

What the Union Does for You, 2/2012

LABOR MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

With several different clusters transferring over to Future Services we thought it would be helpful to clarify the union's role in developing Future Services and implementing it. The Future Staffing model was developed by a committee which didn't include union input until it was all done. The union was invited in to be part of the implementation. Union representatives did not agree to get involved until they got a promise that no one would lose a job or get a decrease in pay from the implementation. Although it's hard to guess what might have happened, it's pretty certain that the process would have been more chaotic and a lot quicker without union input. Considering the current economic climate it's also likely that some people might have been laid off or taken a forced reduction in wages.

WIDER UNION BENEFITS

Just recently a staff member's son got a better interest rate on his mortgage because his mother is a member of our union. Children of several staff members have received scholarships from Council 2. Go to www2.council2.com or www.afscme.org to check out the wide range of benefits you get as a member of a union. Both Council 2 and AFSCME offer scholarships to members and their families who are seeking a higher education. In addition there are discounts on travel, computers, auto insurance and much more.

WHY HAVE A UNION?

When you buy a house, there is one agent who works on behalf of the people selling the house and another who works for you. Why? Because the agent selling the house has one job: to get the best possible deal for the seller. There is no incentive for her to give you a good deal or keep an eye out for your interests. That's what your agent does: he'll negotiate for your interests and try to get you the lowest price possible. Employers are the people selling the house: they have a responsibility to their shareholders or to taxpayers to get the best deal possible. That usually means getting the most work for the least expense. Employees can take what is first offered or they can get their own agent: a union. Your union negotiates to get YOU the best deal: pay and benefits that can support you and your family. The agreement at the end is our contract, a legally enforceable document that protects both parties.

WHAT CAN A UNION NEGOTIATE?

"mandatory subjects of bargaining, which include wages, hours, and other 'terms and conditions of employment' (29 U.S.C.A. § 158[d])."

West's Encyclopedia of American Law, edition 2 (<http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/collective+bargaining>)

What topics can our Union negotiate in our contract?

What union members are paid: YES

What benefits union members get: YES

If a branch would be closed: NO

How the library would deal with staff affected by a branch closing: YES

How a location is staffed: NO

How layoffs are handled: YES

How employees are hired: COMPLICATED. NO, 99% of all contracts have a Management Rights clause, includes management's right to determine the methods and means by which its operations are carried on and to direct the work force, to hire and promote and discharge (Union usually bargains a just cause caveat for discharge). YES, we can bargain things like Union members get points for longevity in an employment pool.

What people (who) are hired: NO

What services the library offers: NO

How library services are implemented: NO

Breaks and meal time rules: YES