

They formed the first Apple store union in the country. Now, employees say they're barred from some benefits

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Employees of the Apple store in Towson, Maryland, filed a formal complaint with the National Labor Relations Board against the company

Wednesday over claims that Apple is excluding them from certain benefits and that the company made a "calculated" move to discourage further unionization efforts.

The employees voted 65-33 in June to join the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, making them the first Apple store employees in the country to unionize. Their concerns included compensation, fairness and COVID-19 safety.

Last Thursday, the [union](#) sent a letter to Apple CEO Tim Cook that said the company has excluded them from receiving "certain educational and medical benefits offered to all other Apple employees."

The nascent union filed an Unfair Labor Practice charge on Wednesday over the alleged exclusion, kicking off a process in which regional field examiners and attorneys investigate the union's charge. About 18,000 Unfair Labor Practice charges were filed to the NLRB in 2022, and generally about half of all charges are withdrawn or dismissed, according to the board.

"One of the reasons the employees in Towson joined the IAM was because they knew our union would use every resource to protect them. We are hopeful that this won't be the normal procedure before we sit with Apple at the negotiating table," David Sullivan, IAM Eastern Territory general vice president, said in a statement. "Our members in Towson want to be heard in the workplace, and securing a first contract will be the first step towards achieving that goal."

Apple's corporate communications office did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The company previously said it offers strong compensation and benefits for [full-time](#) and part-time employees, including [health care](#), tuition reimbursement, new parental leave, paid family leave, annual stock grants and other benefits. The company pays a

minimum rate of \$20 per hour.

The union's letter said leaders in other Apple stores have told employees that unionized employees are not eligible for the benefits in question, but the union said that is misleading because any such benefits will be included in their bargaining proposal when a contract is negotiated. The letter said the decision was made days before an Oklahoma Apple store was set to hold a union election earlier this month in an apparent attempt to dissuade employees from unionizing.

The employees in Oklahoma City ultimately voted 56-32 to form the second Apple store union in the nation.

"We ask that Apple refrain from delivering misinformation regarding why Towson employees will not be offered the [benefits](#) at this time, reported by numerous media outlets and recently told to our negotiating committee," the union for the Towson Apple store wrote. "Our members risked a lot to ensure their voices were heard. Now is the time to embrace us as true partners. We must work together to set new standards in our industry and help keep Apple as one of the world's most iconic brands."

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