

## **Membership Email Update**

### **3.26.2020**

On behalf of the 19,000 members we represent throughout Pennsylvania, we wanted to start by thanking you for the work you are doing, and continue to do, on the front lines of this crisis. As this pandemic unfolds, we've all been taking precautions to keep ourselves safe, to check on our loved ones, and to maintain some balance in a world suddenly thrown into flux. We know that for many of you the anxiety stemming from the virus is compounded by the worksite challenges - challenges staff and members alike have been working round the clock to address. We've called on allies in the advocacy community and the State Legislature to help ensure that your employers are doing all they can to keep you safe.

Since all discussions are ongoing, we're continuing to ask State and Local Unit stewards to keep providing feedback on the specific health and safety concerns they're encountering in their shops - please [complete the survey](#), so we know exactly what needs to be addressed and where.

We want to highlight what's being done for the more than 9,000 members we represent at the County and Municipal level and in our private non-profit shops, as well as our Commonwealth shops.

### **Local Unit Updates**

Non-Commonwealth employers received an intent to bargain letter on Friday, March 13th. These letters informed the employer that SEIU Local 668 demands to bargain over COVID-19-specific health and safety workplace policies. Some County governments have been faster to implement policies than others, and many of the policies we've seen so far have been quite proactive for our members. We're seeing many employers offering telework options, expanding and relaxing sick leave policies, and providing necessary protective equipment for front line workers. For example:

- Bucks County has implemented their Inclement Weather Policy as of this morning, meaning employees can continue to be paid while at home, and this will also trigger the provisions in our CBAs. While our WIC members are essential and must still come into the office, the county has reduced contact with the public as much as possible.
- Lackawanna County relaxed its leave donation policy and members are now able to donate an unlimited amount of leave to co-workers. That leave can be used by non-essential employees as needed, including to cover childcare.
- Washington County, in an effort to comply with social distancing recommendations, is allowing departments to work staggered shifts, with a smaller crew and telework where possible
- York County was the first to get nearly all (more than 95%) - of its employees out of the office and close everything to the public. They also worked hard to ensure that they're making remote work as simple as possible on both the tech and administrative ends.

The policies we are advocating for at the local level include:

- Telework when possible;
- Reduced number of employees in the workspace to ensure employees can practice social distancing;
- Reduced or suspended public access to public facilities;
- Relaxed sick leave policies;
- Health and safety regulations that follow CDC recommendations and OSHA standards, including regular professional cleaning;
- Provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); and

## Membership Email Update 3.26.2020

- Transparent, written COVID-19 safety policies.

Please continue to pass information about how your employer is responding to this crisis to the union through the health and safety form or share directly with your Business Agent. And please let us know if you're having trouble getting information from your employer.

### Commonwealth Updates

In case you missed it, on Sunday, we signed a [shift staggering agreement that covered CAOs with complements of 50](#) or more. As we've shared in other updates, negotiations with the Commonwealth are *ongoing*.

The Commonwealth offered a written agreement on that piece quickly, so that they could expedite that process while they continue to work to address our demands throughout our entire Commonwealth bargaining unit. We wanted to ensure that we could begin to provide some relief to some members as soon as possible, while we continue to work on more measures that cover our entire Commonwealth bargaining unit.

Getting this agreement in place *does not mean* that we are not continuing to advocate for all of our CAO workers, as well as other workers in DHS, DOC, and L&I. We expect negotiations for all shops to continue until all of our members are protected. *We're still waiting on the Commonwealth to finalize additional policies, but in the meantime please [review the specifics on using leave](#) if you are sick and/or exposed to the virus.*

We also have some agency-specific updates to share today:

#### Department of Corrections

In addition to CAOs, our members at SCIs have been hearing varied information regarding inmate group sizes, staggering or rotating shifts, and lockdown procedures. We've had multiple discussions with DOC this week, including a long session yesterday. We're expecting to have clear guidelines for SCIs in the coming hours and will provide a complete update to all SCI members in the next day or so, but we know that:

- The union is now being included in daily DOC internal communication updates for information sharing.
- All SCIs have been elevated to Tier One status to receive PPE and other supplies quickly.
- There won't be any more group meetings over 10 as of today.
- We've signed off on an agreement that allows AWS schedules to be put in place locally to increase staggering.
- Cleaning of specific areas that'd been overlooked (individual items that touch multiple hands) is being increased.

#### Unemployment Compensation

Please keep all of our Unemployment Compensation members at the forefront of your minds. They've had more than 540,000 new UC claims filed in the last *nine days*. These are unprecedented numbers--the last recorded amount that comes close to these was from January 2010, where 168,000 claims were filed in four weeks. We're expecting these numbers to continue to increase in the coming days and weeks, and we know this influx

## **Membership Email Update 3.26.2020**

will be challenging for our members and the entire department. If you work in UC, we're asking that you please ensure your shop steward has your personal contact information, so we can communicate with you quickly. We also recommend all UC members join our [TWR Facebook group](#) as well continue to check our COVID-19 website page: <http://www.seiu668.org/covid19/>.

### **Other News**

On a positive note, we're incredibly excited to report that, as of 5PM yesterday, we're welcoming more than 200 direct-care workers from Southeast PA!! Our organizers have been working to bring SEIU Local 668 into the CADES (Children and Adult Disability Education Services) agency in Delaware County. It's important that, even during this unprecedented crisis, we continue to bring workers into our organization, so we can grow our union and expand our collective bargaining rights. We'll be working with this new shop as they begin the long process of bargaining their first contract and are excited to include them in our ranks.

In closing, please refer to our local's website for the most up-to-date COVID-19 information broken down by shop type. We're asking that members please refer [to this page](#) before sending emails to shop stewards and business agents. This will allow business agents and stewards to focus on employer and shop follow-up to obtain answers to the many questions our members have. If you don't see your question answered on the website, please email [Local668@seiu668.org](mailto:Local668@seiu668.org) and our staff will direct it to the person who can best answer.

Again, please be sure to let us know the specific health and safety concerns at your workplace by [completing this survey](#). We will continue to provide all COVID-19 [updates on our website](#), and have added pages with [Commonwealth-specific](#) and [Local Unit-specific](#) information as well. We also encourage members to join our [growing Facebook community](#), and if you or anyone in your shop is not receiving email updates, please make sure we have your contact information by [completing this form](#).