

AFSCME LOCAL 448



Newsletter

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2022

Progress on Safety Measures in DCFS

After more than a year of intensive advocacy by the members of the AFSCME DCFS Standing Committee—and almost exactly one year since the murder of DCFS investigator, Deidre Silas—the department has finally announced significant new measures to improve the safety of DCFS employees on the job. They include:

- Partnering with local law enforcement;
- Providing special safety belts and shirts;
- A pilot project to test out some form of “lone worker safety device”;
- A number of new state vehicles for staff to use in the field that are outfitted with cell boosters; and
- Voluntary training sessions on self-defense and the use of OC spray.

These changes have already had an impact. In January the availability of a Sheriff’s Deputy in the Peoria office kept an employee safe. An investigator had been attempting to locate a mother with a long history with DCFS and her new baby. Due to the history, the officer accompanied the investigator. The mother attacked the officer. He was able to defend himself, and with assistance from other law enforcement he arrested the mother. It is good to know that the investigator did not have to face that challenging situation alone.

Thank you to Tanya Burns and the Statewide DCFS Standing Committee for their never ending battle to keep workers safe.

Vaccine Mandate Partially Suspended

CMS responded to AFSCME’s call for an end to mandatory COVID vaccinations. Acknowledging that the situation on the ground has changed considerably since an arbitrator affirmed the validity of such a mandate last January, CMS agreed to suspend the mandate in the Department of Corrections and the Department of Juvenal Justice effective immediately—and to bring all impacted employees back to work

However, DHS and DVA 24/7 facilities are not included in this change of policy because the vaccination requirement in those facilities is not mandated by the state of Illinois, but by the federal government. So the vaccine mandate remains in effect in those settings.



Membership meetings are held at least quarterly and always on the 1st Thursday of the month.

Food will be served (when allowed) beginning at 5:30 p.m. with the meeting beginning promptly at 6:30 p.m.

Next Membership Meeting

TBD



Board Meeting

Executive board meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of each month. If a membership meeting is being held that month, the Eboard will meet the Thursday before the membership meeting. Any member who wishes to address the Board regarding a particular issue may do so by submitting a request in writing to an Officer. The request must state the reason you wish to address the Board. You will be notified of your agenda time to address the board.

2-2-23

Zoom

3-2-23

Zoom



Please advise your local steward or Local President Alice Sutherland at presidentafscmelocal448@gmail.com if you are planning on moving or have moved with your new address. We want you to remain informed of any union related issues. It's important as we continue to receive many newsletters back each month due to incorrect addresses.

Don't forget to check out our website at www.afscme448.org and follow us on



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Respect Our Work! Respect Our Rights!

Negotiations for a new State of Illinois Master Agreement officially got underway on January 10, 11, and 12 with a bargaining session in Champaign. The AFSCME Bargaining Committee had presented the Union's proposals at a statewide labor-management meeting in December; On January 11th, the Employer brought its proposals to the table, emphasizing that their goal is to address the dire understaffing crisis in state government.

Unfortunately, few, if any, of the proposals presented by Management representatives seemed likely to advance that aim. Rather, dozens of proposals introduced could have the effect of significantly undermining worker protections long enshrined in the union contract as a means of promoting fairness and restricting favoritism.

While there was considerable confusion about exactly how these new provisions would be implemented, it appears likely that they would limit opportunities for transfers, assignment changes, and promotions—while doing little to improve hiring and retention. The Union Bargaining Committee is prepared to resist any changes that would strip employees of their rights.

AFSCME negotiators are arguing that addressing the understaffing crisis requires making state government a better place to work. While the Union proposals are aimed at reducing the excessive amount of overtime that employees currently are working in a number of agencies, Management's proposals would make it easier for the employer to mandate overtime—and would have the effect of reducing overtime pay.

The Union proposals put forward thus far focus only on workplace rights and working conditions—economic proposals will not be developed until later in the bargaining process.

The current union contract expires on June 30, 2023. It will take a concerted effort by all AFSCME members in state government to secure the fair contract that state employees deserve after having worked tirelessly—and at considerable personal risk and sacrifice—to keep vital state services operational throughout these recent pandemic years. Stay tuned for more information on how you can help win fairness and respect!.



This month let's start taking a look at the Affirmative Attendance Policy which begins on page 243 of master contract.

AFFIRMATIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. The Employer recognizes that personal problems may affect employee attendance and encourages utilization of the Personal Support Program.

President: Alice Sutherland – 520-4576
Vice President: Robin Aebly: IDES-908-9664
Secretary: Tina Wren-590-9350
Treasurer: Laurie Scudder-987-7509

Chapter Chairs

Tanya Burns: DCFS-987-7542
 Donna Wellman: DHS-990-7806
 Ryan Gladhill: DNR –590-0049
 Jennifer Strock: DOT- 677-0842
 Diane Ritter: Lottery - 630-234-1162
 Troy Morse: IGB 976-2585
 Marie Reck: Revenue- 209-5405

Members at Large

Aaron Sockwell: DHS-670-5283
 Jeff Bergstrom: DHS 901-2969
 Tom Soresie: DCFS-973-2857

Trustees

Dawn Chavez: IDES-441-9467
 Greg Duffy: DCFS-994-0502
 Tina Alber: DNR –535-6053

People Chair

Laurie Scudder: Revenue-987-7509

Staff Representative

Chris Hooser: -815-968-0447

AFFIRMATIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY cont.

2. Unauthorized absences shall be those absences for which time is not approved. The threshold between late arrival and unauthorized absence is one hour after the starting time. Although tardiness is not considered an unauthorized absence under this agreement, employees are expected to report to work on time each day as scheduled. Any negotiated tardiness policies shall remain in full force and effect during the life of the Master Agreement unless otherwise negotiated by the parties.

Where current practices exist, any unauthorized absence which is less than a ½ day will be treated under Article IX of the Master Contract as misuse of time inclusive of all other time related infractions (including late arrival, extended breaks and lunch hours, leaving work without authorization, etc.) as one progressive and corrective disciplinary track. However, such absences shall not be subject to #8 of this agreement.

3. Authorized dock time shall be granted when sick time has been exhausted if proper medical certification is provided within three (3) work days. It is the employee's responsibility to provide medical certification to their supervisor. Documents that do not contain the necessary elements will not be accepted and the employee will be so notified. The absences shall be considered unauthorized if acceptable certification is not subsequently provided within five (5) work days.

Proper medical certification must contain the following elements:

- a) Signature, address, and phone number of the medical practitioner (or the authorized designee);
- b) The pertinent dates in question of the illness or injury;
- c) An Indication that the employee was unable to work on the date(s) in question for the reasons of personal or family illness;
- d) The original medical statement; if the employee needs a copy management will provide.

Notwithstanding the above, the Employer may accept an electronically generated statement with an electronic signature or a facsimile with cover page, as long as the necessary information is provided as set forth in 3(a), (b), (c) and (d).

Vacation, holiday, compensatory and personal business time shall be requested in advance, except in emergency situations and as set forth in Paragraph #5. If no personal business, vacation, holiday or compensatory time is available, authorized dock time shall be approved for emergency situations, subject to verification of the emergency situation.

What does this mean? Basically, an absence cannot be approved if you do not have leave time to cover it. And unless department policies differ you have 1 hour from the start of your shift to call in. The time between 1 hour after the start of your shift and the time you call in is considered unauthorized, even if you have leave time to cover it.
Watch the March newsletter for more on this topic.



Don't miss your chance to win a \$25.00 gift card by submitting the correct answer to

presidentafscmelocal448@gmail.com

Winners will be selected by random drawing from all correct answers received by 3-15-23.

What does the acronym **AFSCME** stand for?



to our January winner Lyn Eberhardt!!
 Lyn works for DHS in Sterling!! She knew that PEOPLE stands for
 PUBLIC
 EMPLOYEES
 ORGANIZED to
 PROMOTE
 LEGISLATIVE
 EQUALITY

Recipe of the Month

Orange Creamsicle Truffles

Orange creamsicle truffles are delicious bites of sweet orange and vanilla flavor wrapped up in a tiny decadent package.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup white chocolate chips
¼ cup unsalted butter
1 tablespoon orange zest
3 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
½ teaspoon orange extract
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 drop orange food coloring
¼ cup powdered sugar



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the white chocolate chips to a medium bowl and set aside.
2. In a small saucepan, melt the butter and orange zest together. Stir in the heavy cream and bring to a simmer over medium heat.
3. As soon as the mixture comes to a simmer, pour through a sieve into the white chocolate chips to strain out the orange zest. Allow the mixture to sit for 1 to 2 minutes to soften the chocolate.
4. Add the extracts and food coloring and whisk the mixture until smooth and all ingredients are fully incorporated. The mixture may initially separate from the butter but continue whisking/stirring and it will incorporate.
5. If needed, heat the mixture for 15 seconds at a time in the microwave if the chocolate has not melted all the way.
6. Cover the mixture with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
7. Scoop 1 to 1½ tablespoons of the truffle mixture and form into balls, then roll the balls in the powdered sugar.
8. Refrigerate the truffles for another 30 minutes to 1 hour before

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