

September 30, 2024

Dear MEA-Retired Members,

We are excited to inform you that four members of the association have embarked on a virtual training opportunity focusing on organizing titled, *6 Weeks to Power*.

At the invitation of the NEA's Center for Organizing (C4OSC) Bob Jean, Susan Grondin, Debbie Killam, and Molly Smith have joined in this training with more than 250 individuals coming from 105 cities in 34 states belonging to more than 20 nationwide organizations, including the National Education Association (NEA), America Federation of Teachers (AFT), and their state and local education associations.

The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS) in collaboration with the Midwest Academy, NYU Metro Center, Honest Education Action and Leadership (HEAL Together), and Journey for Justice (J4J) *6 Weeks to Power* is a key offering this fall. A comprehensive organizing training that includes an overview of community organizing, as well as a unique focus on building strong courses of action. Each of the 6 weeks will focus on specific skills, methods, and work to develop an understanding of organizing principles---then developing goals and a plan to operationalize those goals.

Why are we doing this?

MEA-Retired is undertaking this initial step to lay the foundation to initiate a process of strategic planning and outreach. As part of the training process, the team is expected to develop a vision statement, to assist us in the first step. It is as follows.

Improving the lives of all retired educators, both current and future by enhancing opportunities and by promoting positive outcomes in the areas of communication; economic well-being; and physical, psychological, and emotional health.

Thereby strengthening the Maine Education Association of Retired Educators (MEA-Retired).

MEA-RETIRED ORGANIZING TEAM VISION (9/13/2024)

The organizing team members see the strategic planning process as one that will; be collaborative engaging all members of the organization starting with the Executive Board, including the Board of Directors, members of committees, affiliate leadership, and the unified members of the affiliates; representatives of the MEA and NEA associations; and will be a long-term process of one year or longer until completed and adopted.

Besides this informational letter, the organizational team will be posting continuing updates of the *6 Weeks to Power* training experience, on the MEA-Retired website (mearetired.org) and our Facebook page (MEA-Retired). Communication and engagement will continue throughout the process using these methods.

Upon completion of the *6 Weeks to Power* training, MEA-Retired will be awarded \$2,500.00 to assist in the completion of the teams' plan, member engagement in the process, and the adoption of a strategic organizational plan. It will be possible to continue with an additional year of funding with documented evidence of our progress to achieve our goals. Along with the funding will come the support of and ongoing communications with a coach, provided by NEA's C4OSC as well.

We look forward to all members becoming engaged in the process of assessment, evaluation, and strategic planning that will result in the revitalization of our organization.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the members of the *6 Weeks to Power* training team,

Molly A. Smith

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MEA-Retired President-elect