



Union Stories

Union Plus Mortgage Program Saves a UAW Member More than Money

Three times in the past two years Mark Wicks, a member of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 551, called on the [Union Plus Mortgage Program](#) for support, and each time the program came through for Wicks.

When Wicks and his wife Susan recently decided to downsize from their large single-family home to a townhouse in Lockport, IL, they chose the Union Plus Mortgage Program. "It's a great program that has a very easy process," Wicks says. They chose a Union Plus Mortgage because it had helped them get through two layoffs — one last January and the other at the end of 2004.

As 2004 was nearing an end, major life transformations were in store for Mark Wicks and his family. His daughter was in the midst of planning a big wedding. His son was pursuing educational pursuits after high school. And he, a 28-year veteran of his union, was facing a layoff from the Ford Motor Company parts distribution center in Chicago where he worked for close to 30 years.

Even though finances were going to be tight, Wicks could not imagine asking his children to scale back their dreams and aspirations. Thanks to the [Union Plus Mortgage Assistance Program](#) he had one less financial worry. That's because the mortgage program helped alleviate a major concern: how he was going to pay his mortgage during the layoff. By paying part or all of the monthly payments, Union Plus helps to take away members' worries of losing their homes.

The Union Plus Mortgage Assistance Program provides interest-free loans to union members who have had a Union Plus Mortgage through Chase for more than a year. It took just a quick phone call for Wicks to realize that the Union Plus Mortgage Assistance Program would provide him with the help he needed. A representative personally walked Wicks through the process, and approval of the interest-free loan occurred in just a matter of days.

"The program was incredible," says Wicks, a former two-term local committee person. "When you're laid off, you wonder how you're going to keep up. The Union Plus Mortgage Program made a world of difference." The program has provided more than \$2.25 million to over 500 members.

When faced with another layoff this January, Wicks knew whom to call. Again he was told that help was on its way. Loans are made on the basis of need, and they cover up to six months of mortgage payments.

The Wicks are grateful for the mortgage loan that covered their house payment during the layoffs, but they also appreciate the other unique benefits that drew them to choose a loan through Chase — the lending partner of the Union Plus Mortgage Program — in the first place: competitive interest rates, caps on fees, and, of course, strike and disability protections.

Wicks, who knows first-hand the lack of security in the workplace, makes it a point to educate other UAW members about the Union Plus benefits: "I do my best to let everyone know of the program. The benefits are incredible. They make a big difference when circumstances make finances tight."





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