



# ESSENTIAL BY INDUSTRY, EXCEPTIONAL BY CHOICE

*Embracing Our Differences, Leveraging Our Strength,  
Determining Our Future Together*

**W**HEREAS, Even under normal conditions, UWUA members put their lives on the line every day with little public recognition regarding the danger of their work. Utility workers work under dangerous conditions to run, repair, and maintain the water and energy infrastructure of the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** Utility workers are the unsung heroes of almost every natural or manmade disaster — from ice storms, hurricanes, and natural gas explosions to tornados and wild fires. We do it willingly, despite the hazardous condition and lack of recognition. UWUA members work in their local territories as well as across the country and Puerto Rico, as part of nationwide mutual assistance programs, working 16-hour days, seven days a week, often leaving their families and homes. We thank the thousands of union brothers and sisters who answer the call and respond to emergencies; and

**WHEREAS,** Utility workers often serve as first responders when disaster strikes. They are the first to respond to catastrophic events, working to make the scene safe enough for police, firefighters and EMTs to do their jobs. They then go on to repair and supply critical services during response and recovery operations; and

**WHEREAS,** Beginning in 2020 our nation was afflicted by a deadly, highly contagious COVID-19 virus pandemic which killed over 1,000,000 Americans and made many more seriously ill. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic was to close schools, businesses, and other institutions so others could stay home to avoid the virus. These safety precautions were not available for our members who must keep the electricity, gas and water flowing regardless of the dangers posed by a global pandemic and the risk it posed to our members; and

**WHEREAS,** UWUA members went to work every day to ensure that doctors, hospitals, and healthcare providers had the electricity, gas and water they needed to provide care to the sick. UWUA members powered the stores and police and fire departments so that they could provide food, clothing, and essential services necessary during the pandemic. UWUA members entered homes and businesses when there were issues with gas, electric or water services, even though the exposure put themselves and their families at risk. UWUA members also powered the computers and phones that allowed our country to continue to work through videoconferences and electronic communications; and

**WHEREAS,** Once again, the COVID-19 pandemic proved that the utility industry is essential to our nation's ability to survive during natural disasters, manmade tragedies, and now a deadly pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic also solidified the obvious fact that utility workers are the ultimate essential worker and that we are exceptional because we choose to risk life and limb to bring electricity, gas and water regardless or the danger or challenge that presents; and

**WHEREAS,** Our members sometimes make the ultimate sacrifice. We honor every UWUA member injured or killed in the line of duty. Their dedication will not be forgotten, and we owe it to our deceased brothers and sisters to work toward preventing future tragedies; and

**WHEREAS,** Over time, our membership has changed to include more women, people of color and LGBTQ members. The UWUA embraces these changes and sees our diversifying membership as a source of strength. Our time in the fire together over the past few years has proven that when we, as a Union, embrace our differences, we leverage our collective strength and that allows us, as UWUA members, to determine our future together.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** It is high time our elected leaders recognize that we are first responders and essential workers. The UWUA and its affiliates will educate elected officials and advocate for laws and regulations granting utility workers first responders' status; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** The UWUA recognizes the risks and dangers that our members face every day and that they will be called on again to do our essential work in the face of whatever danger comes our way because there is no alternative to providing electricity, gas and water to our nation and its citizens; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** The UWUA calls on our local union leaders and members to organize and participate in observances of the annual National Lineworker Appreciation Day; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** Through UWUA affiliated safety committees and training programs, we will continue to train the safest, most productive, and highest skilled workers in the industry; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED,** Utility Workers are essential by industry and exceptional by choice and that as we embrace our differences, we leverage our strength so that we can determine our future together.