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PUBLIC EMPLOYEE QUARTERLY AFSCME LOCAL 11/AFL-CIO
Volume 81, No. 1 • Winter 2024



REACHING

NEW HEIGHTS

IN PUBLIC SERVICE



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MORE ON P. 13 →

ODOT union member takes 4,000-foot view

Jack Csokmay, a Geographic Information Management System Specialist 2 in the Ohio Dept. of Transportation Central Office, has been with the agency three years now. He didn't know when he took the job what he was really in for.

"When I first walked into the interview, I was expecting it to be about making maps of some sort for ODOT," said Jack, who has a degree in geography and prior experience in mapmaking.

But there was one bullet point on the application that he thought was a little strange. "The application said something like, the applicant should be willing to hop on an airplane," he said. "It was just one bullet point. I thought it was just anecdotal. And then they asked me: 'Do you get airsick?' And I told them 'no,'" he laughs at the memory. And the rest is history.

Turns out Jack's job is indeed map making, but from a 4,000-foot view in a Cessna or a helicopter. "I had no idea when I took the job that it was basically as an aerial photographer," said Jack. "I love it!"

His typical day is far from typical. An ODOT pilot

from the Don Scott airfield in Columbus will call him and let him know they're going to have good weather. That's when Jack jumps into action. He will have already laid out a flight plan and a corridor base that they'll be flying over and photographing. It could be a large area involving major intersections and highways or it could just be a slip on a hill, based on the needs of the agency.

He sets up a laser scanner and camera called a LIDAR. "It's like sonar or radar but for light," he explains. And then computer software helps time the photos to take. "Once we are over the target area, the camera kicks on and starts to take photos. It's automated. In the air, I have to make sure the camera is firing," he said. Once he is done with the images, that's when a lot of Jack's work begins.

After the images are complete, Jack then stitches them together to make one large photograph. And then he starts building 3-D models, called terrain models. It is these terrain models that are then delivered to ODOT districts where they are shared with project managers, surveyors and others involved with infrastructure planning.

He says his biggest challenge is just the sheer wealth of information and understanding the big picture. In fact, Jack

is back in school to learn even more, taking classes in surveying at Columbus State Community College using his Union Education Trust (UET) funds. "I'm pursuing a certification, to get some more experience under my belt and just to learn more," he said.

He says his favorite part about the job is flying around and seeing Ohio from 4,000 feet. "It's important work, but it's fun, too. It's not everybody who can say that," said Jack. "Also, just all the kinds of opportunities I've had, partly from ODOT but partly from the union, too."

In December, Jack visited OCSEA's downtown Solidarity Headquarters to show support for the OCSEA Bargaining Team. He said he did it because he wants to get more involved with the union and because he realizes the power that members fighting together can

have. "Over the last few years, I became more aware of the value of labor and who gets things done. I've noticed that unions get things done," said Jack.

Now, armed with information about his union, he's starting to reach out to members in his chapter about things that are happening, and things folks should care about.

"The driving moment came when state legislators were trying to mandate working from the office, instead of a hybrid schedule," he said. "That drove me to action. I got my coworkers and relatives to take action, even my gym buddies," he said. Now his colleagues look to him for updates. "They call me Union Jack sometimes," he chuckled. □



JACK CSOKMAY | ODOT Chapter 2513



Jack Csokmay, ODOT Central Office, is an aerial photographer and often calls this Cessna his "office."

THE DANGERS OF BEING A WINTER ROAD WARRIOR:

HELP KEEP OUR ODOT MEMBERS SAFE!

The start of the New Year has been a rough one for our brothers and sisters at the Ohio Dept. of Transportation who work around the clock to keep our roads clear and safe in inclement weather. As of this writing, sixteen (yes, 16!) ODOT snowplows have been hit since the start of 2024. And, sadly, that number is likely to rise after this story is written.

“We’ve always known the dangers associated with ODOT members working on our highways, no matter the season. But a rise in technology at our fingertips is increasing those dangers,” says **Omar Parker**, a Highway Technician 2 and Vice President of Cuyahoga Highway ODOT Chapter 1804.

Recently, Omar got the scare of his life when his snowplow was hit in the middle of the day on a Sunday alongside I-90 in Cleveland. Traffic and dashboard cams captured the moment when a distracted driver veered into Omar’s stopped truck, hitting his plow, jolting his truck, and sending the driver into the far-right berm. Neither the driver, passenger nor Omar were gravely injured, thankfully, but Omar says it was the scariest job-related accident he’s ever experienced. “I seriously thought my truck was going to flip over,” said Omar, who went to the ER with a bruised left arm. The driver has since been cited and could face Move Over Law violations.

Despite there being a Browns game that day, there was low traffic and clear visibility, said Omar. “There was no reason this had to

happen, other than the driver being totally distracted,” he said. “I’ve been with ODOT for 20

plus years, but in the last 5-10 years, and people being distracted with their devices, it’s a whole different ball game. People are so addicted, they just have to see a social media post or have to respond to a text right then and there. That’s just crazy to me,” he said.

“I do a lot of traffic control, lane closures, and I see so many distracted drivers all the time, with phones in their hands. That’s the new way of driving. It’s an epidemic,” he said.

Events like Omar’s have made him shell shocked, saying the thought of getting out of his truck to pick up debris, like a blown tire, is just too much of a risk for him. “Not even my huge truck is intimidating enough to deter drivers,” he said.

“Just like the ODOT campaigns say, everyone is somebody’s family out here. Everybody’s trying to make it home. “We’ve all got to do our part to be mindful,” said Omar.

Let’s do our part to keep our ODOT members safe. Follow these tips to keep them safe:



OMAR PARKER
VICE PRESIDENT, ODOT CHAPTER 1804



ODOT documents damage to a snow plow done by a distracted driver.



A distracted driver crashes into an ODOT snow plow.

DON'T CROWD THE PLOW:

- Don't follow too closely behind a snowplow – stay at least **200 feet** behind it.
- **Never** pass a snowplow on the right.
- **Never** drive through a snow cloud.
- Be aware of the driver's **blind spots**.

AVOID DISTRACTED DRIVING:

- **NEVER** text while driving.
- **Turn your phone off** or switch to **silent mode** before you get in the car.
- Refrain from **smoking, eating, drinking, reading, switching the radio** or **any other activity** that takes your mind and eyes off the road.
- **Pull over** if you need to make a call or are distracted by something in your car.
- **NEVER** drive while tired or drowsy.
- **Plan ahead** to know where you're going and be familiar with directions before leaving.

SLOW DOWN AND MOVE OVER:

- Immediately **slow down** and **move over a lane** when you see **ANY** flashing lights.
- If you can't move over safely, **SLOW down** with caution.
- **Be aware** of your surroundings at all times.
- **Avoid fines, save a life. Slow Down, Move Over is the LAW!**

EPA member cherishes benefits of being union



KIM GADDIS
Ohio EPA Chapter 2528



Union Education Trust

“I’m a lifelong learner,” said **Kim Gaddis**, an OCSEA member and Senior Financial Analyst with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. That’s why she says she’s so glad to be a union member, for so many reasons, but definitely because of the union’s commitment to continuing education.

Kim has only been a state union member for five years but says OCSEA’s educational benefit program, the Union Education Trust (UET), has already made such an impact on her life. “I didn’t start with the State until later in life,” said Kim. But she says she’s making up for it by taking full advantage of the union’s negotiated educational benefits. The UET’s continuing education stipend—\$4,000 every year per member through the UET Career Improvement Program—has been a blessing, says Kim. This is especially true as she pursues her biggest career goal to date: A master’s degree.

Kim began her state career in 2018 with the Ohio Dept. of Developmental Disabilities but changed course four years later by applying to the Ohio EPA’s Division of Surface Water. She’s been with the environmental protection agency for just over a year now.

She came into public service well-equipped with a double degree in business administration and accounting from Muskingum University located near her home of Zanesville. But she always knew she wanted more, especially as a single mother with one grown son and one teen-aged daughter still at home. “Anything I’ve wanted for my kids or myself I’ve always had to provide on my own,” said Kim. She says the union’s educational benefits have helped remove some of that burden.

Using her annual UET stipend, Kim is about to complete the Master of Business Administration online program through Western Governors University and couldn’t be more proud. Her family is proud of her too! “I only have four classes until I’m done. I’m hoping to graduate in the Spring,” said Kim, beaming. Pursuing an MBA will not only open doors for her career, she says, but will mean continued security for her family.

“I’ve told so many other union members: you’ve got to use this free education money! Use it for computer classes. Use it for Excel. Use it for Access. Use it for whatever. Just use it! It doesn’t hurt anyone to use it, ever. Especially, lifelong learners like me,” she jokes. And she reminds them that being union is what makes this and so much more a reality!

“Mainly to me, being union means protection. And it means getting paid a fair wage,” said Kim. “I’ve worked in both the private and public sectors, and I would pick public employment every time. Being a public union member provides stability and safeguards, like you know you’re going to be taken care of. I know that I have a voice and others fighting for me and with me to be treated the right way,” she said.

Kim says she’s also come to learn as a union member, that she has a responsibility to be vocal, not only about the benefits but also about the real issues that impact state employees. That includes being a voice for the benefits of workplace flexibility and remote/hybrid work that allow her to serve Ohio and also stay and grow in her smalltown community.

Post-COVID, Kim works a hybrid weekly schedule. This has offered flexibility and allowed her to maintain residence in Zanesville, where she is raising her daughter. “Zanesville is where my family is, where my daughter is comfortable, and where our support systems are,” said Kim, who spoke of local resources she and her special needs teen have come to rely upon.

When telework was threatened by the Ohio General Assembly last year, Kim stepped outside of her comfort zone and spoke out about the impact on her life. “I don’t normally get involved in reaching out to legislators. I don’t always feel comfortable reaching out. That’s why I’m in finance,” she laughed. “But I just knew I had to take a stand on this issue, for me and my family.” □

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *Science meets public service*

KYLE BIANCO | ODH Chapter 2560

Kyle Bianco is a Registered Environmental Health Specialist 2 with the Ohio Dept. of Health and got his bachelor's degree in Human Nutrition and Community Health. He initially thought he was destined for a medical field. He never dreamed he'd be working in the "sewage" business instead, he laughs.

"I thought I was going to be a doctor when I started my degree in biomedical research," said Kyle, for whom math and sciences were always a passion. "I was even thinking I would do some kind of sports training," he said. But plans changed.

Kyle got his first job out of college as a regional manager for ten gas stations, hardly a job in his field. But then a friend helped him get in the

door at the Ross County Health Department. That's when he figured out how he could marry his science background to public service. "From then on, I knew public service was the career for me," he beamed.

Now with the ODH, Kyle has a big job overseeing and monitoring residential sewage and water systems throughout Ohio. The program is under the Bureau of Environmental Health and Radiation Protection, which is also in charge of monitoring campgrounds, pools, and other private and public water systems.

Kyle is one of just three employees in the entire state who provide technical assistance to county and government health districts, industry and the public on maintaining domestic and small-flow sewage systems. It keeps him very busy.

On any given day, Kyle will be speaking in front of a crowd of 100 Wastewater Association members

"I didn't see myself in this field... But I do like helping people and making a difference. I believe in public service."

about new regulations; or pouring over plans for a proprietary sewage system; or chatting with a homeowner about how to maintain their septic tank. "We wear lots of hats on this job," he explained.

"It was baptism by fire, really. I didn't see myself in this field," he said. "But I do like helping people and making a difference. I believe in public service," he added.

He runs into the occasional challenge when he has a homeowner on a fixed or single income who can't afford to upgrade an old system. "Sometimes it's difficult to explain to the public why we need regulations, why an upgrade must be made. Those are difficult conversations, at times," he said.

"But when you get to work with those homeowners and progress is being made—water quality is improving, algal blooms are being mitigated, homeowners are given options—that's what I enjoy," he said. "I also like the training aspect of the job," Kyle said, who spends part of his time educating groups

about state regulations and best practices.

Kyle also says being able to do some telework was a game changer for him. "I 100 percent appreciate the union benefits," he said. "My wife is a nurse in the private sector, and looking at what we save on health care is great. I also like the 'teeth' in the contract that gives me flexibility," he said.

Kyle says he appreciates the transparency that a union can bring to the job and likes that his staff representative regularly reaches out and keeps him informed about what's going on. Kyle is hoping to get more invested with his union and plans on taking a steward training in the near future. □

THE TALE OF TWO BARGAINING TEAMS

CHRISTOPHER MABE, OCSEA President



tract language like health care, work schedules (pick-a-post and work area agreements) for institutions, the number and hours of temporary employees and so much more.

But at the end of the day, the union team is holding strong. And while I can't predict the outcome of bargaining at this stage of the game, the union team is going to the mat on the economic issues that were so important in the member surveys. We know our members don't get into public service to get rich, but they sure deserve fair wages and compensation. And that's what your union team continues to focus on in these last weeks of negotiations.

Mediation is the second step in the bargaining process, which means a third-party mediator is in the room with the bargaining teams in February to help us resolve differences and to try to come to some agreements. Any issues that don't get resolved, will then be part of a Fact-Finding process.

If that happens, a neutral Fact Finder will hear evidence by both sides and render decisions on articles not yet agreed to. Fact Finding is always the last resort and can be a hard pill to swallow since the Fact Finder is limited to rendering decisions only on the proposals both sides bring forward. There's no more back and forth, no grouping of proposals and no give and take. The Fact Finder either sides with management or the union positions, or somewhere in between the two sides.

Union Support Steady

In the wider picture, union support and momentum are holding strong and steady even

though short staffing continues to take a toll in the public sector. In 2023, the AFL-CIO reported an increase of nearly 139,000 union members in the U.S. overall. And that's good news. But will the wins of labor unions in 2023, translate to labor union wins going forward? We believe so.

For one thing, union wages keep going up. A union worker makes nearly \$700 more than a non-union worker per month, or almost \$9,000 per year. That's well over a quarter million dollars in a union member's work lifetime of 30 years. Of course, being a part of a union isn't just about the wages; it's about the whole package: a voice on the job, time to spend with loved ones, health care that's affordable and a secure retirement.

Secondly, we have massive public support behind us. Overall, union support went up again last year, according to a Gallup poll, and now stands at over 71 percent. That's huge!

For bargaining, we purchased some big, high-profile billboards downtown for lawmakers and the Governor to see on their way to work. (As you know, our state contract must ultimately be approved by them.) But they're not the only ones seeing our messages of solidarity and union strength. We're getting huge kudos not just from our friends in labor, but from business owners and others in the downtown area who see our signs. That's giving your union team extra steam as we enter the home stretch... knowing there really is union momentum in this country that can't be stopped! □



LOCAL 11 AFL-CIO

Ohio Civil Service Employees Association



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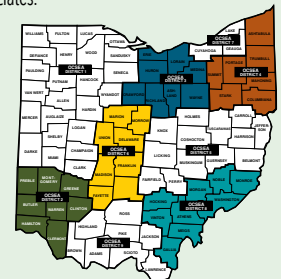
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NEW YEAR NEW CONTRACT

THIS YEAR, I RESOLVE TO:

2024

STAY UPDATED ON BARGAINING.

Keep on top of contract bargaining by visiting [OCSEA.org/bargaining](https://www.ocsea.org/bargaining) and checking your email for bargaining updates. Sign up at [OCSEA.org](https://www.ocsea.org) if you aren't getting bargaining emails. Talk to your chapter leaders about the latest bargaining news including how to vote on the contract. Contract ratification voting is always held on the chapter level.

ATTEND CHAPTER MEETINGS.

Being involved in your union on the local level is essential to building solidarity and union power. Attending chapter meetings helps you get involved and use YOUR skills to grow your workplace and union for the better.

READ THE UNION CONTRACT.

A strong union membership is an informed union membership. This includes understanding the ins and outs of your union contract so you can speak up for yourself and others. Reading the union contract is key to involvement! Ask your chapter about possible union trainings.

TALK TO COWORKERS ABOUT THE POWER OF BEING UNION!

This means talking to union co-workers (and even managers who are willing to listen) about what a union contract means for everyone. A unified voice on the job through a union contract empowers all workers (even non-union), raises wages and benefits for all, and improves working conditions for all workers.



Fighting to Win a **FAIR UNION CONTRACT!**

Your OCSEA Bargaining Team has been going toe-to-toe with State of Ohio management to fight for a fair union contract at the negotiations table since mid-December. The OCSEA State contract expires February 28, 2024 (but is traditionally extended if negotiations go longer.) As of this writing, the union and management teams are heading to mediation to hash out many issues.

Your Bargaining Team, made up of union members just like you from every OCSEA Bargaining Unit, has held steady from the get-go to fight and protect language that are priorities for members: including fair wages, affordable health care and protection of important language that allows members to take care of their families (e.g., sick leave) and have a voice on the job.

Building up state service with attention to recruitment and retention and reminding management of the sacrifices of members has been the Bargaining Team's strategy since Day 1. "Our members deserve to be compensated for the sacrifices they have made and the important contributions they make to our state," said OCSEA President and Chief Negotiator **Chris Mabe**. "This contract is all about restoring respect, dignity and appreciation to OCSEA members who work day-in-and-day-out for the taxpayers of Ohio," he said.

"Management's first moves at the bargaining table hardly hit on the kitchen table issues that members care about," said OCSEA Secretary-Treasurer **Kathy Gersper**. Nor did the State offer incentives that would address recruitment and retention, safety, and chronic understaffing. Management's first shots across the bow, instead, focused on chipping away at contractual rights. This included proposals to eliminate union members' ability to have a say in their work schedules

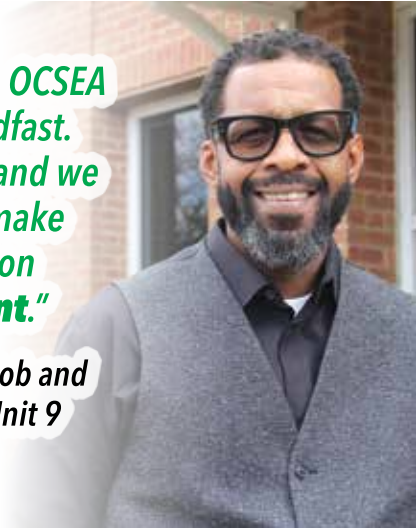
"We've appreciated the support we're getting from union members in every corner of the state. That level of support means everything to us and doesn't go unnoticed,"

- Raymond Harker, Correction Officer, Lorain - Bargaining Unit 3 Negotiations Team member



"Our determination as the OCSEA Negotiations Team is steadfast. We will not back down, and we will fight to the end to make sure our contract delivers on what our members want."

- Damon Neal, Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services - Bargaining Unit 9 Negotiations Team Member



in Corrections (pick-a-post), get rid of the joint labor/management health care committee, increase the hours for intermittents, limit the use of personal leave, and increase the number of contractors.

"Management's proposals fly in the face of what they said was most important, which was to recruit and retain employees," Mabe told members in a December update. "Not only that, but management is trying to chip away at the very foundation of our contract, the items that have built this union and state employment. These are the things that have protected us and kept us safe," he said.

As with any bargaining, the union team's first order of business was to fight off management takeaways and high-risk proposals. "We must protect this 40-year-old document. Our union contract and those who helped build it are sacred. We will not tolerate management taking swipes to take away our rights," said OCSEA Vice President **Rocky Jolly**.

But Jolly says that it is not deterring the Team but making it stronger. "That's what we were elected by the members to do. We can multitask, and these proposed takeaways only help us make our case for a fair contract that our members deserve!" said Jolly.

"Our determination as the OCSEA Negotiations Team is steadfast. We will not back down, and we will fight to the end to make sure our contract delivers on what our members want," said **Damon Neal**, Ohio Dept. of Job and Family Services Bargaining Unit 9 Bargaining Team member.

Looking for member-only bargaining updates? Get them at OCSEA.org/bargaining.

SPREADING THE UNION MESSAGE

Growing visibility and education has been a top priority of the OCSEA Bargaining Team. This includes building awareness about solidarity among our members and reminding our communities of the value of public employees and how a union voice is GOOD for every Ohioan!

PLEDGE CARD DRIVE



Your OCSEA Bargaining Team is excited to show off some of the thousands of Bargaining Pledge Cards that line the walls of the OCSEA Union Hall.

OCSEA's Bargaining Pledge Card Solidarity Drive garnered thousands of paper pledge cards from members in support of the OCSEA Bargaining Team. Led by local chapters, members vowed their tried-and-true support! Those signed paper pledges cover OCSEA's Union Hall walls where negotiations are taking place. "We've appreciated the support we're getting from union members in every corner of the state. I mean, look at the thousands of pledge cards in the room! That level of support is everything to us and doesn't go unnoticed," said Raymond Harker, a Bargaining Team member from Lorain Correctional.

RALLY FOR A FAIR CONTRACT



The Rally for a Fair Contract kicked off bargaining in December. Activists came from every corner of the state to spread the word about their fight for a strong contract and to support their bargaining team.

BILLBOARDS



OCSEA's billboard campaign in downtown Columbus has focused on growing awareness for a fair contract and the value of union public employees. "Thank You" billboards reminded the public that Ohio's public union workers make our communities safe, healthy, and strong. Other billboards hit on "Respect, Dignity, Fairness and Appreciation," 40 years of collective bargaining; and the essential work of union state employees.

LOCAL SOLIDARITY



Organizing on the local level is key to making sure that members—and managers—know why a union voice matters! Solidarity events and actions have helped build union power, increase visibility, and make sure bargaining stays on everyone's minds. During Solidarity Wednesdays, members wore OCSEA attire and took selfies to show support. Chapters have decorated union billboards and union offices, placed posted signs in their work areas and held chapter events to build solidarity.

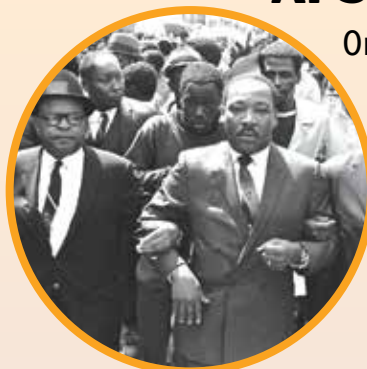
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Throughout U.S. labor history, Black and women workers have played key roles not only in forming unions, but helping secure improved pay, benefits and working conditions even amid ongoing discrimination.



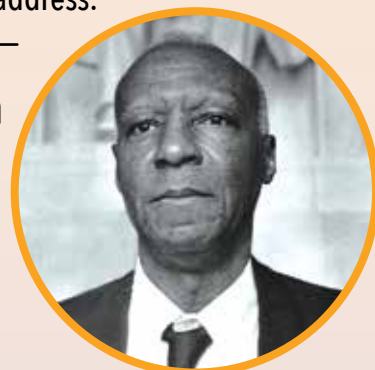
AFSCME Black History

On 1 February 1968, two Memphis garbage collectors, Echol Cole and Robert Walker, were crushed to death by a malfunctioning truck. Eleven days later, 1,300 black men from the Memphis Department of Public Works went on strike. They were members of AFSCME Local 1733. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a key supporter of their movement, was assassinated while in Memphis to help the striking workers after giving his famous "I've been to the Mountaintop" address.



A Philip Randolph

In 1925, trade unionist and labor organizer A. Philip Randolph helped found the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first union of predominantly Black members to receive a charter in the American Federation of Labor.



Bayard Rustin

The labor movement has long stood as an ally to the civil rights movement, often working together, Randolph also played a key role in advancing civil rights, including working with other leaders such as Bayard Rustin to protest discrimination in the defense industries and armed forces.



Dorothy Lee Bolden

Dorothy Lee Bolden led efforts for workers to gain political clout in local governments in Atlanta, including through voter registration drives.



Dora Lee Jones

Dora Lee Jones helped establish the Domestic Workers' Union in Harlem in 1934, which is believed to be a stepping stone in ending the exploitation of Black domestic workers.



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How Discount College Works

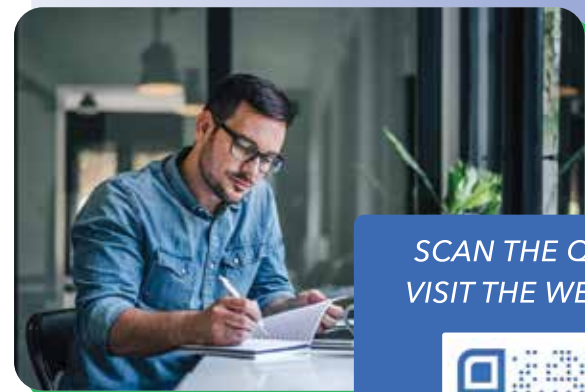
To get started, Request Your Match at the EBS website at ebsunioncollegebenefit.org/OCSEA. Complete a short questionnaire, and you will be matched with an in-network higher education institution that most closely aligns with your interests, experiences, and goals. The EBS discount college institutions currently include Peirce College, Rowan University, Houston Christian University, Claremont-Lincoln University, and Franklin University.

Once you receive your match, an admissions counselor at your matched college or university will reach out to you about next steps in the process. It's that easy!

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Subordinate Body Meeting & Election Notices

ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

MHAS/ DODD/ OVH As- sembly	Meetings: April 19 & May 17 - 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	OCSEA Union Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville OH
ODOT Assembly	Meetings: March 16 & May 18 - 10 a.m.-1 p.m.	OCSEA Union Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville OH
VIRTUAL Public Safety Assembly	May 23 - E-Board: 10a.m.-11 a.m.; Meeting: 11 a.m.-1 p.m.	Contact publicsafety-assembly@gmail.com to request Zoom link.

DISTRICT MEETINGS

District 1	Meeting: May 11 - 10 a.m.-1 p.m.	IBEW, 1975 North West St., Lima
District 2	VIRTUAL Meeting: April 13 - 10 a.m.-12 p.m.	Contact Jonjonnyonny@aol.com to request Zoom link.
District 6	Meetings: April 1 & May 6 - 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.	OCSEA Union Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville
District 8	May 7 - E-Board: 6 p.m.-6:30p.m.; Meeting: 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.	Holiday Inn - Conference Room, 11 E Park Dr., Athens

CHAPTER MEETINGS

Chapter 2500	April 18- E-Board: 6 p.m.-6:30p.m.; Meeting: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.	OCSEA Union Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville
Chapter 2501	June 1 - Member Appreciation Event. Registration begins at 10 a.m. with lunch and more to follow at 11 a.m.	OCSEA Union Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville
Chapter 2503	Meeting: May 20 - 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.	Contact chapter2503@ocsea.org to request Zoom link.
Chapter 2513	VIRTUAL Meeting: April 11 & May 9 - 5 p.m.-6 p.m.	Contact chapter2513@ocsea.org to request Zoom link.
Chapter 3100	VIRTUAL Meeting: May 21 - 6 p.m.-8 p.m.	Contact mjill@cincinnati.com to request Zoom link.

CHAPTER MEETINGS continued.

Chapter 3510	April 17 - E-Board: 6:30 p.m.-7 p.m.; Meeting: 7 p.m.-8 p.m.	VFW Hall, 1133 N. Ottokee St., Wauseon
Chapter 4300	March 18 & May 20 - E-Board: 4 p.m.-4:30p.m.; Meeting: 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Cleats Club Seat Grill, 602 South S (SR 44), Chardon
Chapter 5100	April 10 - E-Board: 4 p.m.-4:30 p.m.; Meeting: 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Morrow County ODOT, 5560 U.S. 42, Mount Gilead
Chapter 5410	HYBRID - May 6 - E-Board: 5 p.m.-5:15 p.m. Meeting 5:15 p.m.-6:15 p.m.	Korner Kafe, 7995 OH-119, Maria Stein
Chapter 5700	March 27, April 24 & May 22 - Dinner: 6 p.m. Meeting: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.	Montgomery JFS - Rm. 292, 1111 Edwin C Moses Blvd., Dayton
Chapter 7010	April 19 - E-Board: 11:30 a.m.-12 p.m.; First Meeting: 12 p.m.-12:45 p.m.; Second Meeting: 2:15 p.m.-3 p.m.	169th USW Hall, 376 W. Longview Ave., Mansfield
Chapter 7760	VIRTUAL Meeting: April 9 - 12 p.m.-12:30 p.m.	Contact Livi.gug@gmail.com to request TEAMS invite.

Magazine Notice Deadlines:

Visit **OCSEA.org/meetingnotices** for deadlines to post subordinate body meeting or election notices in this union magazine.*

Have questions about notices?

Contact **meetingnotices@ocsea.org**.

* Only subordinate body presidents and secretaries have online access to add meeting/election notices. A member-only MyOCSEA account is required.

Need money for college? It's time to apply!

OCSEA's Les Best Scholarship

Dues-paying members, spouses and dependents are eligible!

Since 1989, OCSEA has sponsored the Les Best Scholarship that awards a total of \$12,000 in scholarships to members and their families EVERY YEAR. The scholarship program is exclusively for OCSEA members, and has three categories: **Member, Spouse and Dependent.**

Application and Selection Process

Les Best applications are accepted January 1 through April 30 each year and can be downloaded directly at ocsea.org/lesbest. Each category has its own application and requirements including submitting academic/personal references, providing proof of college acceptance, and writing an essay (Dependent only requirement).

In June, the scholarship selection committee—a group of distinguished third-party judges—will examine and consider all required materials submitted and will award up to 12 scholarships. Each application is scored using a point-based system. To preserve fairness, the judges for the scholarship have no affiliation with OCSEA and have backgrounds in education or labor. Winners are announced on the OCSEA website at [OCSEA.org/lesbest](https://ocsea.org/lesbest) and published in the Fall issue of the OCSEA magazine.

Flexibility for working adults

The Member and Spouse categories are very flexible for working adults, as applicants can attend college full- or part-time. Applicants are eligible for the scholarship as long as they are taking at least one college credit course. Dependents must be enrolled full-time.

Scholarships for college, vocational and apprenticeships

Another way the Les Best Scholarship is unique is that the Dependent scholarship category allows applicants to not only attend accredited colleges, but also to attend vocational schools or union apprenticeships as well. This really opens up eligibility for those not attending a four-year college and recognizes those who choose to enter trade schools and union apprenticeship programs. These programs provide vital training for trades that are in serious need of workers.

Multiple scholarships available

The Les Best Scholarship also allows applicants to win up to three times, and encourages award winners to apply yearly. □



Les Best served as OCSEA President and a member of the OCSEA Board of Directors. The scholarship was named in his honor.

History of the Scholarship

The scholarship is named for Les Best, a former OCSEA President and math teacher at the Ohio Veterans Children's Home. He was dedicated to promoting higher education and training and improving the quality of life for OCSEA members and their children.

\$12,000 in awards!



Download an application at
ocsea.org/LesBest

The deadline to apply is **April 30, 2024**

← SCAN THE QR CODE TO VISIT THE WEBSITE NOW

Members aren't falling for anti-union campaign

Freedom Foundation is at it again! The anti-union group, under its pseudonym “Opt Out Ohio,” kicked off the New Year by spamming OCSEA members’ email boxes yet again. This time they used what is most likely a fake member anecdote attempting to get members to drop their union. **But OCSEA members aren't falling for it.** OCSEA members around the state have reported the spam or are just ignoring the propaganda altogether. Others are using it as an opportunity to share the truth with colleagues about the dangers of union busting.

In this round of spam emails, the extremist group claims that someone named “Nina” is proud of having dropped her union so she can save “X” amount of dollars in union dues a year. “We don't know if ‘Nina’ even really exists, but what we DO know is that a union, and the benefits that come with a union voice, is worth its weight in gold. You can't put a price on that,” said OCSEA President **Chris Mabe**.

“I feel sorry for ‘Nina’ that she won't be able to experience the power that comes with being union and knowing that thousands of brothers and sisters have her back, and she has theirs,” said OCSEA Secretary-Treasurer **Kathy Gersper**.

Of course, this is hardly OCSEA members’ first bout with the group. The special interest group is funded by wealthy billionaire donors who have a lot to gain, literally, by busting unions. They've been at this for years with little to show for it. Behind their “Opt Out Today” smoke screen, the “Freedom” Foundation has spent millions and millions to deceive public employees about their true intentions: **dismantling public services, cutting public employee jobs, and depleting public pensions.** They don't care about you, your family, the size of your paycheck or how union benefits make your life better.

That's why members like **Matt Campbell**, an OCSEA member from northeast Ohio, aren't falling for Freedom Foundation's lies. Matt says what they are trying to do is very transparent. “Everybody has a motive, and Freedom Foundation's is about weakening unions,” said Matt. “The overarching goal of ‘opting out’ is to break the union.



Why do you think they are trying so hard for us to not pay?” he said. Matt says groups like Freedom Foundation are simply about lining their donors’ pockets—not looking out for workers.

Matt says the only thing someone gains from opting out is “being a freeloader,” which means getting all the benefits of a union on the backs of hard-working union members. Basically “members” like “Nina” are “freeloading” union benefits without paying a dime.

Matt knows from experience that if the union falls, “it will be so much worse than how bad you think it is now.” Matt says having worked 13 years in the private sector with no union, he sees the union difference. “I guess I just have a different perspective,” said Matt who has now worked for the State of Ohio for another 13 years. “What I had then is nothing compared to what I have now,” he said. That includes a voice when it comes to wages, benefits, schedules, safety at work, leave time and so much more.

As an Environmental Specialist 2 for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, Matt says he understands firsthand the importance of public service. In emission testing observations, he works hard to make sure our air is safe to breathe, and companies are in compliance with laws that protect us all. It's public services like these that the Freedom Foundation aims to destroy, because there's always more money to be made in “self regulation,” says Matt, especially when compliance is directly tied to a private entity's bottom line.

All across Ohio, disingenuous organizations like this are worming their way into Ohio politics. These organizations are funded by out-of-state billionaires with an agenda: **dismantling public services, cutting employees' wages, and depleting public pensions.** And that means attacking unions that protect all those things. Their aggressive campaigns aim to trick workers into giving up their rights by lying to them.

“It's an ongoing battle, and they may think they are being sneaky, but we are always watching,” said OCSEA Vice President **Rocky Jolly**. “And our members are watching too. They know better!” □

This is Nina

- Nina wants **good union benefits** but doesn't want to pay her fair share!
- Nina wants a **union contract** but doesn't want to pay union dues!
- **Don't be like Nina**



OCSEA responded to the Freedom Foundation's anti-union campaign with this viral meme. It gained traction on social media, helping to spread the message about Freedom Foundation's deceitful tactics.

JOIN US FOR THE

WAC/CMCA Conference 2024!



Join the Minority and Community Affairs and Women's Action committees for their joint 2024 conference!

This will be a fun-filled event with great speakers and solidarity with your union sisters and brothers.

LOCATION:

Kalahari Resort and Convention Center,
7000 Kalahari Drive, Sandusky, OH 44870

DATES:

Friday, May 3 – Sunday, May 5, 2024



LOCAL 77 AFL-CIO

Ohio Civil Service Employees Association

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

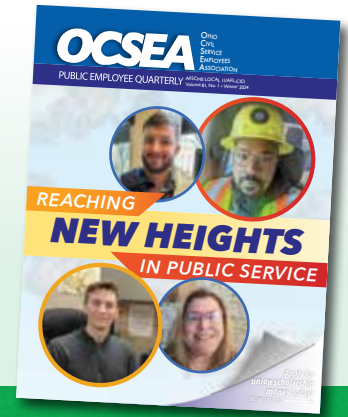


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OCSEA

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WAC/CMCA CONFERENCE 2024
Join us this May!