

ELEVEN SEVENTEEN

YOUR VOICE



YOUR VOTE

AFGE LOCAL 1117 ELECTIONS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Everyone! Welcome to the third edition of Eleven Seventeen. Unbelievably the year is almost over but not before we celebrate the holidays with our loved ones. These next few months will serve as the last for the current Union administration as it is time for you (members) to vote in your union officers. In this edition we will walk you through the process of AFGE local 1117's election, what the union is doing to address the vaccine mandate, and other topics of interest to you.

Our office has recently shifted our vision to solely focus on education, which we believe when increased, leads to improved representation. A few months prior we were attempting to grow our membership but unfortunately we did not have the knowledge to adequately service the needs of the bargaining unit. Be mindful that you do not have to be a dues paying member to utilize the Union but your dues help with sustaining exclusive services for our members and helps us lobby and support those that stand behind unions.

With our shift in vision and mission we are seeing instantaneous results as testament from the cases we've recently resolved. Our goal is to help you anyway we can and the more we know the more we can do. In closing, our office would like to wish EVERYONE a wonderful Thanksgiving. Please be safe, and continue to do your part to protect each other's health and well-being.

MESSAGE FROM THE VA SECRETARY



THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON

November 2, 2021

NOTICE TO ALL AFGE EMPLOYEES

In a recent arbitration decision, Arbitrator Hyman Cohen found that the Department of Veterans Affairs violated the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (the Statute) when it failed in 2017 to bargain over the procedures and appropriate arrangements of the implementation of 38 U.S.C. § 714 and ordered the Agency to electronically post the terms of the Award.

WE HEREBY NOTIFY OUR EMPLOYEES THAT:

WE WILL bargain, retroactively, on request of the Union with respect to all bargaining unit employees adversely affected by the Accountability Act which became effective on June 23, 2017.

WE WILL make any employee whole who, in any agreement reached by the parties, is determined to have suffered a loss of pay, benefits, allowances or differentials because of the Agency's unlawful conduct.

WE WILL NOT interfere with, restrain or coerce bargaining unit employees in the exercise of the rights assured them by the Federal Services Labor-Management Relations Statute.

Denis McDonough

AFGE LOCAL 1117 ELECTIONS

YOUR VOICE, YOUR VOTE

Happy Early Thanksgiving!! It is that time of year for you to select your AFGE Local 1117 Officers. In this article we will walk you through the steps of the AFGE Local 1117 elections and how you can participate. We encourage everyone to participate in the election whether running for office or voting on the nominees.



AFGE ELECTION: FAQ

Q: Do I have to be a dues paying member to run for office?

A: Yes, per the AFGE constitution you must, "Be a member for one year of an AFGE local, immediately preceding the closing of the nomination process".

Q: Do I have to be a dues paying member to vote on individuals who are nominated?

A: Yes

Q: How much are AFGE Local 1117's Dues?

A: The dues for our local is \$22 per pay period

Q: Will this be in person or mail in ballot election?

A: Mail in ballot

Q: Can I be on the election committee and run for office?

A: No.

Q: Which positions are up for election?

A: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Q: Can I consult the Union office with any other questions I have regarding the election?

A: Absolutely. We encourage everyone to participate and to contact us at Unionoffice@afgeL1117.org with any other questions not answered in the FAQ.

ELECTION NOMINATION NOTICE

IMPORTANT - OFFICER ELECTION INFORMATION FOR ALL MEMBERS OF AFGE LOCAL 1117 NOVEMBER 20, 2021

Dear members of AFGE Local 1117,

This is a **combined notice of Nomination and Election** for officers of Local 1117 AFGE, AFL-CIO. It is mailed to the last known address of all members and contains the rules, dates, and processes to be used in the election of AFGE Local 1117 officers. The purpose of this election proceeding is to be fair and consistent while best capturing the intent of the membership regarding who they wish to lead this local.

The nomination and election of officers will be conducted in accordance with AFGE's Standard Local Constitution and Appendix A of the AFGE National Constitution. The election committee: Chair; Michelle Simmons, Judy Davis and Dee Prince.

Questions and/or communications with the Election Committee concerning the conduct of the election must be sent to: AFGE L1117 Election Committee, P.O. Box 473626, Aurora, CO 80047 or via email at election@afgel1117.org. Please include your name and contact information.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Nominations, accompanied by written acceptance by the nominee are to be directed to the Election Committee no later than December 4, 2021. Nominations will be accepted by USPS Mail at the above address by December 3, 2021 or by email; election@afgel1117.org by 10:30am on December 4, 2021.

Self-nominations are appropriate and welcome. A letter of self-nomination constitutes acceptance and a letter of acceptance of nomination constitutes nomination and acceptance.

OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED

- **President** – at large position, all work groups eligible to run for this office
- **Vice President** - at large position, all work groups eligible to run for this office
- **Treasurer** – at large position, all work groups eligible to run for this office
- **Secretary** – at large position, all work groups eligible to run for this office

Qualifications for office: be a member for at least one year and be in good standing (dues paid up to date). You may NOT be a member in any labor organization that is not affiliated with the AFL-CIO; Candidates shall not run for more than one office. The term of office is a maximum of three (3) years.

All election protests must be in writing and received by the election committee within ten days after the election. This election is governed by the AFGE Rules of Conduct for an Election, set forth in Appendix A of the AFGE National Constitution.

ELECTION NOMINATION NOTICE

ELECTION TIME FRAMES:

NOVEMBER 20TH 2021

Mailing of combined notice of nomination and election.

DECEMBER 4TH 2021

Deadline for receipt of nominations and acceptance.

DECEMBER 11TH 2021

Preparation and mailing of ballots.

JANUARY 15TH 2022

Ballots to be collected from PO Box and tallied.

JANUARY 19TH 2022

Preparation and mailing of results or runoff ballot if required.

JANUARY 19TH 2022

Runoff ballots collected and tallied if required.

ELECTION AND CAMPAIGN RULES

1. **Inspection of Membership List:** all candidates will be provided the opportunity to inspect the membership list upon request to the election committee.
2. **Campaign Literature:** the use of any union or any employer resources to promote the candidacy of any candidate is prohibited. This includes the design, publishing, and distribution of campaign literature. Use of the government email system is prohibited. Resources include money, supplies, equipment, facilities, or data.
3. **Tally of Ballots:** write-in votes or write-in candidates are not permitted – as such, any write-in will void that portion of the ballot. Any ballots received after the deadline or in envelopes which do not identify the ballot as that of an eligible voter shall NOT be counted as valid ballots.
4. **Majority Vote:** a majority of the valid votes cast is required for election to office.
5. **Election Records:** All election-related documents (including those pertaining to nominations and the minutes of any meetings) must be sealed and preserved by the Election Committee (who has authority to reopen the records) through the protest period and then turned over to the local secretary.
6. **Questions or Concerns:** upon request, each candidate will be provided a digital copy of the AFGE Standard Local Constitution, and Appendix A of the AFGE National Constitution. All questions or concerns should be forwarded to the Election Committee. Any violation of these rules should be reported promptly so that corrective action can be taken, if necessary.

The above rules are not inclusive. Additional rules or clarifications may be issued by the Election Committee as needed during this election process. The Election Committee will make decisions based on the rules set forth in Appendix A of the AFGE National Constitution.

NATIONAL NEWS

UNION SUPPORT



The Biden administration has directed federal agencies to take concrete steps to help bolster union membership in the federal government and ensure employees are fully informed of their union rights in the workplace.

FOR MORE ON THIS ARTICLE [CLICK HERE](#)

GAO REPORT PROVIDES SNAPSHOT OF AGENCIES' RE-ENTRY PLANS

A new [report](#) issued by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) provided a snapshot of 24 Cabinet or Cabinet-rank agencies' policies and plans to bring workers back to the offices.



FOR MORE ON THIS ARTICLE [CLICK HERE](#)

STUDENT LOAN RELIEF IS ON THE WAY FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS



Earlier this month, the Department of Education (DOE) announced it was [overhauling the Public Service Loan Forgiveness \(PSLF\)](#) and wiping out \$2 million worth of student loan debt for federal employees. With these major reforms, thousands of borrowers will be closer to debt relief. To learn more about the major program improvements, [review the Department of Education's fact sheet](#). These improvements will be rolled out in groups over the coming months.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE [CLICK HERE](#)

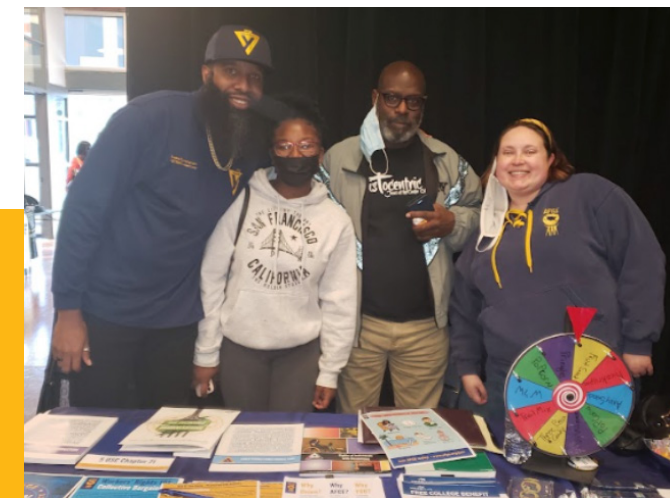
LOCAL NEWS

NEIGHBORHOOD FAFSA POP UP BLOCK PARTY

For the past several years, Colorado students have left tens of millions in federal funds for their college education on the table — somewhere between \$30 to \$50 million, simply because they do not apply.

Could you or someone you know use some help completing the **Federal Application For Student Aid (FAFSA)** to go or return to school? If so and you live in Colorado contact Chevy Lowe at Clowe@ecmc.org.

This month AFGE Local 1117 partnered with the Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC) and KTone Cares Foundation to service and educate the community on the FAFSA process. We were able to help hundreds of students and give away hundreds of dollars in scholarships.



In this picture are AFGE representatives with one of our two scholarship winners.

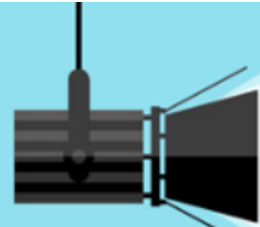


Our National Organizer Hope Berdnt is waiting for students and parents to come by to learn about what a Union is.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS VIDEO](#)

In this video are all the other sponsors at the event standing in solidarity to educate our community about FAFSA.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Faith Thoma

1

Where were you born and where have you lived?

I was born in San Antonio, TX, at Fort Brooks Hospital. Clearly, a military brat whose Grandfather, Great Uncle, Father, Step Father, 2 Brothers, and a Sister all served in the military. I was fortunate enough to have lived in Spain and Italy but spent the majority of my years right here in Colorado Springs, CO.

2

How long have you been with the VA?

I've been with the VA for almost 2 years, only 1 of which has been a paid position. Volunteering was an opportunity to help give back to those who served, providing us the freedoms and liberties we have today.

3

Are you a Veteran? If yes, which branch of service and experience? If you are not a veteran what are you most proud of working for the VA?

I served in the US Air Force and became a CNA shortly after separating and my first GS career was a Medical Clerk (aka-MSA) in San Vito, Italy. I enjoy helping others, learning about cultures and experiences of those who have also traveled to so many lands. I am most proud of being a Veteran serving Veterans, for it is truly a rewarding experience.

4

What are your hobbies? What do you do during your spare time?

I enjoy reading and traveling. When I first joined the AF I wanted to see the world... so not only did I get such an opportunity while I served but I continued to do so afterwards. Most of my travels still include beach vacations, perhaps I should have joined the Navy!

5

What are your thoughts on Unions?

I was taught at an early age, by both my Grandfather and Uncle, that Unions are great! The Union provides such an opportunity for schooling/training, insurance, discounts for many retail corporations, as well as being a voice as to how improvements can occur within the workforce.

MASTER AGREEMENT HIGHLIGHT

In this month's edition of Eleven Seventeen we will highlight Article 6 addressing Alternate Dispute Resolution. Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) refers to the different ways management and employees can resolve disputes prior to or during the grievance or Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) process. Within our local and partnership with VA leadership the most commonly used ADR process to resolve conflict is mediation. Mediation is a structured, interactive process where an impartial third party assists disputing parties in resolving conflict through the use of specialized communication and negotiation techniques.

To initiate the ADR process, kindly send an email to Unionoffice@afgel1117.org or to our EEO partners at officeofcommunitycare@va.gov and we will gladly help resolve your matter. For more on Article 6 (Alternate Dispute Resolution) please [CLICK HERE](#) and visit page 18.



AFGE NVAC/AFL-CIO



Master Agreement
between
the
Department of Veterans Affairs
and the
American Federation
of
Government Employees
2011

COVID-19 NEWS

WHAT IS THE UNION DOING REGARDING THE VACCINE MANDATE?

Currently our office is not allowed to bargain on the vaccine mandate as bargaining is still taking place between National AFGE and VA Central Office (VACO). Once national bargaining has concluded, our local is prepared to bargain on your behalf. We would be remiss if we did not give a **BIG THANKS** to everyone who shared their feedback to the survey we sent a few months back to gather concerns on the mandate. Until we are able to bargaining with VA leadership, noted below are a few measures the Union office is taking to protect you in the workplace:



TEMPERATURE CHECKS

Beginning on Monday November 8, 2021 AFGE local 1117 will take anyone's temperature who requires it at the DENVER location (3773 Cherry Creek N. Drive). All you have to do is come to suite 210C and ring the doorbell and someone in our office will assist you. Upon taking your temperature we will annotate your name and the time you came by our office. Taking your temperature will let you know whether or not you are running a fever and if you should get tested.

CARE PACKAGES

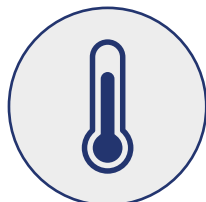
Beginning on Monday November 8, 2021 AFGE local 1117 will be deploying care packages to all our members who contract COVID-19. Non-members can also receive the care packages for a nominal cost. Care packages will consist of Gatorades, bottled waters, fever/ache reducers, dried fruits, thermometer, COVID-19 rapid test and ibuprofen. For more information on the care packages please email Unionoffice@afge1117.org and we will gladly assist you.

COVID TESTING

Our office recently ordered 100 COVID-19 rapid tests for use at our Denver Office and we are currently pending approval due to the high demand. Once we begin implementing COVID-19 testing at our Denver facility we will send an email to our Denver staff.

BARGAINING VACCINE MANDATE

Our office currently has our list of topics and demands we would like to bargain with the agency when the time is right. Thanks to everyone that has shared feedback, asked questions or expressed concerns to get us ready to negotiate on your behalf.



MONEY TALK FLEXIBLE SAVINGS ACCOUNT (FSA)

Don't miss out on pre-tax savings to spend in your Flexible Savings Account. What are pre-tax savings? For instance, if you are in the 20% tax bracket and you designate \$25 to be taken out of your paycheck for the "FLEX" account, you will only see \$20 less in your net pay. Yet, you will have \$25 to use for reimbursement on eligible medical expenses. Pre-tax money can also be used to pay for Dependent Care for child or elder day care expenses.

The FSA can be spent on co-pays for doctor and dentist (or cover dental/eye exam costs if you don't carry dental/vision insurance) visits, prescriptions and even some over the counter items including menstrual products. See www.FSAFEDS.com for the list of over 300 eligible items and to enroll. Open enrollment ends December 13, 2021 for coverage effective on January 1, 2022.

This type of account is usually a "use it or lose it" for the given calendar year but there are currently provisions for limited rollover of unused dollars. It is wise to do a best estimate of possible expenses for the coming year so all of the elected contribution will be spent.



UNION BENEFITS HIGHLIGHTS

WHAT IS THE UNION PLUS FREE COLLEGE BENEFIT?

Under an academic partnership with Eastern Gateway Community College, the Union Plus Free College Benefit offers grants — known as “last dollar scholarships” — that fill the gap between any federal, state and employer education grants for tuition, fees, and e-books for certain online programs at Eastern Gateway.



Free College is possible thanks to the early support and enthusiasm of AFSCME, who entered into a collaboration with Eastern Gateway Community College in 2016. Since 2016, thousands of students have taken advantage of millions of dollars in Free College scholarships.

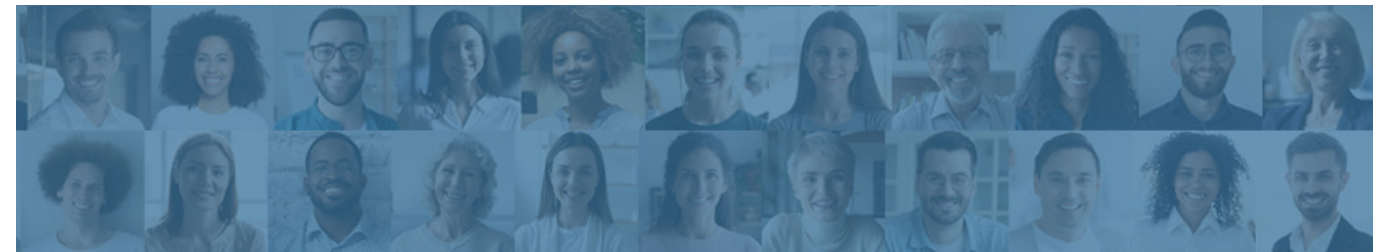
Earn an Associate Degree — completely online, **for FREE!** Even if you don't qualify for student financial aid, the Union Plus Free College Benefit will be applied to your balance for tuition, fees and e-books.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FREE COLLEGE BENEFIT

Bachelor's Degree Completion Program now offers **all new and returning students** a last-dollar scholarship, **which allows them to complete their degree with no out-of-pocket cost for tuition, fees, or e-books.**

This program offers the Bachelor's Degree Completion program with academic partner Central State University (CSU). CSU, established in 1887, is an accredited non-profit public institution located in Wilburforce, Ohio.

LEARN MORE ABOUT BACHELORS DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM



JOIN NOW

Become A Member

Join government workers nationwide and overseas as a member of the largest federal employee union that offers legal representation, legislative advocacy and other services.

Sign Up!

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

For AFGE Members

Explore the benefits available for existing AFGE members.

Explore Member Benefits

UPGRADE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Get 'Members Only' Access

As an AFGE member, you have access to exclusive resources and benefits in our “Members Only” section. Get started now - all you need to do is register.

Register Now

2021 COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN (CFC)



As public servants here at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), you understand the generous nature of our Federal community. That generosity extends beyond our employment and into the CFC. Overseen by the Office of Personnel Management, the mission of the CFC is to promote and support philanthropy through a program that is employee-focused, cost-efficient and effective in providing Federal employees and retirees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all.

This year, the CFC celebrates its 60th anniversary. President Kennedy formalized the CFC with an Executive Order in 1961. And since its inception, the CFC has raised more than \$8.5 billion for charities and people in need. These CFC pledges make a real and meaningful difference to a countless number of individuals throughout our communities, the Nation and the world.

Celebrate 60 years of giving with me by watching [this video](#). Consider pledging a one-time or recurring gift at www.GiveCFC.org. With our combined efforts, we make a difference when we pledge together.

CFC runs from September 1, 2021 through January 15, 2022. If you have pledged before, the online giving platform makes it easy to renew your gift. If you are new to the CFC, talk to your Keyworker to learn how you can join the community. There are countless causes to choose from and multiple ways to pledge. Your gift remains anonymous unless you choose otherwise, and the contributions you make will support charities through unrestricted funds, helping them respond wherever the need is the greatest.

Thank you for being the face of change for charitable causes like helping communities recover from disaster, supporting military families, ensuring education for all and making a positive difference.

Thank you for your support and participation.

Denis McDonough

Denis McDonough

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL & AT NO COST TO YOU

Access your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) 24/7/365 by phone, web or mobile app.



Toll-Free: 888-243-5744

Company Code: vhadenver

MyLifeExpert.com

HOW TO ACCESS?

1. Access the Sand Creek EAP website by [CLICKING HERE](#)
2. Create a new account with your company code [SIGN UP HERE](#)
3. Enter company code: **vhadenver**
4. This will prompt the user to enter a valid email address and then a security code will be sent to it
5. Verify security code, then create a username and personal password.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING DATE / CONTACT / QR CODES

Monthly membership meetings are scheduled for the third Saturday of every month at 10:30am. Please join us via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83448754035> or Dial-in: 12532158782 Code:83448754035#

DENVER (OFFICE OF COMMUNITY CARE) REPRESENTATIVES

NAME	POSITION
Andre Cunningham	President
Cioffi Sweets-Williams	Executive Vice President
David Martinez	Chief Steward
Debbie Osborne	Treasurer
Rachel Caban	Secretary/Steward
Lamar Edwards	Steward Denver
Adrienne Duran POM	Steward Denver
Prince Bryant DCDM	Steward Denver
Christopher Malucelli	AFGE Safety Representative

SOCO REPRESENTATIVES

NAME	POSITION
Tiffany Roman	1st Vice President SOCO
Rene Shepard	2nd Vice President SOCO
Darci Parrish	SOCO Chief Steward
Timothy Eagan	EEO Fair Practice Coordinator
Theresa Barajas	AFGE Local 1117 Trustee

UNION EMAIL

Unionoffice@afgeL1117.org

UNION WEBSITE

www.AFGEL1117.org

FILE A GRIEVANCE



https://afge1117.grievtrac.com/index.cfm?jsession-id=0B63947451E28DF7818642A346BF9EF0.cfusion?zone=/unionactive/griev_track/login.cfm&CFID=77708866&CFTOKEN=5359c47477ba0f6b-E1EE5028-B1EA-F840-004A43C157331FOA

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

Your Right to Union Representation

“If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at the meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to answer questions.”

This is your right under the 1975 U.S. Supreme Court Weingarten Decision.



AFGE Local 1117

3773 Cherry Creek Drive North, Ste. 210C
Denver, Colorado 80209