

# DISTRICT 7 NEWSLETTER

2022 Spring/Summer Issue

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## THE SOLID SEVENTH DISTRICT

*Representing federal employees in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin*



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*AFGE District 7 National Vice President*

**AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO** 

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## AFGE District 7

### THE NATIONAL REP'S CORNER



#### **Major Difference Between Telework and Remote Work**

By NR TJ Hatt

As Federal Government Employees begin to return to the work site, AFGE District 7 has received multiple requests to explain the major differences between Telework and Remote Work. The best place to begin to answer this question is your Collective Bargaining Agreement (also referred to as the CBA, the Contract, the Master Agreement, etc.). If the CBA does not answer your question, the Office of Personnel Management has published a thorough Guide to Telework and Remote Work in the Federal Government which can be found here: <https://telework.gov/guidance-legislation/telework-guidance/telework-guide/guide-to-telework-in-the-federal-government.pdf> (last visited June 8th, 2022). Please note that not every aspect of this guide will apply in all situations. If you still have questions or concerns contact your AFGE Local officers. First, it is important to note that “telework” is an official term with an official definition. Codified at 5 U.S.C. §6501(3), “telework” is defined as: “a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work.”

Second, we must completely understand the worksite. The “Agency worksite” is the official Agency location where work activities are based. The “Alternate worksite” is an employee’s approved telework site (or approved re-

mote site for a remote worker). The “Official worksite” is generally the location of an employee’s duty station as documented on an employee’s Standard Form 50. The official worksite for a Teleworker is usually the Agency worksite. The official worksite for a Remote Worker is usually the alternate worksite. This distinction is a major difference between a Teleworker and a Remote Worker and may adversely affect the Locality Pay of a bargaining unit employee. Finally, Telework is an arrangement in which an employee, under a written telework agreement, is scheduled to perform their work at an agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis. On the other hand, Remote Work is an arrangement in which an employee, under a written Remote Work agreement, is scheduled to perform their work at an alternative worksite and is not expected to perform work at the agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis. Therefore, the major difference between a Teleworker and a Remote Worker is that the former is expected to perform work at the Agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis while the latter is not. How frequently the Teleworker must return to the Agency worksite must be in the written telework agreement and will be determined by the Telework procedures codified in the CBA. Lastly, when considering a request for Remote Work, please note that Locality Pay may change if your official worksite changes. Unfortunately, neither Telework nor Remote Work is a right guaranteed to bargaining unit employees. The Agency must follow the procedures of the CBA whenever considering a Telework or Remote Work request. If the Agency fails to follow the procedures or their decision is arbitrary and capricious (not based in a

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sound business judgment reason but rather discriminatory, personal, or irrational) you may be able to appeal the decision through the Negotiated Grievance Procedure. Contact your AFGE Local officers for further information.



In June 2021, nearly 80% of AFGE members responding to a survey say their productivity has increased a lot or a little while teleworking during the pandemic. AFGE conducted the survey last May to learn more about member's experiences teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic to determine to what extent members want to continue remote work or telework going forward. AFGE's survey shows that the federal and D.C. government employees represented by AFGE were more productive during the pandemic, even though the majority were working from home for the first time. The office is not the same today as before the pandemic. A critical element is flexibility and rethinking how feds will want to work, not just in the coming weeks as they return to government offices but in the months and years ahead (Roberts, 2022). It may mean new desks, chairs, or updating the décor and layout so that it fits the new mode of work that we are now adapting to (Roberts, 2022).

<https://federalnewsnetwork.com/federal-insights/2022/04/get-ready-as-feds-return-to-offices-restock-refresh-and-reconfigure/>

For survey results and other information like this, please check out Federal News Network at [www.federalnewsnetwork.com](http://www.federalnewsnetwork.com)



### **Meet AFGE District 7's Newest National Representative, Vince Schraub**

National Representative Vince Schraub joined the District 7 team as a National Representative in April, bringing with him 13 years of labor movement experience. Most recently, Vince served as Labor Relations Representative for the Michigan Nurses Association, where he represented Registered Nurses at Michigan Medicine (formerly the University of Michigan Health System) in all labor relations matters, including contract negotiations, grievances, mediation and arbitration, and unfair labor practice charges. Vince lives in Metro Detroit with his wife and their two young daughters. In his free time, he enjoys making music, running and exploring new places with his kids. We welcome Vince to the District 7 team and look forward to seeing great things from him.



### **What Else is New at District 7?**

What's new is the ***District 7 Intake Process***. Since taking office, NVP Jason Anderson has created a new system for requesting assistance. District 7 National Representatives have always been here to assist the locals with answering questions, understanding EEO laws, aid with filing ULP's, proposed BUE removals, settlement discussions, assisting with local elections, just to name a few. Also here to assist are the District Organizer, National Organizer, and Legislative Political Organizer.

Please inform the district office of other local officials authorized to submit a request on behalf of the local. This information should be sent to [District7intake@afge.org](mailto:District7intake@afge.org). When a District 7 Request for Assistance Form is submitted to [District7intake@afge.org](mailto:District7intake@afge.org), the request will be assigned to the respective district representative; the requestor will receive an email response as to who is as-

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signed to the request. The requestor will then be contacted to determine next steps. In the same email response, attached will be a Representation and Close-Out Survey Form to complete upon resolution of the request. When returning the completed survey, it should be clearly noted to include the original request date for accuracy. The survey is used to provide accurate reporting, identify improvement opportunities, monitor customer satisfaction, ensure the needs of locals are being addressed, and for AFGE compliance purposes. Since the inception of this new process in February 2022, more than 105 requests have been received by the district office. Please contact the district office via [District7intake@afge.org](mailto:District7intake@afge.org) with any questions or concerns regarding this process. We look forward to assisting you.

**IMPORTANT: This information should not be downloaded using government equipment, read during duty time or sent to others using government equipment, because it suggests action to be taken in support of or against legislation. Do not use your government email address or government phone in contacting your Member of Congress.**



### Legislative & Political Update

Hi! My name is Matt Muchowski, and I am AFGE's Legislative & Political Organizer for District 7! My job is to help AFGE Locals and members 1. advocate for legislation that supports them, 2. elect politicians who will pass that legislation, and 3. organize to mobilize around AFGE issues. We've had a busy couple of months – and things will only continue to heat up as we get closer to the November Mid-Term elections! Last November we held a Legislative & Political Training Institute with District 8 in Bloomington, MN. Over 20 AFGE members attended and learned about

how to lobby their representatives and help their locals organize around Legislative & Political Issues. We hope to organize a similar training soon! It was exciting to see so many AFGE members in person at the Legislative Conference in March. District 7 members met with many of their Congressional Representatives and our Legislative Breakfast had record turnout! District 7 holds regular Zoom meetings for Legislative & Political Coordinators (LPC's). LPC's are the Legislative & Political point people for their locals. They organize around Legislative & Political issues with their Local leadership, the District, and National AFGE; and routinely communicate with Congressional offices. LPC Zoom calls are an important way to share information, and keep each other up to date about the latest news and issues. This will be specially important as we look forward to the Mid-Term Elections in November, and making sure we Get-Out-The-Vote among union members. I was at Convention this June working AFGE's Political Action Committee (PAC) Booth; you may have seen me or stopped by to say hello. AFGE can not use union funds for political contributions, so we need AFGE members to join and contribute to AFGE PAC.

With summer here, let me know if your local is holding any picnics or BBQ's – I'm happy to attend and run a PAC raffle at your events! If you have questions or need my assistance, please submit an intake request via [District7intake@afge.org](mailto:District7intake@afge.org).

**Contributions to AFGE-PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Your voluntary decision to contribute more, less, or not to contribute at all will not result in any favor or disadvantage in your relationship with AFGE.**

## AFGE District 7



### Organizing In District 7

Over 4,070 government workers joined AFGE in June 2022. In an effort to keep the momentum going, AFGE District 7 is looking for opportunities to work with locals to host organizing events throughout the district. We look forward to hearing from AFGE District 7 locals that are ready to engage and help grow the district and AFGE as a whole. We will be more powerful at the bargaining table the more members we have. Congratulations to Local 1963 who signed up 75 new members in June; Local 4070 welcomed 7 new members and a 96% membership of eligible BUEs. Although we think about organizing as in-person events, we are aware that members are still teleworking. Therefore, we must begin to think outside the box to create opportunities to reach not only current members, but to also share the benefits of union membership with workers who are thinking about becoming a member, or who just don't know anything about unions. We are all organizers for AFGE and have a responsibility to represent the agency with professionalism, a sense of activism and pride.

Don Evans, District Organizer for AFGE District 7 recently shared his 2022 Organizing Plan via email to all district locals. Within his plan, DO Evans recommended lunch & learns, a union fair, information table, one-to-one organizing, a Blitz, Metro, and offsite events.

We are doing ourselves a disservice if we do not have accurate list building, consistent conversation, assessments, and an organizing committee. Any information local officers provide to DO Evans helps the district's efforts to collect data for mapping opportunities, build and coordinate direct action, and it creates a network of members on the issues we all care about.

DO Evans and District Office Manager Aleta Way-Shepherd have begun working together to re-establish the District 7 Facebook page and intend to have more content in the near future. In today's society, the use of social media has become daily activity. It is typically used for social interaction and access to news and information, and decision making. Social media has become one of the best ways to reach the masses, as it is a valuable tool to communicate with others locally and worldwide, as well as to share, create, and spread information. If your local has updates or upcoming events you would like shared on the District 7 Facebook page, please send information (with



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pictures, if possible) to [District7@afge.org](mailto:District7@afge.org). Once the district's Facebook page is updated and gaining momentum, the district will begin working on its Instagram page. Your input is important to the district. Suggestions and recommendations are always welcomed.



### Do You Know What Digital Organizing Is and Why It Is Important?

Digital organizing is the process of using technology to mobilize people. Organizing teams coordinate with people digitally to achieve goals and expand progress for an issue or cause. This is where BroadStripes can be helpful. District 7 has about 21 out of 65 locals who are currently using this tool. If you are interested in BroadStripes training, please send a request for assistance via [District7intake@afge.org](mailto:District7intake@afge.org). BroadStripes can assist you with texting campaigns and volunteer coordination or outreach. Digital organizing is important because it naturally adapts organizing principles to the digital landscape most people are already in. Did you know the U.S. has over 313 million internet users? This means over 90% of the population has access to the internet. Digital organizing has become necessary and valuable for campaigns and organizations of all sizes.

### THE POWER OF ORGANIZING

Labor unions have experienced a major revival during the pandemic. A September 2021 Gallup poll found that 68% of Americans approve of labor unions, the highest since 1965. Amazon workers received their first victory in April. Starbucks, Inc. (SBUX), baristas across the country are voting to unionize individual stores. To date, Starbucks union has racked up 50 wins, with many more votes to come. In June, employees at a Maryland Apple store voted to join a union, a significant achievement for organized labor. This store is now the first unionized Apple store in the U.S.



Every job matters, whether it is an hourly worker at Starbucks, a white-collar worker at SSA, a nurse at the VA, or a corrections officer at the Bureau of Prisons. District 7 members have seen tough times due to attacks on labor—but with perseverance and a good organizing plan, we can continue fighting for workers' rights, fair pay, fair labor practices, safer working conditions, and other issues affecting our members.

**Please share upcoming events or organizing drives, via [District7@afge.org](mailto:District7@afge.org) and your local could be featured in an upcoming issue of the District 7 Newsletter!**



## AFGE District 7



### Congratulations to the 2022

#### Legislative Conference PAC Award Winners

Contributions to AFGE-PAC are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Your voluntary decision to contribute more, less, or not to contribute at all will not result in any favor or disadvantage in your relationship with AFGE.

We must represent our membership everywhere and AFGE's PAC allows us to provide our members with critical political representation.

- Most PAC contributors: **AFGE Local 375 with 10 PAC members and Local 1395, also with 10 PAC members**
- Highest PAC \$ amount: **Local 648 with \$3,505**
- Locals with Highest Net Growth:
  - **AFGE Local 4070 with 187**
  - **AFGE Local 933 with 72**
  - **AFGE Local 2092 with 64**
  - **AFGE Local 1629 with 49**
  - **AFGE Local 777 with 36**

### Congratulations to the 2022

#### Legislative Conference Award Winners

All District 7 locals were invited to nominate a person they felt embodied the qualities represented in each award category. A committee of four District 7 volunteers gathered to review submissions. Thanks to the Awards Committee for their participation in this momentous occasion.

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- ♦ **Legislative Political Action**—This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to improving working conditions through legislative and/or political action.



Congratulations to Local 3272 President Amber Westbrook, who has been a vocal advocate regarding the COVID pandemic and safe alternatives to coming into offices. She worked with Sherry Jackson, the Council 220

Legislative Chair, as well as other Social Security locals to compile reasons why hybrid and telework arrangements are best for employees.



Local 1658 Office Manager Echo Hunt was recognized for her tireless efforts in planning rallies and has provided transportation to facilitate protests. Ms. Hunt learned how to drive a school bus

and borrowed a neighbor's school bus so that local members could attend a rally to reopen the government. Ms. Hunt routinely goes above and beyond but this is her first award directly from AFGE.



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◆ **Member Mobilization Award**—This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to mobilizing and organizing AFGE members around worker's rights in their local, council, and/or district.



Congratulations to Local 704 President Nicole Cantello, who was awarded for regularly engaging local leaders and bargaining unit members across the United States by advocating for increased staffing, and lifting up the ground-

breaking agreements around telework, remote work and work schedules through Congress, social media, and the press.



Congratulations to Local 2092 President Vera Marshall. She has created and implemented a successful plan of action to increase AFGE Local 2092's membership. This plan includes in-person and virtual events that have increased the Local's membership.

President Marshall's plan considers the needs of the Local and potential members, as well as meeting potential members where they are and informing them of all the benefits they can receive as members of AFGE.

◆ **Representation through Litigation Award**— This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated a commitment to combatting violations of employee rights in the workplace through litigation.



Congratulations to Local 2280 Chief Steward Chris Mapps. Since taking office, he has aggressively and proficiently held the Agency accountable to the Master Agreement, laws, rules, and regulations, at the negotiation table, in the negotiated grievance procedure, the EEOC procedure, and through filing unfair labor practices with the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA).



Congratulations to Rob Malosh, Local 2092 Chief Steward. He has held the Agency accountable for recognizing the I&I Negotiation rights of bargaining unit employees. Despite the Agency completely ignoring the law and the Master Agreement, Chief Steward

Malosh has persisted to engage the Agency and demand respect at the negotiation table for all bargaining unit employees.

**Hats off to the 2022 Legislative Conference Award winners for a job well done!**

## AFGE District 7

### TRAINING UPDATE

District 7 & District 8 held a Training Conference in Bettendorf, IA on July 19-21. The courses offered were:

- Basic Steward
- Collective Bargaining & FMCS Grievance
- Financial Officers' Training
- OWCP/COVID-19 Disability

Thank you for a great turnout. We hope the training was beneficial and look forward to providing future opportunities.

### UPCOMING TRAINING

The 2022 Diversity Week & Human Rights

Training Conference was held August 5-12, 2022.



### Check out Y.O.U.N.G Committee's Podcast!

The mission of the AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. Podcast is to educate and inform our listeners of real world topics and issues using personal experience stories, research and engaging interviews from across all levels of the Labor Movement.

Listen using this link: <https://anchor.fm/afgeyoungpodcast/episodes/Episode-9---AFGE-PRIDE-and-Pride-365-e1j19i>

Stay tuned for upcoming training opportunities! If you have a request for training, please submit a Request for Assistance Form to

[District7intake@afge.org](mailto:District7intake@afge.org).



AFGE Retirees are front and center in our efforts to honor and defend government employees. That means advocating for a productive, healthy, and secure retirement as well as good jobs, pay, and benefits for those who are still working.

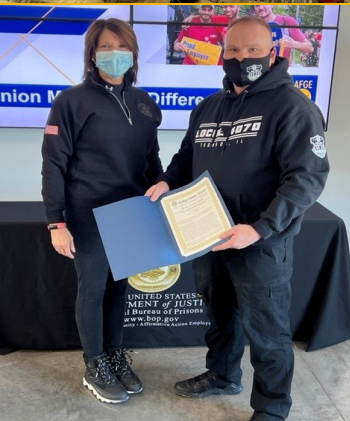
- **Stay connected** with friends through social activities and volunteer opportunities
- **Keep informed** about issues affecting retired and active government employees
- **Take action** to protect retirement security, jobs, and government employee pay
- **Save money** on a host of benefits – Retirees receive all AFGE discounts and benefits
- **Share your skills** with the next generation of union leaders and activists

Most AFGE Retirees remain members of their own locals and pay annual dues directly to the local. You should contact your local directly to sign up, so they can collect your dues. It is best to sign up before you retire. You may only maintain your voting membership if you sign up within 45 days of retiring.

\*You may send basic retiree questions via [District7intake@afge.org](mailto:District7intake@afge.org).



# AFGE District 7







## American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO

# #Free Brittney Griner

ADD YOUR NAME



AFL-CIO



### #FREEBRITTNEYGRINER

On February 17, WNBA star, Women's National Basketball Players Association (WNBPA) member and our union sister Brittney Griner was detained upon her arrival in Moscow. Griner is a two-time Olympic gold medalist. An elite global athlete. On August 5, 2022, Brittney was sentenced to 9 years in prison. The State Department has officially classified Griner as wrongfully detained, and the U.S. government is working towards a negotiation that may include a release.

Please join a broad and growing coalition that supports Brittney Griner and the Biden administration as it continues to do everything in its power to get Brittney and all other detainees home.

Sponsored by AFL-CIO, Washington, D.C.



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[ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED](#)