



SEIU Retiree Organizing FIRST STEPS

SEIU retirees are a valuable resource within the union and within their greater community. They provide a wealth of information and expertise, from organizing to political action. In addition, they have built substantive and meaningful relationships within the union and their broader communities that can help strengthen the union's ability to build coalitions and networks. They bring energy, enthusiasm, time and experience to all SEIU activities. We currently have approximately 55,000 retired members paying dues and 5,700 contributing to COPE. More than 719,000 SEIU members are projected to retire within the next 15 years. Let's keep them active in the fight.

The path to retiree membership:

STEP 1: BYLAWS

They have to be reflected in your bylaws.

Suggested Bylaws Language

Retired Member: Represented Members in good standing who retire from employment may choose to become Retired Members and pay dues as set by the Executive Board. Such members shall be ineligible to vote in elections of the Local, and ineligible to serve as members of the Executive Board.

Retired Associate Member: A retiree who is not otherwise eligible for membership in the Local may pay dues as set by the Executive Board. Such members shall be ineligible to vote in elections of the Local or to serve as members of the Executive Board.

STEP 2: PAYMENT METHODS

Determine a payment method.

Checkoff, rollover membership, electronic transfers, check writing Suggested Retiree Dues Amount: \$5/month

Checkoff collection: Collecting dues by using a dues checkoff system is recommended because it provides a guaranteed steady stream of funding and requires less ongoing solicitation to maintain.

Rollover Membership: It's easiest to recruit members into the program before they retire. Using "rollover membership" language on your membership card can help retain members into retirement at a reduced dues rate, unless they opt out.

Electronic Transfers: If your retirees do not receive pensions, they can have their dues paid by automatic bank account deductions or ongoing credit card charges.

Checks: The least preferred method of payment.

STEP 3: LISTS

Do you have a list? How do you get?

1. Obtaining Lists from Pension Funds

If retirees participate in an SEIU Pension Fund/ Taft-Hartley Fund or a Public Pension Fund, they should work with the fund's board to draft a written agreement that secures a list of retirees and members who are within four to five years from retirement for purposes of developing a retiree program. Although both SEIU pension funds and public pension funds have been willing to provide lists to the local union without specific contract language, we recommend all agreements be made in writing, so the union can have continued access to lists in the event of changes in personnel or politics.

2. Obtaining Lists from Employers

In cases where retirees do not participate in a pension fund, public and private employers should be approached for lists. It is best for locals to include language in their collective bargaining agreements that effectively secures their right to retiree lists.

Sample Language: There should be clear and unambiguous language specifically addressing the local's timely access to retiree lists within each contract or agreement. This language could be incorporated

within the section of the contract or agreement that lays out all of the union's rights, and if possible incorporated into the same section of the contract that secures access to lists of all represented employees so that all the rights associated with regular membership lists apply to the union's rights to the retiree lists as well. Below is sample language for locals to consider during bargaining or for written agreements with pension funds:

"There is a legitimate need for the Union to have timely information on retired employees and about-to- retire employees. Therefore, the Employer (or Pension Fund) shall provide the Union with a monthly report identifying and listing employees who make application for or give notice to the Employer of retirement. The listing shall contain, to the extent practicable, the name, home address, home phone number, cellphone number, email address, date of retirement, and initial date of hire. At the request of the Union, the Employer shall make available to the Union, on a timely basis, a report of all employees from the Employer's place of business that have retired within the past ten (10) years or less. The report shall contain, to the extent practicable, the name, home address, home phone number, date of retirement, and initial date of hire."

If you are anticipating contract reopeners or bargaining new contracts and seek guidance on what provisions to include that protect your right to access retiree information, contact the SEIU Retiree Advisory Council for more information.

3. Obtaining Access to non-SEIU Retirees

Some locals have chosen to reach beyond their traditional borders of organizing retirees from SEIU's membership lists, and have chosen to also organize retirees from other unions. Connecticut State Employees Association organizes all retired state employees—they have access to all retired public employees from the state comptroller.

4. Employer Generated Drop-off Lists

Most employers generate "drop-off" lists. The list may contain people that have retired, been fired, quit or died. Regular phone calls to the list (asking if JoAnne Doe has retired) can help a local build a list.

5. The VAN

You can run a query in the VAN for members 65 and older. This will also be a list that you will have to cull to build an actual retiree database.

STEP 4: COPE

Suggested Retiree COPE contributions: \$5/month
All dues-paying retirees are eligible to contribute to COPE and should be integrated into your capacity plan and count toward the COPE goals of your local.

STEP 5: VOLUNTEERS

Integrate your retired member volunteers into the volunteer work of your regular membership—do not keep them separated. It is important they work alongside current workers so we can bridge the gap between retired workers and current workers. Retiree volunteer shifts and leadership development count toward the LAJ goals of the local.



