



## Frequently Asked Questions

### *Q: What does the Local union do?*

- Works to ensure Jesse Brown follows the AFGE-VA contract, federal labor laws, and VA policies.
- Fights for better working conditions, safety, fair and equitable treatment, and dignity and respect.
- Informs employees of worker rights, advocates for employees, and represents employees in grievances, fact-findings, bargaining, mediation, and meetings between management and workers.

### *Q: What has the union done for me?*

- Unions have a long history of improving conditions for workers. Unions gave workers weekends, 8-hour workdays and 40-hour work weeks, workplace safety protocols, fair wages, and more.
- AFGE National has advocated for pay increases and fought against cuts to benefits, against facility closures, and against increases to pension contributions (a pay cut in disguise).
- Local 789 is currently bargaining with management over performance standards, employee awards, employee duties, tours of duty, and other management-proposed changes to working conditions
- In the past year the AFGE Local 789 has successfully:
  - Negotiated for 2 days/week telework for a work unit previously denied any telework
  - Ensured employees kept their compressed work schedules when management tried to end them
  - Got a member thousands of dollars in backpay that Jesse Brown owed them
  - Overturned unfair AWOLs, reprimands, and written counseling for multiple employees
  - Fought to get employees away from hostile work environments and abusive supervisors
  - Helped employees being discriminated against for protected classes like race, gender, and disability.
  - Represented physicians, social workers, pharmacists, psychologists, dieticians, and more.

### *Q: How much are dues?*

- \$24.91 per pay period. New members get a \$100 new member rebate.
- Dues-paying union members are eligible for many benefits not available to those who don't pay dues:
  - Consumer discounts like car rentals, hotels, Apple products, car maintenance, mortgages, etc.
  - Alternatives to VA-offered benefits like life insurance, dental, and vision
  - Benefits not offered by the VA including disability, hospital indemnity (includes childbirth)

### *Q: What do dues pay for?*

- Member dues are the Local's only source of funds.
- Half of the dues go to National AFGE to fight for increased wages, against cuts to benefits and negotiating with the VA at the national level for better working conditions.
- The other half of dues the local uses for: 1) Training for stewards and officers; 2) Independent contractors to ensure every employee is represented; and 3) Holding the VA accountable by taking cases to arbitration. Each arbitration costs \$5-\$10k and depends the union's available funds.

### *Q: What are the benefits of paying dues? Doesn't the union have to represent everyone?*

The union represents all bargaining unit employee, however, only dues-paying members can:

- Vote on union positions that impact employee working conditions
- Be part of the union's bargaining team with management over matters impacting employees.
- Vote in Local union elections that decide the union officers that represent you to management.