

International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union

In the early 1900s, women increasingly participated in politics and activism. Working women were no different, and their unions demanded better hours, increased wages, and humane working conditions. Cleveland unions were galvanized under the leadership of New York's International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) and worked together to form the Joint Board of Cloak & Skirt Makers' Unions (JBCSMU).



In 1918, after unmet demands, the JBCSMU began a strike, and less than a month later negotiations began. Cleveland companies and the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, were willing to work together and compromise because everyone was so focused on the efforts of World War I. Finally, on Christmas Eve of 1919, the unions ended a 10-year struggle to establish unionism and firmly established collective bargaining in the Cleveland garment trade.

