

## This Is Our Moment to Grow and Win

Throughout the summer months and into the fall, I have been working closely with our AFSCME International to advance the unification of Council 35 and Council 66. This strategic initiative represents a significant step forward for our organization and our members. By uniting these two Councils, we are not only strengthening our collective structure, but also expanding our capacity to deliver essential services, support, and representation to the membership.

This unification will enhance our presence and influence across Western New York particularly within the City of Buffalo where our combined strength will help drive meaningful improvements for public employees and the communities they serve. As AFSCME International continues to advance a bold agenda for growth and empowerment across the country, this moment presents a tremendous opportunity for us to move forward together.

Our time has truly arrived, and with unity, increased resources, and a shared commitment to progress, we are positioned to achieve more for our members than ever before.



*Rich Canazzi*  
**Rich Canazzi**  
President, AFSCME Council 66

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## Welcome City of Buffalo Members!



### CITY OF BUFFALO MEMBER TRAINING

We had a huge turnout for our first City of Buffalo member training ***“Coordinating a Contract Campaign!”*** We'll be offering more training in the near future! ■

# Political & Legislative Action

## People Blitz

There was a lot of interest & excitement around our **PEOPLE Blitzes** in Auburn & Buffalo! We'll be bringing more blitzes to our members in 2026. ■



## Labor Breakfast



Left to right:

**Kevin Lynch** (local 3179),  
**Senator Jeremy Cooney**,  
**Ciara Burno** (1635F),  
**Demetris Graham** (1095)



## BIG WIN!



Congratulations to President **Matt Padbury**, local 1883, on his election to Vestal Town Board!

**INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT RUNNING FOR OFFICE?**

≡ MENU

SEARCH Q

AFSCME

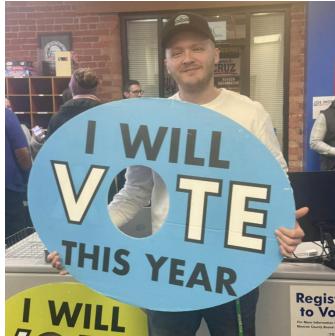
JOIN AFSCME

More union members should run for public office. How about you?

# Political & Legislative Action

## Our Members Powered Pro-Union Victories

Our members were very active at new levels this election season participating in labor phone banks & labor walks helping to elect pro-union candidates! ■



Congratulations to **Ciara Burno** for being selected to serve on the Rochester Labor Council **Committee on Political Education (COPE)** on behalf of local 1635F! ■



### FIGHTING FOR CANDIDATES WHO WILL FIGHT FOR US

As people in public service, we know what a difference it makes when we elect leaders who have our backs. We deserve leaders who respect our work and that's why we fight.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

## Tashawn Tarver Jr.

Crew Chief

Washington Park  
City of Albany  
Local 1961



**Tashawn Tarver Jr. is a crew chief with the City of Albany, based at Washington Park, and a valued member of Local 1961.** On July 15, 2025, he stepped in without hesitation during a moment of crisis, saving the life of a community member.

Tashawn's journey is nothing short of extraordinary. At just 15 years old, he was shot resulting in him ending up in a coma and requiring seven blood transfusions. His chances of survival were slim. A year later, at 16, he was shot again in the leg. Doctors didn't believe he would ever walk again.

In the midst of this trauma, it was his beloved grandmother who delivered the words that resonated with him. She told him that if he continued down the path he was on, he would either lose his life or find himself standing in a courtroom, facing the State of New York alone. The violence he endured and the truth in his grandmother's warning became the wake-up call he desperately needed.

Determined to build a future, Tashawn pursued a career with the City of Albany. He was eventually hired as a seasonal employee. Tashawn proved himself through his dedication and hard work. Over time, he earned a permanent position and is now a crew chief. He genuinely loves what he does and receives compliments for his work.

"I look forward to coming to work every day," he says proudly.

Now responsible for helping maintain the 89 acres of the popular Washington Park, Tashawn's work spans every season and every corner of the grounds. He plows, weed whacks, mows, clears paths and supports events. He often works twelve-hour days,



seven days a week and takes pride in keeping the park beautiful, safe, and welcoming for the community.

On July 3, 2025, his transformation came full circle. Tashawn received an urgent call from frantic coworkers: someone near the tennis courts had overdosed and wasn't breathing. Without hesitation, he rushed over and administered Narcan. For a moment, he thought the person was already gone. Just one week earlier, he had completed Narcan training and received Narcan boxes on the job, and that preparation allowed him to act instantly.

Within seconds, the individual jolted awake.

When the police arrived, they asked who had administered the Narcan. Nervous coworkers pointed to Tashawn, unsure if he'd done something wrong. Instead, the officer told him, ***"He was gone for five minutes. You saved his life."***



After word spread that he saved a life, many unhoused community members began opening to Tashawn, sharing their stories, their struggles, and their gratitude. They trust him. They see him as someone who shows up in a moment of crisis and someone who cares.

His union has also been a crucial source of support. "I love the union. If it wasn't for the union, I wouldn't be here," Tashawn says. ***"Everyone needs someone to fight for them. With the union, I have a family that has my back."***

As he reflects on how far he's come and everything he now gives back, Tashawn says, "It feels amazing that someone is alive because of me." He credits his strength, compassion, and sense of purpose to his grandmother. ***"She gave me hope and a chance to grow. I want to be that for other people. The greater deeds I do, the more I find great people come into my life."***

*"I was once someone who needed saving. Now I save people."* ■



## SHOUT OUT A WORKPLACE HERO

Help us recognize everyday excellence. Nominate a member for the AFSCME Member Spotlight organizers, fixers, caretakers, problem-solvers.

# In the Community

## Listening, Learning, and Leading Locally



**AFSCME Local 1095 & Erie County Medical Center (ECMC)** co-hosted an information session highlighting the new Governor Kathy Hochul Free Community College program! ■

**SUNY RECONNECT**  
Free Community College for Adult Learners at SUNY  
Learn in-demand skills for jobs in growing fields like health care, cybersecurity, and advanced manufacturing with a 2-year degree from SUNY. Now free for New Yorkers 25-55 with no degree.

**LEARN MORE: [WWW.SUNY.EDU](http://WWW.SUNY.EDU)**



**President Rich Canazzi** hosted an engaging lunch & listening session hearing directly from our Albany & Schenectady area leaders. ■



**President Rich Canazzi** showed his support for CSEA Local 1000 & the local efforts to make child-care more accessible. ■



We kicked off our first ever **AFSCME Retirees** chapter with Buffalo area retirees! The chapter is excited to host engaging, informative & fun opportunities for retirees. ■

The leaders of **1635 & 1635F** joined **Rochester Housing Authority** resident leaders to hear updates from **U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand** & **Senator Chuck Schumer** offices. Together, we're advocating for the support our communities need. ■



## Shoutouts & Highlights

### Human Service Worker of the Year Awards



We're proud to celebrate our **local 1635** members recognized by the **Federation of Social Workers IUE/CWA 81381**!

**Danielle Ashton-Harrell** emergency response social worker was named **Human Service Worker of the year**!

**City of Rochester, NY PIC** team received the **Courage Award**!



Left to right: **Orlando Torres** (Vice-President local 1635), **Danni Ashton** (1635 steward) **Mike Rivera** (President local 1635)

# CBTU Rochester Chapter Award

Proud to celebrate our CBTU Rochester Chapter award recipients! The **Deb Lee Lifetime Achievement Award** recognized **Aloma Cason (BENTE Local 2419 retiree)** and the **Frederick Douglass Award** was presented to **Danielle Ashton-Harrell (Local 1635)** ■



Left to right: **Shelly Clements, Aloma Cason, Evelyn Evans**



Left to right: **Shelly Clements, Danni Ashton, Evelyn Evans, Maria Fisher**

# Rochester Labor Council Award

Congratulations to Rochester Labor Council award recipients!

**Town of Pittsford DPW local 3123**  
Organizer of the Year Award



Left to right: **Andrew McCloskey, Nick Schrom, Ryan Secor**

**BENTE 2419, RTA, RAP, ASAR**  
Mother Jones Sacrifice Above & Beyond Award ■



Left to Right: **Margaret Sargent (RTA), Laura Kuhn (BENTE 2419) Elizabeth Cooper (RAP)**



# Shoutouts & Highlights



## Executive Board

Congratulations to **Chris Spencer, local 1635**, who has been appointed to serve on the **AFSCME Council 66 Executive Board**. ■

## Member's Lounge

Each month we feature a topic of interest to our members called a Member's Lounge. Contact **Maria** at [mfisher@afscmecouncil66.org](mailto:mfisher@afscmecouncil66.org) for the link and to keep updated on upcoming member's lounges.

### JANUARY:

Join **AFSCME NY Political Director Brian McDonnell & Deputy Director Courtney Brunelle** for a discussion on **Tier 6** including the reforms we've secured so far. This is your chance to share feedback and help shape the reforms we fight for next.



#### TIER 6 REFORM

January 26 at 5:30  
Virtual - via Zoom

### FEBRUARY:

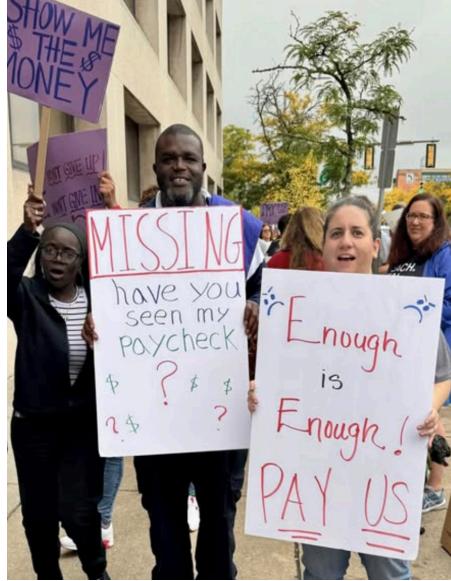
The workplace air we breathe has short term and long term impacts on our health. Join **NYS PESH Program Manager John Usher** who will discuss workplace air quality. This presentation includes an overview of common **Air Quality** issues and how to assess and mitigate them.



#### AIR QUALITY

February 23 at 5:30  
Virtual - via Zoom

# Organizing



## Accountability for Workers' Wages

**BENTE local 2419** members have been rallying, advocating & meeting with elected leaders to ensure members are paid the wages and benefits they are owed after the disastrous rollout of a new payroll system. ■



## In the labor community

Pittsford DPW shared their organizing story with the **Rochester Labor Council**. **President Nick Schrom & Vice-President Andrew McCloskey** highlighted how the union has made their members' lives safer.

Congratulations to **President Rich Canazzi, Ciara Burno local 1635F & Dave Owens local 3179** who were sworn in as delegates to the Rochester Labor Council!

# Organizing



## Strengthening Labor, Statewide

Congratulations to **President Rich Canazzi** on his appointment to the powerful **New York State AFL-CIO Executive Board!** The board leaders represent the 2.5 million union members across NYS & together they work to strengthen & grow the labor movement!



## Training Today for Power Tomorrow

Recently, our leaders & staff attended the intensive **AFL-CIO Organizing Institute!** They will be able to use their training to support members & grow the labor movement around the state!

Left to right: **Amy Smardz, Robert Leonard, Nick Arnold, Cody Stryker**



### WE WON'T BACK DOWN

Billionaires and anti-union extremists want to destroy the public services we provide and roll back laws that protect our health and safety at work, our job security – even the freedom to join a union.

We're not going to let that happen. It's our hard work – not corporate greed – that makes our communities stronger.

Sign up for updates at [afscmego.org](http://afscmego.org)

# Celebrating the Holidays

## Council 66 Executive Board Holiday Party



*Alex Catello & Kerry Lightcap*



*Left to right: Rich Canazzi, Becky Harris, Marcia Stull, Jessica Rinebold, Robert Leonard, Cody Stryker, Judy Culver, Steve Barnum*



## Auburn Local 3124 Holiday Party

*Left to right: Jake Newert, Rebecca Harris, Jen Lang, Marcia Stull, Terri Johnson, Maureen Coleman Back row: Mitch Feocco, Cody Stryker, Judy Culver, Donna Brooks*



## BENTE 2419 Holiday Gifts

*Left to right: Laura Kuhn, Ishimara Rivera-Delgado, George Sinkler, Monique Harris, Ange Palmerini*



## Dunkirk 312 Holiday Party



**IN MEMORIAM**

*Rebecca Scott*

APRIL 15, 1976 - NOVEMBER 1, 2025

On November 1, 2025, AFSCME Council 66 and AFSCME Local 2574 suffered a tremendous loss. Our dear friend and fearless leader, Rebecca Scott passed away after a brief battle with leukemia. To know Becky truly was to love her. She was small in stature, but mighty in spirit.

Her adventure with Allegany County Department of Social Services began in August of 2015. She began as a Senior Caseworker in the Child Protective Services unit. Before long, she moved into the position of Caseworker in the Foster Care unit. There she worked as a Homefinder. In addition, she taught classes to potential foster parents and worked diligently to recruit foster parents to provide loving, stable homes for many children in need. She always went above and beyond, not only in her role as Foster Care Caseworker, but as a human being. She worked tirelessly to obtain grants and organized the annual Foster Care Christmas party each year, to ensure children felt joy and belonging during the holidays.

In June of 2022, Rebecca took on the role of President of AFSCME Local 2574, and our union was forever changed for the better. She fought fiercely for her union brothers and sisters, never hesitating to stand up for what was right. Under her leadership, our local became more active, more engaged, and stronger in numbers. She brought new energy to the union, growing our membership and making people excited and proud to be involved. Rebecca led with heart, determination, and an unwavering belief in the power of solidarity. A prayer vigil was held by Becky's church family during her illness. It was at this vigil that I heard a statement made by our union sister Alison Dickinson that perfectly summed up Becky's character. She said, "Becky would charge into Hell with a bucket of water for any one of us." Her dedication to both the people she served and the coworkers she represented leaves a lasting legacy within our department and our union.

In 2023, Becky joined the AFSCME Council 66 Executive Board. She served as a valued member of the board. In 2025, Becky was awarded the AFSCME Council 66 Local Labor Leadership Award for her extraordinary union leadership.

Those who knew Becky were continually impressed by her ability to give so much of herself to others through her work, advocating for her coworkers through the union, all while juggling the many responsibilities of family life, with grace and love. She showed us all what it meant to lead with heart, determination, and compassion.

Becky's legacy lives on in the strength of AFSCME Council 66 and AFSCME Local 2574, in the families that she has helped, and in the many lives that she touched. She will be deeply missed, but her spirit, laughter, and unwavering commitment to family and solidarity will never be forgotten.

By Joe Bolzan AFSCME local 2574



## Coordinating a Contract Campaign

Council 66 recently hosted the AFSCME International training staff for a presentation of a Contract Campaign training. **The purpose of a contract campaign is to make contract negotiations a complete membership campaign.** Techniques are employed to engage and activate the Union membership. A communication structure is set up to inform the members of progress and fully utilize the resources of the Union to achieve goals set by the local. This process can be used for issues other than contract negotiations as well.

One of the major aspects of a campaign is **assessment**. First, *the purpose and goals of an issue are set*. Next, an **evaluation** is made to see *what resources are available to the local*. The local must then **define the impact** they want to have on the issue. Finally, an **invitation** is made to the membership to participate in *actions that utilize their resources to accomplish the goals of their campaign*.

Another topic of the training was exploring how power works and what are the different types of power. There are **three main types of power** that were covered in the training. The first was **legal power**. This power is the *utilization of the contract language, state laws, and federal laws to regulate the relationship between the Union and the employer*. The next power was **relationship power**. This *relationship with management is developed through cooperation over time*. This is an unreliable and uncontrollable power. Finally, the concept of **worker power** was discussed. *This is the one power that the local can control*.

The remainder of the training covered how to structure the local communication networks and the best tools and practices to use. When structuring your local for a campaign, you identify the different member roles needed and how to best fill those roles with the membership. Examples of these roles are **action team leaders, information collectors, negotiators, storytellers, and communicators**. Some of the actions available for a campaign include petitions, posters, flyers, shirts, buttons, rallies, pickets, marches, and many more. One of the tools that was covered is considered the base of worker power. This is the one-on-one conversation. Training was provided to understand the principles, concepts, and techniques used to utilize this tool.



**Council 66** was happy to host the International training staff for this training. This was an introductory training for a contract campaign. Many other trainings are available through **AFSCME International**. Council 66 will be making these trainings available for its locals. *Please contact Council 66 if your local is interested in participating in a training.* ■