

SEIU Local 73 Committee on the Future

Member Strength Committee Recommendation

The Member Strength Committee has determined that in order to have a strong and sustainable union, it is important for union staff and member leaders to work together to build power for working people in Illinois and Northwest Indiana. A model that relies exclusively on staff is unsustainable. It is not possible for the limited number of union staff alone to reach the 2,200 worksites where Local 73 members work or service the 220 plus contracts that cover Local 73 members. To create a model that is sustainable and can build real power, the Member Strength Committee has made the following recommendations for SEIU Local 73' Member Strength Program:

The areas of work that are needed to have a robust and engaged Member Strength program that builds power for our members:

- **EDUCATION:** develop a training structure for Staff, Stewards and worksite leaders that addresses the ever-changing work of the union, and equips our leaders with the tools necessary to continue to build worker power
- **POLITICAL ACTION:** Build a political program that identifies, educates and develops strategies to engage our union in the political process, identifying our key issues, engaging and holding politicians accountable on and for our issues.
- **COMMUNITY:** We must work within our communities to bring social and economic justice, as well as make sure our communities reflect our vision of a just society.
- **COMMUNICATIONS:** Build a communication structure that reaches our members through the multitude of available platforms that reflect our vision and the important work that is being done.
- **FELLOWSHIP:** We must develop opportunities for members to connect in as many ways as possible to bring us closer together and highlight our similarities, building social bridges which make us stronger and more connected.
- **REPRESENTATION:** We must ensure that we have an effective representation program that builds power in our work sites.

The Member Strength Committee recommends that the areas involved in developing member strength be driven by three integrated tiers:

1. **Union Representatives**
2. **Member Leaders**
3. **Member Resource Center**

1. UNION REPRESENTATIVES:

A well-educated and trained Union Representation staff that is adequate to handle all the responsibilities as needed including, Contract Negotiations and enforcement, identifying and training new leaders, engaging members in campaigns, developing relationship with employers and handling Labor Management issues, and developing political strategies that build worker power.

2. MEMBER LEADERS:

This is the core of an effective Member Strength program. This is the foundation on which all our power is based on. This group includes our Activists, Stewards and Chief Stewards.

We propose a Multi layered system that allows for maximum participation of our members at places they will feel comfortable in moving the union's program;

- **Activist-** a member who organizes workers into the union, distributes communications to members from the office, stewards or other member leaders, turns out for rallies and other events, and helps move the union program.
- **Steward-** A member who performs all activist roles with an additional focus on collective bargaining enforcement, and worksite issues.
- **Chief Steward-** This is our top tier leader. They are responsible for overall union program; Distributing communications and helping turn out members to events, sign up members on membership cards, handling grievances, and Collective bargaining enforcement, participates in contract negotiations and contract action team (CAT) development.

STEWARDS

The role of a member leader is extremely important and is the core of our overall representation program. Stewards/member leaders must establish a trust with their members, and employers; be accountable to their members and the union as a whole; be knowledgeable about, and diligent in their enforcement the contract, ensuring that the union program is alive and vibrant. We must know our members and be the person of first contact with new members coming into our work places (attending new member orientations). We must be able to communicate effectively and consistently with members and the Union's Leadership. Stewards must be creative thinkers, who look for pro-active solutions to problems and issues in the workplace. The Union steward is the key to a strong member strength program.

Requirements for being a Steward.

A Steward/member leader must be selected by one of three means;

- Election in their workplace
- Petition signed by a sufficient number of members in their workplace
- Appointment by Union President until such time as there can be democratic selection
- Subject to re-election every contract cycle

A Chief Steward must meet a higher threshold for selection

- Appointed/ Elected both must have petition signed by other stewards
- Have the recommendation of their Division Director
- Must be approved by Union President

All Activists and Stewards must take an Oath of Office.

All stewards who are classified as supervisors should only represent supervisors unless no other steward is available.

STEWARD –MEMBER LEADER / TRAINING (All Member Leaders must go through appropriate training).

Activist

- Must attend either steward training #1, or an online course to be developed.

Steward

- Must attend two of training modules before being acknowledged as a representation steward.
- Responsible for moving the program of union,
- Can handle basic workplace issues

Chief Steward

- Must successfully complete all four training modules
- Chief must exhibit grievance/worksite issue handling competency
- Be well versed, and actively implementing union program
- Must have attended/facilitated new member orientations

STEWARD-MEMBER LEADER /SUPPORT: The "Member Strength" Committee believes that an effective steward system provides the necessary tools and recognition and support to the Union's worksite leaders.

We recommend the following program.

- Annual Member Leaders Convention
 1. Updates in training and new information
 2. Recognition for work as a member leader, including special recognition for Vice Presidents, Executive Boards, Chapter leaders, and activists, stewards and chief stewards.
 3. Luncheon
- The Union President or designee will ensure that paid union staff will be accessible to member leaders, (cellphone numbers, email etc....)
- Develop a peer to peer support system
 1. Quarterly area meetings
 2. "Zoom" conferences
 3. Tele-Town Hall meetings
 4. Chapter structures
- Steward's dedicated "Hotline" at MRC
- Stewards only Webpage access only
 1. Tools to help Stewards/Member Leaders

2. Short trainings
3. Union updates

STEWARD-MEMBER LEADER STRUCTURES: To best develop a steward structure, the local must determine the number of members leaders needed to maintain a presence across our many work sites. Once established, we will need to focus on how we recruit, train and maintain regular line of communication with work site leaders.

The Committee recommends of at least one Member Leader in every work site as well as one steward for every 50 members. In large bargaining units, we recommend that a steward should be present in every department and shift.

In addition, the committee has identified several other factors including the “reach” of our stewards/Member Leaders:

- Stewards ability to travel to different locations
- Stewards knowledge of different contracts
- Accessibility to units (i.e. hospital departments, secured locations)
- Knowledge of Organizing (Union Program)

STEWARD-MEMBER LEADER /RECRUITMENT, The committee recommends the following to achieve the goal of a leader in every worksite.

- Develop a robust communication program to inform members of leadership opportunities
 - a. SEIU Local 73 website
 - b. Bulletin Boards in work locations
 - c. Information in new member packets
 - d. Email sent to members
 - e. Swag(Union/Steward Pin)
- Utilizing both our existing Stewards and Union staff to identify and recruit new leaders

3. MEMBER RESOURCE CENTER

Our MRC will be the third pillar of our program, augmenting our union Representation and Member leader teams, addressing issues using the best available tools (including technology and a state-of-the-art call center) , becoming a one-stop shop for members to get information, problems resolved and questions answered.

The Committee recommends that the Union immediately move to develop a fully functional MRC that ensures the following items are in place to move our overall program:

- Adequate and trained staffing to answer member questions and meet the local’s representation needs

- Technology to perform these functions more efficiently without sacrificing quality (videoconference, teleconferencing, etc.)
- Supports stewards functioning in the workplace with real-time support
- Standard operating procedures (SOP's) to ensure continuity and effective results for members.
- Is consistently updated on important issues and matters that affect members
- Has business hours that reflect the 24-7 nature of the members we serve
- Plan for “institutionalizing” the MRC to our members, including a communication plan for rolling out the MRC.
- Staffed with individuals capable of speaking the languages spoken by the membership.

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS RECOMMENDATIONS
MEMBER STRENGTH SUB-COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE OF LOCAL 73**

The Member Strength Subcommittee has proposed constitution and bylaws provisions that:

1. **Empower members** to rise up in their union, come together, and take action to raise standards for working families in their workplaces and communities ;
2. Establish **structures that emanate from the workplace**;
3. **Focus the Union** on building power for members and raising standards for working families; and
4. Hold members and elected officers **responsible** to their charge.

Additionally, the Member Strength Committee believes that the Constitution and Bylaws should be a set of **governing principles**, and, as such, need not contain certain detailed provisions on such items as duties of union representatives, or other detailed processes and procedures. Such policies and procedures should be reserved for the Union’s Standard Operating Procedures. Finally, the Committee felt that the Constitution and Bylaws should provide the Union with sufficient **flexibility** to adapt to specific facts and circumstances.

CHAPTERS/DIVISIONS/COMMITTEES

The suspended Local 73 constitution and bylaws establishes stewards councils, at least five committees, and chapters. With a few exceptions, these various structures were never constituted. Some of the structures, such as stewards councils and chapters, appear to overlap. Few provisions exist in the constitution and bylaws to determine how members are selected to these different structures, and there were few requirements that they report their activities to the union periodically or otherwise remain accountable to their charge.

The suspended constitution and bylaws also provides for divisions, but those divisions did not emanate from the workplace. Rather, they are administrative divisions of union staff to perform the representation functions of the union.

As a result of its analysis, the Member Strength Subcommittee has determined that most of the structures established in the suspended Local 73 constitution and bylaws should not be retained, as they either overlap, are defunct, or not based upon building power in the workplace. In place of the structures set forth in the suspended constitution and bylaws, the Member Strength Subcommittee recommends eliminating many of the different structures to focus attention on developing strong chapters, where membership in a chapter is employer-based for large employers, or, where there is not a large employer, based upon common geography or industry, and where chapters are given autonomy to create their own constitution and bylaws and engage in democracy at the worksite level so that the union lives in the workplace, not just at the Union's headquarters.

The Member Strength Subcommittee recommends retaining four other committees (the Committee on Education and Training, the Organizing Committee, the Committee on Political Education, and the Civil and Human Rights Committee (renamed as the new Social and Economic Justice Committee). Each of these committees is essential to building power for working families. The Education and Training Committee will take on a vital role to ensure that everyone from activists and stewards, to executive board members, are properly trained to perform their functions. For the other committees, a union that does not organize cannot survive. It is imperative to be politically active for any union, but especially so for a predominantly public sector union. And the union must continue to raise the standards for all workers through robust social and economic justice initiatives.

To ensure that these committees are constituted, empowered, and held responsible to their charge, the subcommittee recommends that the bylaws set forth a process for selection of the committee members that includes education and training for selected committee members, and a requirement that they hold regular meetings and report on their activities regularly at governance meetings of the union.

Consistent with these principles, the Member Strength Subcommittee recommends the following Constitution and Bylaws provisions:

Chapters.

Section 1. The Executive Board of SEIU Local 73 may establish chapters for each bargaining unit, or for combined bargaining units, or groups of workers with a common geography, employer or industry, and for retired members, and units that will be organized.

Section 2. Chapters may adopt and amend their own bylaws, subject to the approval of SEIU Local 73's Executive Board. Chapter bylaws may not conflict with and are subordinate to the SEIU Local 73 Constitution and Bylaws and the International Union Constitution and Bylaws.

Section 3. Chapters shall hold chapter membership meetings on a regular basis but in no case less than twice per year.

Section 4. Any Chapter willfully neglecting to enforce the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of SEIU Local 73, or the International Union, or its own bylaws, shall be subject to suspension or

revocation of its chapter status or such other sanctions as may be determined by SEIU Local 73's Executive Board.

Committees.

The Executive Board shall appoint members to a Committee on Training and Education, Social and Economic Justice Committee, Organizing Committee, Retirees Committee, and Committee on Political Education to assist the Executive Board in each committee's area of the Union's activities. Other ad hoc committees may be created as needed. Executive Board members shall be appointed by the President to chair each of the committees. Other appointments to the committees will be available to the general membership, and will only be made after the Union announces available committee positions and solicits member volunteers. The duties of such committees shall be determined by the Executive Board in accordance with the International Union Constitution and Bylaws. The chair of each committee shall be responsible for rendering regular reports of the activities of the committee to the Executive Board.

Pursuant to the International Constitution and Bylaws, SEIU Local 73 shall not establish its own registered federal political committee or any political candidates fund for contributions in connection with federal elections, unless this prohibition is waived by the International President.

GRIEVANCE APPEALS

The Member Strength Committee is comfortable with the current practice at the Local Union, where Local staff and officers make final determinations whether to file and pursue individual grievances. The Committee believes that the governing bodies should be responsible for governing the Union, not operational decisions with respect to individual grievances. The Committee has further concerns with the impracticality of any sort of member review process, as (1) contractual timeframes for filing or advancing grievances are likely to be missed pending member review of such decisions, and (2) the volume of work associated with reviewing such decisions could overwhelm a committee of member volunteers, as there are more than a hundred such reviews that must occur within any given year. As such, the Committee recommends removing the language in the suspended constitution and bylaws providing for grievance appeals and inserting the following language in the appropriate place in the context of the constitution and bylaws:

The Local and its officers and representative may decline to process any grievance, complaint or dispute, if in their reasonable judgment such grievance or dispute lacks merit.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING/STRIKES

The Constitution and Bylaws should retain the current language providing for contract ratification and strike authorization by the impacted members, but it is unnecessary to require that such ratification be by secret ballot in all circumstances and a simple majority of impacted voting members should be sufficient to authorize a strike. To maintain credibility, the Committee does not believe that strikes should ever be authorized without broad support from the impacted membership. However, the Committee understands that the threat of a strike can sometimes be effective in achieving gains at the bargaining table, and does not want to place unnecessary hurdles on members' abilities to authorize such collective action. As such, the Member Strength Subcommittee proposes the following language:

The authority to ratify collective bargaining agreements and authorize strikes is vested in the members of the bargaining unit directly involved, with approval from the President of SEIU Local 73. Prior to authorizing a strike, proper notice must be given to the International Union President.

ACTIVISTS AND STEWARDS

The Member Strength Committee identified three levels of member activism within the workplace:

- Activists responsible for organizing workers in a worksite and sharing information;
- Stewards responsible for activist duties as well as representation functions; and
- Chief Stewards selected from among the stewards.

The Committee created two categories of leadership, activist and steward, with the understanding that there are individuals who want to be involved in the program of the union and lead by organizing and sharing information with coworkers, but may not be interested in performing the representation functions of a union steward. The Committee believes that it is important to recognize the important potential and contributions of these member leaders as Activists, while maintaining opportunities for others to perform more traditional roles as union stewards.

Identifying, developing, and empowering these member leaders is crucial to the long-term strength of the Union, and that the Constitution and Bylaws should reflect the Union's goals of identifying, training and educating member leaders in every worksite where Local 73 has members. As such, the Committee proposes the following language:

Member Activists, Union Stewards, and Chief Stewards.

Section 1. Member Leadership. Member leaders (Activists, Stewards, and Chief Stewards) act as the principal point of contact between the general membership and the rest of the Union on a day to day basis. As such, member leaders play a vital role in the organization and strength of the Union.

Section 2. Activists. Activists shall be responsible for informing, engaging and activating members within their area in the program, campaigns, goals and objectives of the Union; participating in Union committees, distributing Union communications to the membership in their area; developing programs for internal organizing, including ensuring that all represented workers are members of the Union; and organizing new workers into the Union. There can be an unlimited number of Activists in the workplace.

Section 3. Union Stewards. Union Stewards shall perform all Activists roles. Additionally, Union Stewards shall report all contract violations and problems on the job to the assigned Union staff or officers to collaborate on avenues for resolution, enforce the contract, resolve disputes in the workplace, and receive and process grievances when members report a violation.

Section 4. Chief Stewards. Union Stewards at a worksite or in a specifically defined bargaining unit may select a Chief Steward from among the Union Stewards. Chief Stewards shall be responsible for holding regular meetings among the Union Stewards and members within the area of service to develop plans for all Union Stewards and Activists in their area of service to effectively perform their duties, and discussing current problems and grievances within the workplace and reporting such

problems and grievances to the assigned Union staff and officers to collaborate on avenues for resolution.

Section 5. Selection, Eligibility, and Removal. Recognizing the importance of an informed, educated, and activated membership, the Executive Officers shall endeavor to have at least one Activist or Union Steward at every workplace where SEIU Local 73 represents workers, and at least one additional Activist or Union Steward for every 50 represented workers in a worksite. Union Stewards shall be democratically selected for the term of their collective bargaining agreement. Activists and Union Stewards must be members of the union, complete training and education as determined by the Education and Training Committee, and take the Installation Obligation contained in Appendix A prior to being installed. In emergency situations, or until such time as there can be democratic selection, the President may appoint union stewards. Union Stewards can be removed at any time by the simple majority petition of members in the Union Steward's area of coverage. In an emergency situation, the President may remove an Activist or Union Steward from his/her position for good cause shown, subject to the approval of the Executive Board. Following removal, or vacancy in an Activist or Union Steward position, new candidates shall be selected in accordance with the procedures set forth above.

DUTIES OF UNION REPRESENTATIVES

The suspended Local 73 Constitution and Bylaws stands alone among all of the other constitutions and bylaws reviewed by the Member Strength Committee in setting forth the duties of Union Representatives. The Member Strength Committee does not see that Article as essential for a guiding principle of the Local Union, and recommends its removal.

INSTALLATION OBLIGATION

The suspended constitution and bylaws contains an oath of office for union officers, but no such installation obligation for activists or union stewards. The Member Strength Subcommittee believes that the Union should retain the oath of office, and expand the oath to cover activists and union stewards. This will impress on individuals holding these leadership positions the importance of their role, and the pledge that they are making to their coworkers and the Union. The Committee believes that the oath of office contained in the suspended constitution and bylaws focuses narrowly on transactional relationships, and instead proposes the installation obligation below, which is more inspirational and challenges leaders to focus their leadership not just on their workplace, but on their responsibility for leaving a better and more equal world for generations to come:

APPENDIX A: Activist Installation Obligation

I, (name) _____, pledge that I will faithfully observe the Constitution and Bylaws of SEIU Local 73 and of the Service Employees International Union.

I agree to educate myself and other members in the history of the labor movement and to defend to the best of my ability the principles of trade unionism, and I will not knowingly wrong a member or see a member wronged if it is in my power to prevent it.

I pledge that I will provide ethical, responsible leadership, organizing new workers to build power to win for all.

As an SEIU member, I will take responsibility for helping to achieve the Union's vision for a just society where all workers are valued and people respected, where all families and communities thrive, and where we leave a better and more equal world for generations to come.

Installation Obligation for Officers and Union Stewards

I, (name) _____, accept my responsibility as an officer of SEIU Local 73 and I pledge that I will faithfully observe the Constitution and Bylaws of the Service Employees International Union and SEIU Local 73.

I pledge that I will provide ethical, responsible leadership, representing our members and organizing new workers to build power to win for all.

I pledge that I will work to the best of my ability to provide effective and responsible leadership to the members I am privileged to represent.

I agree to defend the principles of trade unionism.

I will not knowingly wrong a member or see a member wronged if it is in my power to prevent it.

I pledge to exercise leadership based on the SEIU standards of:

- **Shared unity of purpose;**
- **Openness to questions and a willingness to learn;**
- **Acting with the courage of our convictions;**
- **Working together with accountability; and**
- **Commitment to inclusion.**

I believe in and will fight for the SEIU vision of a just society where all workers are valued and people respected, where all families and communities thrive, and where we leave a better and more equal world for generations to come.

I commit to the highest level of ethical behavior in exercising leadership decisions on our members' behalf.