

NORTH SHORE

FEDERATION OF LABOR

DELEGATE HANDBOOK



UPDATED NOVEMBER 2025



A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Dear Delegate,

On behalf of the North Shore Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, it is my pleasure to welcome you as a delegate to our organization. You are now part of a proud tradition of solidarity, advocacy, and collective action that has defined the labor movement in Northeast Ohio for generations.

Since 1887, the North Shore AFL-CIO and its predecessors have united unions across our region to fight for the rights of working people. Together, we've stood shoulder to shoulder in the struggle for fair wages, safe workplaces, and economic justice for all. We have organized, rallied, bargained, and voted to build a better life not only for union members, but for every working family in our community.

As a delegate, you are a vital link in that tradition. You serve as the bridge between your local union and the broader labor movement — carrying the voices, experiences, and priorities of your union siblings into our Federation, and bringing back the solidarity, information, and strength that come from being part of a united movement of working people.

This handbook is designed to help you step confidently into that role. Inside, you'll find an overview of our Federation's structure, a look at our history and mission, and clear expectations for your participation. Whether you're attending your first Central Body meeting or taking on a larger leadership role, this guide will help you understand how to make your voice count — and how our collective work shapes policy, politics, and progress for workers across Northeast Ohio.

Our Federation is more than a meeting — it's a movement. We bring together unions representing tens of thousands of workers in public service, the trades, healthcare, education, manufacturing, and beyond. Together, we advocate for strong unions, defend workers' rights, and fight for a fair economy that benefits everyone. Your participation ensures that our Federation remains strong, active, and united in the face of new challenges.

Thank you for stepping up to lead and represent your union. Your energy, commitment, and voice keep our movement moving forward. We look forward to working with you to advance the cause of working people — for our members, our families, and our communities.

Welcome to the Federation family. Let's get to work.



Brian Pearson
Executive Secretary

OUR MISSION AND PRINCIPLES

The North Shore Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO exists to unite unions and working people across Northeast Ohio in pursuit of economic, social, and political justice. As a chartered body of the AFL-CIO, we work to advance the principles, policies, and objectives of the national Federation while addressing the needs of workers in Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga counties.

Our mission is guided by the belief that organized labor strengthens communities, protects workers' rights, and enhances democratic society. We seek to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of working people through democratic processes, collective action, and responsible participation in civic life.

Specifically, the North Shore AFL-CIO strives to:

- **Support our unions and members:** Provide assistance, cooperation, and resources to affiliated local unions and their members in pursuing fair wages, safe working conditions, and strong benefits.
- **Promote solidarity and information sharing:** Serve as a central hub for exchanging information, building connections, and fostering unity among labor organizations.
- **Advocate for workers:** Propose, support, and promote legislation and policies that strengthen the labor movement, protect workers' rights, and oppose harmful measures.
- **Encourage civic engagement:** Inspire union members to exercise their full rights and responsibilities as citizens, including registering to vote, participating in elections, and engaging in community life.
- **Support union-made goods and services:** Promote the use of union products, services, and the labor press to educate the public about the value of organized labor.
- **Advance responsible labor practices:** Educate and advocate for strategies such as Responsible Contractor Investment to ensure fairness, safety, and quality in construction and services.
- **Uphold human dignity and justice:** Combat forces that threaten democratic institutions, and work to ensure respect, fairness, and opportunity for all workers.

Through these efforts, the North Shore AFL-CIO continues the proud tradition of unionism, empowering workers, strengthening communities, and promoting a fair and just society.

FEDERATION QUICK FACTS

148

**AFFILIATED
UNIONS**

80k

MEMBERS

135+

**YEARS IN
CLEVELAND**

The North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor is the organized voice of 80,000 working people across Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga counties. Nearly 150 local unions are affiliated with our Federation, representing workers from bus drivers and mechanics to steelworkers, public-sector employees, grocery store staff, world-renowned orchestra musicians, and even the 53-man roster of the Cleveland Browns.

We are one of nearly 500 state and local labor councils of the AFL-CIO and the largest of Ohio's 19 Central Labor Councils, serving as a cornerstone of the labor movement in Northeast Ohio. As a democratically elected body, we are committed to representing the interests of working people at the local level. We mobilize our members and community partners to advocate for social and economic justice, fight oppression, and work every day to make our communities stronger, fairer, and better for all.



FEDERATION STRUCTURE



Delegate Body

- Comprised of delegates from all affiliated local unions. Meets monthly to vote on policies, budgets, endorsements, and Federation direction.

Executive Board

- Elected every four years by Delegates. Implements the decisions of the Delegate Body between meetings. Oversees committees, programs, and campaigns.
- **President:** Presides over meetings, provides leadership, and represents the Federation publicly.
- **Executive Secretary:** Chief administrative and executive officer; manages daily operations, implements programs, and serves as the principal spokesperson.
- **Treasurer:** Oversees finances, prepares reports, and ensures fiscal responsibility.
- **Reporting Secretary:** Keeps minutes and maintains official records.

Vice Presidents: Advise on issues affecting their sectors and assist in mobilization.

DELEGATE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Delegate to the North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor, you are the vital link between your local union and the broader labor movement.

The strength of the labor movement depends on Delegates like you—rank-and-file leaders who bring the real-world experiences, priorities, and perspectives of working people into the Federation’s collective work. Delegates are the connection between what happens in union halls, on shop floors, and in classrooms and what happens in the broader movement for justice and fairness in our region. Your participation ensures that every local union, regardless of size or sector, has a seat at the table and a voice in the decisions that shape our shared future.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

Delegates ensure their local union’s priorities are represented in the Federation’s programs, policies, and actions. In turn, they help bring the Federation’s campaigns and messages back to their local union and community—creating a strong, two-way flow of communication that builds power from the ground up.

An effective Delegate:

- **Represents** their local’s interests faithfully and votes with members’ priorities in mind.
- **Attends** all delegate meetings and participates actively in discussion and decision-making.
- **Reports back** to their local union with summaries, votes, and calls to action.
- **Supports** organizing and mobilization efforts across the labor movement and community.
- **Serves** on at least one Federation committee and volunteers time for campaigns, events, and projects.
- **Models solidarity** by being respectful, inclusive, and solution-oriented in every interaction.
- **Upholds ethical standards**, including the AFL-CIO Code of Conduct and the Federation’s anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.
- **Patronizes union-made goods and services** whenever possible and stays civically engaged by voting in local, state, and federal elections.

As delegates pledge in their oath:

“I will obey the rules and regulations of this Central Body and, to the best of my ability, perform all the duties I may be called on to discharge as a delegate thereto.”

DELEGATE MEETINGS

Delegate meetings are where Federation policies, initiatives, and finances are reviewed, debated, and approved. Officers and Executive Board Members are nominated and elected every four years, and major organizational matters—such as per capita taxes and expenditure approvals—are decided.

Meeting Details:

- **When:** Second Wednesday of each month, 5:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Lower-level hall, Laborers Local 310 Building, 3250 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland
- **Duration:** Typically 1–2 hours

Delegates are expected to consult with their local leadership before and after meetings to ensure their union's voice is heard in Federation decisions and to share updates on key labor, community, and political issues.

VOTING AND REPRESENTATION

- Each Delegate is entitled to one (1) vote.
- Voting may occur by voice vote or division of the house.
- No proxy voting is permitted.
- No Delegate may represent more than one organization.
- Representation is based on each local union's membership and per capita tax paid, as defined in the Federation's Constitution and Bylaws.

MEETING PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION

Preparation and participation make Delegates effective advocates for their union siblings:

- Review meeting materials in advance and prepare for any motions or updates from your local.
- Follow the agenda to stay focused on key issues and manage time effectively.
- Understand parliamentary procedure—how to make and second motions, raise points of order, and request roll calls.
- Communicate clearly and work toward consensus whenever possible.

ORIENTATION AND CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT

New Delegates are encouraged to attend an Orientation Session to learn about the structure, mission, and programs of the North Shore AFL-CIO and the broader labor movement. These sessions, offered quarterly, provide an opportunity to meet fellow Delegates, learn the Federation's history, and strengthen your role in advancing solidarity and collective action across Greater Cleveland.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED: COMMITTEES

Committees help delegates shape our Federation’s mission—building power for working people through organizing, education, community engagement, and political action. A delegate who is interested in serving on a Federation committee should contact the Executive Secretary.

Affiliation/Credentials Committee

Reviews union credentials and determines delegate eligibility. Ensures accurate delegate records are maintained and reports findings to the Central Body.

Coalition Building/Mobilizing Committee

Builds relationships with community and labor allies. Develops activist, phone, and rapid-response networks to mobilize members for events, rallies, and campaigns.

Committee on Political Education (COPE)

Educates members on voting, candidates, and issues. Oversees Get Out the Vote efforts and coordinates candidate screenings and endorsements through county COPE committees.

Community Services Committee

Leads projects that support AFL-CIO Community Services programs, improving lives in the community.

Ethical Practices Committee (EPC)

Enforces the AFL-CIO Ethical Practices Code when violations are filed. Comprised of rotating Executive Board members and either the President or Treasurer.

Legislative Committee

Monitors national, state, and local legislation affecting working people. Provides updates to other committees and affiliates; the Vice President directs committee programs.

Organizing Support Committee

Supports approved organizing campaigns and educates allies on workers’ rights, helping build a pro-union culture across our region.

Strategic Planning Committee

Develops and coordinates the Central Body’s strategic work plan and budget, aligning activities with AFL-CIO priorities.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED: CONSTITUENCY & ALLIED GROUPS

Our constituency groups work within the framework of the Federation to amplify the voices of diverse union members by addressing unique challenges, fostering inclusion, and advancing social and economic justice within the labor movement. We are also aligned with outside organizations that help build worker solidarity and advance social and economic causes.

Cleveland AFL-CIO Retiree Council

The Cleveland AFL-CIO Retiree Council is an organization of retired union members dedicated to advocating for labor rights, supporting union activities, and engaging in community and political initiatives to benefit working families and retirees.

Union Veterans Council

The Union Veterans Council brings together workers who are veterans and speaks out on issues that affect them the most.

Young Worker Advisory Council

The Young Worker Advisory Council empowers and engages young union members by fostering leadership development, promoting activism, and addressing issues important to the next generation of the labor movement.

A. Philip Randolph Institute

APRI is an alliance between labor and the civil rights movement. Today, it fights for racial equality and economic justice.

Coalition of Labor Union Women

CLUW unifies union women to face shared concerns. The coalition focuses on action on issues important to women workers.

Alliance for Retired Americans

The Alliance's mission is to ensure civil rights for retirees and older Americans. Members mobilize to elect leaders dedicated to social and economic justice.

Jobs with Justice

Jobs With Justice fights to create an economy that benefits everyone. They focus on grassroots campaigns and shaping the public discourse about working people.

Labor Heritage Foundation

LHF preserves and promotes the culture of America's worker. It strengthens the labor movement through the use of music and the arts.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED: POLITICAL PROGRAM

The North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor's political program is how we turn solidarity into action. Working people deserve a government that listens to them—not corporate lobbyists or special interests. Through our collective political program, we make sure working families have a strong voice in every level of government, from city halls to the Statehouse to Washington, D.C.

What We Do

Our political program is year-round and focused on issues that matter to union members and their families—good jobs, fair wages, safe workplaces, strong public services, and the freedom to organize. We:

- Vet, and endorse pro-worker candidates for local, state, and federal office.
- Educate union members about where candidates stand on working-family issues.
- Mobilize volunteers to knock doors, make calls, and turn out the labor vote.
- Hold elected officials accountable to the values of the labor movement after election day.
- Work in partnership with the Ohio AFL-CIO and our local union political coordinators to build a unified labor voice across the region.

Our political work is not partisan—**it's pro-worker**. We support candidates who support us, regardless of party affiliation. Together, we help elect leaders who fight for collective bargaining rights, defend public education, expand healthcare access, and protect retirement security. When every delegate is engaged, labor's voice becomes impossible to ignore.

Support Our PAC

Our political action is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from union members like you. These funds power our labor-to-labor campaign operations, voter education efforts, and support for pro-worker candidates.

Contribute to the North Shore AFL-CIO PAC today. Even a few dollars a month makes a difference. Together, we can ensure that the voices of working people are heard—and that the candidates we elect stand with us, not against us. Our politics are simple: When we vote together, we win together.

NORTH SHORE
FEDERATION OF LABOR PAC

Checks can be made payable to:
North Shore Federation of Labor PAC



DONATE TODAY

Scan the QR code or visit
NorthShoreAFLCIO.org/PAC to donate.

Deliver or mail PAC contributions to: North Shore AFL-CIO, 3250 Euclid Avenue, Suite 250, Cleveland, OH 44115

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES

National Training

The AFL-CIO offers a wide range of online and in-person training programs for union leaders and members. Topics include digital organizing, leadership development, labor history, and political education.

The Common Sense Economics program helps workers understand how the economy works—and how to make it work better for everyone.

Local Training

The North Shore AFL-CIO provides regular in-person and virtual training opportunities, including quarterly Common Sense Economics sessions. We also host national programs such as the Organizing Institute, a three-day intensive designed to build organizing skills and support active campaigns.

The United Labor Agency (ULA)

Founded in 1971 by the North Shore AFL-CIO, Teamsters, and UAW, the ULA helps unemployed and underemployed workers find new or better careers and provides business services to employers.

The ULA also operates a Counseling Center and manages union job board at UnionizeCLE.org, connecting local workers with good union jobs. The Federation's Executive Secretary serves as President of the ULA Board of Trustees.

The United Way of Greater Cleveland

The United Way mobilizes and empowers Greater Cleveland residents to break the cycle of poverty through programs focused on income, early childhood development, health, and housing stability.

United Way 211 connects residents to critical community resources 24/7, including housing, food, and health services, across Cuyahoga, Geauga, and Ross counties.

211 also operates the City of Cleveland's after-hours 311 line, the Help2Veterans helpline, and the Ohio Problem Gambling Hotline.

Union Plus

Founded by the AFL-CIO in 1986, Union Plus provides exclusive benefits and consumer programs for union members, retirees, and their families.

From hardship assistance and strike benefits to discounts on travel, insurance, and more, Union Plus helps improve the quality of life for working families and strengthens our labor movement.



OUR HISTORY

Before the Cleveland Federation of Labor

The North Shore AFL-CIO's story begins in the late 1800s, when Cleveland was booming with factories, mills, and shipyards. As the city grew, so did its working class — and workers began to organize for fair wages, safer jobs, and respect on the job.

By 1874, local trade unionists formed the Trades & Labor Assembly No. 47, one of Cleveland's first united labor bodies. Within a decade, more than 50 local unions were part of it, representing workers across industries. Though the Assembly struggled with outside political pressure, it laid the foundation for a strong labor movement in Cleveland.

When the American Federation of Labor (AFL) formed in 1881, many Cleveland unions joined. By 1887, groups like the Typographical, Cigar Makers, Iron Molders, Carpenters, Brewery Workers, and Bakers had AFL charters and came together as the Central Labor Union (CLU) — growing from 26 locals in 1890 to 71 by 1900.

The Cleveland Federation of Labor

In 1902, the Building Trades Council and the CLU merged to create the Cleveland Federation of Labor (CFL). Though Cleveland's business leaders opposed unions, the CFL became a key voice for working people.

By the 1930s, the national labor movement was changing. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) began organizing entire industries instead of single crafts. Tensions rose between AFL- and CIO-affiliated unions in Cleveland — especially during the 1936 sit-down strike at Fisher Body. While the CFL initially supported the strike, divisions led to the formation of a separate body, the Cleveland Industrial Union Council (CIUC), made up of CIO unions.



New Cleveland Labor Group Has 200,000

CLEVELAND (AP)—The Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation of Labor, a new city central labor body of unions, was born Wednesday night. It has a membership of more than 200,000.

Delegates of the Cleveland Federation of Labor and the Cleveland Industrial Union Council voted their organizations out of existence by approving an agreement merging the two into the one central labor body of AFL-CIO unions and adopting a constitution.

The action healed a spilt that began in the turbulent organizing days of the 1930s and resulted in 1937 in the formation of the CIUC by a small group of unions suspended from the CFL.

The AFL and CIO Merge

The rivalry between the AFL and CIO defined labor through the 1930s and 1940s. Internal disputes and political tensions weakened both sides, but by the late 1940s, national and local leaders began to see the value of unity. In 1955, the AFL and CIO merged nationally, and by 1958, the CFL and CIUC followed suit — forming the Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation of Labor with more than 200,000 members. This united organization brought together skilled trades, industrial, and public-sector unions to speak with one strong voice for all workers.

Building Power Through the Twentieth Century

Throughout the 20th century, the Cleveland AFL-CIO led campaigns for fair wages, safer workplaces, and workers' rights. It supported major strikes, advanced civil rights, and became a major force in local politics — fighting for public education, healthcare, and infrastructure that benefited working families. When industrial jobs began to decline in the 1970s and 1980s, the Federation adapted. It welcomed healthcare, service, and public-sector unions, launched retraining programs, and fought to bring good jobs back to Northeast Ohio.

The North Shore Federation of Labor

In 1997, the Cleveland AFL-CIO became the North Shore AFL-CIO Federation of Labor, reflecting its growing regional role beyond the city itself. The new name signaled unity among unions and workers across all of Northeast Ohio. Today, the North Shore AFL-CIO continues the fight our predecessors began more than a century ago. We build solidarity across unions, advocate for policies that put working people first, and stand for social and economic justice for all. Our history reminds us: when working people stand together — across crafts, industries, and communities — we win.

APPENDIX A

UNION ABBREVIATIONS

AFGE: American Federation of Government Employees
AFM: American Federation of Musicians
AFSCME: American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
AFT: American Federation of Teachers
APWU: American Postal Workers Union
ATU: Amalgamated Transit Union
CNA: California Nurses Association
CWA: Communications Workers of America
IAMAW: International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
IATSE: International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
IBEW: International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
IBT: International Brotherhood of Teamsters
IFPTE: International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers
IUE: International Union of Electrical Workers
IUOE: International Union of Operating Engineers
IW: Iron Workers
LIUNA: Laborers International Union of North America
MLBPA: Major League Baseball Players Association
NAGE: National Association of Government Employees
NATCA: National Air Traffic Controllers Association
NFFE: National Federation of Federal Employees
NFLPA: National Football League Players Association
NNU: National Nurses United
NTEU: National Treasury Employees Union
ONA: Ohio Nurses Association
OPEIU: Office and Professional Employees International Union
SAG-AFTRA: Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists
SEIU: Service Employees International Union
TNG: The NewsGuild
TWU: Transport Workers Union
UAW: International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace, and Agricultural Implement Workers of America
UFCW: United Food and Commercial Workers Union
UNITE HERE: Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees – Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union
USW: United Steelworkers
WGA: Writers Guild of America

APPENDIX B: ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER

Action	What to Say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a Second?	Can be Debated?	Can be Amended?	Votes Needed
Introduce main motion	"I move to..."	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Amend a motion	"I move to amend the motion by (add or strike words or both)"	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Move item to committee	"I move that we refer the matter to committee."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Postpone item	"I move to postpone the matter until..."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
End debate	"I move the previous question."	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Object to procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	Chair decision
Recess the meeting	"I move that we recess until..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Adjourn the meeting	"I move to adjourn the meeting."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Request information	"Point of information."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Overrule the chair's ruling	"I move to overrule the chair's ruling."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Extend the allotted time	"I move to extend the time by ____ minutes."	No	Yes	No	Yes	Two-thirds

Action	What to Say	Can interrupt speaker?	Need a Second?	Can be Debated?	Can be Amended?	Votes Needed
Enforce the rules or point out incorrect procedure	"Point of order."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote
Table a motion	"I move to table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Verify voice vote with count	"I call for a division."	No	No	No	No	No vote
Object to considering some undiplomatic matter	"I object to consideration of the matter..."	Yes	No	No	No	Two-thirds
Take up a previously tabled item	"I move to take from the table..."	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider something already disposed of	"I move to reconsider our action to..."	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order	"I move to suspend the rules and consider...."	No	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds
Personal preference - noise, room temperature, distractions	"Point of privilege."	Yes	No	No	No	No vote