

OCSEA

OHIO
CIVIL
SERVICE
EMPLOYEES
ASSOCIATION

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE QUARTERLY

AFSCME LOCAL 11/AFL-CIO
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Leadership Matters!

Read inside about the ways OCSEA members make a difference with their leadership every day! →

Solidarity IS OUR STRENGTH

OCSEA



In the days leading up to Labor Day, OCSEA activists from all over Ohio traveled to Cleveland for the OCSEA 36th Biennial Convention. This year, the delegates set out to attend to the business of the union by making updates to the Constitution and setting goals for the future. The Convention was also an important opportunity for union leaders to collaborate, network and discuss the challenges facing us today. That's what this year's Convention theme, "Solidarity is our Strength," was all about.

In his opening remarks on the first day, President **Chris Mabe** stressed the importance of solidarity in the current fight for the future of public sector unions and the public services that our members provide. "Collective bargaining rights in Ohio are under attack once again, and our union brothers and sisters in the federal workforce are losing their jobs in unprecedented numbers. We must focus in on the future of public service and work together to grow and adapt to keep our union strong," Mabe said.

Former U.S. Senator **Sherrod Brown** addressed these challenges too. Brown, who is running to regain a U.S. Senate seat in 2026, thanked OCSEA members for their service and urged them to vote for candidates who support public employees and their unions! "It's more rigged against workers than it was a year

ago," said Brown. "All persuasions know it's rigged and that many politicians are in bed with corporations," he said. From rising prescription drugs to privatization, Brown said, "I will always fight for you! That's who I am. I fought harder for you than anyone in the U.S. Senate. Which is why I'm running to head back to the Senate." Attendees of the WAC/CMCA luncheon also heard from **Kathleen Clyde**, the new chair of the Ohio Democratic Party, who left them with a hopeful outlook on the future of Ohio.

Thursday's session ended with a big announcement about a new member-only benefit. If you haven't heard, all dues-paying OCSEA members are now eligible for no-cost workplace security insurance. See pages 6 and 7 for more details on the benefit.

Friday's session kicked off with an inspiring speech by **Dr. Amy Acton**, former Director of the Ohio Dept. of Health and candidate for Ohio Governor. Acton said, "It's time for a change in Ohio." She said we must invest in good jobs and a strong economy and build up and support public servants—Ohio's superheroes—who will be the driving force that will grow Ohio for the better. "This is the moment! We can win this. We must refuse to look the other way. I will be with you every step of the way," said Acton.

Later on Friday, AFSCME International President **Lee Saunders** talked about the road ahead and the AFSCME Get

Read the recap of Convention below.
Scan the QR code to view the full photo gallery!



36TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION



Organized (GO) campaign to build power in our workplaces. “Our benefits are possible because we are organized and we have made our voices heard. Nothing is more powerful than one worker looking another worker in the eye and asking them to be a part of something bigger than themselves,” he said. Representatives from the AFSCME GO initiative were also on hand to talk about the program and the power of organizing. To learn more about AFSCME GO and to sign up for updates, visit AFSCMEGO.org.

One of the major themes of this year’s Convention was Leadership. Leadership at every level and of every kind was recognized as the vital force behind our union power. Chapter leaders held a panel to discuss how the OCSEA Leadership Training helped build their organizing skills. On Friday, long-time OCSEA President **Ron Alexander** was honored, and on Saturday, the first-ever **Jean Fightmaster Leadership Award** was presented (see page 8). Leaders from 18 OCSEA subordinate bodies were awarded **High Performance Initiative (HPI) Awards**, and three members won the Labor Gives Back award (see page 9).

The AFSCME PEOPLE Challenge was a focus of Convention, with all nine OCSEA districts competing to increase their voluntary contributions to the union’s Political Action Committee

(PAC) fund. District 2 was the big winner of the PEOPLE Challenge with 97% of their delegation giving to the PAC! See page 15 for more on AFSCME PEOPLE.

Finally, a new addition at this year’s Convention was the Future of Work Expo. The new Future of Work Committee, lead by OCSEA Board of Directors member **Cynthia Watiker**, organized the Expo to showcase new technologies in public service and how OCSEA is guarding against job loss and adapting to technology transitions. The expo featured demos of the new Learning Management System—a training tool for union leaders—as well as drone technology used by members, Virtual Reality job training, and more.

The delegates passed Constitutional Amendment 11 to officially adopt the Future of Work Committee as a standing committee on the OCSEA Board of Directors. They also passed Amendment 3, which clarifies the distinction between non-members and individuals who have formally opted out of OCSEA membership. Additional housekeeping amendments were also passed. More details about amendments, convention news, award winners, and other Convention business can be found at con.ocsea.org. □

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Salt Fork Naturalist leaves a big footprint for Ohio nature education

The Eco-Discovery Center at Salt Fork State Park serves as a nature education resource for guests.



For OCSEA member **John Hickenbottom**, nature is life! As a union Naturalist at the Salt Fork State Park, John oversees the brand-new Eco-Discovery Center which opened its doors to the public on Earth Day this year, April 22, 2025. The Eco-Discovery Center, a part of the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, has had more than 10,000 visitors since it opened its doors earlier this year.

“Salt Fork is the largest state park in Ohio, and I think the Eco Discovery Center distills what makes Salt Fork special,” said John. Displays and interactives are directly related to Salt Fork and the Cambridge area and “really get the message across why Salt Fork is so special and why our state parks in general are special,” said John, who is proud of his public service to Ohio and as a union member with Guernsey Chapter 3000.

“I decided I wanted to be a Naturalist pretty early on. I started volunteering out here when I was 13 under another Naturalist. I grew up hunting and fishing, and I grew

up with an appreciation for conservation and an appreciation for the outdoors,” he said.

John says he gets inspired by inspiring others. “Some of the things I try to do as part of my job is take abstract concepts and break them down into digestible pieces,” he said. John hopes the public, the guests who visit Salt Fork from all over the world, can “take that home with them, absorb that message and hopefully inspire them to do their part and maybe inspire kids to want to do this job for a living.”

Sustainability and renewable energy are at the core of the Eco-Discovery Center, the only public

nature center of its kind in Ohio, says John. Outside, visitors can find relaxation spaces along with a pollinators garden, green roof, solar panels, and a rain-water harvesting systems. Inside, the concept continues with sustainable elements like high-efficiency HVAC, LED lighting and low flow plumbing. The exhibits engage visitors in an interactive journey through Salt Fork’s forest ecosystem to discover how everything in nature is connected and ends with



Bigfoot, as a character guide, is a tool for fun facts and education at the Eco-Discovery Center.



John Hickenbottom
ODNR Naturalist
Guernsey Chapter 3000

OCSEA member John Hickenbottom shares his wisdom of ecology and conservation at Salt Fork State Park.



ways to practice sustainability to protect these valuable connections and natural resources.

And John has been there every step of the way, giving input on the center throughout the process. This includes quotes from personal heroes like Jane Goodall to the Center's character guide, the mythical Bigfoot, a tool to highlight fun facts and teaching moments toward making a big impact with a small footprint.

"Salt Fork has been the Bigfoot capitol of Ohio,

and we embrace that. I use it as an education tool," said John who says the Bigfoot character guide is used with nuance and respect to the lore of the area. "It draws in a lot of people. If 70-100 people show up for a Bigfoot hike, that's 70-100 people who also get to learn about the park, and has a chance to learn about conservation," he said.

John has become known as the "Bigfoot Naturalist" in many circles, he says. In 2021, ODN produced a Bigfoot podcast series called The Squatching Hour for Salt Fork State Park with John as its host exploring the "bigfoot hotspot" with local researchers.

John says the fall and winter will be busy months for the center, with school tours, senior citizen groups, local garden clubs and even a few outdoor writers clubs. He also enjoys talking about his job with local tech school students who are exploring careers in natural resources.

When John isn't busy at the center and talking about the lore of Bigfoot, he also oversees interpretive hikes, guided walks and wildlife programs for the park. □



Scan QR code to watch a video of John's interview at the Salt Fork Eco-Discovery Center



Why Leadership Matters

CHRISTOPHER MABE, OCSEA President



PRESIDENT
VICE PRESIDENT
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Christopher Mabe
Gerard 'Rocky' Jolly
Kathleen M. Gersper

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

District 1: Nachael Church (MHAS), *vacancy*

District 2: Angela Traylor (DODD),
Tim Runyon (DR&C)

District 3: Raymond Harker (DR&C),
Jackie Stuckert (ODJFS)

District 4: Annie Pleasant-Combs (ODJFS)
Eric Kusky (DR&C)

District 5: Doug Korba (DR&C),
Jennifer Wolfe (DODD)

District 6: Deena Gray (Attorney General), Marcus Harris (MHAS), Natalie Qualls (Development), Karen Ryther (OOD), Leslie Tilton (DR&C), Cynthia Watkier (FCJFS), Melissa Yank (BWC), Donna Howard (Public Safety), Damon Neal (ODJFS), Matthew Tyack (Industrial Commission)

District 7: Deborah Weaver (DODD),
Sherry Little (BWC)

District 8: Tom Dearth (DR&C),
Jason Underhill (MHAS)

District 9: Jeff Condo (OVH),
April Duckworth (DR&C)

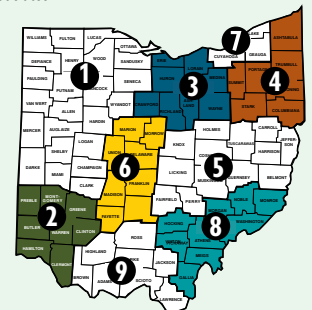
Retiree Representative: Ron Alexander

OCSEA HEADQUARTERS:
390 Worthington Road, Ste. A,
Westerville, Oh 43082

MEMBER RESOURCE CENTER:
888-OCSEA-11 (888-627-3211)

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OCSEA Districts

credit for building it. You can read more about the tribute to Ron as well as the first-ever Jean Fightmaster Leadership award on page 8.

As I mentioned earlier, there are many ways to be a leader. Sometimes leadership is helping make our communities a better place to live even when we're not on the job. I'd like to give a special shout out to **Tammie Dobbins, Kate Newman and Erinn Cottrill** for winning the Bob White Labor Gives Back Award. Tammie was featured in our Spring *PEQ* and the story of how Kate and Erinn are helping their union brothers and sisters in need can be found on page 9.

“Leadership comes in different forms, but it requires a commitment to union values and a willingness to fight for them.”

OHIO'S NEXT LEADERS

As we near the end of 2025, it's time to look ahead to Ohio's future leadership. Next year is an election year with Governor, U.S. Senator and other statewide offices on the ballot. Because Gov. DeWine is term-limited, we will vote to pick our next boss. And we need to think seriously about what that means. Do we want someone who will fire and disrespect public employees as the current administration in Washington D.C. is doing? Or do we want a Governor who supports collective bargaining? This isn't about right or left,

it's about doing what's right for working people.

We are already planning our next President's Conference where we will discuss the candidates and issues that will be on the ballot in November 2026. I can't stress this enough—we need to be fully informed and engaged in the election process. Our jobs depend on it! One way to become more engaged is by participating in our PEOPLE Program, which enables us to voluntarily support candidates who share our values and are willing to work with us on issues that are important to us as union members.

NEW MEMBER BENEFIT

During contract negotiations, we fight for fair wages and good benefits because you deserve to be properly compensated for the important work you do. But your membership in OCSEA should also be rewarded. That's why, effective October 1, we kicked off a new members-only benefit to all dues-paying OCSEA members. We've teamed up with Pearl Insurance to provide workplace security insurance at no cost to you. The policy covers workplace hostage situations, accidental death and dismemberment. See next page for more details.

A few years ago, we started providing similar insurance for members who work in dangerous jobs at the Dept. of Rehabilitation and Corrections and the Dept. of Youth Services. It's our hope you will never need to use the insurance. But, if you do, we hope the benefit gives you peace of mind. It is our appreciation to you for being a valued member of OCSEA. □

Leadership matters! We chose that theme for this edition of *Public Employee Quarterly* because leadership and activism help our union stay strong. As I said to the delegates at our 36th OCSEA biennial convention in Cleveland this summer, this union is fortunate to have been blessed with many outstanding leaders since our union was founded nearly 90 years ago. Leadership comes in different forms, but it requires a **commitment to union values** and a **willingness to fight for them**.

We owe a debt to the members and leaders who fought over many decades to gain collective bargaining rights for public employees in Ohio. **Ron Alexander** and **Jean Fightmaster** are two names that come to mind when we think about true leadership. Their tireless efforts to pass Ohio's collective bargaining law in the 1980s and negotiate the first state contract laid the foundation for the rights and benefits we enjoy today. I'm so happy we could honor their legacies at our convention.

During a Celebration of Leadership, we announced our building in Westerville will be named the **Ronald C. Alexander Union Hall** in honor of OCSEA's longest serving president. We are lucky to have such an incredible facility that gives us the space and resources to better serve our members, and Ron deserves

NEW Member-Only Benefit!



No Cost Workplace Security Insurance

OCSEA has teamed up with Pearl Insurance to offer the Workplace Security Insurance benefit to **ALL dues-paying members!** This **exclusive members-only benefit** provides financial protection both on and off the job and will be provided at absolutely **no cost** to OCSEA members.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Who is covered under this policy?

All dues-paying OCSEA members are automatically enrolled and covered under this policy effective Oct. 1, 2025. No action is required.

2. What does the policy protect against?

If you are a victim of a workplace hostage or captivity situation, you may be eligible to receive the following benefits: **Captivity, Occupational Accidental Death, Permanent Total Disability, Dismemberment**

3. What if the accident is unrelated to captivity?

The policy still provides coverage if you suffer a loss at the workplace:
\$10,000 for accidental death or major dismemberment
\$5,000 for partial dismemberment

4. Is there a maximum payout?

Yes. The maximum total payout for all claims resulting from a single captivity event is \$2,000,000.

5. Can you designate a beneficiary for this policy?

The insured has the right to name a beneficiary. The beneficiary must be someone other than the group policyholder (OCSEA). A **designation of beneficiary form** may be requested from Pearl Insurance.

6. How do I submit a claim under this policy?

Contact Pearl Insurance and a Claims Examiner will walk you through the process. **Designation of Beneficiary Forms** and **Workplace Security Claim Forms** may be obtained from:

Pearl Insurance Attn.: OCSEA Workplace Security Claims
13 Airline Drive | Albany, NY 12205 | P: 800.859.2552

Celebration of Leadership

OCSEA Honors Ron Alexander and Joe Wing



Ron Alexander (center right) honored by Ohio's union powerhouses and family.

Scan QR code to watch video highlights



Joe Wing accepts the Jean Fightmaster Leadership Award at the 36th Biennial Convention.

Scan QR code to watch video highlights



HONORING RON ALEXANDER

If former OCSEA President **Ron Alexander** thought he was going to have a quiet week at the 36th Biennial Convention, he was in for a big surprise. A Celebration of Leadership had been kept secret from him until the second day of the convention. That's when he discovered Ohio's top labor leaders would be honoring him for his decades of union leadership.

Among the leaders in attendance was Ohio AFL-CIO President **Tim Burga**, who shared that his family has known Alexander for many years, as they grew up in the same small town in Eastern Ohio. Alexander played quarterback for the high school football team, and his family owned the local grocery store. "He took small town values and had big-time ideas and he put those big-time ideas into action with real results to help people bargain for a better life and get ahead," President Burga said.

Burga was joined at the celebration by OAPSE Executive Director **Joe Rugola**, AFSCME Council 8 President **Sean Grayson** and former Council 8 President **John Lyall**. Lyall called Alexander a "true trade unionist" and credited his leadership for strengthening the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS).

"Ron took a lot of time and energy to foster and mentor me. He's the only reason I'm here today because of the things he taught me along the way," OCSEA President **Chris Mabe** told the convention delegates. Alexander fought to pass Ohio's collective bargaining law in the 1980's, negotiated the first state contract and served as OCSEA's President for 24 years. "Few, if any, have contributed more to the success of OCSEA than a man I consider a mentor and a close friend," President Mabe added.

To honor Alexander for his lifetime of achievement, the OCSEA Board of Directors voted unanimously to name the union's headquarters in Westerville the Ronald C. Alexander

Union Hall. Alexander considers the construction of the hall to be one of the biggest accomplishments of his presidency.

"I want to thank everyone for participating in this celebration and I want to thank the board for naming the building after me," Alexander said. "We have come a long way and I'm so proud of this building. I don't know how many times I've told Chris how proud I am that when I left we had a building that was a house of labor."

JEAN FIGHTMASTER AWARD

The final day of the convention featured another powerful tribute to leadership with the presentation of the first-ever **Jean Fightmaster Leadership Award to Joe Wing**, who has been a member of OCSEA for 48 years. The award is named after the longtime union activist who passed way in 2023 and was highly respected for her unwavering commitment to worker's rights. Jean Fightmaster held many leadership roles with OCSEA including a term as Vice President, and the award is given to the member who best exemplifies Jean's leadership, advocacy and dedication to the union.

"This is special to me because I worked along with Jean when I first ran for the Board of Directors, I was on a ticket with her, and I learned a lot from her," Wing said in accepting the honor. "I am real honored by this award."

ODOT Chapter President **Donita Weatherspoon** nominated Wing for the award, saying she could not think of a more deserving winner. In her nominating letter, Donita said, "Joe Wing is the union in every aspect of his life." Wing has served OCSEA as a steward, chapter treasurer and member of the state Board of Directors, in addition to the countless hours he has volunteered for union causes.

Congratulations to Ron and Joe! The members of OCSEA are grateful for your leadership and service to our union. □

Corrections sisters help union 'family' members in need

“Corrections means family,” said Correction Officer **Kate Newman**, an activist and union executive board member with Ross Correctional Chapter 7130. That’s why she has joined forces with OCSEA union sister **Erinn Cottrill** from Chillicothe Correctional Chapter 7120, an activist and steward for her chapter. The duo is continually working in concert to help give back to corrections union brothers and sisters during their times of need.

Both Kate and Erinn were honored at the OCSEA 36th Biennial Convention in August, each receiving the union’s highest charitable-giving award, the **Bob White Labor Gives Back Award**.

“We must do everything we can to take care of each other,” said Kate who wants to bring back what she feels is an eroding ‘family’ dynamic among staff within the state prison system. Kate says she grew up knowing this family dynamic firsthand and hopes to revive it little by little by urging co-workers and chapter members to always be at the ready to step up for those in need.

If you attended this year’s OCSEA Steward Conference in June, you might have met Kate and Erinn. They organized a basket raffle at the conference to raise funds for corrections members and families, using more than \$1,000 of their own personal funds for the basket items. The proceeds were split between two officers assaulted earlier this year at Trumbull Correctional and to help the daughter of a Chillicothe Correctional member attend an educational trip after losing her mother to cancer.

After Officer **Jessica Dills** and Officer **Kalya Ann Neely**

were brutally assaulted in March at Trumbull Correctional, Kate and Erinn wanted to help their union sisters get back on their feet. While they knew that money couldn’t heal the emotional scars that come with being assaulted on the job, they wanted to make sure that their union sisters knew that they are not alone.

The funds also helped pay for a National Junior Honor Society trip to Washington D.C. for Chillicothe Correctional dependent **Autumn Mullineaux**. “Autumn recently lost her mom to cancer and is now navigating life without her,” said Erinn, who couldn’t let this opportunity pass this young student by. Autumn, a student at Southeastern Middle School in Ross County, is the daughter of CCI Metal Shop brother **Michael Mullineaux**. “The most memorable take-away from the trip wasn’t the souvenirs or the places visited,” said Erinn. “This young lady made new friends from all different places with different thoughts and views, and that’s priceless,” she said.

And the goodwill doesn’t stop there. The two union sisters also initiated an impromptu pass the hat at this year’s Women’s Conference, raising over \$600 for CCI Chapter 7120 brother Sgt. **Michael Hire** who underwent a heart transplant and rehab. “Wherever there’s a correction family member in need, we’ll be there,” said Erinn. We bet you’re going to see a lot more of their goodwill in the future. □



Erinn Cottrill (above) and Kate Newman (below) receive the Bob White Labor Gives Back Award at the OCSEA Convention in August.



Kate and Erinn hold a raffle at the 2025 Steward Conference. Proceeds went to members in need.



Trip of a lifetime!

Autumn Mullineaux, daughter of OCSEA member Michael Mullineaux, has a blast on her trip to Washington D.C.

Do you know a member who is giving back in their workplace or community?
Tell their story at laborgivesback@ocsea.org.



Celebrating public skill, precision at ODOT Director's Cup Rodeo



Cuyahoga Chap. 1804 members Carl "Cowboy" Schuchman and David McKenzie at the 2025 ODOT Director's Cup Rodeo.

The public may not always recognize it, but OCSEA members who work for the Ohio Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) have some serious skills! This is notably the case when it comes to using the equipment that ensures our public roadways are well-tended, safe, clear of debris and snow, and just looking great as a whole. (And, yes, we've seen the roads in neighboring states, and we think Ohio's are a cut above the rest!)

That's why the annual ODOT Director's Cup Rodeo is so important. The event, held in conjunction with the Team Up ODOT expo on excellence and innovation, spotlights the amazing skills of Ohio's public ODOT plow truck and loader operators.

Skilled drivers from ODOT districts around Ohio come together to compete for the top skill awards in the two categories.

ODOT Rodeos are more than just a fun test of abilities; these equipment contests show our communities how truly skilled our union brothers and sisters are at the work they do. "We know that the very best are taking care of our roadways. I'm just so proud of them and the good public work they do all over Ohio, from our river valleys to our lake fronts and every point in between," said OCSEA/ODOT Assembly President **Sabrina Condo**.

When interviewed about the competition, union brothers and Highway Technicians **David McKenzie** and **Carl "Cowboy" Schuchman** were over the moon about being able to show off their skills. The men work out of ODOT District 12's Warrensville yard in the Cleveland area and are members of Cuyahoga ODOT Chapter 1804.

David, an HT 1, has been with ODOT just over a year, and said, "The Rodeo, to me, means accomplishment. You try to be the best-of-the-best and compete against the best-of-the-best."

"The Rodeo to me is a fun experience, teaches you a lot about the road and plowing," said Carl, who works on the guardrail crew as an HT 2. He pumps up the event year-round in his yard, and says his favorite part is having co-workers cheer him on and cheering them on as well.

As is the case every year in August, the top three winners in each category were honored by the OCSEA/ODOT Assembly with a trophy and a monetary prize! Congrats to the winners and all who participated from each district. □

TRUCK

- 1ST | Mark Geiser**
ODOT Dist. 3 - Wayne Chapter 8500
- 2ND | Dakota Gentile**
ODOT Dist. 4 - Mahoning Chapter 5000
- 3RD | Justin Shonkwiler**
ODOT Dist. 6 - Delaware Chapter 2100

LOADER

- 1ST | Kurt Krisher**
ODOT Dist. 2 - Northwest Chapter 3510
- 2ND | Brad Burden**
ODOT Dist. 7 - MAD Chapter 5410
- 3RD | Ricky Bond**
ODOT Dist. 3 - Richland Chapter 7000

2025 ROADEO WINNERS



OCSEA activist takes an educational journey with the Union Education Trust



Angela Walls
Chapter 2599 - ODJFS

For OCSEA union activist **Angela Walls**, life has been an amazing educational journey, and the Union Education Trust (UET) has helped make it a reality, she says.

Angela's love for learning has been a constant, but "life, as it does, sometimes gets in the way," she says.

"At one point in my life it was hard to admit that I never graduated high school," said Angela who became pregnant with her first child when she was just eighteen.

"In 1983, I remember sitting there in the stands on commencement day, with my baby in my arms, watching my closest friends and family walk the stage to receive their high school diplomas. And I remember how it brought me sadness because I should have been walking along with them," she reflects. "So, I made a promise to myself and to my children that I would never stop pursuing my education, and that I was going to get my GED." After marriage, and three children later, Angela went back, in her late thirties, to earn her GED in 2002.

It was that leap that led her to working at the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority for seven years and then from there, she landed a position in state public service, she says. Angela started as an intermittent in 2010 as a Customer Service Representative (CSR) with the Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services in Unemployment Insurance. She has been dedicated to public service ever since. She then landed on a career in the Ohio Dept. of Medicaid, formerly a part of ODJFS until 2014.

Angela currently works as an Administrative Professional 3 in the Medicaid's Bureau of Provider Services and Support. The Bureau collaborates directly with providers on issues pertaining to nursing care facilities admissions and withdrawals and movements to those facilities. In fact, her current career is what has helped her home in on her career goals and pushed her on her most recent educational journey.

When Angela came to state service, not only did she discover the power of what it means to be a union member, she also discovered her UET benefits. It was those union-negotiated benefits that helped her set her sights high. She has since acquired her associate and a bachelor's degrees, a dream come true for Angela. In fact, just this past April 28, she received her bachelor's in business administration degree with an emphasis in health care management. She proudly graduated with honors, she said.

"I chose health care management as my concentration, because I currently work for Medicaid. I hope it will open doors for me where I can continue to build upon and apply knowledge of the healthcare industry and financial stability. I'm always looking to apply for anything that comes open," said Angela who hopes to continue her journey in the Office of Medicaid.

Angela also says that being a union activist has been a great educational journey. She currently serves as an executive board member and steward for ODJFS Chapter 2599. She says her staff representative and chapter leaders inspired her and encouraged her to take training, learn the contract and be a voice for her co-workers.

"I want to be that person that our members can come to and talk to. I want to help, not only myself, but the people I work with," said Angela, who has taken basic and advanced steward trainings. She enjoys networking at OCSEA conferences and learning from other public employee union members across the state. She is also proud to tell any member about her own educational journey, from college to the union, and how the UET benefits, up to \$8,000 every year, are available for their own journey.

Angela says she wants her educational journey to be her legacy, which began as a positive role model for her three children and now for her five grandchildren. "I have granddaughters now, and I want them to be proud to say, 'Nana has a college degree!'"

When asked if her grown children are proud of her accomplishments, she emphatically said, "Oh yes. Yes! My kids are very much!"

"I've always told them, whatever you put your mind on, don't give up, don't give up on your dreams," said Angela. □

Read more UET profiles at
UEdTrust.org

SCAN THE QR CODE TO
VISIT THE WEBSITE NOW



CONGRATULATIONS LES BEST SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

OCSEA is excited to announce the recipients of the **2025 OCSEA Les Best Scholarships**. Ten awards were given in the Dependents' College, Members' College and Spouses' College categories as well as two book scholarships for the member winners.

OCSEA's Les Best Scholarship program awards a total of \$12,000 in scholarships each year to OCSEA members, their dependents and spouses. An additional \$250 is also awarded to two members through the Pat Callanan-Castro Book Scholarship.

Applicants are encouraged to reapply yearly, as Les Best Scholarship recipients are eligible to win up to three total awards during their educational journey. **The application window runs from January 1 through April 30 each year.** See the winners on the next page and check out the member spotlight below.

Learn more at OCSEA.org/LesBest

SCHOLARSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Alicia Perkins, ODOT Chapter 5700 - Montgomery

2025 Third-Time Member Winner



Les Best Scholarship winner Alicia Perkins says her children are her "why." Her family is pictured above.

Alicia Perkins, an ODOT Highway Technician 3 and a member of Montgomery Chapter 5700, has always had an interest in the medical field. She worked in EMS and fire for 13 years before she began working for ODOT, and is now on the path to become a Registered Nurse.

Not only is she a full-time state employee, but according to Alicia's Nursing instructor at Clark State College, her evening nursing program is "equivalent to having a second full-time job." Moreover, Alicia is a single parent to four children. She also finds time to serve her chapter as a union steward!

While juggling all of these responsibilities, Alicia says she made the Dean's List last semester for the second time in her college career. "It's a huge accomplishment for me considering I also have to help my kids with their homework," she said. Alicia's oldest child is a freshman in high school, and her youngest is still in diapers. "It can be crazy at night between taking care of my kids and working on school work, but I want them to know that I worked really hard and that you're never too old to go to school," said Alicia.

When asked what advice she would give to a full-time employee and parent considering going back to school, she said, "What is your 'why?' That was one of the big things with nursing school. And my response to that is my kids. My kids are the reason that I'm here. I just want to provide them a life that's better than what I grew up with."

"The scholarship program and the **Union Education Trust** has taken almost all of the financial burden away from me. Without that, I wouldn't be able to go to school," she said. Alicia is on track to finish nursing school and become an RN in May of next year. She will be the second in her family to earn a degree. "Without the support of the union, I would not have had this opportunity, and for that, I am forever grateful," she said. □

DEPENDENT CATEGORY WINNERS



Neil Nair

Neil is the child of **Nisha Nair**, a member with Bureau of Workers Compensation Chapter 2535. He is majoring in Computer Science & Engineering with a minor in Business at The Ohio State University.



Haley Bennage

Haley is studying Nursing at The Ohio State University. She is the child of **Jennifer Bennage**, an OCSEA member at the Ohio EPA Twinsburg Chapter 7760.



Sujan Sriram

Sujan, a second-time winner, is the dependent of **Haripriya Sriram**, a member of Taxation Chapter 2595. Sujan is attending the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, studying Applied Mathematics.



Mia Bella Jones

Mia is the child of **Michelle Postiy**, a member of Summit Chapter 7700 and an employee at the Bureau of Environmental Health & Radiation Protection. Mia is studying Radiology at The Ohio State University.



Karlie Kistler

Karlie is studying Finance & Business Analytics at Ohio University. She is the child of **Kimberly Kistler**, a Hearing Officer with the Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services and member of Cuyahoga County ODJFS Chapter 1805.



Sreeja Kommera

Sreeja is the child of **Praveen Kommera**, a member of Dept. of Administrative Services Chapter 2570. Sreeja is studying Pre-Med/Neuroscience with a minor in Business at The Ohio State University.

SPOUSE CATEGORY WINNERS



Dromo Ako-Nai

Dromo is the spouse of **Kyei Baffour Tenkorang**, a Sourcing Analyst with the Ohio Adjutant General's and member of Franklin Chapter 2500. Dromo is studying Information Security Management at the University of Denver.



Lynn Smith

Lynn is the spouse of **Mark Smith**, a Maintenance Repair Worker with the Dept. of Youth Services in Indian River Chapter 7660. Lynn is studying Herbalism at the International Quantum University.

MEMBER CATEGORY WINNERS



LaKeisha Ballard Denham

LaKeisha is the second 2025 Les Best Scholarship Member winner (see Alicia's story on the opposite page). She is studying Business Administration and Agriculture at Kentucky State University.

MORE EDUCATION RESOURCES



Scan QR Code to apply to the
2026 Union Plus Scholarship
(Members, Spouses, & Dependents)



Scan QR Code to apply to the
2026 AFSCME Family Scholarship
(Graduating High School Seniors Only)

Subordinate Body Meeting & Election Notices

ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
BWC Assembly	Dec. 6, 2025 - Eboard 9:30 a.m.; Mtg 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	OCSEA - Room 188, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082
MHAS/DODD/OVH Assembly	Nov. 14, 2025 - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	OCSEA Union Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082
ODNR Assembly	Dec. 6, 2025 - Eboard 9 a.m.; Mtg 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	OCSEA - Room 195, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082
ODOT Assembly	Nov. 22, 2025 - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	OCSEA Union Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville, OH 43082
OOD Assembly	Nov. 19, 2025 - 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Virtual: Contact assem-bly.ood@gmail.com to request access link.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
District 1	Nov. 1, 2025 - 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.	IBEW, 1975 North West St., Lima, OH 45804
District 2	Nov. 12, 2025 - 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.	Dingle House; 9102 W Chester Towne Centre Rd, West Chester Town-

CHAPTER MEETINGS

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
Chapter 200	Dec. 2, 2025 - 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.	IBEW 32, 1975 North West St., Lima, OH 45801
Chapter 2535	Dec. 10, 2025 - Noon - 1 p.m.	Virtual: Contact myank@ocsea.org to request meeting link.
Chapter 2580	Dec. 10, 2025 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Virtual Meeting: Contact ljennings2@att.net to request meeting link.
Chapter 3510	Dec. 17, 2025 - Eboard 6:30 p.m.; Mtg 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.	VFW Hall, 1133 N. Ottokee St., Wauseon, OH 43567
Chapter 5000	Nov. 10, 2025 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Cocca's Canfield, 5193 S Canfield-Niles Rd., Canfield, OH 44406
Chapter 5410	Nov. 3, 2025 - 5 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.	Korner Kafe, 7995 OH-119, Maria Stein, OH 45860

CHAPTER MEETINGS cont.

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
Chapter 7600	Nov. 10 Election (See election section for full details) & Dec. 8, 2025 - 6 p.m. - 7 p.m.	VFW, 1935 Avalon Ave., NE Canton, OH 44705
Chapter 8700	Nov. 18, 2025 - 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Home 2 Suites, 1630 E. Wooster St., Bowling Green, OH 43402

SUBORDINATE BODY ELECTIONS

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
Chapter 7330	Nominations: Feb. 4, 2026 4:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Elections: Feb. 10, 2026 - 4:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Run-offs: Feb. 17, 2026 - 4:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	LOCATION: Chapter Union Office - B-Building Lobby, 1724 SR 728, Lucasville, OH 45648 POSITIONS TO BE ELECTED: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Executive Board (6), District 9 Delegate (1), District 9 Alternate (1), Corrections Assembly Delegate (1); Corrections Assembly Alternate (1); & Shawnee Labor Council Delegate (1)
Chapter 7600	Nov. 10, 2025 - Nominations: 6 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.; Elections: 6:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.; Run Offs: 6:30 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.	LOCATION: VFW 1935 Avalon Ave. NE Canton, OH 44705 POSITIONS TO BE ELECTED: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary & Executive Board (3)

OCSEA Magazine Notice Deadlines:

Winter 2026 2025: Deadline: January 12, 2026
Elections must be held on or after March 16, 2026

Spring 2026: Deadline: March 30, 2026
Election must be held on or after June 1, 2026

Fall 2026: Deadline: Sept. 14, 2026
Election must be held on or after Nov. 19, 2026

Constitutional Requirements for Elections

OCSEA Subordinate Body Constitution Article VI, Section 3 states: "All active members shall be notified of the nominations and election by mail at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of the nominations and election meeting(s). The notice shall include a set date, time, and location for any potential run-offs."

Alberta Street Chap. 2575 leaders Aubrey Fetherolf (Pres.), Rebecca Combs (Sec.-Treas.), Bryan Collins (E-Board and steward) and Darius Johnson (steward) know the importance of the voluntary political action fund AFSCME PEOPLE!



What is PEOPLE?

As public employees, our **wages, benefits and working conditions** are in the hands of politicians.

Through AFSCME PEOPLE, the voluntary political action fund (PAC), union members help support candidates who stand for **strong contracts, no outsourcing, affordable health care, retirement security, and no cuts to vital public services!**

Scan the QR code below to learn how to **become an AFSCME PEOPLE MVP!**



The members of **Alberta Street Chapter 2575** understand the value of AFSCME PEOPLE. President Aubrey Fetherolf said, "We're a **small but mighty** group, and even the smaller chapters play a powerful role in supporting our union brothers & sisters. We may fly under the radar, but we show up with **heart, pride, and purpose.**"

“PEOPLE helps elect and support lawmakers who will **stand with us, speak for us, & fight for our rights** on the job.”

—AUBREY FETHEROLF, CHAPTER 2575 PRESIDENT

When asked what she would say to a member who was unsure about giving to PEOPLE, Aubrey said, "With all the misinformation out there—and groups like the Freedom Foundation actively trying to **dismantle our union one member at a time—we can't afford to sit back.** If we don't show up in those legislative spaces, someone else will—and they may not be on our side."

“Even a small contribution makes a **big difference** when we all come together. It's really an **investment in ourselves & each other.**”

—REBECCA COMBS, CHAPTER 2575 SECRETARY-TREASURER

SCAN QR CODE OR VISIT

ocsea.org/PEOPLE

No union dues are used to fund the AFSCME PEOPLE PAC. Donations are 100% voluntary.



Ohio Civil Service
Employees Association

390 WORTHINGTON ROAD, STE. A
WESTERVILLE, OH 43082-8331



41

OCSEA

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE QUARTERLY | FALL 2025

FEATURE STORIES



2

SOLIDARITY IS OUR STRENGTH

OCSEA 36th Biennial Convention Recap



4

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Salt Fork Naturalist Leaves a Big Footprint



8

CELEBRATION OF LEADERSHIP

OCSEA Honors Ron Alexander & Joe Wing



9

LABOR GIVES BACK

Corrections Sisters Help Members in Need



10

ODOT DIRECTOR'S CUP ROADEO

Celebrating Skill & Precision of Members



11

UNION EDUCATION TRUST SPOTLIGHT

OCSEA Activist Takes an Educational Journey



6

PRES. CHRIS MABE

Why Leadership Matters

7

NEW MEMBER-ONLY BENEFIT

12

2025 LES BEST SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS