



United Food and Commercial Workers Local 951  
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## HELP SPREAD THE WORD

### UFCW OUTREACH SUPPORTS LGBTQ+ MEMBERS

UFCW OUTreach is a group of members, staff and leadership dedicated to building mutual support between our union's International, regions, and locals and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBTQ+) community. The goal of OUTreach is to build a labor environment that cherishes diversity, encourages openness, ensures safety and dignity, and which works toward full equality for LGBTQ+ workers on their jobs and in their union.

If you or members at your workplace would like more information about the UFCW OUTreach program, or would like to be involved with the work of OUTreach, contact Joe Hanson at 1.800.999.0951 ext. 196. Hanson works in the Communications Department at UFCW 951 and serves on the OUTreach Executive Board.



JOE HANSON

### GET WELL, RETIREMENT AND SYMPATHY CARDS



If a member at your workplace is retiring, is seriously ill, lost a loved one or has passed away, stewards may request to have the UFCW 951 office send the member a card from the local.

Stewards can request cards for members at their workplace by contacting their union representative. When requesting a card for a member, be sure to provide the member's name, employer and unit number, the reason the card is being requested and any other relevant information. If the card should be sent to an address other than the address on file at the union office, you must provide the address as well.

# STEWARD UPDATE

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: IN-PERSON CONFERENCES TO BE HELD FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THREE YEARS

After two years of social distancing and taking the necessary precautions to protect our communities, I am excited to once again be hosting in-person steward conferences. I strongly believe that seeing each other face-to-face is the best, most effective way to share our thoughts and ideas, as well as the strategies that we have learned over the past couple of years. It is my hope that you will take the knowledge you gain back to your workplaces and use it to support your fellow members.

The topics for this year's conferences will include new hire orientations, Weingarten Rights, tips for having conversations with non-members, and I will be hosting a question and answer

session. You will be receiving a text to submit any questions that you would like to have me answer during my session, but if you don't use text messaging you may submit your questions to me by email at [comm.team@ufcwlocal951.com](mailto:comm.team@ufcwlocal951.com).

Steward conferences will be held from the end of March through April in Kalamazoo, Lansing, Pontiac and Gaylor.

All stewards will be required to wear a mask covering their nose and mouth regardless of vaccination status. This policy will be enforced. As an additional safety measure, we will be serving boxed lunches at each event to prevent people from having to gather in one area for food.

While I highly encourage all stewards to attend, I understand that some may not yet feel comfortable gathering. If you do not feel comfortable attending the conference or are unable to comply with the mask requirement, your union representative needs to be notified of this in advance of the conference.

I look forward to seeing you there!



JOHN CAKMAKCI

### THE UFCW 951 OFFICE HAS A NEW ADDRESS!

The UFCW 951 office has relocated to a temporary location while the new building is being renovated to better meet the needs of membership and staff. Renovations are expected to be completed later this year.

**At this time, stewards must discard old postage-paid envelopes** printed with the address on Evergreen Drive in order to avoid delays in the receipt of important documents, such as membership applications and grievance forms, which are often returned to the office in these envelopes. Envelopes with the new address are available from your union representative. The new envelopes have a star printed in the upper-left corner to further help differentiate them from the old ones.

Business reply mail such as Foundation scholarship applications and Membership Matters Giveaway forms will be forwarded to the new address by the post office and do not need to be discarded.

The temporary office is located at:

401 Hall St SW Suite 498  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

If you have questions about the move or need updated materials contact your union representative.



## STEWARD SPOTLIGHT: KARLA CALKINS FROM MEIJER #195

In the 15 years she has served as a steward at Meijer #195 in Battle Creek, Karla Calkins has been a passionate advocate for the members at her store.

Calkins first considered becoming a steward during an incident when she needed union representation and there wasn't a steward at her store to help her. Thankfully, Calkins was assisted by a steward from a nearby store and her union representative, but she felt that her coworkers deserved to have their own steward to stand up for them in their workplace. She decided that she could be that person and signed on to become a steward.

Calkins believes that it is important for members to know that the union is more than just contracts and grievances. She works to ensure that members at her store are educated about union events as well as scholarships and reimbursements and participates in fundraisers to help members who are in need. During orientations she tells new

hires about these programs, as well as the benefits of the contracts and having union representation. She wants them to know that the union is there both in and out of the workplace.

In her years as a steward, Calkins has accomplished many great things, from securing backpay and saving jobs to



"I want my members to know I am the person that can help them get their point across or help them through a situation that they don't think they can get through on their own. I'm there when they don't feel that they have that voice or knowledge. I'm one of them. I use the union the same as they do and I understand what they're going through."

— Karla Calkins, Meijer #195 in Battle Creek

successful fundraisers. However, what she is proudest of is that she has been able to be there for her members to help them through issues that they encounter, and that in return they have confidence in her as their steward.

"Karla's passion for her role as a steward is evident in the way that she fights for the members at her store," said UFCW 951 President John Cakmakci. "In the many years that she has served the members at Meijer #195, her coworkers have come to trust her to keep them informed and have their back."

They know that they can go to her with their questions or concerns and she will address them because it is important to her to do so."

## KNOW THE LANGUAGE OF ORGANIZED LABOR

As the go-to resource for members when they have a question about the union or their rights, stewards should be familiar with the language used in their union contract, grievance procedure and within organized labor as a whole. This is why a glossary of terms is included in the steward handbook. Going forward, each issue of the Steward Update will feature a sampling of some of the most commonly used labor terms.

### ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act)

National law forbidding discrimination against employees on the basis of disability and requiring reasonable accommodations for qualified disabled employees. The ADA is enforced by the Equal Opportunities Employment Commission (EEOC) and by private lawsuit.

### AFL-CIO

Created by a merger between the AFL (American Federation of Labor) and the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organization) in 1955. Many major

unions belong to the AFL-CIO, including the UFCW. AFL-CIO member unions (sometimes called the "Federation" or the "labor federation") have approximately 14 million members. The purpose of the AFL-CIO is to improve the lives of working families by promoting economic justice in the workplace through collective bargaining, and advocating for better policy at the local, state and national level.

### Arbitration

A method of settling a labor-management dispute by having an impar-

tial arbitrator decide the issue. This is the last step in the grievance procedure. The decision of the arbitrator is usually binding.

### Award

The decision of an arbitrator in a dispute. The arbitrator's award is based upon the evidence presented, the wording in the collective bargaining agreement (contract) and the arguments of both parties. In labor arbitration, the arbitrator's reasons are generally expressed in the form of a written opinion, which accompanies the award.

## AVOID THESE COMMON MISHAPS WHEN HANDLING GRIEVANCE ISSUES IN THE WORKPLACE

To ensure that UFCW 951 members get the most out of their union, stewards should make note of these "Do's" and "Don'ts" of grievance handling.



### DO

- ✓ Always be sure to include the date of incident and the date that the grievance was filed.  
*This is important information because of time limits associated with the grievance process. In all cases, the company does not have to meet on grievances that are untimely.*
- ✓ Inform your union representative of meeting dates and immediately upon receiving an answer from management after a Step 1 grievance meeting.  
*This is important information due to time limits associated with the grievance process.*
- ✓ Reach out to another steward or your union representative for help if you are unsure which article has been violated.  
*For a grievance to have merit there must be a violation of the contract. In order to prove a violation, it is necessary for the involved parties to know where the violation is.*



### DON'T

- ✗ Submit a grievance form without the date of incident and the date of filing.
- ✗ Leave the space for the article violated blank because you are unsure which article applies to the grievance.
- ✗ Leave your union representative in the dark about Step 1 grievance meetings and answers from management.

Even the most experienced of steward may make a mistake. If this happens to you, reach out to your union representative as soon as the error is discovered. If you are ever unsure of how to handle a situation in your store or feel that you need more training on a specific function of your role as a steward, contact your union representative.

## IT PAYS TO BELONG: FREE AND REDUCED RATE TAX HELP AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS!

Through the UFCW 951 tax program, members have access to discounted tax preparation services and free tax filing advice through the same firm that provides services for UFCW 951.

### TAX PREPARATION OPTIONS

Members can schedule an appointment to have their taxes prepared in-person at the ShindelRock office in Novi or use the convenient mail-in option to have their taxes completed by tax professionals without having to meet in person.

### EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTED RATES

- \$50** Federal & State Forms with No Schedules
- \$100** Federal & State Forms with One Schedule
- \$150** Federal & State Forms with Two or More Schedules

For information contact ShindelRock.

Email: [951tax@shindelrock.com](mailto:951tax@shindelrock.com)

Phone: **1.248.855.8833**

**Get FREE Answers to Your Tax filing questions from a Certified Public Accountant!**

Members completing their own taxes – including those using a web application or software such as Turbo Tax or Tax Cut – can receive free answers to their tax filing questions from the Certified Public Accountants at ShindelRock.