



**SEIU 517M**  
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

The **E-Former**

The Official Electronic Newsletter of  
SEIU Local 517M

## August 2021

### Staff Directory

Please contact the appropriate staff person using the phone directory below:

**Dues & COPE Deductions:**

[Andrea Valerio](#) - 989.797.4241

**Labor Relations Questions:**

**Region 1:**

[Clint Bryant](#) - 989.797.4258

**Region 2:**

[Christine Stressman](#) - 616.696.2141

[Andy Johnson](#) - 269.978.1994

**Region 3:**

[Dominic Barbato](#) - 313.314.6511

**HSS Unit:**

[Janice Cosey](#) - 313.246.1137

**Scientific and Engineering Unit:**

[Howard Gordon](#) - 517.267.2070

**Technical Unit:**

[Kevin Karpinski](#) - 517.267.2088

**Executive Director:**

[Jeremy Tripp](#) - 517.267.2065

**Information Services/PDF/**

**Member-Only Benefits:**

[Dave Corrie](#) - 517.267.2090

**Lansing Office Manager:**

[Olivia Toretta](#) - 517.267.2095

### SEIU Local 517M Joins with Other State Employee Unions to Highlight Public Service

By Jeremy Tripp, Executive Director



SEIU Local 517M is collaborating with the Michigan State Employees Association (MSEA) and Michigan Corrections Organization (MCO) to launch a partnership to further advance, recognize and advocate on behalf of state employees across Michigan.

This joint collaboration, known as the **Coalition of State Employee Unions (CSEU)**, is intended to amplify the voice of union workers, educate elected officials, inform the public and highlight the skills and services state employees provide.

Over the next few months, CSEU will develop and share a series of videos and content, featuring 517M members and other state employees who go to work each day, just like you, to make our State a better place.

CSEU's first 3 videos can be viewed now and include [Public Utilities Engineer, Anna Schiller](#) from the SEIU Local 517M Scientific & Engineering Bargaining Unit, [Transportation Maintenance Worker Ken Irwin](#) and [Correctional Officer Thomas Rockwell](#).

Working together, we know we can continue to make our voice heard, bargain a fair and equitable contract, protect our safety and help recruit and retain qualified individuals to public employment.



[Check out and Like their Facebook page.](#)

**STAY SAFE — STAY INFORMED**

[www.seiu517m.org](http://www.seiu517m.org) [Facebook at: SEIULocal517M](#)

## Notice of Election for Technical Unit Positions

By Dave Corrie, Information Services Coordinator



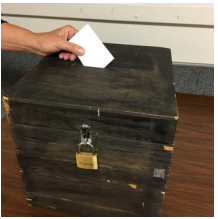
The Technical Unit of SEIU Local 517M is holding their election for Chapter Presidents, Chapter Vice-Presidents, and Unit Secretary/Treasurer for a 3- year term of office. If you are interested in running for one of these offices, you will need to complete the Candidate Petition Form which is available on the SEIU 517M website and can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Candidate Petition Forms will be accepted starting August 2, 2021 and ending at 4:00 p.m. on September 3, 2021. The election calendar is shown below:

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| August 2, 2021        | Notice of Election with links to Candidate Petition Form to unit dues paying members. Distribute <a href="#">Board Policy #7</a> . |
| September 3, 2021     | Deadline for Return of Candidate Petition Forms & Photos.  |
| September 7-10, 2021  | Ballots prepared.  |
| September 13-30, 2021 | Electronic voting; Electronic voting deadline is 4:00 p.m. on September 30 <sup>th</sup> .   |
| September 22, 2021    | Deadline for requesting a paper ballot.  |
| October 4, 2021       | Ballots Counted and Election Certified by Election/Tally Committee. Deadline for Paper Ballots is noon.                            |
| November 1, 2021      | Newly Elected Leadership takes office.   |

## Notice of Election for the Human Services Support Unit

By Dave Corrie, Information Services Coordinator



The Human Services Support Unit of SEIU Local 517M is holding their election for Unit President, Unit Vice President, Unit Board, Steward and Alternate Steward positions for a 3- year term of office. If you are interested in running for one of these offices, you will need to complete the Candidate Petition Form which is available on the SEIU 517M website and can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

Candidate Petition Forms will be accepted starting August 2, 2021 and ending at 4:00 p.m. on September 3, 2021. The election calendar is shown below:

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## SEIU 517M Members Invited to the White House for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July

By Dominic Barbato, Labor Relations Specialist



Over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend, members of SEIU Local 517M were part of a group of frontline workers invited to a cookout on the White House lawn hosted by President Joe Biden and First Lady Dr. Jill Biden. Participation at this event was by invitation only and travel was made possible through SEIU International.

Local 517M members Carmella Johnson and Jan Martin were both in attendance. “It was a picnic for people who worked through the pandemic”, said Johnson. The BBQ included a lunch and remarks from the President to the assembled crowd. “(The President) thanked us all for the work that we do”, said Johnson. “He focused a lot on his plans for vaccination and spoke about how great it was that we were able to come together and see our families and grandparents when we could not do that last year”.

The attendees were joined by the First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, who mingled with the crowd. “The First Lady sat two tables away from us with her sister and her grandchildren. Everyone who wanted a photo or to talk to her got to, she was very generous. When I told her I was from SEIU she immediately responded with ‘I love SEIU’”.



Asked to summarize the event, Johnson concluded, “I had been to the White House as a child, but to see them open it up to workers again felt very welcoming. It was nice being there to represent our union and see all of our hard work rewarded. I am glad we are being led by people who seem so compassionate and supportive of workers. It was good to see the President so appreciative of the work that we do”.

Pictured: Carmella Johnson with First Lady Dr. Jill Biden.

## FEMA Provides Funeral Assistance for COVID Deaths

By Dave Corie, Information Services Coordinator

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is offering financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020. This assistance is made possible under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Applicants submit a signed statement from the certifying official on the death certificate or the local medical examiner, or coroner, that attributes the death to COVID-19 that occurred between January 20, 2020 and May 16, 2020.

Individuals may call the dedicated toll-free phone number **844-684-6333**, Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 9:00 pm to complete a COVID-19 Funeral Assistance application with the help from a FEMA representative. Multilingual services are available. They do not offer an online application. When you call, you will be asked a series of questions and it takes approximately 20 minutes to complete the application process.

A frequently asked questions page about the application process can be found here: [Funeral Assistance FAQ page](#).

## **Your Union Needs You!**

By Dave Corrie, Information Services Coordinator

There are several regional or unit board positions that are currently vacant. Please consider being appointed to a board position based on your region or unit. You may email the appropriate Unit President/Regional Divisional Vice President listed below to apply for a position or ask any questions about what service on a board would entail.

### **Region 2** (Contact [Yolanda Johnson](#))

**Chapter 3 representing** (Three Rivers, St. Joseph County Road Commission, Sturgis Schools, Branch County Courts, Branch County Mental Health, City of Battle Creek) – 1 position

**Chapter 4 representing** (City of Allegan, Otsego Schools, City of Plainwell, Plainwell Schools, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Wayland Schools, AAESA) – 1 position

**Chapter 5 representing** (City of Ludington, West Michigan Mental Health, Northwestern Michigan College, City of Belding, Ionia Courts, City of Hudsonville, ACSET) – 1 position

### **Region 3** (Contact [Carmella Johnson](#))

**Genesee County Road Commission** – 1 position

**City of Detroit** – 1 position

**St. Clair Co RESA** – 1 position

**City of Royal Oak** – 1 position

**Combined at Large** (All other Region 3 units except those listed above, Flint Schools, and Mott Community College) - 2 positions

### **Scientific and Engineering Unit** (Contact [Michelle Kusnier](#))

**MDARD** - 1 position

**MDOT** - 1 position

**DNR** - 1 position

**MSP** - 2 positions

**All departments with less than 50 members:** (Departments of Technology, Management & Budget; Labor and Economic Growth, Michigan Gaming Control Board; Corrections; Military and Veterans Affairs) - 1 position

## **State Membership Reauthorization Program Gets Assistance**

By Dave Corrie, Information Services Coordinator



As our 2021 State Employee Reauthorization Campaign gets into full swing we have added personnel to make it a success.

Pam Basal will be assisting us with our 2021 Reauthorization Campaign. She will be contacting members to reauthorize their union membership, already reauthorized members to survey their concerns and gain feedback, and contact non-members to discuss the benefits of union membership and how important it is to be united as we continue contract negotiations.

Pam is a retired Corrections Officer with 31 years experience and was a union member of our sister SEIU Local MCO her entire career. Her union-related experience includes serving as a union representative and chapter secretary. She also performed new officer recruitment for the department and served on the TISM Team (Traumatic Incident Stress Management) at her facility. Pam also serves as the U.P. Area Chair for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), having a strong devotion to Veterans and Military Service Members.

## **Union Workers Happier and More Satisfied With Their Jobs**

By Michelle Kaminski, MSU Labor Education Program

**Unions exist to improve conditions for working people.** But beginning in the 1970s, research consistently showed that unionized workers were less satisfied with their jobs than non-union workers. Researchers were puzzled by this. Why were unionized employees less satisfied with their jobs?

- Was it because the higher pay and benefits enticed workers to stay at jobs they would otherwise quit?
- Was it because people who worked in industries with overall poor working conditions were more likely to form unions?
- Was it because the grievance procedure gave workers a voice to address problems, and the union served as their advocate?

A **new comprehensive study by Blanchflower, Bryson, and Green** examined data from 2 million employees in the U.S. and Europe and found that there has been a significant change.

Beginning in about 2000 there was no difference in job satisfaction between union and non-union workers. But **since the Great Recession of 2008, union workers have been significantly more satisfied with their jobs than non-union workers.** A big reason for this is that union workers report knowing that good union jobs are not easily replaced.

As an added bonus, **union workers are also happier and more satisfied with their lives in general.** And finally, there is a generational shift. Beginning with workers born in the 1960s, unionized workers are more satisfied with their jobs than non-union workers.

**Bottom line: Today's unionized workers are happier than their non-union counterparts.**

Citation: Blanchflower, DG, Bryson, A, Green, C. Trade unions and the well-being of workers. British Journal of Industrial Relations 2021; 1– 23. <https://doi-org.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/10.1111/bjir.12627>

## **Additional State Disaster Funding Approved for Flood Victims**

By Dave Corrie, Information Services Coordinator

Governor Whitmer announced a plan to utilize \$10 million in state general funds to provide emergency relief to households impacted by the June flooding in Washtenaw and Wayne Counties. The funding comes from a supplemental funding bill approved on July 26th to assist affected areas with restoration costs and other expenses for households not eligible for federal assistance.

The funding will be allocated to the City of Detroit and the designated counties to set up residential gap funding grant programs to assist households not eligible for federal assistance or were not provided adequate resources from federal sources. Federal assistance was made possible when President Biden approved a major disaster declaration on July 15th.

An additional request for over \$50 million in federal funding was also made by Governor Whitmer to repair damaged infrastructure including highways and to improve pump station facilities.