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## **BACKGROUND**

### **THE NEXTGEN INITIATIVE**

The NextGen Initiative was created by the First District to better understand and engage the younger members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Designed to ensure the IBEW continues to remain relevant and reflects the best interests of all generations of its members, the NextGen Initiative is focused on responding to the needs of members 35 and under, while continuing to engage the more experienced worker.

The need for the NextGen Initiative came about as the membership demographics of the IBEW are changing. Baby Boomers and Traditionalists are moving towards retirement, while Gen X and Gen Y members are accounting for a higher portion of the membership yet have less of a connection with the union. The NextGen Initiative will address member disengagement by communicating and educating younger workers on the opportunities available to them and the full service offering of the IBEW, giving them the tools to become more involved.

To address the changing demographics and properly develop a strategy to move forward, the First District engaged a third party specialist, ngen People Performance Inc., to conduct research on generational differences that exist amongst the membership. The research included a national member survey, one-on-one interviews, and group sessions of all four generations of IBEW members. The results were compiled into a summary document which included statistical information, suggestions on how to improve our organization and increase relations between the four generations of members at the local union level, found at the back of this booklet.

Utilizing this research, the NextGen Initiative is focusing on creating a way for younger members to get involved and engaged within the IBEW. In addition to including younger members at conferences such as the All Canada Progress Meeting, one of the strategic approaches being used is the development of NextGen Committees in local unions.

#### **Why NextGen Committees?**

NextGen Committees are designed to create a space for IBEW members under the age of 35 to get involved and serve as an entry point to the union. The purpose and mandate of NextGen committees are shaped by the needs of the local union and interest of their members. Generally, the goal of these committees is to educate younger members on the full offerings of the IBEW, provide a space for young members to better understand the workings of the union at the local level, to discuss issues relevant to young people in their workplace and their community and to learn more about the structures and cultures of the IBEW. NextGen Committees can provide a space to help younger members build the confidence and skills necessary to become active in the local union, attend general unions meetings, develop relationships with their local union and leadership and become engaged in a meaningful way within our organization.

***The NextGen Initiative is one way the IBEW is working towards building a union for the future.***