

Championing Our Jobs and the People We Serve

These are hard times: 1021 members, American workers, and the middle class face enormous challenges. Today, those of us who work in courts, schools, cities, counties, health care, special districts, nursing, and nonprofit agencies, along with our retirees, find ourselves under attack. As crucial jobs are eliminated, our workloads and working conditions are becoming intolerable. Even more dangerously, the public and some of our traditional allies are accepting the idea that our pay and benefits are part of the problem.

Local 1021 members, our families, and our communities have lost ground in virtually every field of social and economic life – whether it be in jobs, wages, healthcare, retirement or taxes. We suffer from the loss of homes, uprooted lives, crumbling infrastructure, and failing education. Much of what has been taken from us took decades to win through union, community, and political activism.

The unprecedented financial collapse of 2008 was caused by a combination of financial deregulation and unbridled Wall Street greed. The Great Recession created a ‘perfect storm’ for opponents of unions and opponents of public services. High unemployment, ballooning deficits, and decades of cuts to public services, combined with a 30-year legacy of tax cuts for the super wealthy, created an opportunity for our opponents. They seized the moment, launching what they hope will be the final assault on public unions, public sector jobs, and public services.

As part of this assault, unions and public services are being scapegoated and collective bargaining rights and our benefits have come under attack. Core public services, such as education and services to the most needy, are being whittled away -- the programs fundamental to working families such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are under attack.

Protecting our jobs and protecting the people we serve are the same battle. We are community members, using our skills to make our communities better through the services that we provide. Therefore we must become the champions of quality union jobs that make quality services possible.

Communication – both within our local and with the public – is vital as we champion both jobs and services. Over the past four months, the Executive

Board has heard from thousands of SEIU members at over 100 chapter, industry and regional meetings, delegate meetings, and through an online survey, a membership poll, and individual emails and letters. Our Two-Year Plan to meet the challenges we face at our jobs and in our communities is the product of this organizational conversation and debate.

This plan reflects our democratic values, our commitment to power in numbers, and our pride in our union and the historic role of labor unions in our society.

Our Two-Year Plan Elements:

1. ORGANIZE OURSELVES FOR THE FIGHT AHEAD
 - a. Build Strength at Our Worksites.
 - b. Be Tougher at the Bargaining Table.
2. WIN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GOOD UNION JOBS AND SERVICES

Change public perceptions about public employees and our unions.
3. FIX OUR BROKEN ECONOMY
 - a. Build a pro-worker political program.
 - b. Make corporations and the wealthy pay their fair share and invest in American jobs.
4. GROW STRONGER

Organize more members into our union.

1. ORGANIZE OURSELVES FOR THE FIGHT AHEAD

If we are strong as a union, we can use our power to fight management's attempts to make us and the public absorb the budget crisis by eliminating quality jobs and services and by gutting our contracts. As crucial jobs are cut, our workloads have increased and our working conditions have deteriorated. Because we are the ones who have direct contact with the public, we know what services the public needs and demands. By building union strength on the job we will protect jobs and services.

a. Build Strength at Our Worksites.

We need an effective partnership between union staff and union members to ensure effective representation. We need to do a better job of communicating with members and responding to their needs on the job on a daily basis by:

- Recruiting, training and mentoring hundreds of new leaders and shop stewards, and providing them with the resources and support they need to effectively stand up to management and run their chapters.
- Recruiting, training and retaining enough quality union staff and holding those staff accountable.
- Increasing union presence and visibility at our worksites, including regular staff visits and more communication between staff and members at all levels of our Local.
- Returning member phone calls within 24 hours when possible but no later than 48 hours.
- Union democracy – Transparency in financial decisions and decision making at every level of our union. Empower chapters to make decisions.
- Developing ongoing education programs for our chapters that include labor history.

b. Be Tougher at the Bargaining Table.

We need to be prepared for tough fights by organizing the membership to participate in the bargaining process.

- Start preparing for bargaining a year in advance.
- Hold Local-wide and industry bargaining conferences to share bargaining strategies, best practices, and model language.
- Form contract action teams (CAT teams) to galvanize worksites, gain community support, build unity and keep pressure on employers for fair contracts.
- Well-trained bargaining teams will provide regular status reports to –and solicit ongoing input from – members.
- Increase opportunities for members to take the lead in bargaining.
- Have researchers available to help build strong contract campaigns by analyzing employers' budgets, strengths and weaknesses.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to fight impasse and impositions.

- Develop and propose contract language that stops the employer from contracting out.

2. WIN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR GOOD UNION JOBS AND SERVICES

We need allies to defend the services we provide and to help fight the contracting out of those services. We need to publicize the quality work that we do. The services that government and nonprofit agencies provide are things that everybody needs as a society and our members provide services superior in quality to those provided by outside contractors. Our union's struggle for quality jobs is as much about all working families as it is about us. Good jobs benefit all working people.

We will:

- Craft a strong, positive public message that defines the valuable work and services our members provide for the whole community.
- Develop members to communicate and deliver this message on an ongoing basis. Train members to tell their stories and the historic role of labor unions to allies. Learn how to engage the people we serve and continue relationships with retired and laid-off members.
- Use the positive public message for bargaining, fighting contracting out, electoral and legislative politics, and new organizing.
- In our contract and budget fights, include campaigns and media strategies that change the debate of who caused the economic crisis and who should pay to fix it.
- Build solidarity with other unions and community allies in the public and private sectors, including faith-based groups.
- Encourage members to contribute to the community through volunteer activities.

3. FIX OUR BROKEN ECONOMY

We did not cause the economic crisis so the budget should not be balanced on the backs of our workers. We ARE the 99%. We need

corporations and the wealthy to pay their fair share. We need to replace elected officials who let them off the hook. Social and political activism will protect our jobs, services and communities.

a. Build a pro-worker political program.

- Build a political program that reflects the short and long-term needs and goals of SEIU members as workers and members of the community.
- Work to re-prioritize the use of tax dollars at all levels of government to reflect the needs of working people.
- Prioritize the following political goals: Defeat Citizens United Ruling, Defeat Paycheck Deception, Pass Pro-Worker Revenue Measures including Tax the Rich, Win a 2/3 Majority in the California Legislature, pass local revenue measures and win pro-worker majorities at the local level.
- Elect genuinely pro-worker candidates and hold them accountable.
- Increase member political activism with ongoing outreach and training on all aspects of the Union's political program.
- Continue to educate and recruit members to participate in the Local's Committees on Political Education (COPE Committees); including expansion of COPE Committees throughout the Local and fostering member input into COPE decisions.
- Sponsor candidate forums and debates early in each election cycle and record what the candidates say so members can help them keep their word; make early endorsements when it is in our strategic interest to do so.
- Develop regional strategic partnerships with groups and organizations to win elections, move issues, and hold elected officials accountable, including finding a mechanism to track the voting record of local politicians.
- Develop long-term relationships with elected officials through regular communication and regularly scheduled meetings.
- Increase our influence through an expanded member lobbying program and by mobilizing members to vote.

- Identify and recruit candidates – including members – to run for office and be appointed to boards and commissions.
- The Capital Stewardship Committee, the Counties Industry Council and others will work to understand pension initiative developments and take advantage of opportunities to influence pension legislation for the benefit of our members and to win secure retirement for all working people, including our non-profit members.

b. Fight for a Fair Economy.

Participate in campaigns to change our tax policies to hold the wealthy and corporations responsible for reinvesting in American jobs and services, including:

- Support campaigns to pass legislation to eliminate corporate tax loopholes and giveaways.
- Work with allies to qualify and pass a statewide ballot measure to increase taxes on the wealthiest individuals.
- Work with allies to ensure that commercial property owners pay their fair share of property taxes.
- Support key allies and coalitions, such as the Refund California Coalition, with staff resources, lost-time resources and research staff support.
- Work with allies to develop and support local progressive revenue generating measures to increase funding for local services.
- Engage in campaigns to hold banks accountable for their part in the economic crisis; pressure banks to work with homeowners to avoid foreclosures.
- Support efforts to increase the number of quality American jobs and to provide affordable housing for all.
- Develop focused media campaigns to attract media attention to all aspects of our Fight for a Fair Economy.

4. GROW STRONGER

Organize or die! Union membership in the U.S. is the lowest it's been in a century, hovering around 11% with even fewer members in the private sector. In the 1950s, 35% of workers were in a union. Without increased unionization of both public and private workers, we will not have the strength to protect and provide quality services. Local 1021 and the Service Employees International Union are committed to organizing more publicly

funded and private sector workers into unions. We should target unrepresented workers who work alongside us.

- Make sure that staff and member communications raise Local-wide awareness about external organizing to:
 - Educate members about the necessity of organizing new members into the union
 - Improve coordination between internal and external organizing campaigns.
- Use the upcoming state realignment and budget as an organizing opportunity: Craft an organizing plan to ensure that work is not shifted to non-union employees.
- Where public services have been contracted out, our union should organize those workers, both to improve their working conditions and to seek standards, wages and benefits that support the fight against contracting out.
- Publicize the organizing victories our Local has achieved.
- Publicize the historic role of labor unions in our society, starting in the public schools and utilizing social media.
- Recruit and develop member leaders into the Reserve Organizing Corps (ROC) to help build new membership. Active and engaged members are the most effective organizers of new members.
- Work within SEIU and other labor organizations to move Fight For a Fair Economy-type programs that share our values.

Labor unions came into existence in response to the problems facing working people. We met the challenges of the past and we can do the same today.