

JOIN THE JHL TRADE UNION!



**JOIN THE JHL
TRADE UNION!**

JHL's guide for immigrants in Finland

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The trade union movement in Finland

Approximately 70% of wage earners in Finland are members of a trade union. One of the largest trade unions is the Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors, JHL, with some 220,000 members. JHL is a member of the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, SAK.

In Finland, wage-earners' rights and obligations are governed by collective agreements and labour legislation, and the majority of employers comply with the collective agreements. In Finland, the collective

The most important task of the trade unions is to negotiate collective agreements for their members and to ensure that they are adhered to at workplaces.

agreements provide wide coverage for a range of wage earners, wherever they work. Collec-

tive agreements cover issues such as salaries, annual holidays and working hours.

The trade union movement can be credited with achieving improvements in the status of workers, for example by negotiating the five-day work week, minimum wage, paid holidays and the 8-hour workday – notions that are nowadays taken for granted, but which were once considered radical.

Many consider an independent and well-functioning trade union movement to be an important factor in the development of a state's democracy and economy.

In Finland, the trade union movement has also been involved in negotiations concerning the Child Benefit Act and parental leave.

Our labour market system requires a high level of joint responsibility, which is why it is crucial that as many wage earners as possible are paying members of their respective trade union. This is the only way to ensure that trade unions, such as JHL, can offer efficient negotiation and trusteeship activities. At the workplace, active union members work to safeguard the employees' interests – they are voluntary workers acting in the capacity of elected officials who hold a position of trust.

JHL as a union

A trade union is an organisation whose task is to negotiate employment issues that concern its members, and to advance members' wages, salaries and other benefits. Union membership brings security to your employment relationship. It is also a way to influence your pay, the terms of your employment and the working conditions in your workplace. As a member of a trade union you are also involved in the international trade union movement, working to defend justice and equality.

JHL – The Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors – is a strong public sector trade union that offers expert services for dealing with issues concerning working life.

JHL proactively promotes its members' interests and influences decision-making in society.

JHL sits at the negotiating tables where decisions are made on agreements affecting working life in the fields of state, municipal, church and private welfare services. JHL negotiates the collective agreements for these sectors and monitors its members' interests at the workplace. The agreements JHL has negotiated improve the income, job security and quality of life of its members. It seeks to increase its influence by gaining a stronger foothold among companies and non-governmental organisations, which apply principles of entrepreneurship in their operations and which are increasingly providing public, tax-financed services.

JHL membership applies to occupations such as child minders, practical nurses, private child minders, advisers, home help workers, institutional caregivers, institutional care assistants, orderlies, cleaners, cooks, office workers, school assistants, bus drivers, repairmen, police officers, office caretakers, road menders, school personnel and real estate maintenance personnel. The organisation has a broad membership base: JHL members work in various occupations in local and central government and in the church, from mayors to messengers and

road workers to practical nurses. More than 70 per cent of its members are women. The members are not direct members of the union but of the local JHL branch that operates in their workplace or locality. There are approximately 700 local JHL branches.

JHL's members

The Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors JHL is a union for people working in the public and private welfare services sector.

Public services constitute all services provided by central or local government (e.g. health services, schools, universities, police, road maintenance, day care, services for the elderly, government office services, library services).

Private welfare services constitute all services financed through taxes but provided by a private service provider (e.g. private social and health services, substance abuse services provided by organisations, services provided by private vocational schools, sports club activities, services offered in the agriculture and counselling sectors).

JHL has close to 220,000 members representing nearly all fields of occupation.

JHL members are employed by:

- the state
- municipalities
- joint municipal authorities
- parishes

- companies and enterprises owned by the above
- non-profit organisations and
- companies or corporations providing services for the public sector in the corresponding industries

The union's task is to promote the interests of its members

Promoting the members' interests means improving their standard of living (= wages or salary, social income transfers, taxation), providing employment security, developing the various qualitative aspects of working life and strengthening the members' professional identity. The union promotes the interests of its members by:

- negotiating the agreements in its sector or participating in such negotiations.
- participating in the development of local and central government, personnel and workplaces.
- influencing the labour market, public and economic policies at the national and international level so as to provide the best possible operating conditions for the labour market system and local governments (management of public relations).
- maintaining and developing an effective organisation that is appropriate from the point of view of the union's main task and objectives.

Representation of members' interests in practice

At the workplace, the interests of the employees are promoted by shop stewards and chief shop stewards. They are not employed by JHL but by the same employer as the other employees at the workplace. However, part of their working time is reserved for matters concerning branch members.

They know the conditions at their own workplace best, and therefore members should always turn to them first when problems arise.

There is also a labour protection delegate that you may consult at the workplace in matters relating to labour protection and occupational health. At all workplaces with more than nine employees, an occupational health and safety delegate is elected from amongst the employees to represent them in occupational health and safety issues. Many occupational health and safety delegates are mem-

bers of JHL, which means that JHL supports them and provides them with training relating to their duties.

In all, the union has employees both in the regional offices in larger towns and in the central office in Helsinki. These employees are responsible for issues such as training, communication, legal matters and other issues relating to the promotion of members' interests and their unionisation.

Collective agreements

Collective agreements and Finnish employment legislation regulate such matters as the duration of holidays, maternity leave, pay during sick leave and other employees' interests. The national collective agreements also regulate the wage level and specify which matters can be agreed on at the local level. In Finland the employer cannot decide on these matters alone. In addition, many issues are nowadays resolved locally, i.e. at the municipal or workplace level.

The majority of our members in the municipal sector work in an employment relationship, whereas in the state sector most are in a service relationship. In practice, there are no

major differences between the two. In permanent employment and service relationships, wages or salaries are paid monthly. Employees may also be paid by the hour.

The collective agreement is a labour contract negotiated between the employer and employee organisations which defines minimum work conditions, such as minimum wage, sick leave pay and other benefits.

Employment contract

The employment contract stipulates the job description, the pay and other benefits and conditions as agreed between the employee and employer. An employment contract and collective agreement are not the same thing. The conditions in an employment contract cannot be less favourable than the conditions that have been agreed on in the collective agreement for the employment sector in question.

Types of employment contracts

Different types of employment contracts can be concluded. They can be in written, oral or electronic form. It is advised, however, that employment contracts are drawn up in writing,

as this is the only reliable way to verify the conditions that have been agreed. A written contract also allows the employer to avoid the legal obligation of providing a written document (for employment lasting longer than one month) or facing the consequences of neglecting to provide such a document.

Employment contracts are written up in duplicate, with both the employer and employee receiving a signed copy. Be sure to retain all of your employment contracts.

Duration of the employment contract

An employment contract can be valid either indefinitely or for a fixed amount of time. In addition, case law has enabled what is referred to as mixed contracts.

Indefinite contracts are the rule. Fixed-term contracts are only applicable in cases where a legally justified reason exists. Such a reason may be, for example, the nature of the work, replacement work or job training. The reason for fixed-term employment must always be indicated in the employment contract.

A fixed-term contract binds both parties for the duration of the contract and ends au-

tomatically on the final day of the contract period. A fixed-term employment contract cannot, therefore, be terminated. Indefinite employment contracts can be ended by the employer when the grounds for notice are observed and by the employee when he or she so wishes.

A fixed-term contract may also include a clause allowing termination of employment. In such mixed contracts, the contract is void when the contract expires unless the employee or employer terminates the employment contract before the end of the contract period.

Issues covered by employment contracts

It is wise to include at least the following issues in an employment contract:

- The concerned parties (the employer's and employee's name and address/place of business)
- A possible probationary period and its duration
- Is the contract indefinite, for a fixed term, or other, e.g. training?
- Justification for a fixed-term contract, if such is the case
- When employment will start and, for fixed-term contracts, its duration
- Place of work
- Type of work
- Salary/wage and other benefits, as well as payment period
- Work hours – if possible, do not sign a contract in which the working hours vary

from nil to a certain number of hours per week. It is possible there will be some weeks where you have no work at all

- The employment contract should be in line with the collective agreement
- Period of notice

The purpose of a probationary period is to give both parties time to determine whether the employment contract fulfils both parties' expectations. A probationary period may be applied for both fixed-term and indefinite contracts. The probationary period may last a maximum of four months, beginning at the start of the employment relationship. In fixed-term contracts of less than eight months, however, the maximum probationary period is half of the duration of the entire contract. It is especially important to agree on the probationary period. During the probationary period, the employment contract can be cancelled by either party without notice, providing the grounds are justifiable.



The collective agreement lays out many conditions that have not been covered by labour legislation (e.g. evening, night, weekend bonuses and holiday pay).

Working hours are also set in the employment contract. The collective agreement that is applied in the employment relationship in-

fluences the working hours. Regulations on working hours vary according to the collective agreements applicable in different sectors. Working hours may be in the form of general working hours, shifts or office hours, and the work can be either full or part time. The work may also include evening, night and weekend shifts.

Wages or salary are determined according to the collective agreement for the sector in question. The demands of the tasks as well as personal performance are factors to be considered when determining the level of pay. In many collective agreements, a candidate's work experience in a field raises the level of pay. For that reason it is advisable to revise your work history and qualifications when drawing up an employment contract.

The employment contract should include the collective agreement that is to be applied in the employment relationship. The collective agreement lays out many conditions that have not been covered by labour legislation (e.g. evening, night, weekend bonuses and holiday pay). The collective agreement also resolves many issues better than labour legislation (e.g. sick leave pay and annual holiday benefits).

The chain of JHL representation is your safety net.

Member → Shop steward → Chief shop steward
Regional office → Central office

Member → Occupational safety rep →
Occupational safety delegate → Regional office →
Central office

Primary legislation affecting the employment relationship

The Employment Contracts Act

The Employment Contracts Act is the basic Finnish law governing labour legislation. It includes regulations regarding the general obligations of both employers and employees, the beginning and termination of an employment relationship, as well as many other issues and conditions related to a working relationship.

The Working Hours Act

When determining issues related to working hours, it is a good idea to check the regulations that have been set in the collective agreement of the sector in question. The Working Hours Act contains specific safety regulations which cannot be altered in collective agreements.

Annual Holidays Act

The Annual Holidays Act regulates the right to an annual holiday: the length of the annual holiday, holiday pay, holiday bonus and the administration of annual holidays. The annual holiday is also, however, inherently influenced by the collective agreements of the sector in question.

The Equality Act

The objective of the Equality Act is to prevent discrimination based on gender, to promote equality between women and men and to improve the status of women, particularly in working life.

Non-discrimination Act

The purpose of the Non-discrimination Act is to foster and safeguard equality and to secure the legal rights of victims of discrimination. The Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, as well as instructions or orders to discriminate against someone. Unjustified discrimination includes that based on age, national or ethnic origin, nationality, language, religion, beliefs, opinions, health, disability, sexual orientation or other comparable reason.

Occupational Health and Safety Act

This Act governs issues related to health and safety at the workplace, and lays out the obligations of the employer, on their own initiative and at their own cost, to ensure that working conditions are as safe and healthy as possible.

Issues related to occupational well-being

If you have questions related to working conditions, working capacity, your ability to cope, health or safety, contact your supervisor.

If you feel your questions were not sufficiently answered or were not properly addressed or if you feel you need further support, contact your labour protection delegate. A labour protection delegate is assigned in workplaces with at least 10 workers.

If you feel that the matter is affecting your

health, you show symptoms or need health guidance and support in the matter, contact the occupational health care service at your workplace.

If, despite your attempts to get help in the above-mentioned matters, no action is taken, contact your nearest Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate. You can also ask your labour protection delegate to contact the Inspectorate on your behalf. The Inspectorate's task is to ensure that employers fulfil their occupational health and safety obligations at the workplace

Act on the Protection of Privacy in Working Life

This Act lays down provisions on the processing and documentation of personal information about employees, drug testing, personality and aptitude tests, the processing of health information, technical surveillance and accessing employees' email.

Act on Co-operation within Undertakings

The Act governing co-operation is intended to promote co-operation between the employer and employee. The goal of co-operation is to provide personnel with an opportunity to participate, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding with the employer, in developing operations and to give the personnel an opportunity to influence decisions that affect their own work, while at the same time fostering productivity and well-being at work among the personnel.

A multicultural organisation

The number of immigrant members in **JHL** has grown steadily in recent years and now represents more than 100 nationalities.

The most common occupational groups among immigrant members are basic service personnel, child-care personnel, transport workers, school assistants, nursing personnel and catering personnel.

In its multiculturalism work, JHL's aims to:

- increase the recruitment of immigrants at workplaces and in local branches
- inspire immigrant members to act in and influence their local branches
- safeguard the interests and related needs of immigrants
- increase the working experience of immigrants
- form strong ties within immigrants' own networks
- take multiculturalism into account in communication with both members and

outside parties

- arrange training for immigrant and active members of local branches in cultural encounters and issues relating to the safeguarding of interests in working life
- promote change in the workplace culture leading to more positive attitudes toward immigrant employees
- influence and participate in the multiculturalism work carried out by the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK
- exchange experiences with the co-operating international organisations
- participate in project-based work for promoting multiculturalism in working life

JHL's regional offices arrange activities for immigrants. More information on those activities is available from your nearest regional office.

Joining JHL

JHL's principle of organisation is based on the working community. This means that all the employees at a particular workplace, in a particular working community, belong to the same JHL branch.

People who are in an employment relationship with the state, a municipality, a joint municipal authority, a parish, a municipal or state limited company or an enterprise can join the JHL branch that represents their sector. This also applies to those who have an employment relationship with an association, a foundation or a limited company.

A convenient way to join is by filling out the electronic form on JHL's website, www.jhl.fi.

The shop steward or an active JHL member at your workplace can help you to fill it out. If you authorise your employer to automatically deduct your membership payment from your wages/salary, print up the form once it is filled out and submit the authorisation for deduction to the payroll department of your

workplace. The completed electronic form will be directed to the union's membership unit, which will confirm your membership by text message. Within the next three weeks of joining you will receive by post a membership card, contact information for your branch and other information related to membership.

There are also hard copies of the membership forms at your workplace. You can submit your form either to the active JHL member at your workplace, or send it directly to the union by post.

The highest decision-making body at JHL – the Union Council – confirms the membership fees annually. The union's total membership fee for 2010 is 1.33% on all taxable earned income.

Benefits of membership

Job security

Only members benefit from JHL's work in safeguarding employees' interests. Members receive support from their shop stewards when problems arise. These may stem from work shift arrangements, different interpretations regarding time off to care for a sick child, wages and salaries, and the extension of a fixed-term employment relationship or its conversion into a permanent post. If negotiations do not lead to a result, the member can apply to the union for free legal advice.

In case of a strike, members are entitled to the union's industrial action benefit.

Unemployment security

Only members of an unemployment fund are entitled to the earnings-related daily unemployment benefit.

Insurance cover

JHL's insurance for regular and student members includes accident insurance with permanent handicap cover, traveller's insurance (valid both in Finland and abroad) and a daily allowance for the period awaiting a pension decision and during the health insurance

qualifying period. Turva Mutual Insurance Company also provides insurance at a special union price. For more information, visit www.turva.fi

Accommodation for JHL members

JHL members may apply for the secure rented accommodation owned by VVO Corporation. There are 38,000 of these apartments, and JHL is one of VVO's largest owners. If you apply for a VVO apartment, it's good to mention that you are a member of JHL. For brochures and application forms, call VVO at 020 508 300 or visit their website www.vvo.fi

Free training arranged by JHL

The main areas of training are:

- Maintenance of occupational skills
- Competence relating to the duties of shop steward
- Developing branch activities
- Developing the working community

Immigrant and multicultural courses

JHL organises 2 courses for immigrants and one multicultural course per year.

In addition to training given at JHL's Raseborg College, education and training is provided in various regional courses arranged by the regional offices and local courses and study groups arranged by various branches.

Branch services

All members of JHL belong to their own local branch, which offers its members training, specially priced trips, holiday cottages and cultural services, among other things.

Effective information

Members receive JHL's Motiivi magazine. In addition, JHL publishes separate supplements for various occupational groups and the Aktiivilehti magazine for active members. You can also visit JHL's website at www.jhl.fi.

At JHL's website, members can visit the Jatsi web service, which is accessible for members only. It offers them up-to-date information on issues such as membership benefits, agreements and the activities of JHL. Jatsi also offers members the opportunity to, among other things, update their contact information and information relating to employment and occupation, sign up for JHL training courses and

benefit from membership discounts.


All JHL members receive a free calendar.

Activities for youth and student members

JHL organises courses, camps and other events for youth members (under 30 years) and also activities for student members. For more information, see JHL's website.

Tax-deductible membership fee

Please remember that all working members can deduct the JHL membership fee from his or her earned income in taxation.



If you require further information, please contact your branch or the employees in the Union Activities Unit or Membership Unit, tel. 010 77031.

Earnings-related unemployment security

By joining a trade union you also ensure your income in case of unemployment. By joining JHL you also join the union's unemployment fund.

The unemployment fund pays members an earnings-related unemployment allowance as well as job alternation compensation during times of unemployment.

Entitlement to a daily allowance

An unemployed person who has registered with an Employment and Economic Development Office (Employment Office) as a job-seeker and meets the "employment condition" is entitled to a daily allowance.

The "employment condition" is met if the person has been employed for at least 34 calendar weeks as a member of the union and his/her working time has been at least 18 hours a week. The period within which the "employment condition" must be met is 28 months. For an acceptable reason the period may be prolonged. Acceptable reasons include, for ex-

ample, illness, parental leave or studies.

Any period for which the employee has been paid a wage or a salary by the employer and during which the employment relationship has been in force is included in the required period. The pay received may not be lower than the level required by the collective agreement or labour legislation (EUR 1019.00/month for full-time work).

Amount of daily allowance

The daily unemployment allowance is calculated on the basis of the pay earned within the same period of 34 calendar weeks during which the "employment condition" has been met. The allowance is determined on the basis of the person's pay minus 3.5%. The applicant is entitled to a child increment for a maximum of three children.

If the pay forming the basis for the allowance is redetermined (due to a new period of employment, for example) before the end of the 500 days during which earnings-related unemployment allowance is paid, the allowance will be not less than 80% of the previous daily allowance (excluding child increments).

Qualifying period

The qualifying period is seven (7) days of unemployment within eight (8) calendar weeks. No more than five days per week may be calculated for the qualifying period. The qualifying period is always applied when the person meets the "employment condition".

Maximum duration

The daily unemployment allowance is paid for a maximum of 500 days. The applicant may also receive an allowance for a period of continued unemployment. This allowance is dependent on the applicant's year of birth and the end of the maximum benefit period.

- If the person was born prior to 1950 and reaches 57 years before the end of these 500 days, he or she will be paid basic unemployment allowance until the end of the calendar month in which he or she reaches 60 years.
- If the person was born between 1950 and 1954 and reaches 59 years before the end of these 500 days, he or she will be paid basic unemployment allowance until the end of the calendar month in which he or she reaches 65 years. In addition, it is required that he or she worked for at least 5 years during a 20-year period by the end of the maximum benefit period.
- If the person was born in 1955 or later, and he or she turns 60 before the 500 days have passed, he or she may receive an allowance according to the same requirements as for someone born between 1950 and 1954.

How to apply for the daily unemployment allowance

If you become unemployed, you should immediately register as a job-seeker with the Employment Office. The unemployment allowance can only be paid for the time during which you are registered as a job-seeker. You can also obtain forms for applying for the earnings-related daily benefit from the Employment Office. Read the instructions for filling in the form carefully.

Paying the daily allowance

When the Unemployment Fund pays you daily unemployment allowance on the basis of your first application, you will receive a decision on the amount of the daily allowance payable to you and notice of how the allowance will be paid. With the notice you will be sent two application forms to apply for further allowances.

Fill in the first application for at least two full calendar weeks. If you are completely fully unemployed, fill in further application forms for four full calendar weeks. The application for a daily unemployment allowance is always made after the period in question.



The number of the Unemployment Fund's telephone service is 010 190 300.

**The telephone service is available Monday to Friday
9.00 to 15.00.**

The Unemployment Fund's customer service office is open Mondays from 9.00 to 15.00. The visiting address is Käenkuja 5, 00500 Helsinki.

Unemployment Fund – electronic services

Unemployment Fund issues can also be taken care of on the Internet via "eWertti". You can learn about eWertti at www.jhl.fi/tyottomyyskassa. The eEmeli phone service is also available for Unemployment Fund issues, and you can carry out all of the unemployment allowance application steps over the phone. Further information on these services is available at the above-mentioned web address.

Contact information

JHL – Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors	Public and Welfare Sectors' Unemployment Fund
P.O. Box 101, FI-00531 Helsinki	P.O. Box 100, FI-00531 Helsinki
Visiting address: Sörnäisten rantatie 23, FI-00500 HELSINKI	Visiting address: Käenkuja 5, FI-00500 Helsinki
tel. 010 770 31 (switchboard)	tel. 010 7703 300

www.jhl.fi

Regional offices

JHL's Southern Finland Regional Office Hämeenkatu 25–27, FI-11100 Riihimäki tel. 010 7703 680	JHL's Pirkanmaa Regional Office Rautatienkatu 10, 7th fl, FI-33100 Tampere tel. 010 770 3620
JHL's South-East Finland Regional Office <i>Lappeenranta Office</i> Koulukatu 23, 3rd fl, FI-53100 Lappeenranta tel. 010 7703 590 <i>Mikkeli Office</i> Vuorikatu 11 A 4, FI-50100 Mikkeli tel. 010 7703 550	JHL Ostrobothnia Regional Office Pitkäkatu 43, FI-65100 Vaasa tel. 010 7703 640 JHL's North Karelia Regional Office Yläsatamakatu 7 B 13, 3rd fl, FI-80100 Joensuu tel. 010 7703 650
JHL's Central Finland Regional Office Kalevankatu 4, FI-40100 Jyväskylä tel. 010 7703 580	JHL's North Savo Regional Office Puistokatu 6, 2nd floor, FI-70110 Kuopio tel. 010 7703 660
JHL's Lapland Regional Office Rovakatu 26 A 14, FI-96200 Rovaniemi tel. 010 7703 600	JHL's Helsinki Regional Office Haapaniemenkatu 14, FI-00530 Helsinki tel. 010 7703 340
Oulu Area Regional Office Mäkelininkatu 31, 5th fl, FI-90100 Oulu tel. 010 7703 610 <i>Kajaani service office</i> Kauppakatu 22 B, FI-87100 Kajaani tel. 010 7703 570	JHL's Satakunta Regional Office Isolinnankatu 24, 5th fl, FI-28100 Pori tel. 010 7703 670 JHL's South-West Finland Regional Office Verkatehtaankatu 4, FI-20100 Turku tel. 010 7703 700

In addition to the regional offices, the following workers in JHL's Central Office are familiar with issues and activities concerning immigrants:

Ulla-Mari Lappalainen
Union Activities Officer
ulla-mari.lappalainen@jhl.fi
tel. work 010 7703 302, 040 566 30 85

Merja Launis-Ahtiainen
Head of International Unit
merja.launis@jhl.fi
tel. work 010 7703 495, 040 865 1464

Marja Nordlund
(membership affairs)
Membership Officer
marja.nordlund@jhl.fi
tel. work 010 7703 411

Pasi Koskinen
Head of the Unemployment Fund
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JHL – the Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors
www.jhl.fi