

New Officer Welcome Packet



November 2022

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Section I: Introduction



Dear Local Officer,

Congratulations on your election as an Officer in an AFSCME Council 93 Local!

Welcome Letter

Local union leaders are the backbone of our Council and the work that leaders like you do every day is what makes AFSCME Council 93 one of the most powerful and effective labor organizations in our country. While you will have all the support you need from us, as well as Council 93's field staff, in-house attorneys, business office and legislative and political action team, we will in turn be relying a great deal on you to help us provide the members of your Local with the high-quality representation and support they deserve.

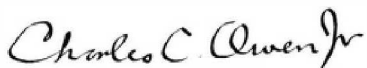
As you have probably already realized, you have taken on a big responsibility. However, as former Local union leaders ourselves in the City of Boston, who have done the work you will be doing, we can assure you that you will find that the difference you will make in the lives of the people you represent will be both gratifying and a lot of fun! Working with your AFSCME Staff Representative to negotiate fair contracts, helping your union brothers and sisters fight wrongful or excessive discipline, mobilizing your membership to demonstrate union power - these are all activities that help to build the union and improve the lives of your colleagues.

Please take some time to review the enclosed Welcome Packet, which we specifically designed for newly-elected Local Presidents, Vice Presidents, Recording Secretaries and Treasurers. This packet does not include every piece of information you will need over the course of your term in office. The International Union has published a comprehensive Officer's Handbook for new officers, and we suggest you take a look. In addition, we think you will find some of the most effective things you will learn will come from on-the-job experiences and the guidance you will receive from our field staff, most of whom also came from Local union leadership positions like us. However, this carefully chosen collection of materials cover the important highlights, and provide direction to resources you will need to continue to learn more.

We recommend you share this guide with your local leadership team. If you have questions and/or feedback about this material, please reach out to Andi Mullin, Director of Member Mobilization, at 617.367.6030 or at amullin@afscme93.org.

Once again, congratulations on your election! We are deeply appreciative of your service to your Local and to AFSCME. If you have questions you've been unable to get answered or need anything at all to help you succeed in your new position, please reach out to either one of us anytime at 617.367.6015. Thank you again for having the courage and dedication to accept this important role in our labor movement. We look forward to working with you to make our union ever stronger!

In Solidarity,



Charles Owen
President



Mark Bernard
Executive Director



Council 93 along with the AFSCME International Union offer a variety of training programs specifically designed to help Local leaders do their jobs. The International Union has also published a comprehensive Officer's Handbook for newly elected officers. In addition, we suggest the following training programs:

Training Information

Steward Training

This 8-hour training covers the basics of dealing with grievances. We conduct Steward Trainings at least 3-4 times per year, both in person and over Zoom.

To find out more please contact: Dan Morse-Assistant Director of Field Services & Organizing 617.367.6045 | dmorse@afscme93.org

Local Union Leadership Academy (LULA)

This training is for Local leadership teams and lasts a full weekend. We conduct this training about once per year.

To find out more please contact: Andi Mullin- Director of Member Mobilization 617.367.6030 | amullin@afscme93.org

Maximizing Your Membership

This 2-hour training will give you the tools you need to make sure that every member of your bargaining unit has been asked to join the union and pay dues. We conduct this training as often as needed, both in person and over Zoom.

To find out more please contact: Andi Mullin- Director of Member Mobilization 617.367.6030 | amullin@afscme93.org

Treasurers Training

This full-day, in-person training provides Treasurers and Presidents with the information they need to keep their finances in order and make sure their Local is in compliance with all state and federal laws. We conduct this training at least once per year.

To find out more please contact: Julie Taylor- Business Manager 617.367.6007 | jtaylor@afscme93.org

Don't see what you need, or have general questions about training?

Contact Andi Mullin or Dan Morse.



As a Local union leader, one of the greatest resources you have available to you is Council 93. This document outlines the various services the Council can provide to your Local, as well as information about how to access those services. We have provided phone numbers below, but click [**HERE**](#) for full contact information for all Council staff.

Your Staff Representative

Your Staff Representative (Staff Rep) is a professional negotiator assigned specifically to your Local. Your Staff Rep will help negotiate your contract as well as any side or between-contract agreements, and help you to enforce your contract (Step 3 and above). Your Staff Rep can help you conduct your Local elections and your contract ratification votes, give you guidance and advice about how to handle a difficult member, or suggest arguments to make in a Step 1 hearing. For some of you your Staff Rep will become a mentor who helps you to learn how to stand up to management and think strategically about contract negotiations. All Local leaders should develop strong relationships with their Staff Reps!

All Staff Reps are part of the Field Services Department. If you are having trouble reaching your MA Staff Rep, reach out Eddie Nastari, Director of Field Services and Organizing, at 617.367.6022. If you are having trouble reaching your Staff Rep in ME, NH or VT, reach out to Steve Lyons, Field Services Director, at 603.606.6726.

Member Mobilization

This Department focuses on increasing member engagement in the union. Need new member Welcome Packets or training on how to ask new bargaining unit members to join the union? Need to develop a plan and materials to engage your membership in an action? Need leadership training for your leaders or your members? Reach out to Andi Mullin at 617.367.6030

How can Council 93 Help You?

**Council 93
Staff are
always
available to
assist our
Locals!**



How can Council 93 Help You?

Legal Department

Under the direction of its General Counsel, the Legal Department is a group of experienced in-house lawyers who represent members in matters related to their collective bargaining agreement. For example, once a grievance gets to arbitration it is turned over to the AFSCME legal team. Each grievant is assigned an Associate General Counsel who will handle all facets of the proceeding. In addition to representing members during arbitration, the Legal team is also responsible for filing Unfair Labor Practices when appropriate, particularly during organizing campaigns. Questions about a case or the Legal Department generally?

Contact Administrative Assistant Jessica Gavin at 617.367.6035

Legislative and Political Action

The Legislative and Political Action Department is your voice at the State House, as well as the source of information about political candidates at all levels. Have a question about the state budget or a specific bill? Is there a candidate for office in your community (good or bad) you want us to know about?

Reach out to Jim Durkin at 617.367.6012

Business Office

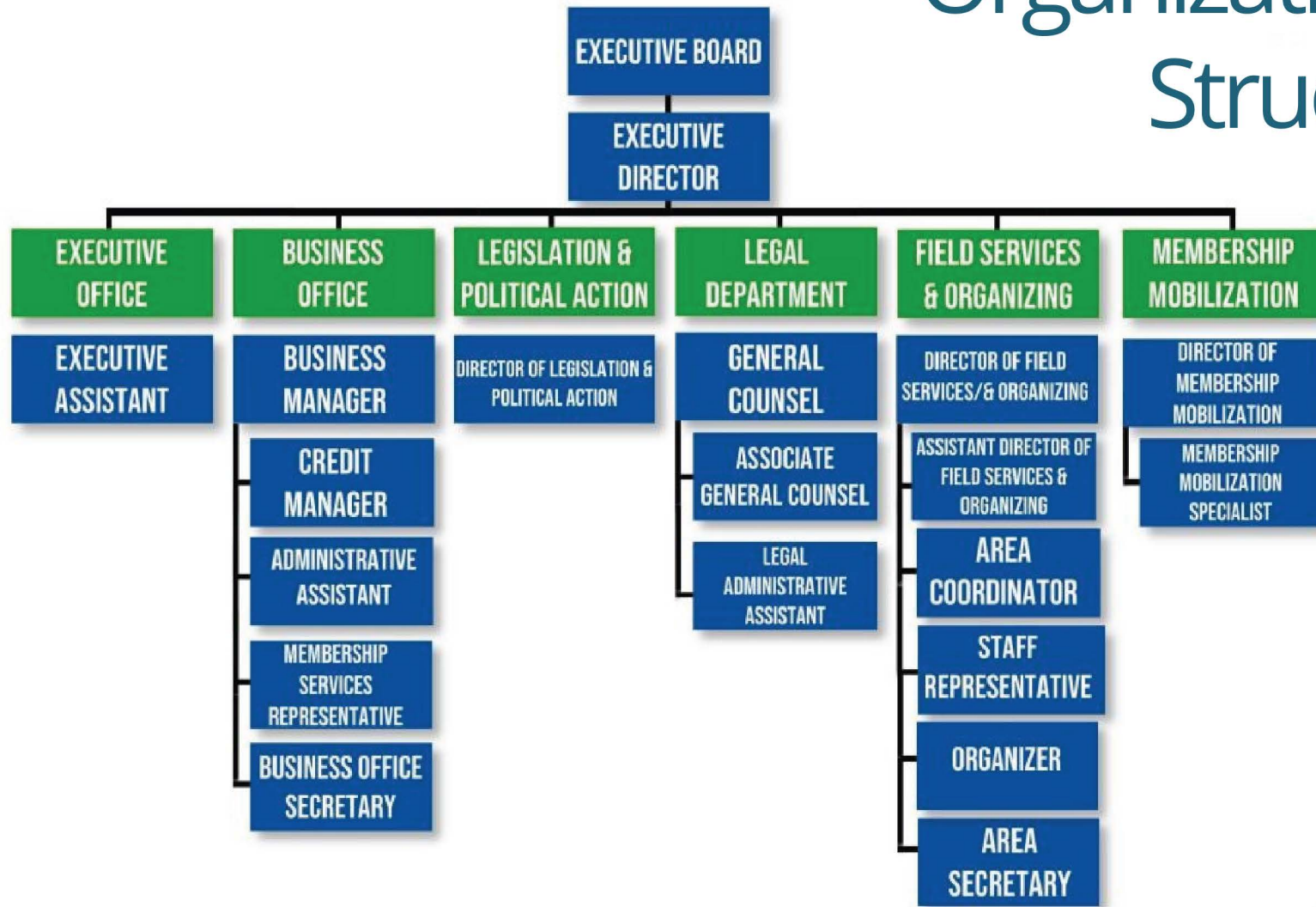
The Council 93 Business Office handles dues collection, dues rebates to Locals, Department of Labor and Internal Revenue Service filings, reports to the International Union, membership issues, convention registration and a variety of other matters.

For questions about rebates, reach out to Business Manager Julie Taylor at 617.367.6007. For all other matters call Sarah Gillis at 617.367.6000, and she will direct you to the right person.



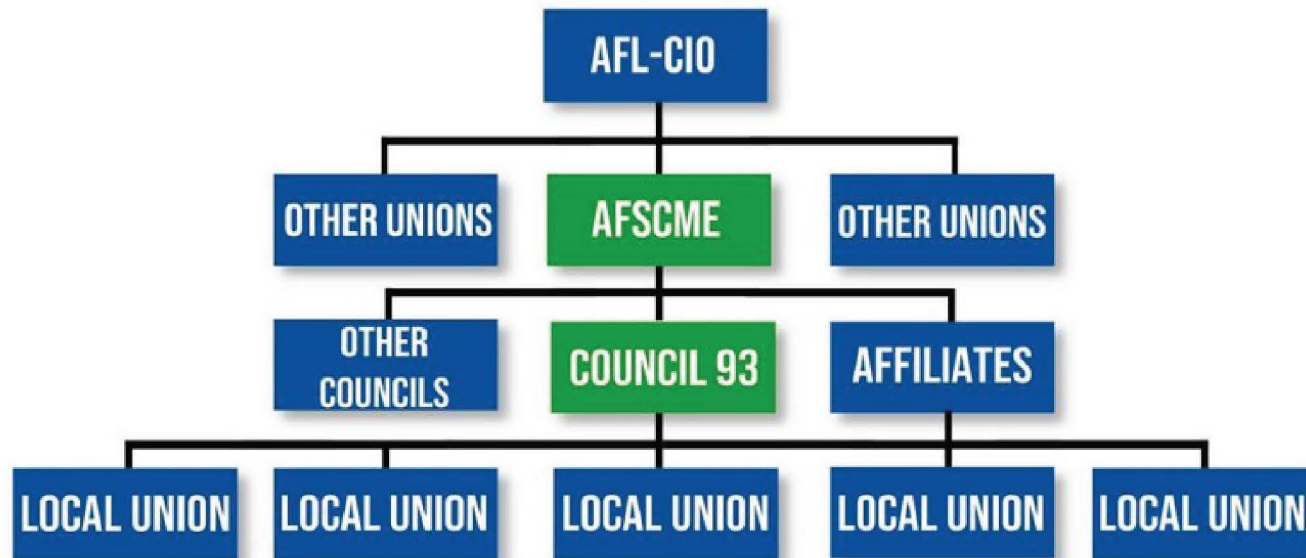
Council 93

Organizational Structure



AFSCME International Organizational Structure

BASIC AFSCME STRUCTURE



Council 93 has approximately 33,000 members

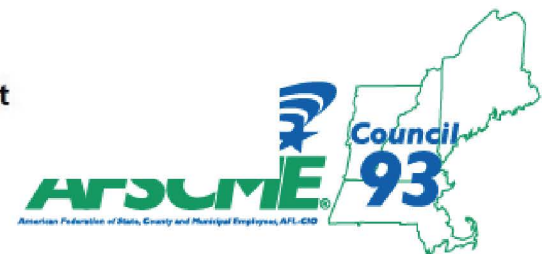
There are 208 local unions in Council 93

Nationwide, there are about 3,500 AFSCME locals

There are over 60 AFSCME Councils

More than 100 independent employee associations
have affiliated with AFSCME

There are approximately 1.3 million AFSCME members in almost
every state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico



Section II: Local Officer Responsibilities



Local Officer Responsibilities

This section includes a brief description of the most common responsibilities of the most four commonly elected Local Officer positions – President, Vice President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary. While these descriptions can be helpful, they are no substitute for looking at your Local Constitution, which will spell out the responsibilities of Local officers. These can vary from Local to Local.

If you do not have a copy of your constitution, your Staff Representative should be able to help you. Having said that, the responsibilities spelled out in most Constitutions are fairly basic. Locals should feel free to expand on these basic responsibilities in ways that make the most sense for them. We have made some suggestions below, but you should determine what makes the most sense for your Local.



Local Officer Responsibilities

List of Duties: Local Union President

The Local President is the highest level elected official in the Local. The President should pull together a leadership team to help her/him run the Local, but at the end of the day the responsibility falls on the President. The President's role is like that of a team captain, focusing on issues and problems and motivating people to work together toward achieving common goals. A good President is always a good listener and seeks out the views and ideas of fellow officers and members.

At a minimum, the President's duties include:

- Presiding at all membership meetings of the Local and of the Executive Board.
- Being a member of all committees. The President cannot serve on the Election Committee initially or if s/he has opposition. If the President is running for re-election unopposed, s/he may serve on the Election Committee.
- Countersigning all checks drawn against the funds of the Local.
- Appointing all standing committees and all special committees of the Local, subject to the approval of the Local Executive Board.
- Insuring that all members of the bargaining unit are provided with an opportunity to join the Local and pay dues.
- Communicating regularly with the membership regarding the standing of the Local, progress on collective bargaining negotiations, and regarding the President's official acts.
- Acting as the Local representative to the community.
- Acting as the Local's ceremonial officer on such occasions as the initiation of new members or installation of newly elected officers.

In addition to these responsibilities, many Presidents also represent members during disciplinary meetings and file Step 1 grievances. Most Presidents also attend Step 3 grievance hearings with their Council 93 Staff Representative and sit at the table during collective bargaining negotiations.



Local Officer Responsibilities

List of Duties: Local Union Vice President

The Local Vice President's primary role is to assist the President in her/his official duties and act in their place when the President is unavailable. The specifics of the role often vary widely from Local to Local depending on the particular President and Vice President and the relationship between them. In the most effective Locals, the President and Vice President work together to divide up responsibilities in a way that makes the most sense for that particular Local.

At a minimum the Vice President's duties include:

- Assisting the President.
- Presiding at meetings and performing other duties of the President when the President is unable to do so.
- Countersigning checks when authorized by the Executive Board to do so.
- Standing in for the President in such roles as ceremonial officer or representative to the community when the President is unable to do so.

We recommend that Vice Presidents take on the responsibility of handling New Employee Orientations and making sure that all bargaining unit members have been asked to sign a union card. In many Locals, the Vice President is the Chairperson of a prominent standing committee, such as the Grievance Committee, or is given responsibility for Chairing an important ad hoc committee.



Local Officer Responsibilities

List of Duties: Local Union Treasurer

The Local Treasurer is responsible for keeping track of the Local's treasury, insuring that all expenditures are made only for legitimate union purposes, and balancing the books.

At a minimum, the Treasurer's duties include:

- Receiving and depositing in a bank all of the Local's money.
- Preparing and co-signing checks for the Local's expenditures. Note that all Local transactions can only be spent with proper authorization, that is, by a vote of the membership or the Executive Board. Payments required by law or the Union's constitution require no further authorization.
- Keeping the Local's financial records and preparing a written monthly report of the Local's financial transactions.
- Acting as custodian of the Local's property.
- Filing a variety of annual reports, including:
 - A Surety Bond form provided by the International Union. The International Union then bills the Local for the cost of the surety bond.
 - A Local Union Annual Financial Report (LUAFR) form.
 - A 990 form to maintain the Local's tax-exempt status.
- At least annually, work with the Trustees to audit the Local's books.

If the Local is large enough to have a paid bookkeeper, the Treasurer's role is to oversee the bookkeeper's completion of the tasks listed above.

Please see the "Treasurer's Resource Sheet," which provides more details and resources for Treasurers.

None of these documents, however, are a substitute for attending a Treasurer's Training, which we strongly recommend for all Treasurers.



Treasurer's Resource Sheet

The role of Local Treasurer is critical. Our best advice to all new Treasurers (and Presidents) is to:

1. Consult the AFSCME International Union (IU) website designed specifically for Treasurer's – www.afscmetreasurer.org
1. Attend a Treasurer's Training. This full day, in-person training provides Treasurers with the information they need to keep their finances in order and make sure their Local complies with all state and federal laws. We conduct this training at least once per year. To find out more contact Council 93 Business Manager Julie Taylor.

In the meantime, here are a few key points:

- All checks require two signatures.
- All expenditures must be for appropriate and necessary union business only. Both the President and the Treasurer should sign a check only after determining that the expenditure is appropriate and authorized by the membership or Executive Board (refer to your Local constitution) and that proper documentation for the expenditure is on hand, i.e. receipts/invoices.
- The Treasurer must reconcile the bank records each month and prepare a monthly Treasurer's report for the Executive Board and/or the membership as appropriate. Transparency about the Local's finances builds trust and engagement in the Local among the membership.
- The Treasurer must file several annual reports, including:
 - o The statement of assets (Surety Bond) by March 1 of each year for the purposes of computing the Local's cost for the Surety Bond arranged through the IU. You can submit this information to the IU through www.afscmetreasurer.org.
 - o The Local Union Annual Financial Report Form (LUAFR) by May 15 of each year. Submit this form to the IU through www.afscmetreasurer.org.
 - o A Form 990 to the IRS each year by May 15. Without this filing, you may lose your tax exempt status. For Locals with annual receipts under \$50,000, Council 93 will file this form for you.
- Cannot find your EIN (Employer Identification Number)? Need help with any of these responsibilities? The Council 93 Business Office can help! Call Sarah Gillis at 617.367.6049 and she'll direct you.

**None of these tips are substitutes for attending the Treasurer's Training!
Reach out to Julie Taylor at 617/367-6007 or jtaylor@afscme93.org to sign up!**

Local Officer Responsibilities



Local Officer Responsibilities

List of Duties: Local Union Recording Secretary

The Local Recording Secretary is responsible for the Local's non-financial records.

At a minimum, the Recording Secretary's duties include:

- Keeping a record (minutes) of membership and Executive Board meetings. Minutes are a brief record of what occurred during a meeting. They should include Officer and Committee reports, as well as motions that were discussed and passed.
- Presenting the minutes of each meeting for approval at the subsequent meeting, making any corrections identified, and keeping all official minutes readily available for future reference.
- Handling the Local's official correspondence. Correspondence the Executive Board considers important should be read by the Recording Secretary at membership meetings.
- Performing other duties that the Executive Board may require.



Section III: Constitutional Responsibilities



Chairing a Local Meeting

A key responsibility of Local Presidents, and sometimes Vice Presidents, is to Chair union meetings. This includes general membership meetings, Local Executive Board meetings, and often Local Committee meetings. For a general membership meeting, the AFSCME International provides a Guide to Chairing a Meeting that can be very helpful. You will find that most meetings you Chair are often not this scripted, but almost all union meetings will include some combination of the following agenda items:

- Roll call of officers
- Reading of minutes of the last meeting
- Initiation of new members
- Reading of correspondence
- Reports of Officers
- Reports of Committees
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Good and Welfare
- Adjournment

Many Local Presidents worry about Robert's Rules of Order. It is true that Robert's rules are the accepted guide to parliamentary meetings and all union meetings are ultimately governed by these Rules. However, it is not necessary for a Local President to be an expert on Robert's Rules. It would be helpful to familiarize yourself and keep handy some basic procedure, which you can find on page three of the AFSCME International Guide to Chairing a Meeting. You will also find page three in this packet.

Constitutional Responsibilities

Need help with this?
Reach out to Andi Mullin at 617.367.6030 or amullin@afscme93.org



Tips for Chairing a Local Meeting:

- **Start with a Good Agenda-** A productive meeting starts with preparation and a well thought-out agenda, so spend some time carefully developing your agenda. Look at the calendar to determine what is happening 2-3 months from now – those items should go on the agenda now. Ask your table officers if there is anything they'd like to include. Once you have a draft, estimate how much time each item will take. If you have more items than the agenda can handle in the time allotted, save some of the items for later. Send the agenda out at least two days before the meeting and ask folks to let you know if there is anything you missed.
- **Begin on Time-** Starting your meeting on time is a concrete demonstration that you respect the time of the folks attending, while starting late communicates disrespect.
- **End on Time-** There is nothing worse than a 90 minute meeting that drags on for two and a half hours. Ending a meeting on time is dependent on 1) designing an agenda that is reasonable for the time allotted, and 2) starting on time. If a worthwhile discussion is going long you can reshuffle the agenda and table some topics for next time, or check in with folks and see if they are willing to stay late. But you will get greater and more enthusiastic and consistent participation if folks trust your ability to end the meeting on time.
- **Take Minutes-** The Secretary should take minutes that make the decisions and action steps you have decided on clear, without a lot of extraneous information. You will need these minutes moving forward, when you inevitably forget something you have already decided.
- **Review Action Steps-** At the end of the meeting, spend a few minutes reviewing the action steps you decided on and who is responsible for what in what timeframe. This will help to insure appropriate follow up.
- **Find a Balance-** What makes Chairing a meeting difficult is finding a balance between moving the conversation along and allowing folks to express their opinions and discuss. A good Chair develops a sense for when to slow down and allow for more discussion, and when to move things along. A good Chair also learns how to summarize what they are hearing to keep forward momentum. For example, you might say, "So what I think I am hearing is that we want to have the contract ratification vote on Wednesday. Any objections to that? Hearing none, let us move onto the next item." Do not be surprised if you are not good at finding this balance at first – this is the most difficult aspect of Chairing a meeting and it takes time to build your skills in this area.

Constitutional Responsibilities



Robert's Rules of Order Key Procedures

Constitutional Responsibilities

Purpose	You Say	Can Interrupt	Requires a Second	Debatable	Can be Amended	Vote Required
Close the meeting	I move to adjourn	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Register a complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	No	None
Lay the motion aside temporarily	I move to table the motion	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
End debate	I call the question; OR I move to end debate	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to...	No	Yes	No	Yes	2/3
Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Refer to a committee	I move to refer the motion to...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify the wording of the motion	I move to amend the motion by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Postpone the decision indefinitely	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

These motions are listed in order of precedence. A motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

Conducting Local Elections

Unions are democracies and as such must conduct regular elections. This allows the membership to select their leaders and promotes confidence in the Local leadership. Fortunately, the AFSCME International Union has developed an extremely detailed guide to conducting Local elections. We recommend keeping the guide handy – it will really help you. In addition, your Council 93 Staff Rep can also provide guidance.

Basics of Conducting a Local Union Election:

- You must conduct regular elections – ***you cannot ignore this Constitutional requirement***. Local union leaders should not shy away from conducting regular elections – elections will only make your Local stronger!
- Start by looking at your Local Constitution and determining when the election must be held. Are elections every year, every other year, or every three years? Your Constitution will also tell you in which month the election must be held. Have your Secretary mark calendars at the beginning of the term so you are not caught off guard and scrambling at the last minute.
- The first step is to conduct nominations. You must provide 15 calendar days' notice of the meeting where nominations will be held. This must be written notice and mailed to the member's home address. ***Email will not suffice***. The notice can include additional information, but it ***must be in writing and it must be mailed to the member's home address***. You must also provide 15 days written notice to members of the date of the election. The notice for nominations and the election date may be included in the same notice.
- Mark your calendar ***now!*** If the election must take place by March 31, 2023, count back 30 days. This means the notice of nomination and election must be ***mailed*** no later than February 28, 2023.
- A nominee is placed on the ballot unless the nominee specifically declines the nomination. Nominees who neither accept or decline the nomination must be placed on the ballot.

Constitutional Responsibilities



Constitutional Responsibilities

Conducting Local Elections (cont.)

- After nominations are closed, the President should appoint an Election Committee. If the President is on the ballot s/he may not serve on this Committee, nor may any other candidate appearing on the ballot.
- No Local funds or resources may be used to campaign for Local office. Each candidate is entitled to a one-time mailing of the membership through the Local office, at the candidates' expense. Note that you should never give a candidate a mailing list or even labels. Rather, the candidate should give the Election Committee the stamped mail pieces, and the Committee members can affix the labels.
- ***Members must vote by secret ballot. The candidate who gets the majority of votes wins. A majority means more than one half.***

Need help with your Local election?

Consult this guide or ask your Council 93 Staff Rep!



How to Change Your Constitution

Each local has a constitution that governs how the Local operates, and from time to time it may be necessary or desirable for you to amend your Local Constitution. For example, your Local constitution may be outdated, particularly in regards to the current membership dues rate. Updating your constitution to reflect the accurate dues rate is also a perfect opportunity to look at the whole document to see if there are other changes that should be made.

If you feel you need a Local Constitution change or update, consult first with your AFSCME Staff Rep. S/he may be able to suggest an alternative approach to solving the problem you are trying to solve. However, if you determine that a constitutional change is necessary, you must follow a rigorous process to do so. Start with. . . your current Constitution! The final Article of the Constitution, usually called “Amendments,” will instruct you on the process.

Here are common provisions:

- You should first submit your proposed language change to your Staff Rep or to Council 93 Assistant Field Services and Organizing Director Dan Morse at dmorse@afscme93.org for an initial review.
- After the initial review is complete, you will have to present a proposed Constitutional amendment(s) at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Local. The proposed amendment(s) must be read and/or presented at one meeting of the Local AND voted on at a separate meeting of the Local. You must give members adequate advance notice of the meeting during which the amendment(s) will be voted on.
- You must provide a written copy of the amendment to each member during the meeting at which the vote is taking place.
- Constitutional amendments usually require a 2/3's majority of the voting membership to pass (see your Local's constitution to verify).
- After the membership has voted to adopt the proposed constitutional amendment(s), the International President must approve the change(s). A copy of the proposed constitutional amendment(s) along with a copy of the meeting minutes from the meeting(s) during which the changes were adopted should be forwarded to AFSCME International New England Area Field Services Director Tim Birch at tbirch@afscme.org.
- A constitutional amendment is not considered approved or in effect until the International President gives their approval.

Need help amending your Constitution?
Reach out to Tim Birch tbirch@afscme.org or to your Council 93 Staff Representative!

Constitutional Responsibilities



Section IV: Membership Information



New Member Welcome Packets

As you welcome a new employee to your Local, it can be very effective to provide them with a new member Welcome Packet. You are of course free to develop your own Packets, but you can also access the materials for a Welcome Packet through Council 93. There are both standardized and customizable materials available for new member Welcome Packets. Here is a list of the standardized materials:

- A brief description of who AFSCME Council 93 represents
- A flyer on Weingarten Rights
- A list of advantages associated with becoming a Union member and paying dues
- A brief description of Council 93's history
- A Q&A about the Labor Movement

All these documents are available electronically and can be printed by you or, if you would prefer, printed by the Council. There are also some standardized items that are not available electronically, but you can obtain physical copies from the Council. These include:

- A brochure on the vendor discounts and member benefits
- Weingarten rights business cards

There are two documents that are customizable for your Local. These include:

- A Welcome Letter
- A Contact Info sheet. This is the piece that needs the most customization.

Finally, the actual member card people sign is also available from the Council. Note that this does not go into the Welcome Packet. The new member signs the card, then they get the Welcome Packet.

If your Local is interested in getting Welcome Packets, you will work with Andi Mullin, Director of Member Mobilization to customize the appropriate documents and decide how many packets you need. Packets can be mailed to your home or work address, whichever is preferred.

Membership Information

Interested in New Member Welcome Packets for your Local?

**Reach out to Andi Mullin at
617.367.6030 or
amullin@afscme93.org**



Guide to Maximizing Union Membership

Council 93 has developed a comprehensive Guide to making sure that every single bargaining unit member is welcomed and invited to join our union and pay dues. This Guide is a soup-to-nuts review that includes information for Local Leaders as well as Council 93 employees.

Topics covered include but are not limited to:

- Why maximizing your membership is important
- How to reach out to new employees
- New Employee Orientation (NEO) rights
- How to process signed membership cards
- Common glitches
- Maintaining accurate data

Membership Information

Interested in a copy of the Guide to Maximizing Membership?

**Reach out to Andi Mullin at
617.367.6030 or amullin@afscme93.org**



Section V: Communications



Communication is Job #1

Communications

As a Local union leader, your most important job is to listen to and communicate with your members. The more time you can spend listening and building relationships with your members, the more trust you will build and the easier your job will be. Listening is a skill most people build over a lifetime, and it is not something you can learn from a book. Fortunately, you probably already have some good listening skills – that is how you got elected to a leadership position in the first place! But it can be easy to lose sight of the importance of listening and of communication in the flurry of the day-to-day, and now that you are a leader of your Local you will need these skills more than ever. Here are some tips:

- There is no substitute for building a relationship with your members, and the best way to do this is to talk to them face-to-face. This begins when a new employee starts work and you talk to them about joining the union, continues through their first few months of work as you check in on them, and becomes ongoing as they complete their probationary period. You are far more likely to get engagement and participation from members you have built a relationship with over time.
- As a general rule, the more personal your communication with your members the more effective it will be. For example, a one-on-one conversation is more effective than a phone call. A phone call is more effective than an email. A personal email is more effective than a canned email. You get the picture. This has to be balanced, of course, with efficiency and with what is feasible. You can not have a one-on-one conversation with every single member about the provisions of a new contract. However, you can have a membership meeting to discuss those provisions rather than sending an email about it.



Communication is Job #1 (cont.)

- Dealing with an upset member and not sure what to do? Start by asking questions and really listening to the answers. This is true if you are talking to a member who has been called into a disciplinary hearing and also true if you are talking to someone who is angry at you or “the union.” Listening will allow the member to blow off steam and also give you valuable clues about how to address whatever the problem is.
- In a strong union information flows upward and downward. You get information about what management is up to from the members. You tell the members what you are doing about it, how contract negotiations are going, and when you need the entire membership to engage. ***Informed and educated members become active members.*** You should in turn be communicating with your Staff Rep, which gives your Local a voice at the state and national level.

Need ideas about how to improve communication and/or engagement in your Local?

**Reach out to Andi Mullin at
617.367.6030 or amullin@afscme93.org**

Communications



Online Presence

Many new Local leaders ask how they can engage their membership and keep them updated on important issues affecting their Local. One way is by establishing an online presence for the Local that can be a resource for the members. While this is certainly something you may do, keep in mind that it is not required. Indeed, while some Locals have a robust online presence, most do not because it takes significant time and effort to manage it.

If you are interested in having an online presence for your Local, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Think about your members and the composition of your Local:
 - Are your members active online in their personal lives?
 - Is your membership spread out either geographically or on various shifts?
 - How large is your Local?
 - Are there multiple chapters/contracts within your Local?
 - Is there a lot of time-sensitive information you need to share with your membership?
 - How do you communicate with your members currently? How well is that working?
- For example, AFSCME Local 1067 is a very large local covering 24 college campuses across Massachusetts and has a strong online presence with its own [Facebook page](#) and [website](#). These are both regularly updated and maintained with information important to the members.
- It will take time and effort on a daily basis to manage your online presence. People will ask questions or make comments, and someone will need to be available to respond, more so if you have a Facebook page where users expect a quick response. It usually works best to have a single person in your Local responsible for managing your online presence, but regardless someone must monitor your site(s) every day and respond to members.
- Generate content regularly! The rule of thumb is that you should post on your social media page(s) at least several times a week. While original content for every post is probably not realistic for most Locals, you can share content posted by Council 93 and/or the International Union. If you never post anything, no one will engage.

Communications



Communications

Online Presence (cont.)

- On social media, visual posts get more engagement than just text. Video is especially effective.
- Make sure your original content and what you re-post is accurate. Do not be tricked into posting misinformation.
- Remember that anything you post online is public! Think twice before you post anything.
- Negative comments and even trolls (individuals, often paid, who scan the web looking for opportunities to post inflammatory comments) are inevitable if you are on social media. Trolls are easy enough to deal with – simply delete the posts from your site and block the posters if possible. However, sometimes your own membership will start posting very negative comments and this can snowball out of control quickly. You should respond to members quickly and civilly and try to resolve the issue. However, if your page descends into negativity you will face some difficult decisions in dealing with it.

If you want an online presence for your Local, we can help!

**Reach out to John Killoy at
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This guide will be periodically updated and amended in order to provide Council 93 Local leaders with the most up to date information as possible.