

The Force



Labor Day

Is NOT the end of summer. That occurs on Thursday, September 22nd, 2022. Labor Day is a federal holiday to honor and recognize the American labor movement as well as the work and contributions of laborers. It is important to remember and celebrate the many people who have ensured a safe and equitable workplace.

The purpose of a labor union is to come together, as a group, to decide what constitutes economic justice, reasonable work hours, appropriate benefits packages, a safe workplace and many other issues, then to work together as a unit to get that for its members. On a day to day basis, stewards all over the United States, strive to assist workers with issues in their employment. These can be as small as helping get leave approved and as big as saving 800 jobs in a ramp down.

Union Stewards are only one part of a labor union. Members are the most important element of a successful union. You can write to your Congressional Representatives regarding legislation that impacts your work environment. Contact your union when things happen so we can address them, timely. Ensure your manager is following the contract requires that you and your steward tackle stuff when it happens.

This type of everyday activism makes our work lives better.

Debbie Mullikin



Announcing a New Recruitment

NTEU has created a new tool to assist with recruiting employees who have yet to join our union. The QR code is a digital way to quickly direct non-members to the Join section of the NTEU website where the online membership form can be found.

Right-click on the QR code image and save to your desktop or device. To use the QR code: open the camera app on your phone or tablet. Point the camera at the above QRcode and tap the yellow link that appears. Once you tap the link, you will be redirected to the NTEU.org/join webpage.

Reminder on Digital Resources

NTEU has a variety of [digital downloads](#) to help you share your union pride virtually.

Download polished NTEU-branded backgrounds for your next webinar or virtual call.



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DO YOU NEED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE? KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!



The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) provide federal government employees the right to use up to 480 hours of leave without pay (LWOP) for a serious health condition or that of a family member. An employee may elect to substitute annual and sick leave. Any sick leave credited to the employee may be substituted without regard to any of the normally applicable limitations on the use of sick leave.

Employee entitlement to substitute:

- (1) An employee is entitled to elect whether or not to substitute paid leave for leave without pay
- (2) *An agency may not deny an employee's election to make a substitution permitted under this section.*
- (3) An agency may not require an employee to substitute paid leave for leave without pay.
- (4) An employee may request to use annual leave or sick leave without invoking family and medical leave, and, in that case, the agency exercises its normal authority with respect to approving or disapproving the timing of when the leave may be used.

Notification by employee and retroactive substitution:

- (1) An employee must notify the agency of the employee's election to substitute paid leave for leave without pay under this section prior to the date such paid leave commences (*i.e.*, no retroactive substitution), except as provided in paragraphs (f)(2) through (f)(4) of this section.
- (2) An employee may retroactively substitute annual leave or sick leave for leave without pay granted under this subpart covering a past period of time, if the substitution is made in conjunction with the retroactive granting of leave without pay.
- (3) An employee may retroactively substitute transferred (donated) annual leave for leave without pay that has been granted.
- (4) An employee may retroactively substitute paid parental leave for applicable leave without pay under certain circumstances.

Employees should notify management, as soon as possible, if they will substitute paid leave for leave without pay. When you request, FMLA you are **not** required to allow Federal Occupational Health (FOH) Services to contact your medical practitioner. If FOH needs something clarified, they should ask you first. They should be specific regarding what needs clarification. If your doctor was clear on your form WH380, management should not need clarification. Generally, management will want to negotiate the number of hours you will be allowed to use, as opposed to what you and your doctor decided you need.

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Accounts Management, specifically, tells employees they are provisionally approved for FMLA. They then say that because the approval is provisional you may not substitute paid leave. This is false and is “interference” with your right to substitute paid leave. Management does not have the right to deny the substitution of paid leave but they are not required to provisionally approve your FMLA, *if* you have not provided the medical documentation within 15 days of the day you invoke FMLA or if they have reason to doubt the validity. In the second situation, they should send it to FOH. If they do not doubt the validity, and they shouldn’t without cause, they should accept what your physician said. At that point, there is no need for a provisional grant of FMLA. It is dishonest for management to tell you they have to wait for FOH. FOH should only be used in limited situations. Certainly, not if this is the second or third, etc., time you have provided a WH380 for the same serious health condition. It’s highly unlikely you were suddenly cured of a chronic condition. If management truly doubts the validity of your medical documentation, they send it to FOH and FOH can’t make a determination regarding your serious health condition, management may pay for a second opinion. You are still not required to give FOH access to your medical practitioner.

This is when they should grant provisional FMLA. In this situation, while you are getting the second opinion, you would be allowed to substitute paid leave. But if you are denied FMLA after the process is finished, you would be offered the opportunity to change the leave to annual or sick as appropriate. If neither were appropriate, management could grant LWOP or assess AWOL. FMLA can be considered an accommodation for a disability. Interfering with your right to use leave under FMLA can be considered a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act or the Rehabilitation Act.

Debbie Mullikin

STEWARDS’ CORNER

Your NTEU Stewards are here to fight for you! We are available in person, by phone, email, or skype!

GATEWAY STEWARDS

President:

Debbie Mullikin

Vice President:

Chris Pierce

Secretary/Chief Steward:

Shannon Lovins

Day Shift Full Time Stewards:

Loretha Hudson, Rachel Lovins,
Angela Moore

Day Shift Part Time Stewards:

Tonya Morris, Nicole Guethlein,
Jennifer Smith, Thomas Bayer, Brandi Riggs, Shonda Collins,
Nichole Williams, Alistair Blair, Brandy Belew

Swing Shift Chief Steward:

Alex Walker

ISO BUILDING

Treasurer/Full Time Steward:

Janet Colwell

NTEU EMAIL

ctr.cov.cirsc.nteu.73.covington@irs.gov

COVID IS KILLING NTEU 73 EVENTS

Before the COVID shutdown NTEU 73 had three events that we put on annually. We have the Memorial weekend picnic, the Labor Recognition Luncheon around the middle of September, and a Holiday Party the first week of December. In the past, there was always a crowd at our Picnic and people seemed to always enjoy this event. Since there is an additional 59 minutes for the Labor Recognition event, we always have the majority of the employees come out to get lunch. We plan to have a few vendors to give discounts for being NTEU members. This year, it will be September 14th for the Annex, and IRRC can join the event at the Annex building. We combined the Annex and IRRC building because the majority of the employees in the IRRC building are on a telework agreements. On September 15th we will have the lunch for the Gateway building. At this point, we have not yet reserved a venue for the Holiday Party, which is typically held for a member and a plus 1. We usually have a DJ, a nice dinner, and soft drinks are also included. Last year, wine and beer were also included at the Double Tree close to the Greater Cincinnati Airport. At all events we also draw names from NTEU 73 members for gift cards.

For last year's holiday party, the Chapter sent out 2,000 invites to all NTEU 73 members. We had 65 members attend and with their guests the total number of people was 114. The price to print and mail the invitations was \$1,601.33. The banquet, drinks, and DJ totaled \$11,708.29. The total cost for the prizes was \$1,043.00. The Holiday Party cost \$14,352.29. The money per member for this event is approximately \$221.00 per member.

For this year's Memorial Day picnic, we had 63 union members attend in addition to their guests, which totaled 346 people. This is a family event and with such a small group, there was no waiting in line for rides or drinks. The people that attended seemed to have enjoyed that, but our goal was to have many members gather in a nice place to enjoy with their family and their work family. The cost of the event would have been the same regardless of how many people attend, which was \$9,439.14. We also gave out gift cards to



members that totaled \$424.00. Our total cost of the Memorial Day Picnic was \$9,863.14. So that would mean approximately \$157.00 per member.

Due to the cost of these events, the Chapter cannot continue to afford having them since 1% of the members participate. Your dues do not cover the cost of these events. Is there an event that we do not have that you would like to have instead? Is there an event that you would like to keep? We would like to have feedback from the members. You can write us at PO Box 12389, Covington, Ky 41012. You can send an email to Shannon.k.lovins@irs.gov or Janet.d.colwell@irs.gov. We look forward to hearing from you!

Janet Colwell

DEATH OF A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE!

UNITED BENEFITS

When an *active* or *retired* Federal Employee dies there are steps that the surviving family members need to take.

First

FEGLI (Federal Employee Basic Life Insurance). The Majority of *active* Federal Employee's will have the Basic Life Insurance. This amount is their annual salary rounded up plus an extra \$2,000.00. Example: Salary \$47,722.00, round up to \$48,000.00 + \$2,000.00 = \$50,000.00 policy. The Majority of *Retired* Federal Employee's take a 75% reduction which from our example they would end up with a \$12,500.00 policy. They might also have Part A (\$10,000.00 policy) or Part B (up to 5 times their base salary). All Federal Employees will need to fill out the application forms with instructions in the link Below. If you are an IRS employee, you can also call ERC (Employee Resource Center) at 866-743-5748 and use prompts #1 and then #3 to for help. You will need the deceased name, social security number, date of birth and death certificate.

The FEGLI Death Benefit application, instructions and mailing address are in this link (copy and paste):

https://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/fe6.pdf

Second

Death in Service (actively employed). If the employee dies while still working the spouse may be entitled to 50% of the base pay plus an additional \$15,000.00. If the death occurred after December 1, 2016, the spouse may get 50% of base pay plus an additional \$32,423.56 (adjusted to COLA). To get this benefit the employee must have 18 months of credible service and have been married for at least 9 months. A *former spouse* may receive this benefit (whole or in part) if a qualifying court order awarded a benefit. The former spouse must have been married to the deceased for 9 months and did not get married again until after the age of 55.

Children may also be eligible for a monthly survivor benefit If the deceased worked for at least 10 years (18 months of which must be civilian service).

Death as a retiree. The Surviving Spouse may receive the Survivor Monthly Annuity if it was selected at the time of separation from Service. A former spouse would receive this benefit if it was awarded through a court order. Note you will need the CSA Claim number of the deceased. This number can be found on the 1099 R Form. When a spouse files for this survivor annuity, OPM will issue them their own CSF number, which re-

fers to their survivor annuity.

CSRS Survivor may also be entitled to select a lump Sum plus interest of any remaining principle in there CSRS account in place of the monthly annuity.

The FERS Death Benefit application, instructions and mailing address are in this link (copy and paste):

https://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/fe6.pdf

The CSRS Death Benefit application, instructions and mailing address are in this link (copy and paste):

https://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/sf2800.pdf

The following is a link to the OPM Overview of Death Benefits (copy and paste)

<https://www.opm.gov/retirement-services/fers-information/survivors/#url=Overview>

Paul Thornton
United Benefits
paul@unitedbenefits.com
423.309.2768
Fax: 423.370.1296



Its that time of the year again! The week of September 12th NTEU Chapter 73 will show our appreciation to all IRS employees. We will be providing lunch catered by a local favorite, the Log Cabin. There will be raffles to win some awesome prizes and we will also have a few vendors on site with us as well. Per the National Agreement Article 8 section 3 management will provide each employee 59 minutes of admin time to attend the Labor Recognition activities.

On Wednesday, September 14th NTEU 73 will be serving the Annex location for all Florence employees. If you work at the Annex or the industrial location, please join us from 11am-1pm for day shift employees and 7pm-9pm for swing shift employees.

On Thursday, September 15th NTEU 73 will be serving all Gateway employees. If you are in the building, please come join us in the 3rd floor Canteen from 11am to 1pm for day shift employees and 7pm to 10pm for swing shift employees.

We look forward to seeing all your face and celebrating the amazing work you do!

Rachel Lovins

Send off Summer With Savings



August Highlights

Walt Disney World®: Save up to \$80 off gate prices
Samsung: Get up to 30% off select Samsung products
Les Milles: Save \$30 on SMART TECH equipment bundles
Zoos & Aquariums: Go wild with up to 50% in savings on tickets nationwide



Last Chance for Summer Fun

Finish your summer off strong and take advantage of our offers with deals on:

- **Flights:** Save up to 20% on domestic and international flights
- **Hotels:** Get up to 60% off hotels
- **Rental Cars:** Save up to 25% off



School Is Almost Here

August means it's back-to-school time. Take advantage of our education offers and get a head start on the school year.

- **AllCampus:** Save up to 15% with select online learning programs
- **Udemy:** Get up to 75% off online courses



National Wellness Month

We've got August offers on fitness, nutrition, and well-being to celebrate National Wellness Month.

- **Onnit:** Save 15% on nutrition orders of \$125 or more
- **Calm:** Get \$40 off the #1 app for sleep, meditation, and relaxation



Make the most of your TicketsatWork membership! Get instant access to exclusive deals, limited-time offers and members-only perks on the products, services and experiences you need and love. With something to excite every interest, it's time to spend less and enjoy more this season.

New to TicketsatWork? Getting Started is Easy.

- 1 Visit TicketsAtWork.com
- 2 Click *Become a Member*
- 3 Enter your company code or work email to create an account

COMPANY CODE

KINTEU

NEED HELP? CALL US: 1-800-331-6483 • EMAIL US: CUSTOMERSERVICE@TICKETSATWORK.COM
*Prices and Offers are subject to availability and subject to change without notice. Please review the terms and conditions for offers.



⚙️ The 2022 Summer Membership Campaign will run from May 8, 2022, through September 24, 2022.

💰 An incentive of \$50 will be paid to each new member that completes and turns in the form 1187 during the campaign period. If you are a member and recruit a non-member to join you can get \$25 for each recruit. They need to put your name at the bottom of the for 1187.

🕒 Incentives will only be paid for new members who have not been a member of NTEU within the past year.



UNITED
B E N E F I T S

Benefits Enrollment and Retirement Assistance

FREE SERVICES PROVIDED

- Retirement Planning, Strategies, & Estimates (3 Paychecks)
- FEHB (Federal Employee Health Benefits) into Retirement
- FEGLI (Federal Employee Group Life Insurance) into Retirement
- Retirement Paperwork:
 - GRB:
 - Paperwork for FERS & CSRS employees
 - Social Security:
 - Help with setting up account
 - Starting benefit payments
 - Setting up Medicare
 - TSP:
 - Help setting up accounts
 - Maneuvering through TSP webpage
 - Protecting your retirement funds

VOLUNTARY BENEFITS OFFERED

- Permanent Life Insurance - employee, spouse, children, and grandchildren
- Short-Term Disability
- Hospital Indemnity
- Critical Illness
- Dental & Vision Insurance

ONE-ON-ONE APPOINTMENTS

Schedule your one-on-one benefits review by scanning the QR Code below.

You can also visit us at

<https://unitedbenefits.com/lp-paul-chris/>



Paul Thornton

paul@unitedbenefits.com

423-309-2768

Roxie Thornton

423-309-2758

Christopher Lee

chris@unitedbenefits.com

256-740-2166