



Leadership Empowerment Zone

Weekly email updates from CSEA President Mary E. Sullivan

Thursday, January 4, 2024

Happy New Year CSEA Family! Below you will find important information, available trainings and a review of the many things we accomplished in 2023.

2023 Year in Review:

In 2023, our union once again showed that when we stand together, we can accomplish anything. Union organizing efforts continued to remain strong, with CSEA welcoming many new groups of workers into our union, including:

- School Safety officers at Schenectady City School District
- City of Long Beach Part-Time members
Bangs Ambulance workers
- Storm King Art Center
- Goshen Public Library
- Croton Library
- Town of New Scotland
- Inwood Sanitation District No. 1 (Supervisors)

Field Operations did very impressive work to strengthen contracts during the past year, we should all be very proud of these numbers:

- 62 contracts ratified since September 2023
- 15 of those 62 contracts added Juneteenth as a paid holiday
- 487 total contracts have Juneteenth as a paid holiday

Because of strong union legislative and political action, Gov. Kathy Hochul, her administration and state legislators passed a New York State budget that fully funds state agencies and provides important aid to local governments.

Our union worked with the Governor and her administration to enact measures to increase hiring and encourage retention at state agencies and local government. With our union's legislative and political action efforts, the governor and state legislature made many changes to the state's civil service system that include waiving civil service examination fees, offering continuous recruitment exams, placing Civil Service representatives in career centers across the state, requiring the Department of Civil Service and municipal civil service commissions to advertise competitive exams in schools and job training centers and counting employee provisional time toward permanent appointments. Governor Hochul signed the latter two items into law during a September news conference at which our union discussed the urgent need to boost worker recruitment and retention.

As 2023 ended, we continued to work with Gov. Kathy Hochul and her administration on efforts to reform the pension system, as well as civil service reforms to promote worker recruitment and retention. The governor and legislature have made positive reforms to pensions and civil service, but more work needs to be done.

The power and value of legislative and political action was also on display when the governor signed into law several bills that protect workers' rights and safety.

Union members showed up at the polls this year for numerous successful elections of local government candidates who stand with working people, most notably, longtime friends to our union Monroe County Executive Adam Bello, who was reelected, and Dutchess County Executive Sue Serino, who was elected. We look forward to working with them and other CSEA-endorsed candidates who were elected.

CSEA advanced efforts to reach out to new employees as soon as they are hired, including by forming a new member orientation task force. The New Member Orientation (NMO) Taskforce was created at the beginning of 2023 to review current practices and materials that are used throughout

CSEA. Taskforce Members represent every region in CSEA and across all industry sectors. They met and put in a great deal of time and effort to enhance our NMO materials in order to deliver the most effective ways to recruit and retain CSEA members.

Additionally, the Membership Enrollment & Administration Department was created from two separate departments within CSEA, and the staffing level was increased to create efficiency and accountability for the membership application process. Internal controls were implemented to ensure all applications received are processed timely. Regional teams were also created to increase the proficiency and accountability of the application and posting process. These changes have resulted in a dramatic improvement in our membership counts, dues revenue intake and far fewer complaints from our union leadership.

Our Legislative and Political Action Department also traversed the state attending regional conferences to have open discussions with members about anti-union groups like the Freedom Foundation and Opt-Out Today to find out what we can do better to combat these union-busting efforts and false narratives. We listened to our members' feedback and created new print materials to *fight back with the truth* based on what our members said they wanted to see and hear from us.

In 2023, CSEA continued to fight for workplace safety and health. Our union's Occupational Safety and Health developed a campaign to raise member awareness of ticks and tick-borne illness in New York, including distributing to members tick removal keys, tick identification charts, posters, and other reference materials. When Canadian wildfires affected air quality throughout the state, our OSH Department kept members informed of resources and recommendations to stay safe.

Hundreds of union members attended our Statewide Women's Conference in Saratoga Springs, where they learned how to better use their union voices to increase our power.

Additionally, hundreds of CSEA members from across the state had an opportunity to network, develop and enhance their leadership skills in trainings offered during our 113th Annual Delegates Meeting. CSEA members also increased their knowledge through region conferences throughout the year.

CSEA worked with the Workforce Development Institute (WDI) to launch a Child Care Scholarship Program to help working families with the high cost of child care.

Our union continued to negotiate and strengthen contracts across the state. Numerous bargaining units have added Juneteenth as a paid holiday, and these efforts continue.

Our State Operations Team also reached agreements with the Governor and her administration to extend paid parental leave to eligible state employees, and secure back overtime pay for hundreds of CSEA members. We continue to work to extend these successes to more members.

In 2023, our union also stepped-up efforts to urge soon-to-retain and retired union members to join the CSEA Retiree Division.

During CSEA Member Appreciation Month, we recognized and extended a thank you to all of our union members for their hard work every day in providing services in every community in New York.

CSEA members across the state also continued to show their solidarity through participating in Labor Day and Veterans Day events.

Looking ahead into the new year, we still face challenges and much more work, but we will stand strong!

OSH reminder for NYS school districts

As of today Jan. 4, 2024 all school districts and their cooperative extension must comply with the New York State Public Employees Workplace Violence Prevention Law. The governor recently amended the law to include all school districts. The law requires school districts to include union representatives in the process and requires them to implement protective measures and train all employees. Contact your OSH Specialist or visit <https://cseany.org/workplace-violence-prevention> for more information and assistance.

Important Election Information:

***TO: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR LOCAL PRESIDENTS
FROM: STATEWIDE ELECTION COMMITTEE***

By now you should have received some information in the mail from the Statewide Election Committee (SEC) regarding the 2024 Statewide, Region, Board of Directors, and AFSCME Delegates Elections. The information should have included the Election Notice. It is vital that you provide this election information to your Local membership and Unit membership, if any.

If you did not receive this information, or if you have any general questions about the election process, you may contact the SEC staff at 1-800-342-4146, extension 1447 or sec@cseainc.org. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Thank you! Deb Ake, Chair, Statewide Election Committee

Important Information from the Statewide Treasurer: The IRS has increased the mileage rate to 67 cents per mile effective January 1st, 2024. In order for your Local/Unit to pay the new rate, a motion must be made at your next Executive Board meeting confirming this rate and

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES can mileage reimbursement be made at a rate that is higher than this approved IRS rate.

<https://cseany.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2024-IRS-Mileage-Rate-Memo.pdf>

Membership Applications are now available in Spanish

Our Membership Department is pleased to announce that CSEA’s Membership Applications are now available in Spanish. The *online form* can be found and filled out on our website at <http://tinyurl.com/yc5cscpr> (within the Join Us drop down menu at cseany.org). It is also available on the MyCSEA App under “SIGNUP APPS.”

To place an order of the *hard copy Spanish-Membership Applications*, please call the Membership Department: 518-257-1278 or send an email to: annemarie.raymond@cseainc.org.

CSEA Communications receive 5 ILCA Awards It was recently announced that CSEA and its Communications Department received five awards in the International Labor Communications Association’s (ILCA) 2023 Labor Media Awards, which honors 2022 communications work. This contest is extremely competitive, with entries submitted by labor unions from across the U.S. and Canada, these honors are quite an accomplishment. View the awards here: <https://cseany.org/workforce/?p=13104>.

Rochester Americans Discount Offer

With the Rochester Americans’ season well-underway, we’d like to remind members of the CSEA-exclusive discount offer we have on all regular season home games at Blue Cross Arena in downtown

Rochester. [Click this link](#) and enter code CSEA to redeem this offer throughout their season.

Member Benefits Spotlight: Update on American Solar Partners
The Member Benefits Department was informed that American Solar Partners is shifting their business from residential solar installations to commercial installations. This decision was made based on the raising interest rate environment. American Solar Partners will continue to service existing CSEA installs but will no longer install new residential systems. CSEA will cease promotion and endorsement of this benefit.

Required Union Representation IN-PERSON Trainings:

State Government Grievance Representation – Fallsburg (Region 3)**

Tuesday, January 16, and Wednesday, January 17, from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Call (845) 831-1000 to register.

State Government Discipline and Interrogation – Albany (Region 4)**

Wednesday, January 17, and Thursday, January 18, from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Call (518) 782-4400 to register.

Local Government Discipline and Interrogation – Beacon (Region 3)

Saturday, February 3, from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Call (845) 831-1000 to register.

Local Government Discipline and Interrogation – Binghamton (Region 5)**

Tuesday, February 13, and Wednesday, February 14, from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Call (607) 338-1130 to register.

State Government Discipline and Interrogation – Oneonta (Region 5)**

Tuesday, February 20, and Wednesday, February 21, from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm. Call (315) 433-0050 to register.

*****This is a 2-part training, participants must complete both sessions to receive credit for completion.***

Required Union Representation **VIRTUAL Trainings:**

Discipline & Interrogations Recertification

Monday, January 22, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm. <https://memberlink.cseany.org/Event.axd?e=1212>

Grievance Representation Recertification

Monday, January 29, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm. <https://memberlink.cseany.org/Event.axd?e=1216>

Required Officer Trainings:

Contact your region to register.

Region 1 – (631) 462-0030 Region 4 – (518) 782-4400

Region 2 – (212) 406-2156 Region 5 – (800) 559-7975

Region 3 – (845) 831-1000 Region 6 – (716) 691-6555

****VIRTUAL** President/VP Training for Regions 1-6**:**

Wednesday, January 17, and Thursday, January 18, from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm for new and experienced officers in all sectors.

Deadline to register is Thursday, January 11. Call your Region to register.

*****This is a 2-part training, participants must complete both sessions to receive credit for completion.***

What do you want to read about?

I'm asking for your feedback on any topics you'd like to see covered in future editions of this weekly leadership update. If you have ideas, please take the time to fill out our quick online survey at: <https://forms.office.com/r/seCVpFhVaG>.

I appreciate your response.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary". The signature is written in black ink on a light yellow background.