

LABOR RELATIONS			
	Question	Answer	OPM URL
533	What is Labor Relations?	The relationship between agency managers, their employees and the unions that represent the employees. The Federal Statute (labor law) establishes basic rights for each of these groups and in conjunction with a CBA (collective bargaining agreement) governs how these parties work together. The rights of all parties should interact to promote the effectiveness of the agency.	
535	What is a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)?	The CBA, also known as a “contract” are negotiated and agreed upon by the agency and the union. It specifically outlines how agency representatives interact with employees that are represented by the union. The CBA is reviewed by agency heads and ratified by union members before it becomes effective.	
537	How are unions formed and who do they represent?	Unions are private sector organizations(not a government entity) that are elected by employees to represent them as defined by their certification. The law gives federal employees the right to form a bargaining unit and choose a union to represent it. Employees that are excluded from union membership are: managers, supervisors, personnel specialist, internal security personnel and confidential employees.	
538	What does a union do?	The union, once certified can bargain with agency management over how certain personnel policies and practices affect the working conditions of bargaining unit (union) employees. Additionally, the union can represent it’s members in presenting grievances, during investigatory meetings that could lead to discipline. They are also permitted to attend formal discussions in which managers discuss working conditions of unit employees.	
540	What are management’s rights when a union has been elected?	Management maintains the rights to make organizational decisions assign work and decide on and carry out personnel actions. In some instances the union has the right to be informed of intended changes before they are made and may request to bargain the impact of the change. Any changes that are based on a protected management right are not open for negotiation.	
542	What is the difference between an Administrative Grievance and a Negotiated Grievance?	Employees that are not members of the union handle grievances through the administrative grievance procedure. This is outlined by agency/bureau specific policy. During the process of negotiating a collective bargaining agreement, management and the union come to agreement on how grievances brought forth by union members will be handled. The process is usually referred to as a negotiated grievance procedure. In most cases this will vary from the agency administrative grievance procedure.	
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544	How are Labor Relations issues resolved?	When the parties cannot resolve issues that arise, outside assistance can be invited in at either parties' request. Groups such as the Federal Labor Relations Authority, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, and the Federal Service Impasses Panel function as mechanisms to resolve special problems.	
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