



## News

# Hundreds of Diablo Game Developers Join Communications Workers of America

August 28, 2025

**NATIONWIDE** – Today, over 450 game developers behind the popular video game series Diablo have voted strongly in favor of union representation with the Communications Workers of America (CWA), either by signing a union authorization card or indicating that they wanted union representation via an online portal. As the latest wave in video game organizing, the workers will be members of CWA Local 9510 in Irvine, Calif.; CWA Local 1118 in Albany, N.Y.; and CWA Local 6215 in Austin, Texas. Microsoft has recognized their union.

"With every subsequent round of mass layoffs, I've witnessed the dread in my coworkers grow stronger because it feels like no amount of hard work is enough to protect us," **said Kelly Yeo, Team 3 Game Producer on Diablo and organizing committee member.** "I am overjoyed that we have formed a union—this is just the first step for us joining a movement spreading across an industry that is tired of living in fear. We are ready to begin fighting for real change alongside our Diablo colleagues."

"I grew up playing Diablo, and I feel lucky that I get to work at Blizzard on a game that's very special to me and the gaming community," **said Skye Hoefling, Team 3 Senior Software Engineer II on Diablo and organizing committee member.** "But passion can't protect us from job instability. Our union allows us to focus on making magical experiences for our players instead of worrying about the unstable job industry."

The unit, which includes game developers, artists, designers, engineers, and support staff across the Diablo franchise, is one of the largest wall-to-wall unions at a Microsoft-owned studio and builds off the momentum of **Blizzard's Story and Franchise Development workers securing union representation** and Microsoft workers securing historic contracts at ZeniMax Media and Raven Software.

"My entire career as a developer has seen my peers and I paying the 'passion tax' for working in an industry that we love," **said Nav Bhatti, Team 3 Senior Software Engineer and organizing committee member.** "At some point you have to choose between fight or flight, and forming a union is us doing just that — standing our ground in the industry."

"The day after the third round of mass layoffs, I walked into the office, and when I tried to open the door to the cafeteria, my badge was denied. For a moment, I wondered if getting breakfast was how I'd find out I was part of that round," **said Ryan Littleton, Team 3 Game Designer on Diablo and organizing committee member.** "While luckily it was just a technical issue, none of us should have to live with that constant worry that we might be let go at the drop of a hat. A union allows us to organize across the industry to make great games and protect the developers who create them from the constant pressures of layoffs, passion tax, and crunch."

The wave of unions at video game studios has accelerated. Since last July, **when over 500 World of Warcraft developers formed the first wall-to-wall unit at Microsoft**, over 3,500 Microsoft workers have organized with CWA, fighting for fair compensation, job security, and a seat at the table to improve workplace conditions. Alongside recent union recognition campaigns across the industry, video game workers announced the formation of **United Videogame Workers-CWA (UVW-CWA)**, an industry-wide video game union working to build power irrespective of employer or current job status. Video game workers interested in learning more should visit **this webpage** to speak with an organizer.

"Diablo workers are the latest to show that California has become a hub for video game worker organizing," **said CWA Local 9510 President Jason Justice.** "What's happening here is part of a much larger story about turning the tide in an industry that has long overlooked its labor. Entertainment workers across film, television, music, and now video games are standing together to have a seat at the table. The strength of our movement comes from that solidarity."

"We are thrilled to welcome these video game workers into Austin's union family. Each new organizing effort adds momentum to the nationwide movement for video game worker power," **said CWA Local 6215 President Ron Swaggerty.** "This progress is the result of the resilience and determination of workers who have been stepping up and speaking out over the past few years."

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### About CODE-CWA

The **Campaign to Organize Digital Employees (CODE-CWA)** is a network of worker-organizers and their staff working every single day to build the voice and power necessary to ensure the future of the tech, game, and digital industries in the United States and Canada. CODE-CWA is a project of the Communications Workers of America, which represents hundreds of thousands of workers throughout tech, media, telecom, and other industries who stand together to fight for justice on the job and in our communities.

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