

**AFSCME WV COUNCIL 77  
AFL-CIO**

**AFSCME Membership:**

**BENEFITS,  
QUESTIONS  
&  
ANSWERS**



**AFSCME WV COUNCIL 77  
501 Leon Sullivan Way, 1st Floor, Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone (304) 342-2114 • Fax (304) 342-2441  
Toll free 1-800-642-1983 • [www.afscmewv.org](http://www.afscmewv.org)**

## What is a union and how is it set up?

A union gives you power. Power that will help decide: better wages, pensions, health care and other benefits. By joining together with other employees, you can determine your own future. Through AFSCME, public employees have a voice – one that is heard.

As an AFSCME member, you become a part of a local union of men and women in your area with jobs like yours or who work for your employer.

AFSCME local unions, along with Council 77, are affiliated with AFSCME International Union, located in Washington, D.C. The International Union provides research, educational and legislative resources, and staff with national experience and knowledge. The International assists AFSCME members and our local unions in winning job improvements in remaining current about issues affecting AFSCME members at work.

## What is AFSCME?

AFSCME International started in 1932 in Madison, Wis., in order to lobby for and strengthen civil service laws. In the 1960's AFSCME became linked with the civil rights struggle when Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis while supporting our sanitation workers' strike.

The largest union in the national AFL-CIO and since the 1940's, AFSCME local unions have been part of a proud labor heritage in West Virginia that continues today.

AFSCME is dedicated to improving the jobs and lives of employees of West Virginia's state, county and city governments, and school districts, as well as child care and home care providers, and employees of health care organizations; non-profit institutions and employees of private companies.

**Leadership. Membership. A voice to win change and improvements on the job.** That is what AFSCME – the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees – stands for and provides to public sector, child care, health care and private sector employees in West Virginia.

AFSCME Council 77 represents thousands of working and retired West Virginians and is an affiliate of the 1.6 million-member AFSCME International Union.

## Who runs the union?

**YOU DO.** A truly democratic union, AFSCME is run by its members. Every member has a vote in the election of local union officers and board members. Each local has its own constitution, and members vote at meetings to determine policy, activities and local dues structure. Members also vote on contract approval or rejection. These rights are guaranteed by the International Union Constitution and the Bill of Rights for Members.



## AFSCME Services

### Grievance and Arbitration Assistance:

West Virginia Council 77 staff and outside legal counsel assist you in handling grievances and arbitrations, working with your AFSCME stewards and making the council's attorney available on matters of legal concern.



### Staff Representation:

Council 77 has staff and stewards located throughout the state. These experienced representatives serve various AFSCME locals and provide expertise on collective bargaining, job representation issues and local union effectiveness.

### Analysis and Research on Economic Issues:

Council 77 offers valuable assistance with wage comparisons and economic research to help speed up bargaining that leads to satisfying results. AFSCME International provides analysis of government budgets and data on contract agreements across America.

### Lobbying on All Levels of Government:

AFSCME Council 77 knows that workers need to be represented in the WV Legislature and in Congress. An extensive and multi-faceted legislative program serves you at all levels of government.

### Public Relations:

Through an active public relations program, the Council 77 Newsletter: *West Virginia ORGANIZER* and the *AFSCME WORKS* magazine, web sites and e-mail updates the public and AFSCME members are kept informed about current work issues in WV and the nation.

## Every AFSCME member gets these and many other money--saving benefits:

- Vision Care – Discounts for you and your family
- Hearing, chiropractic and pharmacy discount plans
- Scholarships and educational planning service
- Personal legal service plan
- Travel package savings
- Low-rate auto and personal loans
- Advantage MasterCard, no fee, special low interest
- Much more...at [www.afscmewv.org](http://www.afscmewv.org)



# AFSCME: Collective Bargaining, Grievances & Politics

## What is collective bargaining?

The way employees make real and substantive changes in the workplace is through collective bargaining, negotiating as equals with an employer to improve: promotion opportunities, job security, transfer rights, salary, health insurance and other conditions at work.

AFSCME is an expert in innovative collective bargaining. Nationwide, AFSCME local unions enforce and monitor over 3,000 collective bargaining contracts. In WV, AFSCME members enjoy contract rights that cover some municipal employees **only** for now.

**How does it work?** Members of a local union decide what needs improvement at their worksites. Union representation, selected by the members, hammer out an agreement with management on every issue of concern. We sit at the bargaining table with the same rights as management. Before any agreement is accepted by the committee, the majority of the members of the union must give their approval.

Your union bargaining committee represents the united strength of all union members. The more members, the more power you have. It is that simple. There is strength in numbers.

## How do members resolve grievances?

If you have a problem with your employer, you need representation – someone to prepare and present your case. AFSCME gives you that representation.

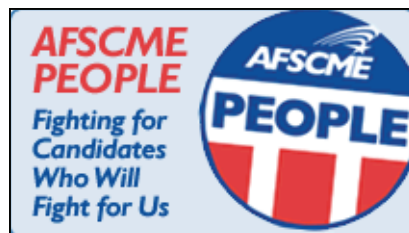
AFSCME also makes sure you receive a hearing establishing a grievance procedure to which management must respond promptly and fairly.

When you are part of a strong union that represents an overwhelming number of workers, your employer has to listen to you.

## Does the union get involved in politics?

Yes, AFSCME's International Constitution states: *"For unions, the workplace and the polling place are inseparable."*

Public employees in particular know that their well-being and the quality of services they perform are strongly affected by who holds public office. More and more, this is true for non-profit organizations, child, home and health care providers and private businesses within our community.



AFSCME members work for better government and improved laws. Members have their own independent political organization called **PEOPLE**, Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality.

**PEOPLE** is run by AFSCME members who participate in committees at the local, state and national levels. They work to improve laws and elect politicians responsible to the needs of workers. No union dues are ever used for political fundraising or activities.

## What kind of people belong to AFSCME?

Architects, bus drivers, office personnel, child care providers, corrections officers, custodians, doctors, food service workers, hospital workers, and technicians, nurses, public health specialists, data processors, accountants, lawyers, laborers, cooks, sanitation workers, social workers, auditors, budget analysts, engineers, park employees, law enforcement officers, court and parole employees, transportation employees, casino employees -- and YOU!

**Come join the fastest growing public sector union!**



[www.afscmewv.org](http://www.afscmewv.org)

