



SEIU 517M
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

The E-Former

The Official Electronic Newsletter of
SEIU Local 517M

January 2026

As We Move into 2026

With one year as President of the local, we are standing at a moment of transition and renewal. The many internal and external issues that demanded so much of our time, energy, and attention are behind us. With those matters resolved, we will refocus fully on what truly matters: representing our members, strengthening our union, and building a future rooted in solidarity, transparency, and growth.

Over the past year, we have taken deliberate steps to strengthen governance and financial oversight.

One of the most important milestones this year is that we are almost fully staffed. My goal was to have a full staff by the end of the year and we are almost there! We have three new employees who have joined our team:

- Jake Tkaczyk, working alongside Dave Corrie
- Joe Bellgowan, supporting our State units
- Larry Sedrowski, supporting HSS, the City of Saginaw, and the St. Joseph County Road Commission

Member leadership development remains a priority. Steward Training will be held on **February 21–22, 2026**, at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing. Michigan State University's Labor Law program will provide a half-day presentation, and staff will facilitate breakout sessions for both new and experienced stewards. This training is designed to meet members where they are and equip them with the tools they need to advocate effectively.

The **State Ambassador Program** is designed to serve multiple purposes, with its most important goal being the identification and development of future leaders within our union. The program creates meaningful opportunities for members to become more involved, gain a broader understanding of the union's mission, values, and structure, and deepen their commitment to both the local and the membership as a whole. In addition to leadership development, the program expands our communication network. State Ambassadors serve as key communicators—helping to share important information, updates, and initiatives from the union to the membership, while also bringing feedback, concerns, and ideas from members back to union leadership. This two-way communication is essential to building trust, engagement, and unity across the organization. Ultimately, the program helps cultivate a strong pipeline of engaged leaders who are prepared to support the union's work today and guide it into the future.

With our various distractions behind us, a full staff in place, engaged members, and clear priorities, we are entering the next chapter of our Local stronger and more focused than ever. Our commitment is simple: to do what is best for our members, to represent them with integrity and strength, and to build a union that is prepared not just for today—but for the future.

When we move forward together, grounded in solidarity and shared purpose, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

Happy New Year!

Greg Merricle, SEIU Local 517M President

Staff Directory

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Labor Relations: School and Local Government Units

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Information Services:

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API Caucus - Lue Yang released from Baldwin

Rabia Keo, SEIU API Midwest Region Committee

Lue Yang, a resident of St. Johns and a Hmong refugee, has been released from ICE custody after being detained since July. Lue, who came to the U.S. legally following the Vietnam War, was transported from an ICE facility in Baldwin, Michigan, to Grand Rapids, where he was warmly greeted by his family and supporters.

In the Lansing area, Lue has made a real difference as a leader with the Hmong Family Association, despite facing challenges with his citizenship due to a past conviction. We're happy to share that Governor Gretchen Whitmer granted him a pardon in October to help prevent his deportation.

"I'm so relieved that Lue is back with his family," said Barrett, who worked tirelessly for his release. "Lue is not an illegal immigrant and poses no threat to our community."

The SEIU, including API Caucus, is actively and firmly against ICE raids and its enforcement practices, advocating for immigrant rights and demanding the abolition of ICE. The union views these raids as "cruel, " unjust," and "economically destructive. "The David Huerta Incident: A high-profile incident involved the arrest and injury of SEIU California President David Huerta by ICE in June 2025 while he was peacefully observing a workplace raid in Los Angeles. This event galvanized further protests and statements from the SEIU and other labor organizations like the AFL-CIO, who condemned the actions and demanded his release and the dropping of "baseless charges".

The API SEIU is dedicated to advocating for civil rights, supporting immigrant issues, empowering workers, fighting for wage increases, and improving healthcare and working conditions for AAPI communities and all people of color. SEIU API Caucus here in Michigan actively works with community organizations like Rising Voices, Laotian American Community of Michigan (LACM), and also Immigrant & Refugee Resource Collaborative (IRRC), plus many more, to address immigration issues, providing "Know Your Rights". We're proud of the work being done to support and uplift everyone!

Rabia Keo from SEUI API meeting Lue Yang, his wife, and the governor's staff, plus Representative Mai Xiong, at an event that celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Lao Diaspora.



Moving Forward Together

By: Claire Corr, 517M Executive Director

Our Annual Meeting on December 13, held in Lansing and on Zoom, marked a meaningful moment for SEIU Local 517M. After a challenging period, this year is closing on a strong note, and our Local is entering 2026 with renewed focus, stability, and confidence.

Over the past year, leadership worked through serious and necessary matters that demanded time and attention. With those issues now behind us, the Local is fully refocused on what matters most: serving our members, strengthening our union, and preparing for the future. The work done in 2025 has laid a solid foundation - one built on accountability, transparency, and trust.

We are ending the year nearly fully staffed, better positioned to support members across worksites, and ready to meet the demands ahead. Strong representation remains at the center of our work, and recent contract successes show what is possible when members are engaged and the union is united.

Just as important, this year reaffirmed our commitment to developing leaders and staying connected to each other, to our communities, and to the values that define SEIU. From leadership development and member engagement to political advocacy and community service, the Local continues to show up where it counts.

Looking ahead to 2026, our focus is clear: growth, sustainability, and long-term strength. That means investing in leadership at every level, organizing for the future, improving communication and transparency, and ensuring that our union remains strong for the next generation of members.

We are entering the next chapter grounded in lessons learned, confident in our direction, and united in purpose. When we move forward together, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.



Click the link to watch the 2025 Annual Meeting: https://youtu.be/cftfS_dt6cw

Union Values in Action at the Southside Community Kitchen

By: Claire Corr, 517M Executive Director

On Monday, December 15, SEIU 517M staff came together to prepare and serve a nutritious lunch at the Southside Community Kitchen. Participating as a team was an important reflection of our union values - solidarity, dignity, and collective care. As a union, we believe in lifting up working people and our communities, and this experience allowed staff to put those values into action beyond the workplace.



The Southside Community Kitchen's mission aligns closely with our own: meeting people where they are, restoring dignity and worth, and creating connection through care and compassion. Each meal is served in a safe, warm, and welcoming space, reminding us that everyone deserves respect and support.

The need for this work is clear. One in six Michiganders experiences food insecurity, including 400,000 children. Rates are higher for certain groups, with significant impacts on low-income families, people of color, and younger adults.

Our time at the Kitchen was a powerful reminder that unions play a vital role not only in advocating for workers' rights, but also in strengthening the communities we are part of.



You are invited to join the caring people who support this mission and help ensure every neighbor feels nourished, valued, and supported. Not in Lansing? Call 2-1-1 to find the nearest community kitchen in your area or find another cause that is near and dear to your heart.

New Senior Labor Relations Specialist Hired at Local 517M!

Local 517M has hired a new Senior Labor Relations Specialist, Larry Sedrowski! Larry will be representing the Human Services Support (HSS) Unit, the City of Saginaw, and the St. Joseph County Road Commission.

Before joining SEIU 517M, Larry spent the past 22-Years as a Mediator for the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Service (FMCS). That work involved both public and private sector negotiations, grievance resolution, labor-management promotion, and conflict resolution.

Prior to FMCS, Larry was an Ironworker and Business Agent for Local 25 Detroit. He is a Graduate of Oakland and Saginaw Valley State Universities. He resides in Midland with his Family and is active in the Tri-Counties community.



SEIU Local 517M is proud to welcome Larry to the team!