

February 2022

In This Issue: The Role of Labor Unions, Weingarten Rights, The Union Difference, Labor Union Terminology, Historical Highlights from Labor Unions



AFGE Local 910 Newsletter

The Role of Labor Unions

1. Unions amplify the voices of working people on the job.
2. Working people in unions are as diverse as Americans as a whole.
3. Working people in unions come from a variety of sectors.
4. Unions are thriving in diverse industries.
5. Democracy is strengthened when more working people are union members.
6. Unions reduce inequality and help middle- and low-wage working people obtain a fair share of economic growth.
7. Unions help reduce wage gaps and increase wages for women and people of color.
8. Union workplaces are safer and all workplaces are safer because of unions.
9. Corporate lobbyists and lawmakers are dismantling the rights of working people.

(<https://www.aflcio.org>)

CONTACT US

Appointments are recommended to ensure availability. Please contact us to schedule an appointment with a steward!

Office: (816) 922-2040

Cell: (816) 924-4440

910AFGE@910AFGE.org

VHAKANAFGE910Stewards@va.gov

VHAKANAFGE910Officers@va.gov

Office Location: M11-244

Local Website: <https://www.afge910.com/>

National Website: <https://www.afge.org/>

MEMBER BENEFITS CORNER

Discounted Movie Tickets

Local 910 members can purchase \$5 movie tickets to AMC or B&B theaters. Members may purchase up to twelve (12) tickets per year.

AFGE National Benefits

A comprehensive list of benefits for AFGE members can be found by following this link:

<https://www.afge.org/member->

DID YOU KNOW?

Your union dues
are tax-
deductible

AFGE is the largest federal employee union, as of 2019 we have:

Active Members

313,000 dues-paying members

Represented Workers

700,000 federal and D.C. government employees

Local Chapters

987 Locals nationwide

(<https://www.afge.org>)

Weingarten Rights: Your Right to Request Representation

The employee must make a clear request for union representation before or during the interview. The employee cannot be punished for making this request.

How to Request Representation

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer or steward be present at this meeting. Until my representative arrives, I choose not to participate in this discussion."

After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose from among three options...

- 1) Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and (prior to the interview continuing) the representative has a chance to consult privately with the employee;
- 2) Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
- 3) Give the employee a clear choice between having the interview without representation, or ending the interview.

If the employer denies the request for union representation, and continues to ask questions, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has the right to refuse to answer.

Weingarten Rights Apply When...

- 1) A manager, representative of management, or supervisor is seeking to question an employee.
- 2) The questioning is part of an investigation into the employee's performance or work conduct. During an investigatory interview, a representative of management may require an employee to defend, explain, or admit misconduct or work performance issues that may form the basis for discipline or discharge.
- 3) The employee reasonably believes that the investigation may result in discharge, discipline, demotion, or other adverse consequence to their job status or working conditions.
- 4) The employee requests a union representative. Employers are not required to advise employees of their right to representation and third parties (including union representatives) may not make the request on behalf of the employee.

The Union Difference

Workers in a union have...

- **Higher wages** (11.2% more than what nonunion workers make)
- Employer-provided **health insurance** (96% compared to 69%)
- Access to **paid sick days** (93% compared to 75%);
- **Retirement** benefits through private employers (82% to 48%); and
- Guaranteed **pensions** through private employers (54% to 8%).

(<https://www.aflcio.org>)

Did You Know?

- The Department of Defense developed GPS technology.
- Defense Department researchers developed the networking system that led to the creation of the internet.
- More than 50 federal employees have won the Nobel Prize for their work.
- Clara Barton, an employee of the Patent Office, founded the American Red Cross.
- Half of all U.S. medical doctors in practice today received training by government employees working for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Thanks to the government, polio and measles have been all but wiped out. The vaccine for meningitis and drugs for malaria were developed by federal government employees.
- The federal government is the largest employer of Veterans in the U.S. The gov employs over 600,000 veterans, or 30% of the federal workforce overall. Nearly 50% at the defense department.

(<https://www.afge.org>)

Recruitment Bonus!

New members and their recruiters receive a \$50 bonus, just in time for the holidays!

View the AFGE Master Collective Bargaining Agreement by following this link:

<https://www.afge.org/globalassets/documents/cbas/c53---nvac-contract.pdf>

Labor Union Terminology

Labor Union: An association of workers formed to negotiate collectively with an employer to protect and further workers’ rights and interests. A labor organization is composed in whole or in part of employees, in which employees participate and pay dues, and which has as a purpose the dealing with an agency concerning grievances and conditions of employment.

Grievance: A complaint by (1) an employee concerning matters relating to their employment; (2) by a labor organization concerning any matter relating to employment; or (3) by an employee, labor organization, or agency concerning the effect or interpretation, or a claim of breach, of a collective bargaining agreement; or any claimed violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of any law, rule, or regulation affecting conditions of employment.

Demand to Bargain: Demand To Bargains (DTB) are submitted when conditions of employment change. Organizations often want to make changes but before this can happen, the union works to make sure our bargaining unit employees’ rights are safeguarded and expand those rights if possible.

Collective Bargaining: Collective Bargaining is the mutual obligation of the representative of an agency (in our case, the KCVA) and the exclusive representative of employees (AFGE Local 910) to meet at reasonable times and to consult and bargain in a good-faith effort to reach agreement with respect to the conditions of employment affecting such employees and to execute, if requested by either party, a written document incorporating any collective bargaining agreement reached, but the obligation referred to in this paragraph does not compel either party to agree to a proposal or to make a concession.

Request for Information: The Agency (KCVA) must provide information to a Union, upon request, and “to the extent not prohibited by law”, if that information is (1) normally maintained by the agency in the regular course of business, (2) reasonably available, (3) necessary for full and proper discussion, understanding and negotiation of subjects within the scope of collective bargaining and (4) does not constitute guidance, advice, counsel, or training provided for management officials or supervisors, relating to collective bargaining.

Cease and Desist: Cease and desist orders may also be issued to force a person or entity to refrain from a labor practice or method of competition deemed unfair. To explore this concept, consider the following cease and desist order definition. To stop, discontinue, or bring to an end.

Unfair Labor Practice (ULP): A violation of any of the provisions of the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statue. ULP charges are filed with the Federal Labor Relations Authority by an individual, a union, or an activity.

Arbitration: A voluntary process to resolve disputes over the interpretation or application of collective bargaining agreements. Voluntary arbitration and fact-finding are important features of constructive labor-management relations and virtually all collective bargaining agreements contain arbitration provisions.

Merit Systems Protections Board (MSPB): The Merit Systems Protection Board is an independent, quasi-judicial agency in the Executive branch of the Federal Government that serves as the guardian of Federal merit systems. The Board is composed of three members who are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. They serve overlapping, non-renewable 7-year terms. The Board is bipartisan. No more than two of its three members may be from the same political party.



National AFGE Grievance on Vaccine Mandate

More information on the vaccine mandate will be sent soon. National AFGE is working on this through the grievance process. More information can be found at www.afge.org

KCVA Established a New COVID-19 SOP on December 27, 2021

Follow the link below to read more!

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/VHAKAN/SiteDirectory/Outreach/All%20Employee%20Information/Daily%20Uploads/COVID%20Updates/COVID%2019%20SOP.pdf>

Historical Highlights from Labor Unions

- Some of the earliest organizing efforts in the United States were young women working at mills. From that point forward, the labor movement has played a central role in the advancement of women's rights.
- 1619 The first labor strike on American soil was organized and staged by Polish workers and artisans in Jamestown
- 1773 Laborers protest royal taxation in the Boston Tea Party
- 1933 Frances Perkins becomes the U.S. Secretary of Labor, the first woman to be appointed to the U.S. Cabinet
- 1935 Frances Perkins drafts the Social Security Act, greatly increasing retirement security for Americans
- 1935 National Labor Relations Act passed
- 1962 President John F. Kennedy's order gives federal workers the right to bargain
- 1963 Equal Pay Act bans wage discrimination based on gender
- 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act passed
- 1973 Labor Council for Latin American Advancement founded
- 1974 Coalition of Labor Union Women founded
- 1998 The longest successful strike in the history of the United States, the Frontier Strike, ends after 6 years, 4 months and 10 days.
- 2000 AFL-CIO Executive Council calls for reform in the nation's immigration laws for undocumented workers

(<https://www.aflcio.org>)

Movie Ticket Update

AMC and B&B Tickets have been ordered for 2022.

Tickets are \$5 each and are sold in M11-244. Tickets are sold on a first come first serve and will not be re-stocked if we run out.

Members are encouraged to buy their tickets early!



AFGE Quarterly Lunch & Learn

Thank you for joining us for the December Lunch & Learn! Mark your calendars for the next quarterly Lunch & Learn on

March 16, 2021

Stay tuned for more information!

Local 910 Officers:

Chris Smith, President
Janet Constance, Exec VP
Jill Folsom, Secretary Treasurer
Debbie Brackenbury, Title 38 President
Shelley Barney, Title 5 President

Local 910 Stewards:

Corrin Heesch
Frankie Morgan
Ashley Wilson
Tiffany Taylor
Ron Peters
Dallan Hamman
George Lollis