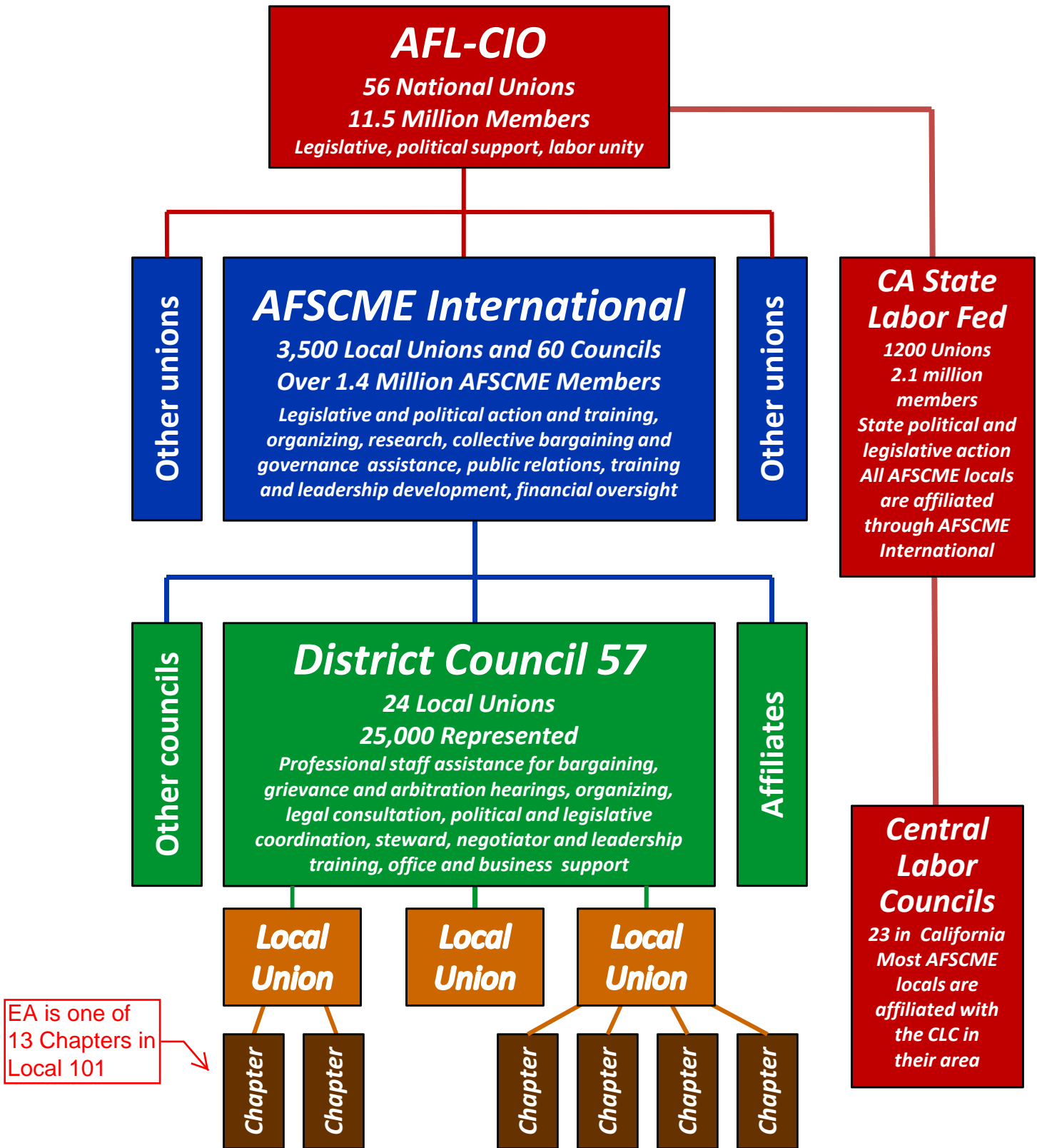


Structure of AFSCME



EA is one of 13 Chapters in Local 101

Chapters and locals accept or reject contracts, initiate political action, organize internally and externally, and forge community and labor alliances. Locals collect dues and make monthly per capita payments to AFSCME, to Council 57, and their CLC, cover arbitration and some legal costs, print contracts, and provide some member-only benefits.

Union Essentials

The AFL-CIO, AFSCME, and Its Structure, Governance, Resources and Services

What is the AFL-CIO?

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) is the voluntary federation of 56 national and international labor unions, representing more than 11 million working women and men of every race and ethnicity, and from every walk of life. These unions include the International Association of Machinists (IAM), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Operating Engineers (OE), and many others.

The mission of the AFL-CIO is to improve the lives of working families — to bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our nation. www.aflcio.org

What is an “International Union”?

An international union is one with members in local unions located within *and outside* the United States. Typically, international unions headquartered in the United States have local unions in Canada, Puerto Rico or territories like Guam. A “national union” is one with members and locals in the United States only.

What is the California Labor Federation?

Commonly called the “State Fed”, the California Federation of Labor is the state “branch” of the AFL-CIO, which encompasses 1200 affiliated locals and councils, both those whose parent unions are affiliated with the AFL-CIO, and those whose parent unions are affiliated with “Change to Win”, another grouping of large national unions. The State Fed coordinates labor’s endorsements and work on *state* political races, and gives assistance to local central labor councils for that purpose. The State Fed is also a strong presence and advocate for labor’s issues with the state legislature, particularly on worker’s compensation, unemployment insurance and labor standards. www.calaborfed.org

What is a Central Labor Council?

A central labor council is a local organization under the umbrella of the AFL-CIO that includes most of the local unions in an area, typically one large county or several (or many) smaller counties. Increasingly, central labor councils include both local unions that are affiliated with the AFL-CIO, and ones whose parent unions are not, in order to achieve the maximum labor unity on labor issues in their area. The purpose of central labor councils are to promote united action by organized labor on local economic and political matters, to provide interventions in labor disputes and strike support, and otherwise assist the locals that are their affiliates.

What is AFSCME?

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) is a union of over 1.4 million members in 46 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. It is currently the largest union in the AFL-CIO. www.afscme.org

What is the difference between AFSCME and the AFL-CIO?

AFSCME is a member of the federation and is one of the 56 unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

Who is in AFSCME?

AFSCME members are state, county, city, district and school workers, and workers who provide services through public funding or non-profit agencies, such as hospitals, child care and home care providers. AFSCME members serve the public every day in a variety of professions: health care (public and private); social services; public works; education; transportation; corrections;

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parks and recreation; environmental services; home health care; child care and other services.

AFSCME by the numbers:

- More than 1.4 million members
- More than 60 councils
- More than 3,400 local unions and affiliates
- Over 100 independent employee associations have affiliated with AFSCME

What is the AFSCME International Union?

The AFSCME International Union, headquartered in Washington, D.C., coordinates the union's actions on major national issues such as health care, privatization, and workplace safety. The International carries out certain national functions such as representing us in the U.S. Congress and coordinating political activities for federal elections. It also provides resources and expert help to councils and local unions in areas such as:

- Collective bargaining/negotiations
- Communications
- Information systems
- Leadership development
- Legal counsel
- Legislative lobbying
- Organizing
- Political action
- Public relations
- Research, including budget analysis
- Training

Who determines AFSCME's direction?

AFSCME members. Every two years, AFSCME holds its International Convention. AFSCME members are elected as delegates from local unions and councils, and debate and vote on the union's basic policies. Every four years, delegates elect the International Union's President, Secretary-Treasurer and 33 International Vice Presidents. Gerald W. McEntee is the current International President of AFSCME, first elected in 1981. Lee Saunders is AFSCME's current International Secretary-Treasurer, first elected in June 2010. The next International Convention is in 2012, in Los Angeles.

What is a local union?

As an AFSCME member, you are part of a *local union* (also called a local) consisting of workers in a specific agency or institution (e.g. a city, a school district, a hospital), or a department or function in that agency. Some local unions represent members in just one public or private agency, or unit – for instance, a city or the support staff unit for a school district – while others represent members under a number of agencies and contracts, each of which is a *chapter* of the local union, with the ability to elect negotiators and stewards, and ratify or reject their contract.

Local unions are the front line of the labor movement, and are what most people think of as “a union.” They vary in size and complexity from thousands of members – a statewide bargaining unit, a big city or many agencies – to only a handful of members in one small district. *Each AFSCME local union writes its own constitution, holds regular membership meetings, elects its own officers, executive board and delegates to Council 57 and other bodies, and directs its own finances, including the setting of dues within the guidelines of AFSCME's International Constitution.*

What is a council?

Councils are a part of AFSCME's administrative structure. They provide professional staff to assist and support local unions in the negotiation of contracts, grievance handling, arbitrations, education, public relations and work on legislative and political action. They also provide office and administrative support for local unions. Commonly, AFSCME local unions within one state, city or county pool their resources to form a stronger council. AFSCME has over 60 councils. Each council is governed by a convention or delegate body representative of its affiliated locals, writes its own constitution, elects its own officers and executive board, and directs its own finances,

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including the setting of council per capita rates – the service fees paid by local unions for council services - within the guidelines of AFSCME's International Constitution.

What is Council 57?

Your local union is part of District Council 57, headquartered in Oakland, California. Council 57 encompasses 24 local unions, representing 25,000 workers in 85 public and private agencies in California: cities, counties, school, transit, water, fire and park districts, state workers, and workers for hospitals, health care and private transportation companies. www.afscme57.org

As an AFSCME leader, what resources are available to me and my local through AFSCME International or Council 57, and how can we access them?

Regarding AFSCME International's Resources and Services:

- 1) **Affiliate Relations** - The Affiliate Relations Department maintains the International union's membership and officers' data for all AFSCME affiliates, working with affiliate staff to obtain up-to-date data. They coordinate the membership card mailings, generate official credential cards for AFSCME's affiliate officers, which are used during Conventions, and oversee the annual member political rebate process. *Contact the Council 57 office staff that serves your Local*
 - 2) **Education and Leadership Development** - The Education and Leadership Development Department develops and offers programs based on the premise that member involvement in union activities builds power in the workplace. Major education and training programs include:
 - Stewards in Action
 - Member Action Team (MAT)
 - Executive Board
 - Member Educator Program
 - Local Union Leadership Academy
 - Investor Education Program
 - Volunteer Member Organizing (VMO)
 - Next Wave
 - Bargaining
 - Women's Leadership
 - Strategic Planning
- Contact your Council 57 Business Agent or Training Coordinator Linda Gregory at 415-602-0776*
- 3) **Scholarships** - The Education and Leadership Development Department also administers the following scholarships for AFSCME members, staff and their families: AFSCME Family Scholarship, Union Plus Scholarship, Joey Parisi Scholarship, Nadra Floyd Scholarship and the Jerry Clark Scholarship. The department partners with the United Negro College Fund to provide summer internships for student activists to experience union organizing. *Contact the Council 57 office staff that serves your Local*
 - 4) **Financial Services** - The auditing section of the Financial Services Department reviews the financial condition and internal controls of AFSCME's councils and large locals as mandated by AFSCME's Affiliate Audit and Review Program. *Contact Teresa Green 800-244-8122 or 1-202-429-1210*
 - 5) **AFSCME Supplies, T-shirts and Merchandise** - General Services provides AFSCME affiliates with various official supplies that include useful forms, publications, membership jewelry and T-shirts. *Contact the Council 57 office staff that serves your Local for an AFSCME Supply Order Form, or for more custom caps, clothing, cups, bags, coolers and other AFSCME merchandise, go to www.afscmestore.org*
 - 6) **Judicial Panel** - The Judicial Panel is an 11-member body appointed by the International President, with the consent of the International Executive Board. The judicial panel hears appeals from charges raised under the International Constitution, most commonly regarding election challenges or protests, or charges brought under Article X of the Constitution. *Contact 1-202-429-1210*

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- 7) **Legal Services** - The Office of the General Counsel provides legal representation and advice to International union officers and staff and to AFSCME councils and locals. *Contact your Council 57 Business Agent*
- 8) **Legislation, Political Action and PEOPLE** - staff of the **Legislation Department** advocates at the federal level on those issues related to AFSCME members' jobs, their families and their communities. The **Political Action Department** has the task of educating and mobilizing grassroots activists to elect local, state and federal candidates who will represent the interests of union members and working families. **PEOPLE** (Public Employees Organized to Promote Legislative Equality) helps fund the union's political activities and coordinates member political education programs to elect candidates who support AFSCME members and working families. PEOPLE depends on members' voluntary contributions to fund and complement the union's political activities. *Contact Cheryl Brown, Council 57 Political-Legislative Director at 1-800-244-8122 x254*
- 9) **Organizing and Field Services** - Organizing new members is a lifeblood priority for AFSCME. The main objectives of this department include:
 - Organizing new bargaining units where the union is not yet established
 - Where the union is established, assisting AFSCME councils in building their own organizing capacity
 - Acting as the liaison in the field for problem-solving efforts of all kinds*Contact Keith Uriarte, Council 57 Organizing Director at 1-800-244-8122*
- 10) **Research and Collective Bargaining** - The Department of Research and Collective Bargaining Services provides assistance to AFSCME locals and their members in many different areas: local or state agency budget analysis, contracting out issues, including maintaining a comprehensive record regarding companies who attempt to contract with public agencies and replace public employees, and resources for effective collective bargaining including information requests. They also maintain a library of past and current contracts for assistance in contract negotiations. *Contact your Council 57 Business Agent*
- 11) **Constitutions and Charters** – The Research and Collective Bargaining Services Department also includes the **Constitutions and Charters** section, which provides assistance to locals and councils regarding changes in their jurisdictions and constitutions. *Contact your Council 57 Business Agent or Training Coordinator Linda Gregory at 415-602-0776*
- 12) **Retirees** - The AFSCME Retiree Program is an expanding national network of retired public-sector workers with members in over 250 state and local groups. *Contact Nadia Bledsoe at 800-826-6491*

Regarding Council 57 Resources and Services:

- 1) **Organizing Assistance or Training**, for either internal membership building or to organize an agency or unit AFSCME does not currently represent - *contact Keith Uriarte, Council 57 Organizing Director at 1-800-244-8122.*
- 2) **Political or Legislative Action**, or training needed in these areas. This might include a question about an endorsement process, forming a local Political Action Committee or creating a political action plan, a particular race or ballot measure your local is concerned about (or your local wants to work on) or a bill in the State legislature that would threaten (or assist) your members. *Contact Cheryl Brown, Council 57 Political-Legislative Director at 1-800-244-8122 x254*
- 3) **Steward, Negotiator and Leadership Training**, the annual Leadership Conference, strategic planning assistance, and arrangement for training via other resources, including community college labor studies programs and UC Berkeley Labor Center. *Contact Linda Gregory, Council 57 Training Coordinator at 415-602-0776 or 800-244-8122*

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- 4) **The Council 57 website (www.afscme57.org)**, which has an individual page for your local union. – *Contact Valerie Carley at 1-800-244-8122 x 212 to correct information regarding your local, ask that information or features be added, or make other changes.* Pictures of officers, leaders member and local activities are particularly welcome, and Val will be glad to add them.
- 5) **Local financial, dues accounting, audit or Hudson report** (the annual report issued to non-members who are paying an agency or fair share fee to the union) issues, or to participate in a Local Treasurer’s training provided by the International Union - *Contact Teresa Green, Council 57 Finance Director at 1-800-244-8122 x205.*
- 6) **Legal consultation** or assistance on work and union issues including contract interpretation, grievance viability, arbitration, the possibility of court action, compliance with labor law, unfair labor practices, the filing of PERB charges, or the duty of fair representation. The Council has a fairly comprehensive retainer with the Beeson, Tayer and Bodine labor law firm, who has offices in Oakland and Sacramento. *If you feel there is an issue on which legal advice or assistance is needed. Contact your Council 57 Business Agent, who will either have an answer to your question or will generate an inquiry under the Council’s retainer with one of the attorneys.*
- 7) **Membership or database issues** – *contact the Council office staff that assists your local or Danielle Dixon, Council Database Coordinator at 1-800-244-8122 x204*

This publication is decidedly a work in progress, and your suggestions for further questions you feel need “de-mystification” for AFSCME leaders and members are warmly invited.