



SEIU 517M
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

E-FORMER

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APRIL 2026



TOMORROW'S MICHIGAN TODAY

BY: RITA LAMOREAUX, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Did you know that SEIU 517M has special member benefits that serve you and your family? Did you know our union is connected to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit? It's called Tomorrow's Michigan Today.

The charitable arm of our union offers scholarships and disaster relief grants to support our members and their families. Both programs are for dues-paying members in good standing (as defined in the SEIU Local 517M Constitution and Bylaws). These programs are possible through the generosity of our members through donations or fundraising events such as the golf outings we have hosted in the past.

Each year, the Tomorrows Michigan Today Scholarship awards 15 \$600 scholarships for members, their spouse, children, stepchildren, adopted children, or grandchildren with college or trade school expenses. The 2026 Scholarship Applications are now available. [Click here](#) to apply. The deadline is 4:00 p.m. on May 29, 2026.

The SEIU 517M Disaster Relief Fund supports our members who may be experiencing hardship due to a natural disaster. During difficult times, we want our members to know they are not alone. Those who have been impacted are encouraged to apply for grants up to \$500 which provides limited financial assistance to eligible members. Follow this [link](#) if you have been affected by the recent natural disasters in Michigan.

Over the past month, we've provided support to members affected by flooding in Saginaw and the tornadoes that moved through Southwest Michigan. This commitment to members supporting members is what makes our union strong!

If you want to know more about our programs or would like to donate, contact Rita LaMoreaux at rlamoreaux@seiu517m.org or 517-267-2095.

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SAGINAW PUBLIC SCHOOL MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT SITE VISIT CAMPAIGN: BUILDING STRONGER CONNECTIONS WITH AN INSPIRING TEAM

BY: MARIAN WILCOX, MEMBER STRENGTH DIRECTOR



Over the past several weeks, SEIU 517M has launched its Saginaw Public School Membership Engagement Site Visit Campaign—an initiative that continues to highlight the power of connection, collaboration, and community. These face-to-face visits have brought renewed energy and appreciation, transforming names into meaningful relationships and reinforcing the strength of this incredible group. So far, visits have included Chester Miller Elementary School, Saginaw United High School, Thompson Middle School, and Herig Elementary School.

From the very beginning, the warmth and openness shown by members created a genuine sense of belonging. It's clear that this is more than just a workplace—it's a community rooted in respect, kindness, and shared purpose, making a real difference in the everyday experience of its members.

During each visit, members received copies of their contract—an essential tool for understanding their rights, benefits, and the full scope of what has been achieved together. Saginaw Public Schools Steward Dennis Morrison and Member Strength Director Marian Wilcox took time to answer questions about the 25.5% wage increase for Paraprofessionals and the 11% wage increase for the Patrol Officers that SEIU 517M won at the bargaining table. Dennis and Marian also took time to provide support to ensure that members feel informed and supported.

What stands out most is the dedication and passion SEIU 517M members bring to their work. That commitment does not go unnoticed—it inspires not only continued support, but also celebration.

Looking ahead, there are exciting opportunities to further strengthen these connections through future gatherings and solidarity events. Whether large or small, each moment spent together helps build the unity that makes this community so strong.

This group truly represents the heart of a strong union—engaged, supportive, and united. Dennis and Marian look forward to continuing visits to all Saginaw Public Schools throughout the remainder of the school year. Schools will be notified in advance, so be sure to watch for email updates, stop by to connect with your union representatives, and pick up some SEIU 517M SWAG!

Here's to many more opportunities to connect, support one another, and celebrate all that you do.

NEW LEADERS SPOTLIGHT

BY: BRANDELL TOMANICA, LABOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST

The City of Muskegon Clerical Unit has elected Jillian Burns as its new President, and Andrea Robinson as Steward. As they step into these roles for the first time, we want to recognize their commitment to our union and the courage it takes to take on leadership roles. Their willingness to serve strengthens our collective voice and reflects the power of members stepping up to lead.

When asked why they stepped into these roles and what the union means to them Jillian said “Being part of a union makes me feel empowered because I know my voice matters and I have the support of others standing with me. I want to help others experience that same strength by encouraging them to speak up, stay informed, and stand together for what’s fair. That is why I wanted to be union president, to help others feel the strength I feel from others around me”.

Andrea said “I wanted to step up into this role because I care deeply about standing up for others and making sure everyone is treated fairly. My background as a first responder has taught me the importance of advocating for people when it matters most, and I want to bring that same mindset to our union. To me, the union means strength in unity-having each other’s backs and working together to create a better, more supportive workplace for everyone”.

As we celebrate Jillian and Andrea stepping into leadership, let’s also take a moment to thank the leaders in our own units who show up every day to support their coworkers. Our union is strongest when members get involved, whether that means attending meetings, supporting your team, or taking the step into leadership yourself. You could be the next emerging leader, helping to move our union forward.

Save the Date: SEIU Michigan Lobby Day – April 15

Join SEIU 517M and our partners: SEIU MCO Local 526M, SEIU Healthcare Michigan, and SEIU Local 1, for a Lobby Day at the Capitol in Lansing on April 15. This is our opportunity to come together, meet with legislators, and advocate on the issues that matter most to us.

We’ll gather at 9:30 a.m. at the DoubleTree in Lansing (formerly the Radisson Hotel), with lobby visits taking place throughout the day. Breakfast, lunch, and plenty of solidarity will be provided.

Stay tuned for more details!



HONORING A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP: DARYL BUCHANAN RECEIVES LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD

BY: LAMONT WILLIAMS, LABOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST

Although Daryl Buchanan was unable to attend the SEIU 517M Steward Leadership Conference held February 20–22, 2026, his impact was still proudly recognized. Mr. Buchanan was honored as a recipient of the SEIU 517M Lifetime Leadership & Service Award, a testament to his decades of dedication and unwavering commitment to union values.

To ensure this recognition was properly celebrated, Mr. Buchanan was presented with his award at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center (CAYMC) in downtown Detroit—home to both the City of Detroit and Wayne County government offices.

As Mr. Buchanan prepares for retirement later this year, he leaves behind an extraordinary legacy. With 32 years of service to the City of Detroit, he has spent the last eight years serving as Union President of the Non-Supervisory Unit, where his leadership has been nothing short of exceptional.

Throughout his tenure, Mr. Buchanan has been a tireless advocate for union members. He has consistently gone above and beyond in:

- Negotiating strong contracts
- Investigating and resolving grievances
- Recruiting and engaging new union members
- Educating coworkers on the importance of union solidarity
- Organizing meetings to keep members informed and involved

He has never hesitated to stand firm in holding management accountable, ensuring that the contract is enforced and that the rights and protections of union members are upheld.

Mr. Buchanan has recently passed the torch to newly elected Union President Isaiah Bomar, marking a new chapter for the unit while continuing the strong foundation he helped build.

SEIU 517M extends its deepest gratitude to Daryl Buchanan for his outstanding leadership, unwavering dedication, and steadfast loyalty to the union and its members. His legacy will continue to inspire for years to come.



SEIU 517M
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

A DAY IN COURT – UNION STYLE

BY: CLAIRE CORR,
517M EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I recently sat in on an arbitration involving an ADA issue, and wow, I didn't expect to be that into it. But honestly? It was fascinating.

Arbitration is often called our "day in court," and after seeing it up close, that really hits. This is the final step, where everything comes together and the members' stories are heard.

What stood out most was the work behind the scenes. Our staff reps at 517M put in serious time by researching, prepping, interviewing, and digging into every detail. By the time arbitration starts, they're ready! And it shows.

They ask tough questions. They cross-examine. They make sure our members' voices are heard loud and clear.

It's not about putting on a show, it's about getting it right. It's about fairness, accountability, and doing everything possible to make a member whole whether it's ADA, discipline, termination, or anything in between.

Watching it all unfold gave me a new appreciation for arbitration. It's not flashy. It's not fast. But it matters. It's one of the strongest rights we have as union members, and a powerful reminder that when it counts, we show up and stand together in solidarity.



SEIU LOCAL 517M EARNS NATIONAL GROWTH AWARD

BY: CLAIRE CORR,
517M EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We're proud to share that SEIU Local 517M has been recognized with a Growth Award for exceeding our goal of signing up 500 new dues-paying members in 2025. We didn't just meet the goal, we surpassed it, welcoming 564 new members into our union! This achievement places us among just three locals across the entire SEIU to earn this distinction. This is what solidarity looks like. This is what commitment looks like. This is what happens when we organize, stand together, and do the right thing. Membership matters. Solidarity matters. Recognition matters.

The union matters. And most importantly, WE matter. Thank you to every member who made this possible.



REMINDER: 2026 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE!

The SEIU 517M - Tomorrow's Michigan Today Scholarship is open to dues-paying members in good standing (as defined in the SEIU Local 517M Constitution and Bylaws), their spouse, children, stepchildren, 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.



2026 Scholarship Applications are now available. [Click here.](#)

SEIU 517M WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS TO THE STAFF!

SEIU 517M would like to welcome to our staff Rita LaMoreaux as the Director of Operations

Rita will support the daily operations and long-term success of the local as well as support HR efforts, financial functions, policy development and updates. She will lead the local's non-profit Tomorrow's Michigan Today and will work with our Executive Director on strategic planning and direction for the union. She is excited to expand the workforce development opportunities for our members and helping with government relations and community outreach.

Rita comes from a background of supporting member-oriented organizations for the past 30 plus years. As a life-long resident of Lansing, she has many relationships in Lansing to aid SEIU 517M in expanding our outreach.

With a varied background, she brings a wealth of knowledge to the union. She most recently ran her own consulting and nonprofit management firm, Lacor Consultants. With her move to SEIU 517M, her husband Dave Corrie, a recent retiree of our union, will take the reins of the business.

In the past, Rita was the Executive Director of the Lansing Area Safety Council. Prior positions included work at the Michigan Association of Insurance Agents, MIRS News Service, City of Lansing and State of Michigan DNR.

Rita has an Associate's Degree from Lansing Community College and two other degrees from Western Michigan University. As a life-long learner, she has many professional designations to help her with knowledge to aid our members.

Giving back to her community is important to Rita. She is currently on the boards of the Capital Area College Access Network and Association of Fundraising Professionals, Capital Region and volunteers with the Lansing Community College Foundation.



TECH NOTES – NEWS FOR TECHNICAL UNIT MEMBERS

BY: KEVIN KARPINSKI, SENIOR LABOR RELATIONS SPECIALIST

THIS SECTION OF THE NEWSLETTER IS DEDICATED TO THE ISSUES BEING FACED BY OUR STATE OF MICHIGAN TECHNICAL UNIT MEMBERS.

The State health plan is restricting weight loss drugs such as Ozempic for those who do not have Diabetes or other conditions mandating such a prescription. It appears that weight loss alone is not something they are willing to support. Your Technical Union leadership and staff sit on a Joint Healthcare Committee with the State.

We would like to hear your stories in support of having access to these weight loss drugs, especially if you have verifiable medical provider statements or support for using the drugs for weight loss as a healthy component that stands by itself.



Please send me your stories at kkarpinski@seiu517m.org

I will commit to working on behalf of this issue at the joint healthcare meetings.