

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. In the words of International AFSCME President Gerald McEntee, "Our goal is to provide our members the best and most dedicated representation humanly possible."

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.