



A Message from NVP Lannan

Hello AFGE Family,

As we look back over the last year, let us be reminded of how important it is for us to take the time to reflect

on the past in order for us to know the direction that we must move AFGE forward in. I am continuously inspired by all of the amazing leaders and activist, who represent our members and the sacrifices that they make to fight for civil, human, women's, and workers' rights. Our AFGE Members work hard everyday to care for the civilians, military, dignitaries, and to service the public and have proven time and time again that they truly are the heartbeat of America!



Various AFGE Leaders at the AFGE Leadership Training in Washington, D.C.

As we move AFGE forward into this new year, we will have new opportunities before us to build AFGE into the Union that we all know we could, should, and must be in order to stand in solidarity like never before. We must recognize that our Diversity as a Union is our greatest strength and that our Unity is our Power, because it takes each and every one of us to make this Union work for all federal and D.C. government workers. We must continue to put the best interest of the people that we represent over the politics and corruptive power that is designed to strip us of our rights, to bust up our Union, and that are the barriers we must break so that we can obtain equality and justice for all.

While we must also recognize that 2024 is going to be another trying and busy year for us all in AFGE and we will be tested as a labor union like never before, I know deep in my heart and strongly believe that if We Stay Ready, We Work Together, then We Will Rise Together!

I would like to encourage each of you to make sure to put time on the calendar this year to care for yourself and for your family and friends, to spend time with those who you love and who support you in this work because there is nothing more important than family, and that includes our Union Family. I hope and pray that 2024 is the best year in AFGE's history and I am confident that with your continued hard work and dedication, we will accomplish amazing goals for the federation. As our motto goes in WFP, "We don't make excuses, We make it happen for our AFGE Members", and that's exactly what WFP will continue to do all throughout this year for each of you!

In Solidarity,

Joromy A. Jannan

Jeremy A. Lannan, NVP for Women and Fair Practices



Embracing the Spirit: Celebrating Native American Heritage Month

November is a time to pay homage to the rich and diverse cultures, histories, and contributions of Native Americans as we celebrate Native American Heritage Month. This month provides an opportunity for reflection, understanding, and appreciation of the original inhabitants of this land. The legacy of Native Americans is woven into the fabric of the United States, and through acknowledging their heritage, we honor the resilience, wisdom, and enduring spirit of these communities.

The term "Native American" encompasses a multitude of distinct tribes, each with its own unique languages, traditions, and customs. From the Navajo in the Southwest to the Ojibwe in the Great Lakes region, and the Cherokee in the Southeast, the diversity among Native American cultures is vast and remarkable. November was a chance to explore and appreciate the richness of these traditions, from the intricate beadwork of the Plains tribes to the storytelling traditions of the Eastern Woodlands.

Native Americans have an ancient and profound connection to the land, rooted in a deep respect for nature and its cycles. Their spiritual practices, often intertwined with the environment, emphasize harmony and balance. This heritage offers valuable insights into sustainable living, conservation, and a holistic understanding of the interconnectedness of all living things. Recognizing and learning from these ancestral wisdoms can contribute to a more sustainable and harmonious future for all.

Native American Heritage Month also serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving and revitalizing indigenous languages, art forms, and cultural practices. Many tribes have faced the challenge of cultural erosion, and efforts to revitalize and pass on traditions to younger generations are crucial. Supporting initiatives that focus on language revitalization, cultural education, and the preservation of sacred sites helps ensure the continuation of these invaluable aspects of Native American heritage.

Beyond cultural contributions, Native Americans have made significant contributions to various fields, from art and literature to science and politics. Notable figures like Wilma Mankiller, the first female Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, and Sherman Alexie, a celebrated author, exemplify the strength, resilience, and talent within Native American communities. Recognizing and celebrating these achievements fosters a broader understanding of the diverse talents and capabilities of Native Americans.

While celebrating the achievements and richness of Native American heritage, it's crucial to acknowledge the historical injustices and ongoing challenges faced by these communities. From the forced removal of tribes to the struggles for recognition and sovereignty, Native Americans have faced and continue to face significant obstacles. Understanding this history is essential to building a more just and equitable future that respects the rights and autonomy of indigenous peoples.

Native American Heritage Month is a time for all Americans to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the original inhabitants of this land. By recognizing the diversity, wisdom, and contributions of Native American communities, we contribute to a more inclusive narrative of American history. As we celebrate this month, let us do so with a commitment to learning, understanding, and honoring the enduring spirit of the first peoples of the Americas.

AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. PODCAST COMING SOON

Season 2 coming February 1, 2024

Available at www.AFGE.org/YOUNG

The AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. Podcast is a production of the AFGE National Y.O.U.N.G. Committee and the Bridging Union Gaps (B.U.G.) Initiative.





Workshops in January 2024 to kick off the new year, to guide Local/ Council Coordinators within their roles, and to educate and promote Locals/Councils appointing Coordinators at their levels (WFP, Y.O.U.N.G., PRIDE, etc.) if these important positions are not already established with the Local or Council. These workshops will also be used as an opportunity to advertise the District Coordinator Bootcamps being planned within each respective District. AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. and AFGE PRIDE will also play an active role in working with the NHRC to facilitate these virtual workshops and the District Coordinator Bootcamps because

we understand that when We work together as a Union, We truly are Stronger Together!

The NHRC has also been working with WFP to plan

their annual training and meeting in May of 2024, which will be located in Portland, OR. The NHRC will complete certification training to become certified mediators and will serve as volunteer mediators to assist with AFGE's Conflict Resolution Program. The NHRC, AFGE Y.O.U.N.G., and AFGE Constituency Group Leaders will close out the weekend by working together on National Convention Resolutions so that they stand in solidarity and continue the important work around civil, human, women's, and worker's

Website: www.AFGE.org/NHRC

empower federal and D.C. government workers across

rights, which will in return help to protect and

the nation and overseas.

National Human Rights Committee

In December 2023, WFP hosted District Coordinator Bootcamp planning sessions with each of our AFGE Districts. These planning sessions consisted of District NVPs, the District NWACs and NFPAACs, the District Y.O.U.N.G. Coordinators, and the District PRIDE Coordinators. Each District drafted a training plan to host a District Coordinator Bootcamp in 2024, where some training would be in-person, some would be virtual, and some would be a combination of both. The National Human Rights Committee's ultimate goal is to offer Coordinator Training to help educate, empower, and prepare our Local and Council Coordinators to be successful within their roles.

The National Human Rights Committee has also been working with WFP, AFGE Y.O.U.N.G., and AFGE PRIDE to host some virtual Coordinator Bootcamp

the support of the Local/



Council Leadership. Our mission as leaders in the Labor Movement is to plan for the future, but is also to leave the Union in better hands than when we received it.

The AFGE National Y.O.U.N.G. Committee has been hard at work preparing for their upcoming Annual Meeting and the AFGE Legislative & Grassroots Mobilization Conference in February 2024. AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. will be hosting a lunch and learn event for attendees to learn how to bring AFGE's Y.O.U.N.G. Program to their Local in order to bridge the union gap (B.U.G.) between AFGE Y.O.U.N.G., Locals, Councils, and Districts. During this event, District Y.O.U.N.G. Coordinators will provide an overview of the AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. Program, will highlight different activities and events that have been successful, and will help Locals to develop a Y.O.U.N.G. B.U.G. Plan for 2024 that Locals can take back to their Locals/ Councils. The goal of the workshop is to encourage and empower Locals/Councils to (a) appoint a Local/ Council Y.O.U.N.G. Coordinator if they currently don't have one, (b) work with their Local/Council Y.O.U.N.G. Coordinator to finalize and implement the plans created at the Y.O.U.N.G. LegCon workshop, and (c) to educate and recommend for each Local/ Council to establish a Local Y.O.U.N.G. Budget to support implementing the plans for 2024.

The workshop will help to continue to support Y.O.U.N.G. 's mission and message, that in order to

Check out AFGE Y.O.U.N.G.'s Goals for 2024

- Create tools to organize and mobilize young AFGE members and encourage potential members to join AFGE.
- Encourage mentors over the age of 40 to join the AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. Program to educate and prepare young members for leadership roles.
- Encourage Local & District leadership to select a Y.O.U.N.G. Representative.
- Educate members on the importance of AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. and the young workers movement as a whole.
- Include an AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. meeting/training or social event at major AFGE conferences.

Email: YOUNG@afge.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/YOUNG

Website: www.AFGE.org/YOUNG



At the 2023 LegCon, AFGE PRIDE provided scenarios to those in attendance regarding various topics and situations that impact the LGBTQIA+ community and then discussed those scenarios. During the 2024 LegCon, AFGE PRIDE will be taking some of those same scenarios and further expanding on them, giving more detail and information about how to better assist someone who has questions or needs representation regarding an LGBTQIA+ issue.

The group met in December to do their strategic planning for 2024. Within their strategic plan they included further plans for their Subcommittees that include creating new training courses to be given in-person, virtually, and via self-paced webinar on the AFGE Learn website. AFGE PRIDE hopes to continue to host Discord community events where anyone who is a member of the AFGE PRIDE Discord server can come together, get to know each other better, and also have the ability to ask their burning questions.

Check out AFGE PRIDE's Goals for 2024

- To help LGBTQIA+ members and potential members feel welcomed and valued in AFGE.
- To facilitate efforts by AFGE to oppose workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression.
- To provide educational support to the leaders and members of AFGE that will ensure respect

for all employees, including LGBTQIA+ federal and D.C. government employees.

- To promote best practices in the workplace to support LGBTQIA+ union members and encourage Locals to adopt them via contract language, union policies and union advocacy.
- To work within AFGE and the Labor community to organize support for equality and justice of the LGBTQIA+ community and their families.
- To engage and mobilize the LGBTQIA+ community to support union campaigns for every member's rights at work.
- To increase turnout at AFGE PRIDE Events in 2024 and to support goals at the Local, Council, and District Levels of the federation.
- Develop an AFGE PRIDE lunch and learn guide for Locals to educate and advocate for employees' rights and promote inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ Identifying.
- Review and update and develop AFGE PRIDE digital and print resources and manuals.
- Develop an AFGE PRIDE Coordinator Training Program to help Local and Council Coordinators reach success within their roles and responsibilities.

AFGE PRIDE meets regularly on the second Thursday of every month. *Register Here*

Email: afgepride@afge.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/AFGEPRIDE

Website: www.AFGE.org/PRIDE



- Develop a 2024 Black History Month Program and Events.
- Create a virtual training that addresses the most common ways Black Identifying Federal and DC Government Employees experience racism in the workplace, how to recognize it, how to prove it, and how to use their rights to combat it.
- Improve economic development and employment opportunities for Black Identifying Workers.
- Increase union involvement in voter registration, voter education and voter turnout projects, where data and statistics identify a negative impact to the Black Community.

Over the last few months, AFGE B.L.A.C.K. worked collectively on their strategic plan for 2024. Below are some of the goals and objectives that B.L.A.C.K. will be working to accomplish this year and we look forward to working with our AFGE Members and Leaders to optimize our opportunities and to ensure that as a Labor Union we continue to work towards eradicating discrimination in the workplace, eliminate racial injustices that impact our members, and fight towards equality and equity in our communities.

Check out AFGE B.L.A.C.K.'s Goals for 2024

 Build relationship with Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), AFL-CIO and A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI), AFL-CIO to partner on issues that impact Federal and DC Government employees.



- Promote Professional Development of Black Leaders within Government and AFGE.
- Utilize AFGE B.L.A.C.K. to organize new members and mobilize new activists around racial, social, and economic justice issues.
- Partner and Collaborate with HBCU Institutions to help strengthen alliances within the black community and build a new layer of solidarity and support within the labor movement.
- Actively support civil rights and civic groups working to improve living and working conditions in the black community.
- Increase effective political alliances between labor, religious organizations, and the general public.

AFGE B.L.A.C.K. meets regularly on the third Wednesday of every month. *Register Here*

Email: black@afge.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/BLACK

Website: www.AFGE.org/BLACK



AFGE A.P.O.W.E.R. Chair, Rena Youngblood, along with her family doing organizing work in AFGE District 10.

During October-December 2023, AFGE A.P.O.W.E.R. has utilized the monthly meetings to obtain direct feedback from AAPINH members and leaders and to develop their strategic plan for 2024. Below are some of the goals and initiatives that A.P.O.W.E.R. has committed to accomplish in the new year. The goal is to encourage and empower more AAPINH workers to join AFGE, to become activists and leaders within their locals and councils, and to focus on the issues that affect the AAPINH workers and their families, both in the workplace and in their communities nationwide. A.P.O.W.E.R. 's vision and mission is to raise the voices of the AAPINH community and to build AFGE into a more intentionally inclusive union that represents all federal and D.C. government workers, especially underrepresented groups like AAPINH workers.



Check out AFGE A.P.O.W.E.R.'s Goals for 2024

- Promote professional development of AAPINH identifying leaders within AFGE
- Acknowledge and educate around AAPINH contributions to our Agencies, our Communities, and the Labor Movement
- Improve working conditions for AAPINH Identifying Members and their allies
- Grow a collective AAPINH voice within AFGE that can be used to organize and mobilize other AAPINH Federal and DC Government Employees into AFGE
- Develop a Partnership with APALA and other AAPINH labor-based organizations
- Build a strong network and increase participation of AAPINH Identifying Members within AFGE
- Create an AFGE A.P.O.W.E.R. organizing campaign plan, schedule meeting with AFGE Membership and Organizing Department to increase the visibility of A.P.O.W.E.R., promote the group and program within the Locals, Councils, and Districts
- Translate resource materials, manuals, flyers, and information on the website to improve AFGE's messaging and to promote intentional inclusion
- Create an AFGE A.P.O.W.E.R. Toolkit for Locals to utilize for Lunch and Learns and related events

AFGE A.P.O.W.E.R. meets regularly on the third Tuesday of the month. *Register Here*

Email: apower@afge.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/APOWER

Website: www.AFGE.org/APOWER



AFGE HISCO Leaders have continued the momentum of building a solid foundation and network within AFGE HISCO and we've received overwhelming support and participation in these efforts. We have increased our monthly meeting participation and social media network, we have created subcommittees to focus on legislative priorities affecting the Hispanic/Latinx community, and are currently working on translating WFP's materials to Spanish so that we ensure information and resources are being provided to our Hispanic/Latinx members and leaders where they are needed the most for representation, training, and to empower federal and D.C. government workers nationwide, including in Puerto Rico.

AFGE HISCO has obtained direct feedback from their survey results, from participants during their monthly meetings, and from members and leaders throughout all Districts so that they ensure that they are meeting the needs of the federation and to promote inclusion and representation on behalf



of their constituents. Since being reorganized under WFP in June of 2022, AFGE HISCO has proven that the delegates made the right decision and aims to continue to accomplish their mission as intended within the National Constitution. AFGE HISCO has not only amplified the voices of our Hispanic/Latinx members and leaders, but they have been intentional about supporting the other constituency groups and diverse communities to set the example within AFGE by showing that when We work together, We Rise Together!

Check out AFGE HISCO's Goals for 2024

- Build partnership with the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA), AFL-CIO, LULAC, and other labor-based Organizations.
- Build and strengthen relationships with other International Unions, Labor-Based Organizations and within AFGE.
- Develop Strategies for AFGE to use to promote the recruitment of Hispanic/Latinx Identifying applicants into the Federal and DC Government Agencies.
- Voter registration/link with an organization who is doing work around voter registration.
- Translate resource materials, manuals, flyers, and

information on the website into Spanish to improve messaging and promote intentional inclusion.

- Develop AFGE HISCO Toolkit for Locals, Councils, and Districts to use as resources for organizing and legislative issues.
- Identify legislative and political concerns/ issues that negatively impact the Hispanic/ Latinx Community and create an action plan to accomplish action items and address issues.
- Increase digital and social media communications and build a strong network for AFGE HISCO.
- Develop Bargaining Contract language centered around pay compensation for bi-lingual and multilingual skill sets and work with AFGE 's

Legislative Political Department to lobby Congress around legislation to address the issue on a larger spectrum.

• Create AFGE HISCO Program and Training Calendar

AFGE HISCO meets regularly on the third Thursday of the month. *Register Here*

Email: afgehisco@afge.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/HISCO

Website: www.AFGE.org/HISCO



WFP's Human Rights Network also includes our Local and Council Coordinators who serve within the role as a Women's, Fair Practices, Y.O.U.N.G., and PRIDE Coordinator. These Coordinator positions play an integral part in fighting for civil, human, women's and workers rights on behalf of federal and D.C.



workers nationwide and abroad. WFP would like to challenge each Local and Council to establish and/ or appoint the following Coordinator positions below to help bridge this union gap and to ensure that our members are

receiving the best representation possible at all levels of the federation.

Local/Council Women's Coordinator Local/Council Fair Practices Coordinator Local/Council PRIDE Coordinator Local/Council Y.O.U.N.G. Coordinator

Also, check out our resources for Local and Council Coordinators: WFP Coordinator Toolkit, AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. Toolkit, and AFGE PRIDE Toolkit.

Email WFP Program Coordinator, Matthew Uchaker *matthew.uchaker@afge.org*, to find out more about the process of establishing and/or appointing a coordinator for your Local or Council.



Telework Not Automatic Reasonable Accommodation Post COVID19

Reasonable accommodations are adjustments or modifications that enable people with disabilities to perform the essential functions of a job efficiently and productively. During the COVID19 Pandemic, many essential functions were temporarily waived because the workplace was closed. However, that does not permanently alter a position's essential functions.

Ultimately, the EEOC indicates that determinations regarding what constitutes an effective reasonable accommodation are going to be "fact-specific determinations" and the employer "has no obligation under the ADA to refrain from restoring" the employee's essential functions to pre COVID standards.[1] When contemplating telework as a reasonable accommodation, consider the following:

- The connection between the amount of telework sought and the specific impairments
- The ability to perform essential functions including those waived during COVID19, with the accommodation
- The responsibility to cooperate throughout the interactive process even if the initial accommodation offered is not your preference

Below is some helpful caselaw:

 Melissia M. v. VA, 122 LRP 47504, EEOC No. 2022000591 (EEOC OFO 2022). Full time telework was not necessary because the Agency's offer of a solid door for her private office and private bathroom were effective for her irritable bowel syndrome and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

- Marti F. v. VA, 122 LRP 43713, EEOC No. 2021003694 (EEOC OFO 2022). Full time telework was not necessary because the Agency's offer of 50% telework, protective equipment, and alternative positions (although declined), was reasonable because the essential functions of the position required patient contact regardless of the employee's higher risk for COVID-19.
- Sherill S. v. SSA, 120 LRP 31570, EEOC No. 2019003650 (EEOC OFO 2020). Full time telework was not necessary because Agency offered reasonable temperature related accommodation for temperature related condition and Complainant was not able to establish that anxiety would decrease when teleworking if still required to interface with public and coworkers.

There is no requirement that you accept the reasonable accommodation offered. However, you need to participate in the process. The Agency will often start with the cheapest/easiest option and there is nothing inherently wrong with that. You need to let the Agency know that the alternative accommodation being offered by the Agency does not meet your needs and explain why, including any reason provided by your doctor. Then the interactive process continues. It may take time to find an accommodation that works for you and therefore also discuss with the Agency possible temporary accommodations while waiting for a decision on your request. It is important that you continue to engage in the interactive process, and you stay in communication with the Agency.

[1] https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws



What is a Reasonable Accommodation for a Religion?

The Agency must reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices, unless doing so would cause a burden that is substantial in the overall context of the employer's business taking into account all relevant factors, including the particular accommodation at issue and its practical impact in light of the nature, size, and operating cost of the employer.* Therefore the Agency may be required to make reasonable adjustments to the work environment and/or religious observances or practices that will allow an employee to practice their religion.

What is considered Religion?

Pursuant to The EEOC Compliance Manual, Section 12, Title VII defines "religion" very broadly and includes traditional organized religion as well as religious beliefs that are new, uncommon, not part of a formal church or sect, or only held by a small number of people.

The Manual notes that "because the definition of religion is broad and protects beliefs and practices with which the employer may be unfamiliar, the employer should ordinarily assume that an employee's request for religious accommodation is based on a sincerely held religious belief." Section 12: Religious Discrimination. However, an employee should cooperate with reasonable requests for

verification of the sincerity or religious nature of a professed belief.

What are some examples of a Reasonable Accommodation for a Religion?

Examples of some common religious accommodations include flexible scheduling, voluntary shift substitutions or swaps, job reassignments, and modifications to workplace policies or practices including making exceptions to dress and grooming requirements as well as providing a space for prayer.

What are some examples of when the EEOC has determined that the Agency does not have to accommodate the employee?

An employee will not be accommodated when it creates an undue hardship for the Agency or the request is for an optional religious activity, for example: a vacation to reflect on one's beliefs; Mondays off to rest from Sunday church choir activities; and Sundays off for auxiliary church duties, including driving the church bus and parking cars. * The Supreme Court's decision in Groff v. DeJoy, 143 S. Ct. 2279 (2023) clarified that "showing 'more than a de minimis cost'...does not suffice to establish undue hardship under Title VII." The "undue hardship is shown when a burden is substantial in the overall context of an employer's business," "taking into account all relevant factors in the case at hand, including the particular accommodations at issue and their practical impact in light of the nature, size and operating cost of an employer."

What's Next?

Check out the WFP website

Visit us at www.AFGE.org/WFP to learn more about WFP, the work we do, our Human Rights Network, and more. Most importantly, check out our WFP Resource Library, where you can find all of our most important resources—toolkits, handbooks, brochures, EEO materials, photo albums, materials for Spanish and Tagalog speakers, and more.



Upcoming Events

AFGE B.L.A.C.K. Virtual Lunch & Learn Jan 17, 2024 at 11:00 am EST

AFGE B.L.A.C.K. Virtual Lunch & Learn Jan 24, 2024 at 7:30 pm EST

WFP Coordinator Bootcamp — Virtual Workshop Jan 30th & 31st, 2024 from 7:00 - 9:00 pm EST

AFGE Y.O.U.N.G. Podcast Season 2
Release Feb 1, 2024

AFGE Legislative & Grassroots Mobilization Conference *Feb 11-14, 2024*

National Executive Council Meeting *Feb 15, 2024*

AFGE Black History Month Virtual Program Feb 2024 TBD

AFGE Women's History Month Virtual Program Feb 2024 TBD



Contact Us: For general inquiries, email wfptraining@afge.org. For EEO-related questions, email eeo@afge.org. Do you know a Local or Council Coordinator that's doing amazing work? We want to hear about them! Reach out to us at wfptraining@afge.org to share your story and possibly be featured in future issues of the WFP Quarterly.