



# THE UNION THAT NEVER QUILTS

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO



**AFSCME**



# WE ARE AFSCME

America's communities never rest. Streets need cleaning. Families need care. Students deserve well-run schools and our neighborhoods demand safety. That's why people who work in public service never stop. This isn't just a job. It's a calling. The work matters because it means something to make a community better.

AFSCME is the union of people who serve the public every day. We believe every person working to sustain their community deserves respect. Our 1.6 million members provide the vital services that make America happen, and we believe everyone deserves a chance to fulfill the American Dream.

AFSCME believes every person working to make their community safer, stronger and better deserves respect. We are a union of individuals, each with our own story, but we share a commitment to public service. Together, we win better lives for ourselves, our families and our communities. For people proudly committed to public service, we never quit.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lee Saunders".

Lee Saunders  
President



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elissa McBride".

Elissa McBride  
Secretary-Treasurer





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# WHO WE ARE

AFSCME members work everywhere our communities need us. We take care of people in hospitals, nursing homes, group homes, mental health care facilities and in their own homes. We provide transportation, sanitation and public works in our cities. We support the educational mission of universities, community colleges and our public schools. We protect public health and safety. We design, build and maintain the infrastructure we all depend on every day. We drive students to school and keep them fed and safe. We help people get back on their feet with access to work, housing, job training, meals, child care and health care resources. We provide IT and clerical support to make sure systems function smoothly.

We are nurses. Social workers. Direct care workers. Substance abuse counselors. Higher education employees. Librarians. Street maintenance workers. Engineers. Food and environment inspectors. Probation, corrections and law enforcement officers. Doctors and veterinarians. EMTs and 911 operators. Bus drivers. Clerical workers. Scientists. And so much more.

AFSCME members set the standards of our pay, benefits and working conditions by coming together to negotiate for strong contracts. We fight for justice in the workplace and in our communities. We negotiate not just for ourselves and our families but to meet the needs of the people we serve. We stand for excellence in public service.

We are AFSCME. Join us.



# THE UNION DIFFERENCE

Standing together with 1.6 million other workers and retirees in public service means standing in a position of strength. When AFSCME members face discrimination, poor working conditions, or any form of unfairness on the job, we have 1.6 million sisters and brothers ready to stand with us.

That's what makes AFSCME strong. We're effective at fighting for each other, for our families, for higher standards at our jobs and for the resources we need to serve our communities.

And we win. Workers who are union members earn 25.2 percent more than nonunion workers. The difference is even greater for women and people of color. And union members earn better benefits, like health care coverage and paid sick days as well. Ninety-four percent of union members have a retirement plan available, compared to just 66 percent of those not in a union.

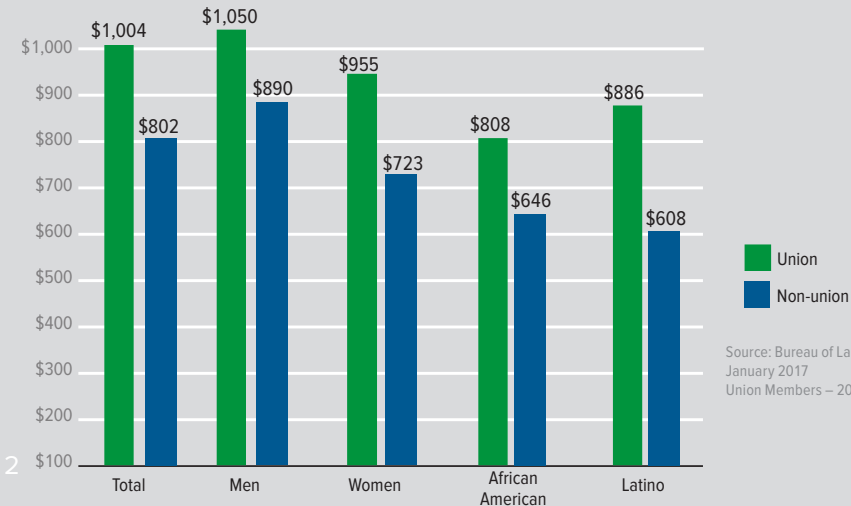
Union members are better trained, have workplaces with higher safety standards and are more likely to have the resources we need to serve our communities.

*“I have two jobs — one at a large community mental health non-profit and another at a hospital where I am an AFSCME member. The union difference is clear. Because of our union, there is accountability and transparency at the hospital.”*

— Ana Diodati,

Social Worker, Oregon Health & Science University, Oregon, AFSCME Local 328

## UNION MEMBERS EARN MORE



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2017  
Union Members – 2016

# WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Corporate interests, the wealthiest 1 percent and their political allies are attacking the freedom of working people, especially those of us in public service, to join together and speak with one voice. In Washington, D.C., and in state legislatures across the country, they are using their outsized political power to attack our pay, reduce our health care, eliminate our pensions, weaken Social Security and even change the law to make it illegal for us to have a voice on the job.

***"My co-workers and I organized with AFSCME to gain a voice at work. In our first contract we negotiated a higher starting wage, raises for years of service and an across-the-board increase."***

**— Michael Peterson,**

Collections Technician, Minnesota Red Cross,  
Minnesota, AFSCME Local 3931

Why? They know that we are stronger together. They know unions make life better and raise the standards for all working people.

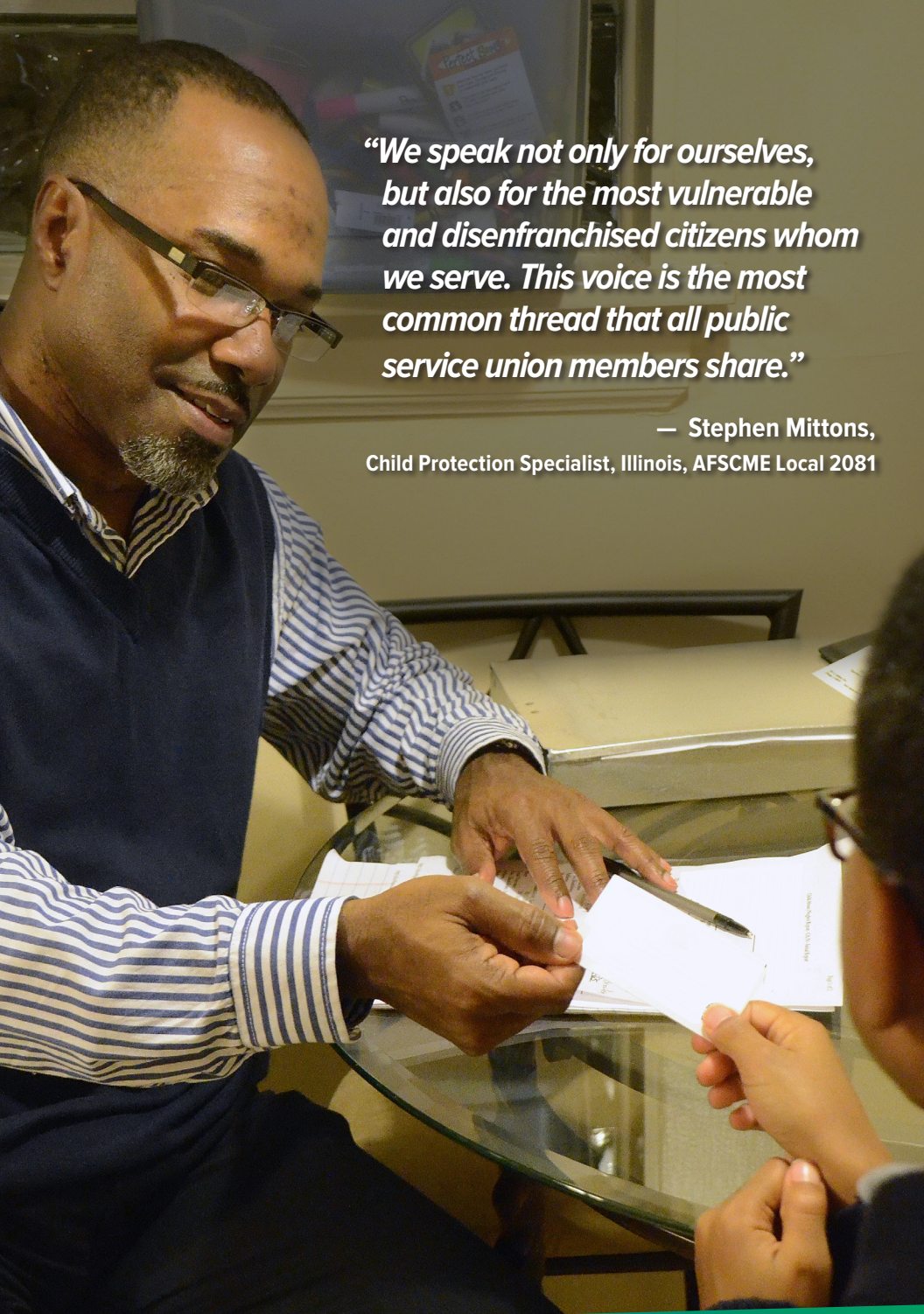
The only way to stop the attacks on our rights and to protect our wages, pensions, health care and more is to come together. That's why joining with your fellow public service workers in AFSCME to fight for a better life is so important.

***"We joined with AFSCME because we saw the power in numbers. By working together with AFSCME, we voted in new school board members who support workers and who understand the important contributions we make to our school district."***

**— Julie Martin,**

Nutrition Service Manager, Kentucky, AFSCME Local 4011





***“We speak not only for ourselves, but also for the most vulnerable and disenfranchised citizens whom we serve. This voice is the most common thread that all public service union members share.”***

**— Stephen Mittons,  
Child Protection Specialist, Illinois, AFSCME Local 2081**



# THE AFSCME DIFFERENCE

## HOW CAN WE GET MORE POWER ON THE JOB?

If you aren't a member yet, join the union! And if you are, get involved! We get more done together than alone. By building on the standards set by over 10,000 AFSCME contracts covering 1.6 million members across the country, we are winning raises, rights and respect at the bargaining table, in state legislatures and city councils across the country.

***“We affiliated with AFSCME to be stronger and more effective at the bargaining table, the city council and on the job! With AFSCME, 1.6 million members have our backs.”***

— **Winston Ingham**,  
Senior Household Hazardous Waste Technician,  
California, PEU AFSCME Local 1



*“During the legislative session, my co-workers and I educated legislators as to how we keep our communities safe. We won the biggest pay raise in Texas corrections history, and we fully funded our pension benefit for the first time in many years. That is the power of our union!”*

— Tanisha Woods,  
Sergeant, Texas, AFSCME Local 3920



## HOW DOES COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WORK?

A committee chosen by you and your co-workers sits down and hammers out an agreement known as a “union contract” covering issues of concern with your employer. The bargaining committee sits at the bargaining table as equals with management and represents the united strength of all union members. The majority of members approve the agreement before it can become a ratified contract.

***“During contract negotiations, there was one thing that never disappeared from what we put on the table – a pay raise from \$10 to \$14 an hour. And we won!”***

**– Sabrina Small,**  
Bus Driver,  
Florida, AFSCME Local 1184

***“We bargained our contract with the city of Boston to include funding to lower our housing costs. As a first-time home buyer I was able to decrease the amount of my down payment and secure a low-interest mortgage.”***

**– Bahram Gharony,**  
Mechanic,  
Massachusetts, AFSCME Local 944



# SOLVING PROBLEMS IN THE WORKPLACE

A visible union creates a more just workplace. Many worksite issues are addressed by union members outside of contract negotiations.

## LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Many AFSCME locals have contract language creating standing labor-management committees or LMCs. An LMC is a joint committee between union members and management at the worksite or departmental level. The LMC meets periodically to discuss and resolve issues in real time and to resolve issues that may not be covered in a collective bargaining agreement. Many AFSCME unions have used LMCs to address workplace safety, staffing, mandatory overtime and other concerns.

***“Labor-management meetings work. Recently, we won hazard pay for co-workers in the riskier units. We also changed a policy to put more distance between us and our more dangerous patients because many of us were getting hurt.”***

**— Phillip Newton,**  
Correctional Guard Therapeutic,  
Louisiana, AFSCME Local 1695

## STEWARDS

An AFSCME steward is a volunteer or an elected official who is the front line of the union in the workplace. Stewards function as the worksite communicator, organizers and representatives with management. Stewards are familiar with work rules, policies and procedures, and help enforce the contract and identify workplace problems and issues. They are often the first people to turn to if you have an issue at work.

## MEMBER ACTION TEAMS

A Member Action Team (MAT) is a communication network of volunteers who commit to talking regularly with up to 10 of their co-workers. MATs ensure every voice is heard and keep everyone in the loop by gathering information through one-on-one conversations; sharing updates on contract negotiations, labor management meetings and other union activities; circulating surveys and petitions to identify and solve problems; and signing up and mentoring new employees.

# RAISING STANDARDS IN PUBLIC SERVICE

We are proud of the work we do and believe that all workers engaged in public service deserve fair wages, good benefits and a secure retirement, as well as a voice on the job. It doesn't matter whether the boss is a politician, a government bureaucrat or a CEO of a private company — public services matter!

*“At a time when private corporations and private EMS were not giving out any raises, with AFSCME, we were able to obtain an 18 percent pay increase over three years.”*

— **Ricky Rodriguez,**

Paramedic, American Medical Response,  
California, AFSCME Local 4911

*“When we realized that new employees were being paid more than those of us who had seniority, we organized several actions against management. This resulted in an \$8,000-\$10,000 pay increase for nearly 200 people statewide.”*

— **Meghan Rockwell-Ashton,**

Child Welfare Social Worker,  
Maryland, AFSCME Local 112

*“We organized at Sharp HealthCare to raise health care standards in San Diego. With one powerful voice, we achieved higher standards in our work environment and, in turn, enhanced health within our community.”*

— **Sam Ciechanowicz,**  
RN, Sharp HealthCare,  
California, UNAC



## WHAT IS OUTSOURCING?

“Outsourcing” occurs when a government body decides that a public service provided by public workers should instead be provided by a private contractor. It is also referred to as “privatization,” “competitive sourcing” or “contracting out.” Outsourcing often involves substituting non-union jobs — with lower wages and few, if any, benefits — for union jobs with decent wages, health insurance and retirement benefits.

Outsourcing can put vital public services in the hands of businesses who care about profits instead of serving the public, while often costing taxpayers more money. But no matter the employer, everyone involved in public service deserves the power and protections of a union.

## INSOURCING TO RAISE STANDARDS

AFSCME members have fought and won battles against privatizing well-paying jobs to low-standards contractors and have successfully insourced work to improve standards.

***“When the Bristol Board of Education signed an agreement to outsource school cafeteria services, including more than 50 dedicated employees, AFSCME showed us how to fight back. We partnered with the community and other labor groups to stop the outsourcing by voting out the board and negotiating a fair agreement.”***

— Enrique Feliciano,  
Custodial Worker, Connecticut, AFSCME Local 2267

***“As contract employees, my co-workers and I fought for almost a year to be hired by the university. My life has changed dramatically since we organized to become University of California workers. I’m now a proud Local 3299 member. I used to make \$10 an hour without benefits; now I make \$20 an hour and I have quality health care and a pension.”***

— Consuelo Barrera,  
Senior Custodian, California, AFSCME Local 3299

# INCREASING POLITICAL POWER

## WHY DOES AFSCME GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS?

Serving the public means electing leaders who support the work we do to make our communities stronger and it means holding those leaders accountable. Our jobs, wages and working conditions are directly linked to politics. From privatization to budget cuts, politics at the federal, state and local levels affects public services, workers and the people we serve.

Our political activities protect our retirement security, fair pay, decent benefits, access to health care and the values working people share.

We support politicians who support us, no matter their political party or affiliation.

***“When our legislature wouldn’t pass the budget, we ran a successful ‘Fund Our Contract’ campaign with 10,000 members participating in local events. We know the importance of showing our presence to our community and local legislators.”***

— **Russell Glatt,**

Social Service Specialist, Washington, AFSCME Local 1253

## DO MY DUES PAY FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLITICAL CANDIDATES?

Under federal law and many state laws, union dues cannot be used directly to fund political candidates, although they may be used to support some state-level candidates.

***“We stepped up during the 2017 legislative session and secured a 6 percent wage increase with an additional 5 percent for correctional members. I am so proud of the way we held politicians accountable.”***

— **Sonja Whitten,**

Quality Control Specialist, Nevada, AFSCME Local 4041

## HOW DOES AFSCME MAKE POLITICAL CHANGE HAPPEN?

AFSCME makes political change happen through PEOPLE, our political and legislative arm. PEOPLE is run by AFSCME members who participate in committees at the local, state and national levels. PEOPLE committees work to elect politicians and support legislation responsive to the needs of public service workers.

## AFSCME PEOPLE

AFSCME members have a voluntary, independent, political organization called AFSCME PEOPLE. Because federal law and the laws in many states prohibit unions from contributing directly to candidates and political parties, AFSCME PEOPLE relies on voluntary contributions from AFSCME members to elect candidates who understand the needs of working families and support their interests.

People who work in public service understand the needs of their communities better than anyone. You are on the front lines and you see how the laws and policies passed on the federal, state and local levels affect the people you serve.

And as someone who is devoted to your community, you deserve respect for the work you do. That means fair wages, good benefits and a secure future for you and your family. And you deserve a voice – whether it be in your local city council, at the state legislature or in the halls of Congress – as powerful as those of corporate CEOs and the wealthiest Americans. AFSCME PEOPLE gives us that voice.

We have that power when we stand together to support electing officials who support us and our values.

No matter what political party you support – or if you don't support one at all – you can stand with your sisters and brothers to help elect people who support us.

## HOW CAN I JOIN PEOPLE?

There are a few ways to join PEOPLE. Talk to your steward or local leadership about signing up for PEOPLE membership.

And of course you can contact the International Union to join PEOPLE as well. Visit [afscme.org/people](https://afscme.org/people) or call 202-429-1126.





*“We joined together with two other unions to negotiate a five-year agreement with our new employer when it took over food service operations at the clinics. We won pay and benefit increases, more leave time, holiday pay and defined shift times that mean more money in our pockets and more time with our families. That’s the power in numbers and that’s the power of our union.”*

— Scott Rodriguez,  
Cook, Morrison Healthcare,  
Minnesota, AFSCME Local 1856



*“We pooled our resources to elect school board members who stand with us. When Sodexo lost its food service contract, the school board worked with us to make sure our new employer, Aramark, honored our contract and our benefits.”*

*— Rachel Cooper,  
Cafeteria Manager, Georgia, AFSCME Local 1644*



# HOW AFSCME WORKS

## WHO RUNS AFSCME?

You do. AFSCME is run by AFSCME members. Every member has a vote in the election of local union officers and board members, as well as the ratification of contracts. Members decide on policies, activities and dues.

And as AFSCME members, we are protected by the Members' Bill of Rights.

## AFSCME'S STRUCTURE

All AFSCME members are members of a local union made up of your co-workers in your community. Your local consists of officers elected by you and your co-workers. Most locals belong to a council, which represents multiple locals in a single state or in several states.

Every two years, AFSCME holds its International Convention. AFSCME members elect delegates, who debate and vote on the union's policies. Every four years, the delegates elect the International Union's President, Secretary-Treasurer and 34 International Vice Presidents. All officers are accountable to AFSCME's membership.





## THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION

The AFSCME International Union, headquartered in Washington, D.C., coordinates the union's actions on major national issues such as outsourcing, health care, Social Security and federal funding to states and workers' rights. AFSCME International carries out certain national functions such as lobbying for our interests in the U.S. Congress and coordinating political activities for federal elections. It also provides resources and expertise help to councils and local unions in areas like collective bargaining, communications, organizing and more.

The International union fights for the basic rights and benefits AFSCME members have earned, like fair overtime, anti-discrimination rules and secure retirements. AFSCME is on the front lines of the battle against special interests' efforts to reduce your rights and your standard of living.

The international union also communicates members' stories and priorities with innovative communications campaigns. Whether we're organizing new members, fighting for a better contract, or working to secure our rights, we use the latest technology to spread our message. With video, social media and traditional channels, AFSCME members' voices are always heard loudly and clearly.

# AFSCME MEMBERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

AS AFSCME MEMBERS, WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO...

## 1. MEMBERSHIP

No person otherwise eligible for membership in this union shall be denied membership, on a basis of unqualified equality, because of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability or political belief.

## 2. FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Members shall suffer no impairment of freedom of speech concerning the operations of this union. Active discussion of union affairs shall be encouraged and protected within this organization.

## 3. FREEDOM FROM BOSSES

Members shall have the right to conduct the internal affairs of the union free from employer domination.

## 4. FAIR ELECTIONS

Members shall have the right to fair and democratic elections at all levels of the union. This includes due notice of nominations and elections, equal opportunity for competing candidates and proper election procedures constitutionally specified.

## 5. HOLD OFFICE

Members shall have an equal right to run for and hold office, subject only to constitutionally specified qualifications, uniformly applied.

## 6. REVIEW FINANCIAL RECORDS

Members shall have the right to a full and clear accounting of all union funds at all levels. Such accounting shall include, but not be limited to, periodic reports to the membership by the appropriate fiscal officers and periodic audits by officers elected for that purpose or by independent auditors not otherwise connected with the union.

## 7. VOTE

Members shall have the right to full participation, through discussion and vote, in the decision-making processes of the union, to pertinent information needed for the exercise of this right. This right shall specifically include decisions concerning the acceptance or rejection of collective bargaining contracts, memoranda of understanding, or any other agreements affecting their wages, hours or other terms and conditions of employment. All members shall have an equal right to vote and each vote cast shall be of equal weight.

## 8. DUE PROCESS

Charges against a member or officer shall be specific and shall be only on grounds provided in the International Constitution. Accused members or officers shall have the right to a fair trial with strict adherence to due process. The accused shall be considered innocent until proven guilty.

# HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

## MY CO-WORKERS ARE IN AFSCME, BUT I'M NOT A MEMBER

The best way for nonmembers to get involved is to join AFSCME! Ask the steward at your workplace how you can join the union and stand with your co-workers for fair treatment on the job.

## I AM A MEMBER

AFSCME members can help grow our union to make us even stronger:

- Become a volunteer member organizer to bring new members into the union.
- Join PEOPLE to help us grow our voice in state capitals and Washington, D.C.
- Join mobilizations when your fellow members are fighting for fairness on the job.
- Attend an organizer or steward training to become a leader in your own union.
- Join a workplace labor-management committee, a member action team or a contract action team to keep your co-workers informed about what's going on in the union.



For more information about these ways to get involved, visit [afscme.org](https://afscme.org)

## I AM A NONUNION PUBLIC SERVICE WORKER

Call us! AFSCME staff can walk you through the process of forming a union with your co-workers.

For more information, contact us at [organize@afscme.org](mailto:organize@afscme.org) or 202-429-1260

# MEMBER BENEFITS

Being 1.6 million members strong means your union can leverage benefits and discounts not available to individuals.

The AFSCME Advantage programs offer many money-saving benefits for working and retiree members. Members have access and discounts to benefits that are essential to your everyday living.

Your family members even benefit from your union membership as they are eligible to apply for some of the Advantage benefits.

## POPULAR BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- **AFSCME FREE College:** Move forward in your career with a new 100 percent free online associate degree from Eastern Gateway Community College. Available to AFSCME members and their families.
- **Scholarships:** Take advantage of several that are available. Take the time to learn about them and apply.
- **AFSCME Advantage Credit Card:** Pay no annual fee and become eligible for job-loss benefits.
- **Accidental Death Insurance:** Get up to \$20,000 of accidental death insurance at no cost.
- **AT&T Wireless:** Save 15 percent on individual and family plans.
- **Auto Insurance:** Save hundreds of dollars, add homeowners insurance and save even more.
- **Credit Counseling:** Get a FREE consumer credit counseling session and get back on the road to financial recovery.
- **Legal Service:** Get attorney references and a half-hour of no-cost consultation.
- **Mortgage Program:** Receive a gift card ranging from \$300 to \$750 after closing.

*“I commend our union for making free college available to us and our families. By going back to school, I’ve shown my 10-year-old son that it’s never too late to get a college education.”*

— Rick Anderson,  
Corrections Officer, Ohio, OCSEA

To learn more about AFSCME Advantage services, check our website at [AFSCME.org/advantage](https://www.afscme.org/advantage) or call 1-800-588-0374.



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