



SEIU 517M
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

The **E-Former**

The Official Electronic Newsletter of
SEIU Local 517M

May 2025

International Workers Day - May 1st

Scholarship Bowling Fundraiser Set for June 28th

The SEIU 517M Tomorrow's Michigan Today Scholarship Fund will hold a fundraising bowling event on Saturday, June 28, 2025 at the Royal Scot Golf and Bowl located at 4722 W. Grand River Ave., Lansing, 48906. The event will start at Noon and will end at 4:00 p.m.

The cost is \$100 per lane for a 2-hour block. The blocks are Noon-2:00 pm, 2:00 pm - 4:00pm. This will include 2 hours of bowling, SEIU 517M T-Shirt, shoe rental, pizza, and a pitcher of pop for teams up to 5 bowlers per lane. Bumper lanes will be available for those teams not in the tournament.



This year we will be holding a Tournament. A team can enter the tournament for \$20. This is optional, you can just play for fun as well.

Complete the registration form on the next page no later than Friday, June 20, 2025. If you have any questions, please contact Dave Corrie at corried@seiu517m.org.

We look forward to seeing you there! [Register Now!](#)

AFRAM ASCEND Event on May 4th



Join us for AFRAM ASCEND: "A Seat at the AFRAM Table" where we celebrate Black excellence, culture, and community together! This event is being held at the Fitmiss Dance Studio (27206 Eight Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48033) on Sunday, May 4th from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Lunch will be provided at 2:10 pm.

Join us for a day filled with empowerment, connection, and celebration. This in-person event will bring together AFRAM leaders and allies to discuss important topics and share experiences. Get ready to network, learn and grow as we strive for a more inclusive future. Secure your spot now and be part of the conversation! Sponsored in part by SEIU AFRAM Michigan and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters. Save your spot and [Register Now](#).

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2025 AFRAM National Conference



The 2025 Bi-Annual SEIU AFRAM National Conference was held in Chicago on April 3-6th. The theme for the this year's conference was "Battered, Not Beaten: Defending our Democracy."

SEIU Local 517M attendees were Local 517M Secretary/Treasurer Joey Combs, HSS Unit President and DVP Janice Cosey, Flint Schools Unit President and Region 3 DVP Carmella Johnson, Region 3 Secretary Jan Martin, HSS Unit Board Members

Rabia Keo and Raceine McDonald.



There were a variety of workshops, speakers, panel discussions and plenary sessions dealing with subjects such as member engagement, organizing, and racial justice. There was a spotlight on some of the progressions and successes of African-American men and women in the labor movement and planning for the next two years.

SEIU International President April Verrett was honored at the Saturday night banquet.



Above: L-R: Raceine McDonald and Joey Combs. Below Left: Carmella Johnson, Below Right: Jan Martin. The fans were part of a dance number entitled "Boots on the Ground" and were available for purchase at the conference.



Picture Above: L-R: Janice Cosey and Rabia Keo

Together We Rise Conference

By Brandell Tomanica, SEIU 517M Staff



L-R: Clint Bryant, Brandell Tomanica and Joey Combs embrace the baseball theme of the conference.

SEIU Local 517M Secretary/Treasurer Joey Combs along with Labor Relations Specialists Clint Bryant and Brandell Tomanica, recently attended the SEIU Together We Rise Drivers, Bargainers, and Data Conference in Chicago. Clint, Brandell, and Joey are just a few of our dedicated team members out on the field, ready to hit the ball out of the park this year in SEIU's Drive to One Million. Here at 517M, our team is all in and ready to show up, show out and help our members bring home wins!

SEIU International President April Verrett spoke to the attendees and highlighted a lot of really important challenges we have in front of us and coming up on the horizon, but the one message that I can't stop thinking about and wanting to share is simple, and yet

still so profoundly critical of what we are here for. April said that she wants to make sure that every one of our members can afford to go grocery shopping. The kind where you don't have to stick to a strict list on a razor tight budget. She wants our members to be able to go grocery shopping while they are hungry and not have to worry about cutting into their rent money, their bill money, their credit cards! That's what brought Unions together in the first place, and it's what keeps us together still to this day.



At this year's conference we had panels discussing how important it will be to bring a culture of militancy to our movement. Now is not the time to shy away from taking risks, standing up against unfair treatment and fighting for our members' rights, and all workers' rights! These members are Starbucks workers from California who were so invested in their fight that they were arrested for "making good trouble." They now wear that as a badge of honor because in 2024, after two and a half years, they were successfully able to get Starbucks to agree to go to the table with them, in over 400 stores for more than

10,000+ workers. When we fight, we win! Adopting a culture of militancy will be how we get there.

Scholarship Application Deadline is May 23rd

The deadline for the SEIU 517M - Tomorrow's Michigan Today Scholarship is Friday, May 23, 2025. The scholarship is open to dues-paying members in good standing (as defined in the SEIU Local 517M Constitution and Bylaws), their spouse, children, step children, adopted children or grandchildren with college or trade school expenses.

There are 15 scholarships available and the amount of each scholarship is \$600. These non-renewable scholarships will be awarded to students based on successful completion of the application process and meeting certain criteria. Awards will be made via a lottery system from all eligible submissions. Scholarship applications are available now so [Click here](#).

SEIU Sponsors Lab Week Event



SEIU Local 517M hosted a lunch on April 24, 2025, at the Joint Laboratory in Lansing in conjunction with Medical Laboratory Professionals Week. SEIU represents Scientific and Engineering and Technical unit state employees working for EGLE and DHHS at the lab. These highly trained and dedicated health professionals contribute to quality health care and save countless lives each day by providing reliable laboratory test results required for prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment of diseases, and protection of the environment.

The presenters talked about the union, the benefits of union membership and the SEIU Local 517M Ambassador Program.



Pictured Right: SEIU Local 517M President Greg Merricle and Member Strength Director Marian Wilcox address the group.

Pictured Left: Technical Unit Senior Labor Relations Specialist Kevin Karpinski speaks to the attendees.



May is Mental Health Awareness Month



May is Mental Health Awareness month and the State of Michigan Employee Service Program (ESP) has assembled resources to assist individuals. These are not just for state employees, but can have general application for everyone.

Their newly redesigned [Wellness Resources](#) webpage contains information on managing stress, burnout, and supporting physical health and wellness, in addition to many other topics.

A new [Mindfulness](#) resource page has been created that offers videos, apps, and articles on the practice of mindfulness and its benefits.

Additional Mental Health Support and Resources

- ◆ [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline - Call. Text. Chat.](#) provides 24/7 free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention, and crisis resources.
- ◆ [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) offers information and resources to learn about mental illness or support a loved one who is struggling.
- ◆ [Workplace Mental Health Toolkit download | Mental Health America](#)

Six Things to Try This Month to Improve Your Mental Health:

1. Make a list of 5 things you are grateful for today.
2. Practice positive affirmations.
3. Start a conversation about mental health.
4. Stay hydrated.
5. Take a break from screens.
6. Practice a mindfulness technique.

Tech Notes - News for Technical Unit Members

We are creating a section of the newsletter dedicated to the issues being faced by our State of Michigan Technical Unit members. These will be under a section entitled “Tech Notes” and will be made up of summaries of topics. There will be a section on the SEIU Local 517M website where the full story can be read. Past articles will be archived with expanded coverage of the stories.

Technical Unit Challenges MDOT Subcontracting

Grievances have been filed under our contract and civil service challenging the subtracting of technical unit jobs. The current authorization was to supplement technical unit work, and not replace state civil service Technicians. Technical unit jobs have been lost in Detroit as the department continues to send work to contractors. The grievances were denied by MDOT at Step Two and appealed to OSE and Civil Service. The Civil Service grievance has been appealed to the Employment Relations Board after the Civil Service Hearing Officer denied a hearing on this matter. More to the story on the website.

Technical Unit Appeals Claim to Circuit Court

The Technical Unit Grievance Committee voted to file a claim in Circuit Court to overturn an Employment Relations Board decision that denied the Leave to Appeal by bargaining unit members challenging MDOT’s policy and application of overtime balancing under the Civil Service Rules and Regulations. The claim was filed after MDOT changed their policy on the balancing of overtime opportunities. More to the story on the website.

Long Term Disability Claim Denied

A long-term member has been denied her LTD claim. We are working with her to appeal the denial from Sedwick to the Employee Benefits Department in accordance with the Civil Service Rules and Regulations. We are in the process of obtaining all the documents needed for this appeal.

Failed Drug Tests

We have had some positive random drug tests recently. If you are in a drug test designated position, please remember that just because cannabis is legal in the State, it is still prohibited to be in your system if you are in a test designated position.

DNR Forestry & Wildlife - Denied Use of Annual Leave vs Comp Time

A Forestry Tech working for the DNR who is certified as a Forest Firefighter was denied the ability to use annual leave before accrued comp time. The Technical Unit Contract and FLSA allow for public safety and seasonal workers to use vacation time before comp time if their levels of annual leave are greater than 250 hours. Since seasonal workers are required to work a large amount of overtime/comp time, the contract allows to provide them the ability to use their annual leave to avoid having to lose hours as they reach closer to the cap. The department is claiming that fighting forest fires is not done “regularly” and the technicians are considered volunteers. More to the story on the website.

Labor-Management Meeting on Safety Standards

DTMB Radio Tech Unit Rep David Peck raised concerns about safety standards not included in the assignment of new work vehicles. A meeting was held regarding safety cages or barriers between the driver and the rear cargo areas of trucks and SUV’s. Previous assigned vehicles had safety cages so in the event of an accident or roll-over, tools boxes and radio tower components will not hurl through the vehicle unrestrained potentially causing injury or death. More to the story on the website.

[Access the Expanded Tech Notes Section Here.](#)

Shop Sensational Saginaw Begins June 6th



One of the most anticipated summer events in the Great Lakes Bay Region — **Shop Sensational Saginaw** will be taking place **June 6–8, 2025** at the SVRC Marketplace Pavilion in Downtown Saginaw. This is the same location as the SEIU Local 517M Saginaw Office at 203 S. Washington Ave., Saginaw.

This three-day celebration is more than a market — it's a movement. Designed to amplify the energy, culture, and creativity of Saginaw, this vibrant event will feature:

- **60+ local vendors and food trucks**
- **Live entertainment** including DJs, bands, and themed nights
- **A classic car show** and family-friendly experiences

Admission is free, but they ask that you check out the small, local shops and support them. Hours will be Friday - 5 pm - 10 pm, Saturday - 4 pm - 10 pm, and Sunday - 12 pm - 7 pm.

Daily Themes:

Friday, June 6 – Boots, Eats & Beats (Rodeo Style):

- Food Truck Alley down Water Street
- DJ on the 1's and 2's
- Live Music on Stage.
- iMix Mobile & Good Ash Cigar Lounge for the perfect adult night out vibe

Saturday, June 7 – Salsa, Shopping & Street Eats (Latin Inspired):

- Salsa and Merengue Dancers
- Traditional tacos, authentic tacos, Saginaw's famous taco creations.

Sunday, June 8 – Community Cruisin' Car Show (Family Fun Day):

- Food, games, music and community fun
- Classic cars, lowriders, jeep clubs, corvettes & antique show vehicles.

[Click here for more details.](https://svrcmarketplace.com)