under COBRA that allows workers to keep their medical coverage at a reduced rate if they get laid off.

need to make sure legislation helps Main Street.”

House members passed the “Jobs for Main Street” bill (HR 2847) last December.

The measure proposes to help create and save jobs by making targeted investments in areas that will grow the economy over the long run, including highways, public transit, construction, small businesses, job training, and hiring and retaining teachers, police officers and firefighters.

The bill also helps those who are currently looking for work by extending unemployment benefits and COBRA coverage.

House members hope to pay for the estimated \$150 billion legislation by taking \$75 billion from the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) used to bail out Wall Street and redirecting it to “Main Street.”

The Senate recently



AP/World Wide Photo

Using UCubed, thousands of jobs activists can focus their power on politicians at the local, state and federal level to take action to end the recession and get American families back to work.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

[Demand Immediate Passage of The “Jobs for Main Street” Bill](#)

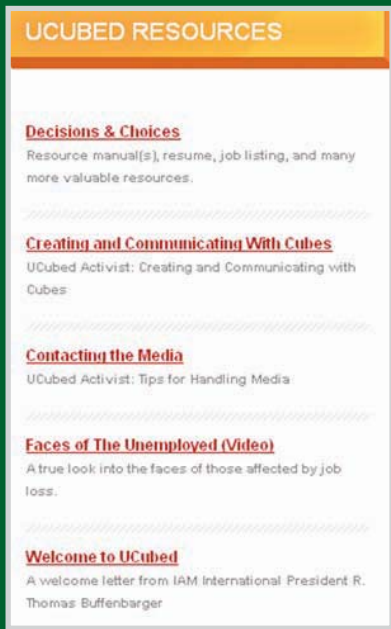
[Tell Congress We Need Jobs and We Need Them NOW!](#)

[We Demand An Increase In Maximum Food Stamp Benefits for America’s Unemployed](#)

[Demand Congress Craft Long Term Unemployment Benefits! No More Quick Fixes!](#)

[Demand Congress Extend The COBRA Subsidy for Unemployed Workers!](#)

[Clarion Call To The Nations Governors: We Need JOBS!](#)



AP/World Wide Photo

UCubed offers resources for the unemployed to find work, share ideas and become activists to fight for JOBS Now!

year, economists argue that is not enough.

According to the National Employment Law Project, jobless workers have remained without work for an average of 29 weeks, and 39.8 percent have been out of work for six months or longer. Worse, the Economic Policy Institute estimates that, because of the stimulative and stabilizing impact of unemployment benefits on local communities, up to 800,000 additional jobs could be lost this year if benefits are not extended through the end of the year.

UCubed activists must demand Congress craft a long-term unemployment benefit strategy.

“Congress’ June 30 extension is nothing more than a stopgap measure,” explains Buffenbarger. “It signifies their failure to address the real

passed its own jobs legislation, but the \$15 billion measure pales in comparison to the House version.

American families are hurting. And, they want to get back to work. UCubed activists must demand lawmakers pass a comprehensive

“Jobs for Main Street” bill immediately.

Extend Unemployment Benefits

While the “Jobs for Main Street” bill provides for an extension of unemployment benefits until June 30 of this

“No one’s been untouched by this recession. Everybody knows somebody who’s unemployed and lost their job. When UCubed first came out, I immediately sent it to my brother and brother-in-law saying this is another resource. Something you can join to connect with people in your neighborhood. When you’re looking for a job, it’s all about contacts. You never know what might come of that.

UCubed has a unique perspective coming from a union and people who really care about workers.”

Christine Diaz, Local 2339-H
Flight Attendant

CONTINENTAL AIRLINES
Houston, TX



“I thought I was going to retire here, but now I don’t think so. It’s corporate greed. Their pockets get fatter and fatter, and they don’t care about us. We really have to stick together. Through UCubed, we can try to get more benefits and food stamps for the unemployed because they’re starving. There are so many people out there who don’t have anything.”

Renee MacLean, Local 743
Tech II Mechanic

HAMILTON SUNDSTRAND
 Windsor Locks, CT



underlying problem: the hemorrhaging of jobs in this country. America’s jobless deserve better!

“With the ranks of long-term joblessness continuing to grow and this Grave Recession achieving record depths, the unemployed need policies that will support them throughout their climb towards re-employment,” says Buffenbarger. “America’s workers need more than band-aids put in place just to keep folks quiet for the moment. Americans need jobs! And until those jobs are created, working families need to pressure Congress in order to ensure workers are not left out to dry.”

COBRA

Losing one’s job is bad enough. Losing one’s health insurance adds insult to injury.

According to the Kaiser

Family Foundation, the average full cost of COBRA family health insurance for a worker who just lost their job is \$1,137 per month.

The average cost under the 2009 COBRA premium reduction program is \$398 per month.

While the House bill’s

call for a 15-month extension of the 2009 COBRA premium reduction program is better than no action at all, the bill’s arbitrary June 30 deadline for eligibility, again, stops short of providing real relief to America’s unemployed. “Laid-off workers struggling financially to

UCubed members get access to the Machinists Mall, an online retail center offering discounts on hundreds of necessary family items.



“The company has never laid off anyone. But now they want to cut 110 jobs, which they will do by attrition. Before I came to Omaha, I was laid off by the phone company after I’d worked there for 11 years. A friend who still works there said they’re laying off another 100 workers and that the company

expects to close its doors in six months. It’s going to be hard for him to find a job. I’m going to pass out the UCubed brochures at all three of my work locations. It’s a good way to get our members involved.”

Scott Palma, Local 31
Machinist

OMAHA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT
Omaha, NE

food on the table. The program now helps to feed one-in-eight Americans. But in a recession bigger than most of us have ever seen, studies have shown that recent increases and temporary improvements to the program through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are not enough.

For most families, most of those benefits, if not all, are usually gone before the end of the month. Record job loss and soaring long-term unemployment has pushed the situation far beyond where we were a year ago when the legislation originally passed. Today, more needs to be done.

UCubed activists must demand Congress’ support of an extension and expansion of state food-stamp programs immediately.

make ends meet should not, at any point in time during their unemployment period, have to worry about premiums that exceed 80 percent of their unemployment income,” says Buffenbarger.

UCubed activists must demand Congress act now to create legislation that provides America’s laid-off workers the affordable COBRA coverage they need.

Food Stamp Appropriations

When 17 million U.S. households - that’s 49 million people - are having difficulty keeping enough food on the table, and one-in-four children live in a household that struggles with hunger, it is up

to our nation’s leaders to act.

Food-stamp use is increasingly becoming a necessity for households looking to keep



AP/World Wide Photo

With workers facing a year or more of unemployment, UCubed activists are advocating for increased monthly food stamp benefits because many families must turn to food banks when they run out of food stamps before the end of the month.

AP/World Wide Photo



Unemployment benefits are critical to many families trying to survive long-term unemployment. UCubed allows activists to pressure Congress to extend unemployment benefits and call for increased benefit levels.

Machinists Mall

To help alleviate the strain on unemployed workers' wallets when it comes to buying food, clothing, personal care products, household goods, over-the-counter medications and other important services, members of UCubed also have access to the Machinists Mall, a program that offers steep discounts and rebates. Savings are highlighted each week.

Build a Movement

"I am convinced that this unique, useful and unifying idea will add a real sense of urgency in efforts to get all Americans back to work," says Buffenbarger.

As the *IAM Journal* went to press, UCubed had jobs activists in more than 1,288 zip codes and 318 cubes in 43 states and Washington, D.C.

But, as with all change, it must start at home – here, within our own Union. "IAM members – employed, unemployed and underemployed – can help organize the jobless by creating cubes in their own zip codes," affirms Buffenbarger. "Efforts to help the unemployed get back to work, and the machines in our nation's factories hum-

ming, must start with us.

"Your life will change a little bit at first. But the lives of those you connect with via UCubed will change dramatically," says Buffenbarger.

"With your activism, UCubed can grow exponentially. Help us. Help yourself. Help your country. I urge all IAM members to join UCubed and start a movement today."

"My son's been unemployed almost a year now. He's trying to maintain, but they're sending most of our jobs to Mexico. Those jobs will never come back. If we aren't looking out for each other, who will?"

Charlotte Washington

Local 774

Certified Sealer

CESSNA
Wichita, KS



Photo by Randy Tobias

Start a Cube Today!

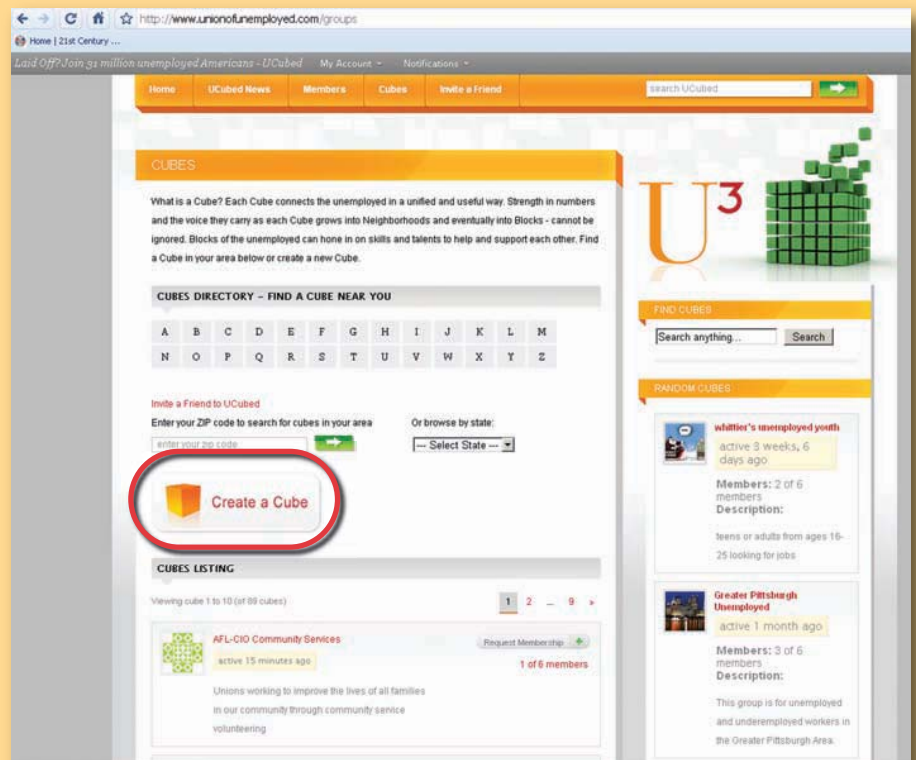
Join UCubed

1. Click "Join Now" to register.
2. You will be given an avatar (*graphic*) to represent you. If you'd like to upload your own avatar, browse your computer and upload an image.
3. Once you register, you'll receive a confirmation activation notice in your e-mail. Click the activation link and you'll be taken to a page where you "Log In."
4. Enter your username and password.
5. You are now ready to either **find and join** an existing cube by zip code, or **create** a new cube.



Create a Cube

1. On the "Cubes" page, click "Create a Cube." Fill in your location and other information so activists can easily find your cube. Then, click "Continue."
2. Click "Comment Wire," if you want to allow members to chat. Click "Discussion Forum," to allow activists to post articles or comments. Click "Next Step."
3. You will be given a random avatar that will identify your cube or you can upload your own graphic. Click "Next Step."
4. Finally, "Invite Others to Join UCubed." Enter their e-mail addresses separated by a comma.
5. Click "Submit" and you're done.

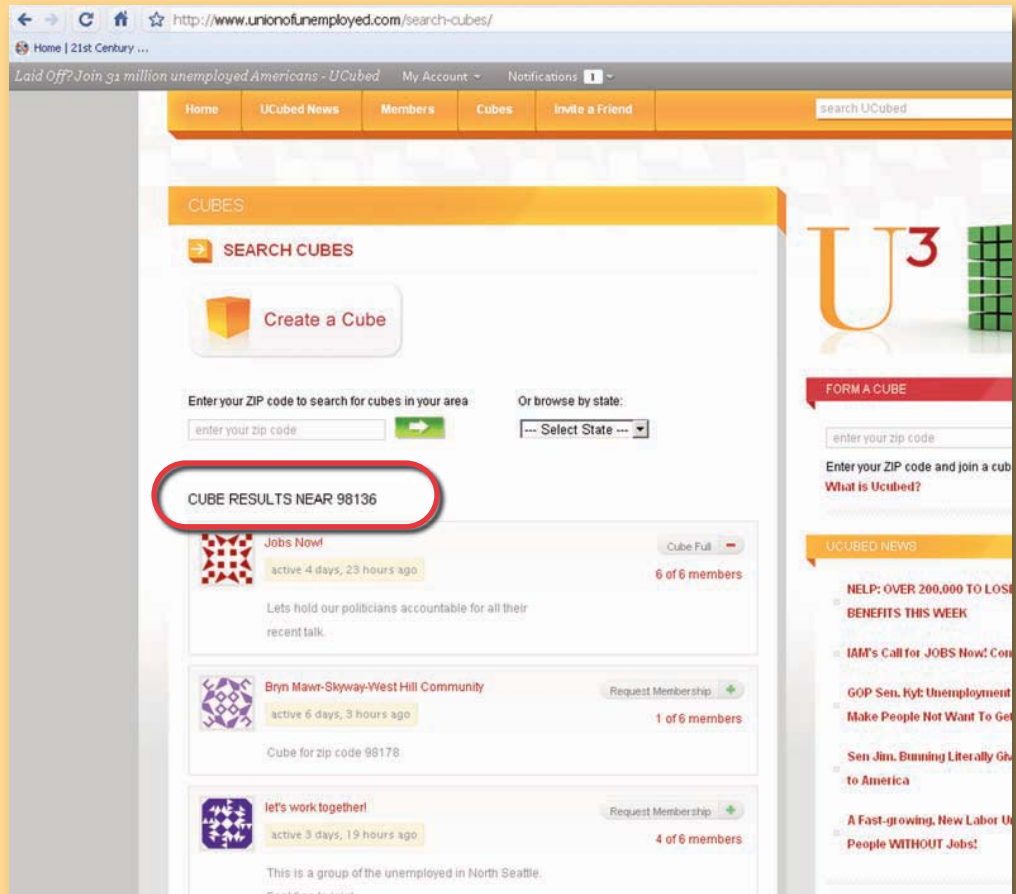


Find a Cube

1. Under "Build a Community" on the UCubed home page, enter your zip code and click the arrow to find existing cubes.

2. From the list of cubes in your area, click a cube's name to find out details, or click "Request Membership" to join that cube. The creator of that cube will be sent a message that you are waiting to join.

3. If there is no cube in your zip code, or if the cube is filled, create a new cube by clicking "Create a Cube."



6 Activists = 1 Cube



Become a Cube Leader

The person who leads the fight for jobs in their area.

