

OCSEA Structure



Navigating your way around OCSEA can be a little confusing at times. OCSEA is a large organization with over 36,000 members, who work in sites throughout Ohio, and its structure takes some getting use to. The following are answers to the questions new employees often ask about the union's structure.

What is AFSCME?

AFSCME stands for the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. It is a nationwide organization with 1.3 million members, making it the largest public employee union in the United States and second largest union in the AFL-CIO. OCSEA affiliated with AFSCME in the early 1980's and because of this affiliation OCSEA was officially designated as "Local 11" of the national union.

AFSCME provides valuable skilled staff, research, experience and resources for OCSEA and Ohio public workers. Besides giving us a voice in Washington, AFSCME provides expert assistance in areas in such as safety and health, public policy, economics and budget analysis, political action, labor law, union organizing and contract negotiations. Nationally, AFSCME staff is among the top in their fields of expertise.

AFSCME's policies are set at national conventions held every two years, and its national officers are elected at alternate convention to four-year terms. OCSEA Local 11 sends delegates to these conventions to represent our views.

Who governs OCSEA?

The overall guidance to OCSEA comes from its 31-member Board of Directors. Beginning in 1998, board members are elected for three-year terms and any member

in good standing can run. Board members deliberate and vote on union policies, set its budget and oversee nearly every aspect of OCSEA operations. The Board meets every two months and it is led by state officers who are elected to four-year terms at the union's biennial conventions.

Board members are also responsible for attending chapter meetings and keeping members informed of the union's statewide plans.

OCSEA Statewide President is Eddie L. Parks; its Vice President is Christopher Mabe; and its Secretary-Treasurer is Kathleen M. Stewart. These three officers form OCSEA's Executive Committee and, lead the day-to-day functions of the organization.

What is an OCSEA Chapter

The Chapters of OCSEA are the grass-roots of the organization. Every employee in one of the union's bargaining units is assigned to one of the union's Chapters based upon place of employment or residence. If you have a problem or if you want to become more involved in the activities of OCSEA, the Chapter is where to begin.

Chapters are created along lines of "common interest" such as the employees of a specific agency (if there are enough), institution or geographic location. For example, all of the employees at a state prison will belong to the Chapter.

Each Chapter meets regularly to discuss problems, plans, and programs. Most Chapters also plan regular social activities. Each has its own set of officers and union stewards, and each chapter sends a number of delegates to the union's biennial state convention.

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What is a District Council?

For administrative and governance purposes, OCSEA has divided the state into nine districts and each OCSEA Chapter is assigned to one of these districts. Within each district is a District Council that discusses common matters of importance to that area and to all of the members and chapters within the District. Each Chapter in the district is entitled to send delegates to the District Council.

District Councils typically plan district-wide educational programs and organize the union's political action efforts through District Grassroots Committees.

What is an Assembly?

"Assemblies" bring together employees from across the state that work in the same agency or department. Each Chapter with members in the agency that has an assembly is entitled to send delegates to the Assembly meetings.

Assemblies meet at least quarterly and are an important forum for discussing and responding to problems in a particular agency. Assembly meetings are usually

open to any OCSEA member employed by the particular department.

Although not every department has its own assembly, the number that does is fairly extensive and includes most of the larger agencies. Check with your OCSEA Chapter for more information about whether an assembly exists for your department.

Assemblies exist in Rehabilitation Services Commission, Ohio Department of Transportation, Mental Health/Retardation, Department of Youth Services, Local Government, Rehabilitation and Corrections, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, Bureau of Workers Comp, Taxation, Natural Resources, EPA, Adjutant General Fire Fighters and Industrial Commission.

What does the union staff do?

Although OCSEA has an excellent group of stewards plus officers elected in each of its Chapters, District Councils and Assemblies, these union leaders can't do it all. OCSEA and AFSCME maintain a staff of specially trained professionals who work with the Union leadership handling the legislative, accounting, data processing, arbitration, legal, education, communication and administrative matters of OCSEA.

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