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**EDUCATION**DEPARTMENT

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# **Standing Committees**

## **The Building Blocks of a Strong Union**

Getting Involved In Local Union Standing Committees





Looking for dedicated, caring people for standing committees. Amount of available time is flexible. Willingness to build union and share talents a must. Apply in person at your local union.

# Standing Committees

Vibrant local unions and progressive social movements don't just happen; they are planned for and worked on by people like you - members who care about the future and status of our union, members who care about what kind of future we want for all working families. One way to make a difference in all aspects of our union movement is through standing committees.

Local Union Standing Committees are the tools through which the policies and programs aimed at strengthening our union are put to work. These committees support UAW members by implementing activities that further the social, economic and political goals of the UAW. Local Union Standing Committees are made up of individuals who may have a special interest or strength in a particular area or they may just want to learn more about a subject and find a way to contribute to the labor movement.

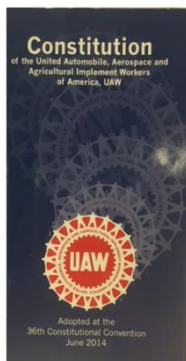
An effective standing committee uses the diversity of its local membership to bring together ideas, opinions and information needed to support common labor objectives that include:

- ❖ Building solidarity among the membership
- ❖ Encouraging members to take part in activities in the local union
- ❖ Providing communication links within the workplace
- ❖ Becoming politically active
- ❖ Working with other standing committees to keep the membership informed of current issues
- ❖ Educating members to become active in the local union by setting up classes and exchanging information on issues that concern working families
- ❖ Working with our coalition partners in building a progressive social movement.



## Article 44

### Local Union Committees



Article 44 of the UAW Constitution requires the local union to establish ten local union committees. These committees have defined functions to perform for the local union membership. The local union shall have the following standing committees:

- ❖ Citizenship and Legislative (CAP)
- ❖ Civil and Human Rights
- ❖ Community Services
- ❖ Consumer Affairs
- ❖ Conservation and Recreation
- ❖ Constitution and Bylaws
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Union Label
- ❖ Veterans
- ❖ Women's Committee
- ❖ and such other committees as they deem necessary

Article 44 further states that all committee members should be appointed or elected subject to the discretion of the local union or unit workplace organization in the case of an amalgamated local union.

Standing committees shouldn't exist just because "it says so in the Constitution". They are designed to be the "building blocks" upon which a successful local union is based. Standing committees also provide the starting point for many long-term union activists.

*Standing committees provide the starting point for many long-term union activists.*

## How Standing Committees Operate

Standing committees have officers as well as members. Most standing committees consist of:

- ❖ a chairperson
- ❖ a vice/co-chair
- ❖ a secretary
- ❖ a treasurer/financial secretary (where applicable)
- ❖ members
- ❖ sometimes sub-committees/task force



The local union president, as provided under Article 40 of the UAW Constitution, is an ex-officio member of all committees in the local union.

Standing committees hold meetings on a regular basis as determined by their local union bylaws, or as determined by the committee in consultation with the leadership.

## What Standing Committees Do



An effective standing committee is a motivated, energetic and innovative group of members who can apply their abilities to their areas of interest. Standing committees work in cooperation with their local

union executive board. They identify topics, programs and issues that are important to the membership, the community, the local union, the international union and labor movement as a whole. They develop plans and proposals for activities and, when approved by the local union executive board, carry out those plans. Standing committees report out at membership meetings on the progress of their activities and future plans.

## How To Get Involved

Local union bylaws determine how to become a standing committee member. Some local union standing committee members are elected, while others are appointed by the local union president. Contact your local union president regarding the procedure for becoming a standing committee member.

Consistent with the union's values and principles, effective standing committees reflect the diversity of a membership.

*Contact your local union president regarding the procedure for becoming a standing committee member.*

It is important that appointees have initiative, energy and a willingness to learn.



Members who choose to participate on a standing committee make significant contributions toward building strong locals and a more by equitable society. They do this by educating, motivating and mobilizing the membership

around issues of key concern to working families.

## **What Makes Standing Committees Successful**

**Communicating** - not only among members of the committee, but also with the local union leadership and other committees. Many projects and activities overlap between committees; talking and offering support to those committees will ensure success for all of us.

**Asking Questions** - to learn as much as possible about the objectives and purpose of the standing committees in your local. Find out what needs to be done and what the priorities are for your committee. Encourage others to voice their opinions and ask questions to clearly understand the issues from the leadership and rank and file perspectives.

**Listening** - not merely to hear what is said, but to understand the attitudes and opinions of others and to increase your own awareness and allow others to have a voice in committee decisions.

**Accepting Challenges** - ask for help when needed. Be prepared to look for solutions and alternatives when faced with a problem. Don't reject an idea only because "it's never been done before". Seek avenues for gathering information.



**Keeping At It!!** - build on small successes and activities that give your committee credibility and pride. Encourage each other and remember that working collectively can accomplish more than working alone.

## **What If You Need Help?**

Local standing committee training and support are available from various national departments. Assistance is available through your local union leadership, which will contact your regional office.

Local Union Standing Committees are not limited to, and can exceed, the descriptions in this book. Contact your local leadership to identify the programs and activities your standing committees are involved in.

Your efforts as a standing committee member can be multiplied by working with others in our common struggle for a strong union.

# Local Union Standing Committees

## ***Citizenship and Legislative Committee***



The Citizenship and Legislative Committee, most often referred to as the Community Action Program (CAP), is the worksite political-legislative arm of the local union and the vital workplace political activator.

If you believe that the people we elect greatly impact the political climate for working families and you want your voice heard, then this is the committee to join. CAP committee members work on identified key issues adopted by convention action.

This agenda includes:

- ❖ Protecting worker rights
- ❖ Fair trade
- ❖ New initiatives for working families
- ❖ Health and safety
- ❖ Other issues that affect working families

These issues are given priority based on, among other things, urgency and geography. We support candidates who support and fight for our trade union agenda. The CAP committee assists in voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, dollar drives, letter writing campaigns, and publicizing the issues and positions of public officials. This is the committee for hands-on political experience that allows you to grow and learn and take part in legislatively implementing our labor and social agenda.

## ***Civil and Human Rights Committee***

The Civil and Human Rights Committee is an essential guardian of the “No Discrimination” policy of our union. Members of this committee fulfill the local union’s commitment to assure members full rights regardless of religion, race, creed, color, sex, political affiliation, national origin, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.



The committee informs members of steps and procedures, including filing complaints and hearings, whenever a member or members believe their rights have been violated, either by management or other union members. The committee works toward the elimination of discrimination in the workplace, the community and the nation. Members of this committee have the opportunity to keep the local union moving forward toward the fulfillment of our UAW commitment on the civil rights front.

This committee needs members who feel a moral obligation to speak out on the issues of intolerance, injustice and bigotry and to rebuke any person or group that expresses such activity.

# **Community Services Committee**



The Community Services Committee performs the important task of getting help for members and their families in time of need. If being there to assist when an emergency, natural disaster, or even just hard times strike is something you feel strongly about, then

this is the committee to give your time and effort to. Some examples of community service activities include:

- ❖ hurricane relief
- ❖ organ donor awareness
- ❖ food drives
- ❖ blood drives
- ❖ support for laid off workers

The Community Services Committee works through public and private organizations to assure that members faced with problems in emergency situations get relief when needed.

Generally, strike insurance benefits are handled by this committee when local unions are forced to demonstrate their economic strength. This committee serves as the local's link with the community as we all work together to help those in need.

## ***Conservation and Recreation Committee***

This committee provides a variety of opportunities that fall into two categories. Recreation, which includes leisure time activities, and Conservation, which includes environmental concerns.



It has been proven that in today's busy work environment people need to combat stress with quality family and individual leisure time activities. If you enjoy organizing events such as bowling leagues, hunting trips, sporting events, team sport competition and the like, then the Conservation and Recreation Committee could be your committee of choice.

This committee is also an avenue to explore if clean air, clean water, developing parks and other environmental concerns are of interest to you. The Conservation and Recreation Committee challenges are not limited to your neighborhood or state, but are as widespread as national and global issues that affect us all.

## ***Constitution and Bylaws***



The bylaws of each local union, with the UAW Constitution, set out the rules by which the local operates. In a new local, the work of this committee sets the stage for how the local will function.

But, even well-established locals may need to modify or amend their bylaws.

Members of this committee are responsible for submitting original and/or amended bylaws provisions to the local union membership for discussion and approval. This committee monitors the required local union bylaws amendment procedure to ensure compliance with the current bylaws and constitutional provisions.

Once the amended bylaws provision(s) has been approved by the local union membership, this committee monitors the process to ensure that the amendment is immediately submitted to the International Executive Board pursuant to Article 37, Section 3 of the Constitution. Join this committee to strengthen your local union's bylaws and structure.

*The Constitution and Bylaws committee sets the stage for how the local will function.*

## **Consumer Affairs Committee**

The Consumer Affairs Committee members believe that the labor movement should monitor the social conscience and performance of companies in order to provide safe and honest products and services. This committee educates members on issues that affect all consumers, such as:



- ❖ child labor
- ❖ truth in lending
- ❖ truth in packaging
- ❖ truth in advertising
- ❖ utilities
- ❖ consumer fraud
- ❖ credit, and the like

*The Consumer Affairs Committee strives to keep the membership informed on various consumer protection activities.*

If you are interested in keeping the membership informed on various consumer protection activities and legislation, this is the committee that needs you.

## ***Education Committee***



Building the power of the movement through educating and training union members is the responsibility of the Education Committee.

Members of this committee determine the needs of the membership and provide

classes, material and information based on these needs.

In many subject areas “on the shelf” programs exist that can be delivered to your members. Materials are developed on such issues as:

- ❖ New Member Orientation
- ❖ Grievance Handling
- ❖ Leadership In Action
- ❖ Union Involvement
- ❖ Planning

Programs can be developed on topics of interest.

If you are committed to providing education that informs, develops skills and motivates our leadership and members, this is the committee for you.



## ***Union Label Committee***

An effective Union Label Committee supports the labor movement by informing and educating members *about the products we buy* as consumers. This committee helps to emphasize the importance of supporting those goods and services produced by union members under union-won working conditions.



The Union Label Committee keeps members informed of union products and availability of these products in the community.

This committee also helps bring to the attention of our members those products produced under non-union conditions and by anti-labor manufacturers. Committee members identify items that are on the “boycott” list and encourage rank and file support of these boycotts.

The work of this committee need not be limited to personal consumption. As citizens, we can demand that tax dollars be spent on quality, union-made products including cars, buses and the like.

## ***Veterans Committee***



The Veterans Committee seeks members who are willing to represent the interest of all active and retired UAW veterans and their families.

This committee is dedicated to advocating for the political and social concerns of Veterans.

This is accomplished through

leadership, guidance and education on matters of concern, such as:

- ❖ The Agent Orange Act of 1991
- ❖ The Persian Gulf Conflict
- ❖ dependent care
- ❖ disabilities
- ❖ benefits and others

The men and women who came to the aid of our nation when they were called upon, are a valuable resource to the entire labor movement. If you want to build and enhance the dignity that all Veterans have earned by serving their country, the Veterans Committee encourages you to participate.

## Women's Committee

The Women's Committee works to further the gains of women in the workplace as well as society. This committee informs and educates to broaden the scope of traditional women's roles. The sisters and brothers on the Women's Committee



encourage women to become active in local, national and community causes and programs. If you are interested in issues and topics such as:

- ❖ Legislative action
- ❖ Initiatives for work and family
- ❖ Women in politics
- ❖ Pay equity and the like,

then your involvement in this committee will support and encourage the women in your local and thereby, everywhere.

## Other Possible Committees

Other possible committees should be established by local unions to meet the needs of the local (e.g., New Member, Publicity and Publications, Youth, Special Events, Work and Family, Labor Crisis Support and the like). Such committees are necessary when a situation arises that does not fall within the scope of one of the above committees, or is of such magnitude that the local union believes special emphasis should be given to that project.

Newsletter



# ***My Plan For Building The Power Of Our Union Through Standing Committees***

Committees I am interested in:

- Citizenship and legislative (CAP)
- Civil and Human Rights
- Community Services
- Consumer Affairs
- Conservation and Recreation
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Education
- Union Label
- Veterans
- Women's Committee
- Other committees as deemed necessary

Who can I talk to about what this committee does in my worksite?

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I can commit to:

- helping on a single project
- being an active member of the committee
- being open to what's needed

Ideas for committee projects:

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Coworkers I can talk to about becoming involved with me:

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Day I plan to talk to my local union president:

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