

# County and City Employee

WASHINGTON STATE COUNCIL OF COUNTY AND CITY EMPLOYEES — AFSCME AFL-CIO

## Other WSCCCE/Council 2 Services

### POLITICAL ACTION

The Political Action Department is directly involved with the membership in state, local and national political campaigns. It works with AFSCME councils and locals to develop a strong regional political structure, and assist members in organizing to help elect AFSCME-endorsed candidates for public office. Voluntary donations to Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality (PEOPLE) are used to help candidates who have indicated an awareness of the problems of public workers.

### EDUCATION

Finding and training good leadership is one of the most important concerns of the local union. For Council 2 AFSCME locals, the job is made easier through ongoing training programs provided by the Education and Leadership Training Department. Building a steward structure, steward

and officer training, committee development and leadership training, collective bargaining techniques and contract administration are just a few of the available training programs which aid local leaders and stewards to develop the skills necessary to organize strong, active and viable local unions. Techniques such as discussions, work groups, and role playing, in addition to a variety of materials from pamphlets and flip charts to slide shows and video tapes, make the education process a challenging and stimulating experience increasing membership involvement and participation.

In addition, the Education Department makes available to local unions and their membership, films, manuals and other education tools including "The AFSCME Steward" magazine which is distributed to every local union on a quarterly basis.

### COMMUNICATIONS

Getting the local union message across, whether to the membership or the public, can be a complicated job. The International provides assistance to local unions in this critical area through the Public Affairs Department which maintains a headquarters staff of media professionals, as well as field staff in key areas.

AFSCME's official newspaper, "Public Employee," also is produced online by the Public Affairs Department as are various leaflets, pamphlets, and publications helpful to the local membership. Assistance is given in local press relations and in setting up local union newsletters. Creating a positive public image is another way to build a strong union, both locally and nationwide.



## WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY ACTION

Women's Rights-More than 50% of AFSCME's members are women. AFSCME has been the leader of such issues as pay equity, child care, and the fight against on the job sexual harassment. The department provides affiliates with expertise and information, educational materials and workshops on issues of special concern to women members. This department also serves as a link between affiliates and national women's organizations such as CLUW.

Community Action-The Community Action Program provides training and assistance in three major areas. It encourages the establishment of Community Action Committees on

the local and council level to develop programs to meet community needs while simultaneously working to enhance AFSCME's community image. The program also provides technical expertise in the area of employee assistance programs and workshops designed to meet the off-the-job needs of the membership. Community Action staff also offer assistance to local unions in building community coalitions to help prevent deinstitutionalization and privatization effort and to promote common goals.

## RETIREE PROGRAMS

As workers, public employees have always fought to protect their jobs... and as AFSCME retirees they must continue to organize and protect their security. To improve and enhance the

lives of the retired public employees, the Department of Retiree Programs works to organize and serve retired AFSCME members. Through structured statewide chapters, a variety of services are available from pre-retirement counseling to political and legislative activity directed toward the needs of retirees.

## LEGAL SERVICES

AFSCME's general counsel office in Washington, DC is backed by a large network of lawyers who are familiar with labor in their respective areas. The legal staff interprets the law as it pertains to AFSCME members and locals, assists councils and locals in preparing testimony to legislative bodies, and generally protects the legal interest of the members and the union at all levels.

# Where Do My Dues Go?

## Dues for 2026 ARE DISTRIBUTED AS FOLLOWS:

**NO INITIATION FEES** Dues are equal to 1.45% of your monthly base salary (a minimum of \$22.21 per month to a maximum of \$69.10 per month)

**LIFE INSURANCE:** A \$10,000 Life Insurance policy that is included in your membership at no additional cost through Colonial Life Insurance Company.

**\$16.50 AFSCME:** This portion of your dues goes to AFSCME, our International Union.

AFSCME coordinates efforts across the country, which includes research, education and congressional lobbying. AFSCME has better than 1.2 million members.

**\$.45 (average) COUNTY LABOR COUNCIL:** Your county labor council represents you in dealings with city and county officials in matters involving organized labor. (County/councils establish their own dues structures.)

**\$4.25 LOCAL:** This amount per member is returned to your local to be spent as it sees fit, within restrictions of its constitution and AFSCME's Financial Code. It is used, among other things, to send delegates to the Council's Biennial Conventions, Executive Board/Legislative meetings, and to represent the local at other meetings of the Council.

**\$.25 LOCAL:** This extra amount per member is returned to your local in addition to the amount above, per the Council 2 Constitution.

**BALANCE COUNCIL 2:** The balance goes to WSCCCE/Council 2 which coordinates activities for over 180 locals throughout the state. The Union represents you at the bargaining table and under the negotiated provisions of your contract. Staff Representatives are available to assist you directly when you have problems. WSCCCE/Council 2 also provides an educational and leadership training program.



# What Is AFSCME?

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees is one of the largest unions in the country, representing over 1.3 million public employees. The Washington State Council of County and City Employees, Council 2 is the statewide affiliate of AFSCME and represents over 17,000 public employees in over 170 local government jurisdictions.

The Washington State Council of County and City Employees, Council 2 employs a staff of over 25 individuals in Six offices across the state.

In all of the jurisdictions a democratically run Local Union conducts the business of the jurisdiction with the aid of a Staff Representative.

Our professional Staff Representatives assigned to each Local Union are there to conduct negotiations and handle any grievances that may arise. The Union has attorneys on staff to enforce your contracts when necessary in grievance arbitrations. Time and time again we have proven that with professional help, we all can work together to better your wages, benefits and conditions of your employment.

## What AFSCME Has Meant to Me

Over the past several years, as I have become an increasingly active member of my local, I have come to appreciate the role that unions have played shaping our history over the previous century. This awareness struck me with the greatest impact during the International Convention in Philadelphia last summer. As I sat with the other delegates, I looked around me, looked at the faces of the attendees and came fully to realize how AFSCME and other unions have worked and struggled and sacrificed to make our present lives possible.

Philadelphia, steeped in history as the birthplace of the nation, was a fitting setting to reflect on organized labor's accomplishments. The industrial revolution that drew the multitudes to America's cities created intolerable conditions for America's working families. The lives of the majority of citizens were drastically different from those we "enjoy" today. There were no workplace safety protections, no job security, no long-term disability insurance, and no pension or health-care plans. To express a grievance against an employer would quickly result in lack of employment. Workers had no weekends off, no holidays, and no overtime pay for the fourteen-hour days they often worked. Each of these things we take for granted was a hard-fought battle, won by individuals realizing that by joining forces as a union, workers gain a voice.

For me, AFSCME represents that tradition of uniting for a common cause, building a force to be reckoned with by standing together. As we face

## What Kind of Workers Does the Washington State Council of County and City Employees Represent?

Our membership consists of all types of public employees...blue collar and white collar including road and maintenance workers, clerical and technical support personnel, bus drivers, correctional officers, appraisers, prosecuting attorneys, counselors and more; The list grows everyday.

## What Do All These People Have In Common?

All of these people perform work for a governmental agency (city, county, school district, health district, etc.) and have found that the Washington State Council's ability to provide representation and to improve contracts has bettered their workplace. That's hard to beat!!

## What Kinds of Things Will You Be Able To Count On From WSCCCE/Council 2? You will:

- Elect your own local union officers;
- Control your own treasury through a democratic process;
- Set policies and goals for your own membership and vote on them within your own local union;
- Start building solidarity with your co-workers for job security and working conditions;

## AND

### With the assistance of a Staff Representative, you will:

- Develop your own contract proposals;
- Sit in on grievance meetings as an equal with your supervisor; Elect a negotiation team to represent you at the bargaining table;
- Have access to other job related information (safety standards, salaries from other jurisdictions and more).

## AND

### With the Assistance of WSCCCE/Council 2, you will:

- Attend leadership and training seminars;
- Compare trends in employer tactics with other local union leaders in the State; Receive research information on special areas within your local union;
- Learn about the legislative process to aid you in electing officials whose policies favor working people.

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an uncertain future, my commitment to My union grows stronger, because I realize that it is only through the union that any of us will have a voice in the workplace. Alone, I am expendable. I can be replaced on management's whim. My salary may be lowered or benefits discontinued without warning. I may be subject to unfair treatment, with rules arbitrarily put in place. My protests of unsafe conditions may go unheeded.

As a member of AFSCME, I have the power of my union behind me. I have a voice in the workplace and recourse to grievances. I am protected from unsafe working conditions and injustice on the job. As a part of AFSCME, I can help shape the future for my fellow union members and myself.

For women and minorities, AFSCME represents equality. Through our union, women and minorities gain power in the workplace that they may lack without the organizing force of our labor union. These individuals are often under-represented within the management of our workplaces. It stands to reason that some of our unique needs and concerns would not be addressed without the support of a strong union behind us, a union in which we are well represented.

Unfortunately, many of us within AFSCME have yet to realize how formidable unity is. As Joseph Ettor of the IWW once said, "if the workers of the world want to win, all they have to do is recognize their own solidarity. They have nothing to do but fold their arms and the world will stop." As union members, we must remember that management does not need us as individuals, but they need us collectively. Each time we stand against wrongs to our union brothers and sisters we grow stronger as a union. This strength benefits us all.

Through AFSCME, we have the power to shape our future.

Paula E. Williamson  
AFSCME, Council 2  
Local 618, City of Olympia

# How Does AFSCME Serve You?

## International Headquarters

AFSCME has nearly 200 executive, professional and clerical staff members at AFSCME's International Headquarters in Washington, DC and an additional 300 International staff in AFSCME offices around the country whose sole purpose is to serve the more than one million individual AFSCME members who make almost 3000 local unions and councils nationwide.

To fulfill this promise, a host of experts and specialists at International Headquarters continuously work with councils, locals and members on the complex problems affecting public employees. International assistance in a variety of specialized areas is available to locals and councils upon request.

## Field Services

The Field Services Department in Washington, DC coordinates the efforts of AFSCME's operations and is responsible for the organizing activity of the union, including organizing campaigns, representational elections, negotiations and strike handling.

AFSCME knows that local union problems often require a local perspective to find the best solution. The AFSCME field staff of area directors, representatives and union organizers offers the membership a network of professional staff on location in the field. The field staff work closely with council and local union staff to provide a liaison with Headquarters.

## Collective Bargaining Expertise

In today's sophisticated and complex labor relations process, local unions often need the assistance of collective bargaining specialists to negotiate the best possible contract. When AFSCME locals request such assistance, the International provides analysts, pension experts and a data bank that includes up-to-date information on more than 3000 AFSCME contracts nationwide. Using these resources, the International's Department of Research and Collective Bargaining Services can compare proposed contracts with other contracts in a similar bargaining unit. Information on wage trends, cost of living increases, health and welfare costs, job classification studies and numerous other factors affecting contracts is also available.

In first time contract negotiations or negotiations that seem particularly difficult, an experienced negotiator may be assigned from headquarters at the request of the local. Helping the local union achieve a fair and just contract is one of the ways the International is serving the membership.

## Legislative Activity

Public employees feel the effect of governmental policies twice—first as citizens and secondly as public workers. AFSCME members, therefore, can and should be a significant force in shaping public policy on the national, state and local levels. Working together to help build this effort at all levels is a function of the Departments of Legislation, Political Action and Public Policy Analysis.

The Legislation Department works with Congress and the Executive Branch to develop laws and policies that reflect the concerns and interests of AFSCME. The department also assists councils and locals in an effort to assure that state and local policies and laws reflect the legitimate interests of public workers.

## Public Policy Analysis

The Department of Public Policy Analysis provides the technical expertise for developing issues and legislation that has extensive, long-range implications for AFSCME. This includes, among other things, the financing of public services at the national, state and local levels, pension and welfare reform, health security, tax structures and employee protection measures.

AFSCME's continuing battles against deinstitutionalization and public hospital closings are handled primarily by Public Policy Analysis.