

AFL-CIO CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS

A Voice for Working Families in Communities

Building Political Power for Working Families

Advancing a Progressive Local Legislative Agenda

Supporting Contract and Organizing Campaigns and Workers' Freedom to Form Unions

Mobilizing and Solidarity

What are central labor councils?

AFL-CIO central labor councils bring different unions together in communities to work collectively on organizing new members, educating and mobilizing current members, strengthening cities and counties and creating a powerful voice for working families. CLCs comprise the grassroots network of the labor movement's efforts to ensure that economic, education, health care and other policies benefit working families.

What do they do?

Central labor councils give working families a voice:

- **On the job.** Working together in CLCs, local unions support one another's organizing campaigns and contract bargaining. With "Street Heat" rapid-response teams, CLCs turn out large groups of working people to support union members and challenge anti-union, anti-worker employers. CLCs forge community alliances that build support for union members' efforts to win positive changes on the job and retain past gains.
- **In local and state politics.** CLCs endorse candidates for local office, make recommendations on state legislative endorsements and coordinate the local union movement's political mobilization efforts, including voter registration, worksite leafleting and neighborhood canvassing.
- **In local and state government.** CLCs provide working families with the information and opportunities they need to make their voices heard by local elected leaders and state legislators. CLCs engage union members in developing and promoting a working families agenda for good, secure jobs; job safety; adequate investments in such working family needs as education, health care and retirement security; and against job-killing proposals like privatization of government services.
- **In their communities.** An extensive network of community services staffers and volunteers works through CLCs to help union members in need of emergency assistance during family crises and natural disasters, plant closings and economic hardships. CLCs strengthen communities in additional ways by linking labor with community and religious groups to tackle shared concerns by supporting high-road economic developments that create good-paying jobs and ensure the local revenue base for essential services such as education.

- **In the economy.** CLCs give working families greater power to shape their economic well-being by mobilizing working people for social and economic justice, for fair treatment on the job and for pro-worker government policies. CLCs also link local unions with the educational resources of the AFL-CIO, giving members the opportunity to learn more about today's economy, why it favors the wealthy over working people—and what they can do about it.

How are they structured?

More than 30,000 local unions make up the 525 local labor councils across the nation. While participation by locals in the semi-autonomous organizations chartered by the AFL-CIO is voluntary, the federation strongly encourages all unions to build stronger local labor movements through full affiliation and participation.

Local labor federations are comprised of local unions and other eligible subordinate bodies of the national and international unions that are affiliated with the AFL-CIO. Certain eligible unions may affiliate by receiving a charter through the Solidarity Charter Program. Other unions may receive a certificate of affiliation as a direct local affiliate through the Unity Partnerships Program, and local associations of the National Education Association may join by receiving a certificate of affiliation through the AFL-CIO/NEA Labor Solidarity Partnership.

Representatives of central labor councils serve on a national advisory committee appointed by the AFL-CIO president. The state federation and central labor council advisory committee meets twice a year to consider and recommend initiatives and programs to the federation. CLCs are governed by elected executive boards and officers serving part time or as volunteers in most small and medium-size communities. In larger cities, CLCs have full-time officers and staff.

Where can I get more information?

To find out more about central labor councils, contact the AFL-CIO Office of State and Local Affiliates at 202-637-5280 or visit our website at www.aflcio.org/aboutus/unioncities.