

SOLIDARITY is our STRENGTH



A TRAGEDY WAITING TO HAPPEN

The staffing shortage at DRC and DYS

While most of us enjoyed Christmas morning last year with our families, the date will long be remembered as a day of tragedy at the Ross Correctional Institution in Chillicothe. It's the day Correction Officer **Andrew Lansing** was viciously beaten to death by an inmate with a history of being written up for misconduct. Lansing, who served with the Dept. of Rehabilitation and Corrections for more than 20 years, had volunteered to work the holiday. He was married and the father of two.

"Lansing was a model officer. He was firm, fair and consistent," said **Bobby Stamper**, the President of Chapter 7130, which represents staff at RCI. "Everyone is still in shock. It has awakened people to the risks we take coming in here every day," he said.

Those risks are elevated by



RCI Correction Officer Andrew Lansing, pictured with his wife Chun Lansing, was murdered by an inmate on Christmas Day.

a chronic shortage of corrections officers at Ross. DRC claims the facility was short-staffed by about 40 positions at the time of the deadly assault. But Stamper says the number is closer to 80 when you include officers on disability or other types of leave. "We feel like

we are behind the eight ball as far as staffing levels and mandatory overtime," Stamper said. "People are just burned out and they want change."

Unfortunately, dangerous staff shortages are not unique to the RCI or DRC. The Dept. of Youth Services has faced similar issues for

many years. While DYS has downsized the number of youth facilities it currently operates to three—Circleville, Indian River and Cuyahoga Hills—the problem of not having enough juvenile Correction Officers persists.



“We feel like we are behind the eight ball as far as staffing levels and mandatory overtime.”

– Bobby Stamper, RCI Chapter 7130 President

“Interviewing them and hiring them is not the problem, at least not in Circleville,” said **Wilson Humphrey**, a JCO at Circleville and the President of the OCSEA DYS Assembly. Humphrey says the real problem is convincing staff to stay because of mandatory overtime and working conditions.

DYS offers cash incentives to work weekends and other shifts. But despite the extra pay the entire third shift at Circleville is on mandated overtime because of the constant turnover. “If we were fully staffed and eliminated mandatory overtime people would feel a lot better about coming to work. They can have a life,” Humphrey added.

Stamper says mandatory overtime is also a major concern for his members at RCI along with pay, benefits and unsafe



“Unfortunately, something bad has to happen like an assault or a major riot before they say let’s make changes.”

– Wilson Humphrey, OCSEA DYS Assembly President

working conditions. “If you want good quality people to come here and stay you have to give them what they’re due,” he said. Despite the warning signs, DRC and DYS have been slow to change.

“Unfortunately, something bad has to happen like an assault or a major riot before they say let’s make changes,” Humphrey stated. Something bad did happen at Indian River in 2022 when juvenile inmates rioted and barricaded themselves in a building for several hours. A few days earlier a JCO was severely beaten at the same facility.

These incidents finally convinced DYS to allow the use of CO spray, also known as pepper spray, on a limited basis. But only certain people have access to the spray, which delays how fast it can be deployed during an incident.

The death of Officer Lansing received widespread news coverage, not just in Ohio but across the nation. The outcry that followed put pressure on DRC to make long overdue reforms. OCSEA called for new leadership at DRC, and members responded by sending letters to Governor Mike DeWine and state legislators. The mounting pressure, from OCSEA and the public, has pushed DRC leadership to consider changes they have long resisted.

After several meetings and blunt conversations, DRC agreed to allow correction officers at the Ross and

Trumbull Correctional Institutions to carry tasers as a deterrent against violent assaults. The evidence is clear from other states that the deployment of tasers does lead to a decrease in prison violence. The plan is for tasers to be rolled out to more institutions within the next year or so.

“DRC finally faced up to reality that staffing and security concerns cannot be downplayed any longer. And it became obvious to them

that we would not back down,” said OCSEA President **Chris Mabe**. “The mutual agreement to deploy tasers at Ross and Trumbull represents a significant victory for the safety of our members.”

President Mabe says tasers are just the first step and OCSEA will continue to advocate for safety and staffing at the Ross Correctional Institution and other facilities. □



OCSEA and SEIU 1199 hold an informational picket outside Indian River following violent incidents that happened at the DYS facility in 2022.

Persistence pays off!

Repeal of WEP and GPO shows the power of labor activism



Former Senator Sherrod Brown listens to testimony from public employees about how WEP and GPO impacted their retirements.

If you want proof to show how activism can pay off, look no further than the fight against the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). The anti-worker laws had siphoned money away from public employees, including members of OCSEA, for more than 40 years by reducing their Social Security benefits. Year after year bills in Congress had failed to stop the unfairness. Yet, public employee

unions and dedicated members of Congress never gave up trying to repeal the laws.

WEP and GPO were supposed to stop so-called “double dipping” by workers who receive public pensions for work not covered by Social Security but also paid taxes into Social Security when they were employed in the private sector. As a result, some retirees had their monthly Social Security benefits cut by half or more.

Through phone calls, emails, rallies and one-on-one lobbying of mem-

bers of Congress the tide began to turn. OCSEA retirees, whose union activism didn't end when they retired, helped amplify the call for change.

By late last year enough members of the U.S. House of Representatives had been persuaded that they forced a vote on the Social Security Fairness Act to repeal WEP and GPO.

Strong bipartisan majorities of the House and Senate then voted for the bill and President Joe Biden signed it into law in January 2025. Former U.S. Senator Sherrod, who fought for many years to pass the Social Security Fairness Act, was at the White House for the bill signing.

“Social Security is the bedrock of our middle class. You pay into it for 40 quarters, you earned it, it should be there when you retire,” Sen. Brown said. “It is about what workers earn. It is about honoring the dignity of work.”

What does the long-awaited repeal of WEP and GPO and the restoration of Social Security benefits mean to OCSEA retirees? We asked some of them to find out.

Restoring Benefits



Alan Koser, a longtime BWC member of Chapter 7000, started working as a dishwasher at a restaurant in Mansfield when he was 16 years old. He worked a lot of odd jobs including stints at General Motors and substitute teaching before he was hired by the Bureau of Workers' Compensation in 1993.

Alan paid Social Security taxes when he worked in the private sector and says he didn't learn about WEP until he was ready to retire and draw his OPERS pension. “Boy that



Union members attend a public hearing on the Social Security Fairness Act last summer in Columbus.

seems pretty unfair,” is how he remembers his reaction to learning his monthly Social Security benefits would be cut in half.

But thanks to the repeal of WEP and GPO, Alan’s Social Security benefits will be fully restored giving him an additional \$650 per month. “I’m always grateful that I have a nice healthy pension thanks to OCSEA,” Alan said. “(But) I paid into Social Security and I just figured I should get it.”

Righting a Wrong



Mike Davis, the former President of Chapter of 2555, has a similar story to tell about lost benefits. Mike owned an insurance agency before his wife died and he started working for the Ohio Dept. of Insurance as an investigator and contract analyst. He worked at ODI for 20 years until he retired in 2011.

Mike says WEP cut his Social Security by a third and cost-of-living adjustments to his OPERS pension led to further reductions. “It did not make any sense. None whatsoever,” he said. Mike became a motivated activist collecting petitions and talking to anyone who would listen about the injustice.

“I have to say the unions were a big voice,” Mike said. “And it wasn’t a partisan thing because it was affecting republicans and democrats. It didn’t matter. This was a people thing.” Mike also gives “big time” credit to Sherrod Brown.

While many had doubts that WEP and GPO would ever be repealed, Mike thought it was possible if enough people heard about it, so he never stopped advocating.

“I thought people would be



AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler and former Senator Sherrod Brown (second and third from right) watch as President Joe Biden signs the Social Security Fairness Act into law at the White House.

upset and future state retirees would be upset about it including teachers and police officers,” he added. “It didn’t make sense that you’d penalize people for helping give us services to clean our roads to do the things that most people don’t want to do.”

Uniting Retiree Activists



Louella Day-Jeter, a retired Public Safety member of Chapter 2505, is another union activist who got involved in the fight to repeal WEP and GPO. After a 42-year career working in the records Dept. for the Ohio Highway Patrol, Louella is eligible for a small monthly Social Security payment, based

on earlier employment, but even that is reduced.

“I’m not doing this for myself because I get a good pension from the state of Ohio,” Louella said. “I’m doing this for the people I know that didn’t work for the state as long as I did.” And that includes members of her chapter and her own daughter who also works for the state.

Louella says she became active in the repeal effort when Sen. Brown

and others started holding events to rally support for restoring benefits. “I worked to make sure everybody that worked for the state is going to be able to survive when they retire,” she said.

And Louella won’t forget the moment President Biden signed the Social Security Fairness Act, “I jumped up and down like a crazy woman!” □



More than 3.2 million people had their benefits reduced or eliminated because of WEP and GPO, according to the Social Security Administration. The SSA is finalizing its plan to implement the Social Security Fairness Act to adjust payments and pay retroactive benefits dating back to January 2024. Scan the QR code for the latest updates on the payment schedule.



2025

A YEAR OF CHALLENGES A YEAR FOR ACTION

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many state employees despite overwhelming evidence that telework saves tax dollars.

The Governor and General Assembly also must pass a new biennium state budget by July 1, and that means funding priorities for state agencies and departments will be hotly debated. Everyone expects a tighter budget this time around and we will be fully engaged to ensure our members are not adversely affected. That's the reason we have started training members on how to testify before legislative committees. We are the folks who work on the front lines and legislators need to hear from us before they make decisions impacting our lives.

The budget isn't the only thing at the Statehouse that could affect our union brothers and sisters in 2025. Legislation has already been introduced in the legislature threatening organized labor. Senate Bill 1, which is the latest version of legislation we saw in the last General Assembly, would ban university faculty from striking and limit the terms and conditions they can negotiate in collective bargaining. Sounds a lot like Senate Bill 5 from more than a decade ago, doesn't it? Another bill would place limits on work release for state employees to participate in certain union activities. These bills are a clear signal that at least some legislators are willing to attack worker rights, and we must be ready to push back.

We must also be prepared to stand up for organized labor on the national level. Last month, executive orders lifted a ban on private prison contracts, stripped job protections for some civil service employees and called for an end to

remote work. And that could just be the beginning. Proposals for massive cuts to the federal workforce are expected as well.

AFSCME will be leading the fight to protect worker rights on all levels of government because we know from experience what happens in Washington D.C. can trickle down to Ohio. AFSCME has launched a "Get Organized" campaign to push back on attacks against public service workers from coast to coast.

Knowledge is power! That's why we will hold several leadership trainings this year to educate members about what's happening in our state and how they can help this union stay strong. There will be training on advocacy and organizing, and guest speakers discussing current workplace issues such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. I encourage anyone in leadership who's interested in attending one of the trainings to contact your chapter president to let them know you'd like to participate.

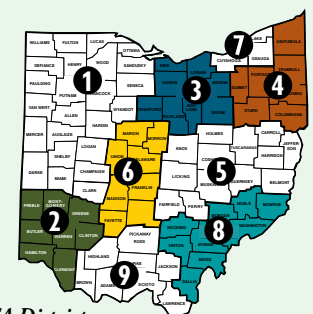
Our leadership training sessions will be just part of a busy year with many opportunities to get together with your fellow OCSEA members. We look forward to a full schedule of conferences beginning with the Committee on Minority and Community Affairs Conference in March. This year's theme for the CMCA conference is "Planting the Seeds for the Future."

Building for the future will also be a major focus of our biennial convention in Cleveland in late August. There will be lots to discuss and your input and participation will be a vital part of what we can accomplish together in 2025 and into the future. □

As the new year begins, we are gearing up to face the challenges of 2025 head on, determined to do whatever it takes to protect our members and grow our union. We will tackle challenges on many fronts—from staffing shortages that threaten health and safety to anti-worker legislation that could undermine collective bargaining rights. Our **solidarity is our strength** and it will be the key to a successful year.

Staffing shortages at the Dept. of Rehabilitation and Corrections and the Dept. of Youth Services have been an ongoing and dangerous problem. Just how dangerous became tragically apparent on Christmas day when Officer Andrew Lansing was murdered by an inmate at the Ross Correctional Institution. The public outrage that followed has cast a harsh light on DRC, and we have been turning up the heat. Our blunt conversations with DRC leadership have led to a policy change allowing officers at RCI and the Trumbull Correctional Institution to carry tasers for the first time. It's a significant step toward a safer workplace, but we will continue fighting for more.

This year, our eye will be on the Ohio Statehouse because what happens there has direct consequences for our membership. Barely a month into the new year, Governor DeWine issued an executive order ending remote and hybrid work for

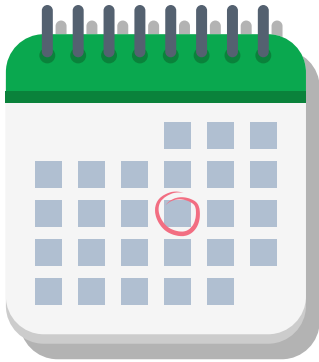


OCSEA Districts



Coming to your mailbox!

Look for your new OCSEA membership card in your mailbox soon! The new cards are made of durable plastic and include important union contact info, plus a QR code to update your contact information quickly and easily.



SAVE *the* DATES:

Upcoming Conferences & Events

Mark your Calendars for these upcoming 2025 OCSEA conferences and events:

Committee on Minority and Community Affairs (CMCA) Conference:

Columbus | March 21 - 22



Women's Action Committee (WAC) Conference:

Toledo | May 2-3

Stewards Conference:

Columbus | June 6-7

OCSEA Biennial Convention:

Cleveland | August 27-30

Veterans Committee Conference:

Location & date to be determined | November



Shining the light

and

Breaking the Stigma

Union activist focuses on mental health support in ODOT

National Mental Health Awareness Month, which takes place every May, is always a good reminder of the importance of investing in and prioritizing mental health care—on the job and in our personal lives. But for OCSEA activist and Ohio Dept. of Transportation Surveyor **Lucas Preston-Colvin**, mental health awareness is more than a monthly observance; it's become a personal commitment to help reduce the stigma that comes with asking for help and taking care of yourself.

Lucas says growing awareness and promoting resources that can help other co-workers in need is especially dire in an agency like ODOT where he's found that talking about mental health is not always the norm. "A lot of people suffer in silence, but they don't have to," he said.

Lucas says there are plenty of resources to help with desperate personal situations, and he wants to be someone his co-workers can lean on. He also wants to make sure resources are readily and easily available to those in need, particularly those who wish to remain anonymous. "You don't have to be on your own," says Lucas.

A recent ODOT District 2 Well-At-Work pilot program helped put mental health care at the forefront in ODOT. District 2 includes employees that serve in Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Seneca, Williams and Wood counties in northwest Ohio. The goal of the pilot? To reduce stigma around mental health and to offer county-by-county resources that are tuned to the needs of ODOT's workforce.

Lucas, who works out of the District 2 Office in Bowling Green, was one of the employees selected to serve on the district's Well-At-Work pilot resource group. The initiative focused on building tools that offer not only mental health resources like counseling but also food, housing, financial, and addiction services, to name a few. Lucas says issues like food insecurity and addiction can attribute to depression, anxiety and a variety of mental health disorders on and off the job.

As a part of the pilot, management in the district also began taking a mental health "First Aid" course. "If any initiative is going to succeed, it has to start at the top," said Lucas about the importance of growing a culture that prioritizes employee well-being and support.

The group's efforts have certainly paid off. Not only has the ODOT District 2 Well-At-Work initiative become permanent, but the efforts have also gotten the attention of leaders in Columbus. The group was recently recognized by ODOT Central Office and the Governor. The group also participated in an Ohio Chamber of Commerce event around mental health and suicide prevention, and representatives have traveled around the state to other ODOT districts to talk about how they can build their own mental health resource initiatives.

Lucas continues to be active in the Well-At-Work group representing the voices of bargaining unit members. Meeting quarterly, par-

“If we can save one person's life with resources, then we've completed our goal.”

– Lucas Preston-Colvin, ODOT

ticipants receive training, monitor usage, and fine-tune resources. The district's employee homepage offers resources by county, including links to hotlines, counseling, community support, tips and more. The group continues to work to ensure that each garage throughout the district has at least one Well-At-Work representative.

"We are no counselors by any means. We're just here to guide people in the right direction," said Lucas. "If we can save one person's life with resources, then we've completed our goal," he said.

Lucas says developing mental fortitude is key to his own success, and he is grateful to be a part of a union that offers benefits that help him,



ODOT Surveyor and union activist Lucas Preston-Colvin is part of an ODOT Dist. 2 mental health awareness team to help co-workers in crisis. The district's homepage offers online resource because of those efforts.

and his family thrive. He graduated this January from Franklin University with a bachelor's degree in business administration that helped him get promoted to his current ODOT Surveyor position. He is now continuing his surveyor education at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. "All of this was made possible by my Union Education Trust benefit. I didn't pay one cent out of pocket to get this far, and I couldn't be more grateful for my union benefits," said Lucas.

Commitment to community is key, says Lucas who serves as a volunteer first responder fire fighter and EMT. He recently participated in an Ohio Chamber Commerce round table about first responder mental health. Lucas says many ODOT members are also volunteer first responders and veterans.

Lucas is an active member of Chapter 8700, where he is a steward, and a delegate to the ODOT Assembly. He is interested in expanding conversations about how we can spread mental health resources to all union members.

Resources for all State Employees

The Ohio Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary and confidential support service designed to assist state employees and their dependents. The mental health professionals of EAP provide consultation and referral to licensed providers on issues including domestic relations, drug and alcohol, mental health, financial and legal assistance and more. For information on your benefit, visit das.ohio.gov/EAP. To contact your Ohio EAP directly, visit guidanceresources.com or call 800-221-6327.



For Lucas, his mental fortitude is directly related to opportunities like going back to college. He's appreciative of his union benefits—the Union Education Trust, for example—for making those opportunities a reality.

From Service to Solidarity!

Honoring our union members who are veterans

Every November, the OCSEA Veterans Committee brings members together to honor our United States Veterans, past and present. Many of those brothers and sisters in attendance are veterans themselves. The annual OCSEA Veterans Conference, held around Veterans Day each year, represents a comradery of union members in service like no other event put on by the union throughout the year. The conference theme, “From Service to Solidarity: Unions Empowering Veterans,” was a perfect reminder of how important veterans in public employment are in the fabric of our communities and within our union.

One major tradition of the conference is the honoring of union members with two veterans-focused awards during the Larry Cremeens Annual Veteran Awards Ceremony. Historically the ceremony honors one veteran and one veteran supporter, but this year, two veterans exceeded expectations in service and were honored at the event. The 2024 OCSEA Veterans of the Year Award honorees were **Stephan Massey** and **Matt Keating**.



Watch Stephan Massey talk about what being a veteran means to him and how he helps give a voice to others.



Stephan Massey, OCSEA Veteran of the Year

Stephan Massey is an Army Veteran (Logistics) and a union leader with Summit Behavioral Healthcare Chapter 3180. He is a Financial Analyst in the Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS) agency. Summit Behavioral Healthcare (SBH) is the Cincinnati-area public mental health and addiction services facility.

Stephan was nominated for this prestigious award by not one, but two of his SBH co-workers.

“I’ve known Stephan for seven years, and over this time, he has exemplified the gold standard of workplace professionalism, while at the same time serving as a compassionate and engaged veterans advocate for ex-military brothers and sisters,” said Andrew Heister. Andrew is a veteran and union co-worker in finance at the Cincinnati MHAS facility who has sought guidance from Stephan on many occasions.

Co-worker Beverly Morton also nominated Stephan for the award, calling him a “Great American” and an advocate for all veterans in the workplace. She says as chair of the SBH Veterans Committee, Stephan

advocates for and organizes events in honor of veterans every year.

Stephan was incredibly humbled by the honor, saying he didn’t really know his co-workers thought much about his service. But he was mistaken, which was obvious by the nominations and outpouring of admiration for Stephan’s duty to country, his community, his union and his profession.

“I just try to help the veterans in my local chapter to get everything they need,” said Stephan, who always encourages veterans in the workplace to go out and advocate for what they deserve. Stephan serves as Chapter 3180’s 2nd Vice President and is a steward to make sure all members have a voice and advocacy on the job. Stephan is also a First Aid and CPR instructor.



Matt Keating, OCSEA Veteran & Supporter of the Year

Matt Keating, an Afghanistan Army Veteran, is a Correction Officer at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF) and is a member Chapter 7330. He was awarded a first-time combination award, Veteran of the Year and Supporter of the Year Award, due to his nominations and unique qualifications for both categories.

“Matt’s character and humility allow him to fit in with everyone else. He is a perfect example of someone who has been through a lot with the military but does not allow those difficult situations to define who he is as a member of society or as a professional,” said SOCF co-worker and union leader, CO Landon Conley. “He is one of those guys that makes others feel safe around him because they know if something dangerous happens, Matt will be there and know how to respond,” said Landon.

Matt was unable to attend the ceremony but was proudly honored by SOCF chapter members in attendance at the conference. He says he’s humbled by the award and believes being in a correctional facility is about as close as you can get to having a military family. “When an alarm goes off, you don’t question who it is, who needs help. You just go. In that way it’s very similar to being in the Army,” said Matt.

Matt is a member of American Legion Post 23 and has volunteered with Friends of Portsmouth. He is married with two kids. He loves to play golf, which he calls one of the biggest stress relievers in his life. □

OCSEA VETERANS CONFERENCE

The annual OCSEA Veterans Conference is held every November to honor veterans past and present. The event includes the Larry Cremeens Annual Veteran Awards Ceremony, a tribute to our nation by the Corrections Honor Guard, a Missing Man Table Ceremony, special guests with resources for veterans, union solidarity and so much more. Thank you to our OCSEA veterans who have served or who currently serve in the armed services.



Summit Behavioral Health Chap. 3180 member and Army veteran Stephan Massey (center right) is honored with one of OCSEA's Veteran of the Year Awards.



Judge Guy Reece, a retired U.S. Army Colonel, speaks of the connection between veterans and unions. He said public employees show great courage and service to their communities.



OCSEA President Chris Mabe (Army) and Veterans Committee chair Doug Korba (Navy) welcome attendees and honor member veterans and all who serve.



Krystol Mayer, Lead Veteran Service Officer at the Lorain County Veterans Service Commission, says her passion is in helping veterans with their benefits.



The Corrections Honor Guard, at the Veterans Conference, kicks off with a flag ceremony to honor our nation.



Samuel Swoger III, Ninth District 1st Vice Commander at Mahoning County American Legion, stresses the importance of veterans' organizations such as American Legion and the VFW.



Attendees honor our nation with the Pledge of Allegiance.



Members of SOCF Chap. 7330 accept the Veteran of the Year and Supporter of the Year Award on behalf of Army veteran Matt Keating, who was unable to attend.



The OCSEA Veterans Committee is proud to put on the Veterans Conference each year.



The Missing Man Table Ceremony honors service members who are absent from our tables because they never made it home.

\$12,000 in awards!



OCSEA Les Best Scholarship



Riley Wolfe
2024 Les Best Scholarship Winner

Dues-paying members, spouses and dependents are eligible!

Since 1989, OCSEA has sponsored the Les Best Scholarship Program that awards a total of \$12,000 in scholarships to members and their families EVERY YEAR. The scholarship program is exclusive to dues-paying 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. **This year, members will be asked to write an essay reflecting on their own experience as a union member, while spouses and dependents will be given a different question about the role of unions in families and communities.**

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. To learn more about the selection process, visit the Les Best website. Winners

are announced each summer 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

The dependent scholarship category allows applicants to not only attend accredited colleges, but also vocational schools or union apprenticeships as well. This opens up eligibility for those not attending a four-year college and recognizes those who choose to enter trade schools and union apprenticeship programs, which is vital for trades and to grow the economy.

Multiple scholarship wins

The program also allows applicants to win up to three times. Award winners are encouraged to apply yearly. □

Riley is a first-time winner of the 2024 Les Best Scholarship. She is the dependent of Matthew Wolfe, an ODN member of Summit Chapter 7700. She is using her scholarship award to study Chemical Engineering at Pennsylvania State University - University Park Campus.

"I have always been interested in STEM and I knew I wanted to go into the engineering field. The biggest thing I am looking forward to is using this opportunity to encourage other young women to be in this field," Riley said. "I hope to one day be a role model for other girls who want to go into engineering. I want to reach out to my community and offer to come into schools to talk about my career and encourage other girls to follow in my footsteps."

Riley understands the power of connecting with her community. "I think one thing my dad's union has shown me is that you have to be involved," she said. "Being involved in several different clubs during my first year of college has helped me make the transition from high school a little easier."

The Les Best Scholarship has helped make this dream possible for Riley. She said, "Because I am attending an out-of-state school, my tuition is very high. I also have a sister who is currently attending college. I relied a lot on scholarships such as this one to pay for my tuition this year."

The Les Best Scholarship helps ease the burden of higher education for students like Riley every year. Get started on your application today!



Download an application at
ocsea.org/LesBest

The deadline to apply is April 30, 2025

← SCAN THE QR CODE TO VISIT THE WEBSITE NOW

OCSEA DISCOUNT COLLEGE



Employee Benefit Systems, Inc.

"Trusted by Unions Since 1997"

Powered by the
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Tuition Discounts on 50+ Programs

Interested in exploring opportunities for professional development or personal growth, or is a family member ready to head off or return to college? **As an OCSEA member, you and your family have access to discounted tuition rates for college degrees and certificates.**

OCSEA's new college benefit through the **Employee Benefit Systems (EBS)** guides members and family members (including extended family) to find the right college and degree options for you. The discount college program is a collaboration between OCSEA and the EDUTrust Network. Through EBS, you will get matched with an in-network college or university and earn an **associate, bachelor's, master's degree or certificate** and SAVE! Full- and part-time programs are available.

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!

About the EDUTrust Network

EDUTrust Network consists of a network of carefully selected colleges and universities that provide:

- Discounted tuition rates for 50+ online programs, including those built for adult students;
- A supportive, personal admissions experience with a college or university admissions counselor;
- A transcript evaluation to determine how any existing credits will translate to your degree;
- Student support services like career and financial aid counseling, disability services, and navigating the challenges of returning to school.



Franklin University's U-LEARN Program

New Education Opportunity For Members and Families

Maximize your time and tuition benefits through the **Franklin University U-LEARN program**. In addition to **free books**, dues-paying members and their family members can take **unlimited associate- or bachelor's-level courses** for **\$5,250 per calendar year**. There is no payment due after the max has been met. The U-Learn program is for NEW students only.

OCSEA members may be eligible to use their **Union Education Trust (UET)** benefits while participating in this program. Learn about UET at uedtrust.org. UET is an OCSEA state employee benefit and is not available for family members.

Students who qualify for any grants or scholarships may also have little to no out-of-pocket expenses.



Scan QR Code to visit the website now →

ebsunioncollegebenefit.org/OCSEA

Subordinate Body Meeting & Election Notices

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
ASSEMBLY MEETINGS		
MHAS/DODD/ OVH Assembly	Apr. 11 & May 9 - 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	OCSEA - Bowman Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville
ODNR Assembly	April 5 - E-Board: 9 a.m.- 10 a.m., Meet- ing: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	OCSEA - Bowman Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville
OOD Assembly	May 14 - 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.	Contact assembly.ood@gmail.com for location
DISTRICT MEETINGS		
District 1	May 10 - 10 a.m.-1 p.m.	IBEW, 1975 North West St., Lima
District 2	E-Board (vir- tual): April 9 - 6 p.m.-8 p.m.; Meeting (in person): May 14 6p.m. -8 p.m.	Dingle House, 9102 W. Chester Towne Ctr., West Chester
District 6	April 7 & May 5 - 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.	OCSEA - Bowman Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville
CHAPTER MEETINGS		
Chapter 200	April 1 - 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m.	IBEW 32 1975 North West St., Lima
Chapter 1801	May 20 - 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	State Office Building - Plaza 615 W. Superior Ave., Cleveland
Chapter 2320	April 14 - Meeting: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.; E-Board: 7:30 p.m.	The Elks Lodge (lower level), 109 S Main St., New Lexington
Chapter 2500	April 17 - E-Board: 6 p.m.- 6:30 p.m., Meeting: 6:30 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.	OCSEA - Bowman Hall, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville
Chapter 2501	April 12 - E-Board: 9 a.m.- 10 a.m.; Meet- ing: 10 a.m.-12 p.m.	OCSEA - Room 195, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville
Chapter 3000	May 15 - E-Board: 6 p.m. - 6:15 p.m., Meeting: 6:15 p.m.-7:15 p.m.	Theo's Restaurant, 632 Wheeling Ave., Cam- bridge

BODY	DATES/TIMES	LOCATION
CHAPTER MEETINGS <i>continued</i>		
Chapter 3510	April 16 - E-Board: 6:30 p.m.-7 p.m., Meeting: 7 p.m.- 8 p.m.	VFW Hall - 1133 N. Ottokee St., Wauseon
Chapter 4800	April 1 & May 6 - E-Board (in-per- son): 5:30-6 p.m., Meeting (hybrid): 6 p.m.- 8 p.m.	AFSCME Ohio Coun- cil 8, 420 S. Reynolds Rd., Toledo or contact jlawniczak@bex.net or CSteele930@gmail.com to request meeting link.
Chapter 5100	April 9 - 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Morrow Co. ODOT, 5560 U.S. 42, Mt. Gilead
Chapter 5410	May 5- 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	Meetings: March 26, April 23 & May 28 - 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.	AFSCME Ohio Council 8 Local 101, 15 Gates St., Dayton
Chapter 7000	March 20, April 17 & May 15 - 6 p.m.-7 p.m.	United Steelworkers, 376 W Longview Ave., Mansfield
Chapter 7010	April 18 E-Board 11:30 a.m.- 12 p.m.; First Meeting: 12:15 p.m.-1:15 p.m.; Second Meeting: 2:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m.	USW Hall, 376 W Longview Ave., Mansfield

OCSEA Magazine Notice Deadlines:

Spring 2025: Deadline: March 28

Elections must be held on or after June 2, 2025 (including convention delegate elections - see next page)

Fall 2025: Deadline: Sept. 10

Election must be held on or after Nov. 10, 2025.

Constitutional requirements for elections

Per the subordinate body Constitution Article VI, Section 3: "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."

Subordinate Body Meeting & Election Notices

SUBORDINATE BODY ELECTIONS

BODY	DATES/TIMES	POSITIONS	LOCATION
Industrial Commission Assembly	May 10, 2025 - Meeting: 10 a.m. (resumes after elections); Nominations: 10 a.m.-10:15 a.m.; Elections: 10:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m.; Run Offs: 11 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Executive Board (4)	OCSEA - Room 195, 390 Worthington Rd., Westerville OH 43082
District 8	March 18, 2025 - E-Board: 6:00 p.m.; Nominations: 6:30 p.m.-6:45 p.m.; Elections: 6:45 p.m.-7 p.m.; Run Offs: 7:15 p.m.-7:30 p.m.; Meeting resumes after elections.	President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Executive Board (3), District steward for ODOT District 10	Holiday Inn-Conference Room, 11 E. Park Dr, Athens OH 45701
Chapter 1801	March 25, 2025 Nominations: 4:30 p.m.-4:45 p.m.; Elections: 4:45 p.m.-5 p.m.; Run Offs: 5:15 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Executive Board (7), District Delegate/Alternate, Assembly Delegate/Alternate (for OOD, MH/DD, DYS, DRC, ODJFS, Taxation, DNR, IC & Public Safety).	The Frank J. Lausche State Office Building - Plaza, 615 W. Superior Ave, Cleveland, OH 44113
Chapter 1820	March 27, 2025 Nominations: 5:45 p.m.-6:15 p.m.; Elections: 6:30 p.m.-7 p.m.; Run Offs: 7:15 p.m.-7:30 p.m.	President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Executive Board (3), District Delegate/Alternate, Assembly Delegate/Alternate.	Bedford Exam Station, 22133 Rockside Rd., Bedford OH 44146
Chapter 2565	Nominations: March 19, 2025 - 12 p.m.-12:30 p.m. (Location: B-001); Elections: March 24, 2025 - 12 p.m.-12:30 p.m. (Location: B-001); Run Offs: March 25, 2025 - 1 p.m. - 1:15 p.m. (Location: Lecture Hall)	President, Vice-President Secretary/Treasurer, Executive Board (3), District Delegate/Alternate.	Dept. of Education, 25 S. Front St., Columbus, OH 43215
Chapter 5110	Nominations: March 18, 2025 - 6 a.m.-3 p.m.; Elections: March 25, 2025 - 6 a.m.-3 p.m.; Run Offs: March 27, 2025 6 a.m.-3 p.m.	President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Executive Board (4), District Delegate/Alternate Assembly Delegate/Alternate.	Nominations: FOP Lodge 5327 Harding Hwy E, Caledonia OH 43314 Elections and Run Offs: MCI Entrance Building, 940 Marion-Williamsport Rd. E, Marion, OH 43302

OCSEA Convention alert!

Want to include a convention delegate election in the spring edition of this magazine? Notice of elections of delegates to the **Biennial OCSEA Convention** MUST be submitted by **March 28, 2025**. Delegate elections appearing in this periodical MUST take place ON or AFTER June 2. Authorized officers can submit notices online at [OCSEA.org/meetingnotices](https://www.ocsea.org/meetingnotices). Otherwise, a mailed notice, at cost, MUST be sent to chapter members.





LOCAL 11 AFL-CIO

Ohio Civil Service Employees Association

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



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OCSEA

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE QUARTERLY | WINTER 2025

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The staffing shortage at DRC & DYS



4 PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF!
The Repeal of WEP & GPO



8 SHINING THE LIGHT & BREAKING THE STIGMA
ODOT Activist focuses on mental health



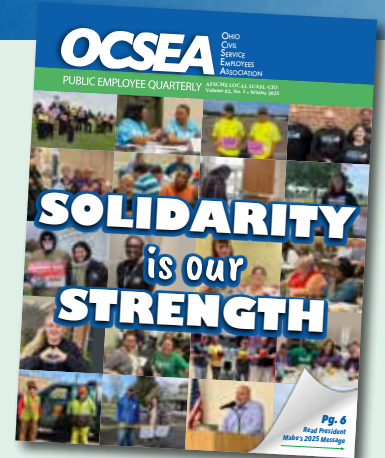
10 FROM SERVICE TO SOLIDARITY
Honoring our union members who are veterans



12 2025 LES BEST SCHOLARSHIP
Members, Spouses & Dependents: Apply now!



13 OCSEA DISCOUNT COLLEGE
Plus: Franklin University U-Learn Program



6 PRES. CHRIS MABE
2025: A Year of Challenges. A Year for Action.

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