



# American Federation of Government Employees Local 789

**MARCH 2024**

**VOLUME 1**

## **MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER**

### **AFGE Local 789 Now has a website!**

You can find AFGE Local 789 information and documents and link to National AFGE news at <http://www.afge.org/local/L0789/home/>

#### **Reminder:**

**You have a new  
Contract!**

**Knowing more about  
your rights as a AFGE  
bargaining unit  
employee starts with  
reading the contract.**

**Here is the link to the  
contract:**

**[https://www.va.gov/LMR/  
docs/Agreements/AFGE/  
VA-AFGE-2023-Master-  
Agreement.pdf](https://www.va.gov/LMR/docs/Agreements/AFGE/VA-AFGE-2023-Master-Agreement.pdf)**

#### **Local 789 Wins!**

AFGE Local 789 has been busy fighting for the rights of bargaining unit employees at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center and the surrounding CBOCs. We would like to spend some time to report grievances that have been won on behalf of the rights of some of your colleagues. Spending time talking about grievances won can also serve to educate you about your rights as a AFGE bargaining unit employee.

#### **Your Right to a Break Room or Staff Lounge**

Did you know you have a right to a staff lounge/break room in your work area? Article 32 (Sections 1 through 3) in the AFGE Master Agreement (otherwise known as the contract) protects your right to a staff lounge/break room. AFGE Local 789 recently won a grievance when management converted a staff lounge to office space without informing the union or the affected

employees. The Union filed a grievance and argued that this change in working conditions was a violation of the contract. Management agreed to all terms and recommendations of the Union and converted the office space back to a staff lounge and break room.

#### **Your Right to Use Your Leave**

Did you know that Article 35 of the contract outlines your right to using various types of leave inclusive of annual, sick, leave without pay, Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, and so on?



## Local 789 Wins! Continued

AFGE filed a grievance on the behalf of a member whose manager was trying to control the terms of how they were to use their leave. The Union argued that such constraints to their leave was a violation of the contract. After reviewing the contract violations outlined by the Union, management agreed with the Union by removing the constraints to the member's leave. You can review Article 35 for more information about your rights to use your leave.

## Fighting for Rights Can Be a Long-Term Process

AFGE Local 789 has several grievances, arbitration lawsuits, and unfair labor practice cases that are pending in the areas of the use of official time to represent bargaining unit employees by Local 789 officials, workplace areas that may have hostile work environments, employee award incentives, workplace safety concerns, and change to employee performance standards that should have been bargained before implementation. Accountability can be a slow process, but holding management accountable to the contract is critical. We will continue to keep you informed as to the status of some of these important cases.

## HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE UNION?

We have heard from some of you that you may be interested in becoming more active with the union, but you just don't know how. AFGE Local 789 needs more volunteers across work areas to help with grievances, lead committees, attend NEO, and other opportunities. Here are a few ways to become more active with your Union.

- Every month we need two volunteers to present in NEO (New Employee Orientation). We have a script you can use, or you can talk informally about the importance of joining the Union. We can walk you through a process which does not require a large time commitment. Additionally, you can receive a \$100 rebate if an employee from the NEO you presented, joins the Union.
- Attend the Monthly AFGE Local 789 Meetings.
- You can observe a grievance and/or a Weingarten.



**JOIN AFGE LOCAL 789 TODAY!  
CONTACT US**

**AFGE Local 789**

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Chicago, Illinois 60612

Email: [afge0789@gmail.com](mailto:afge0789@gmail.com)

**HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE UNION?  
Continued**

- You can contact AFGE Local 789 if you would like to become active in initiatives discussed at the monthly meeting or areas of special interest in your work area.
- You can volunteer to be a Union Steward and represent bargaining unit employees.
- Advocate by reporting suspected contract violations to the Union.
- AFGE offers training for members who may be interested in learning more about their rights and/or becoming more involved with the Union. Go to <http://afge.org/training>, register for an account, and you will see a list of webinars, live and recorded trainings.

**CUT OUT THE STATEMENT BELOW SO YOU CAN HAVE IT ON HAND IN THE EVENT YOUR SUPERVISOR QUESTIONS YOU AND YOU FEAR YOUR STATEMENT MAY LEAD TO DISCIPLINE**

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**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION!**

**WEINGARTEN RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION**

If you are interrogated or interviewed by a supervisor or management and reasonably fear it may result in discipline against you READ THIS STATEMENT:

“If this discussion could in any way lead to me being disciplined, fired, or cause an adverse effect on my employment, I respectfully request my union representative to be present during our meeting.”

Under these circumstances:

- You have the right to have a Union Representative present with you during the meeting, but you must ask for one.
- The meeting must be postponed for a reasonable time to allow your Union Representative to be present.
- Threatening reprisal for requesting a representative or refusing to allow your representative to be present are unfair labor practices.