

"I love my job, and I care about doing the absolute best for my students. When I became a union member, it opened up a whole world of professional development opportunities for me."

–Carl Williams, senior custodian at Lucille Smith Elementary School and president of the Lawndale (Calif.) Federation of Classified Employees, AFT Local 4529

"To be the best at what I do, I need time, tools and trust from the district. As a union member, I'm able to advocate for those things. I now have paid time to collaborate with my colleagues."



–Marilyn Williams-Piggee, teacher's assistant at Murray Elementary School and member of the Chicago Teachers Union



"Alone, I didn't have the confidence or power to ask for an increase in my pay. As a union member, I know we're all in this together, and collectively we have as much power as our administration. We can demand the pay that we deserve."

–Sharon Douglas, paraeducator at Rawson School and member of the Hartford (Conn.) Federation of Paraeducators

"I had some financial problems. My union president said, 'We can help you keep your lights on.' I have two kids, and the union kept my lights on. So I'm here for my union. Other people have tough things happen, and the union helps them. The union has your back in a way that you don't understand until you need it to have your back. You never know when you're going to need someone to be there for you."



–Kaitlyn Davidson, dispatcher/router/standby bus driver, North Clackamas School District; executive board membe and bargaining team member, Oregon School Employees Association Chapter 71



"I have a passion for my role in feeding the students at this school. I appreciate how the union plays a crucial role in enhancing both my compensation and working conditions. For this, I am Union Proud."

–Rose Gianni, food service manager and member of the Denver Federation for Paraprofessionals and Nutrition Service Employees

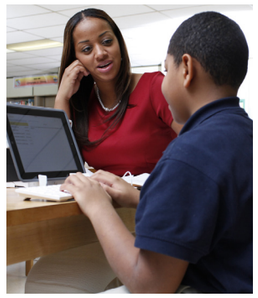
Being an AFT member has benefits

Besides the professional development offerings, AFT + Member Benefits gives you access to all sorts of discounts and services. There are credit card deals, shopping discounts, insurance and financial services, and help paying off your student debt. And we know work can be stressful—so we have a trauma benefit to help with counseling. To learn about these perks, go to **aft.org/member-benefits**.

Join the union! We are stronger together.











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Why organize with the AFT?

Why belong to the AFT?



Education Healthcare Public Services

AFT PSRP

Our union, the AFT, fights to secure a better life for those we serve and those we represent. Our members make a difference every day: educating students, caring for patients and strengthening communities—work that touches nearly every family in America.

The 1.8 million-strong AFT fights for good wages and benefits, a real voice at work, strong public schools and services, and accessible, affordable healthcare and higher education. We fight for a democracy that works for the people—not just the powerful—and we fight for the opportunities and pathways that allow all our students, families and members to thrive.

That mission is even more urgent today. Families are being squeezed by rising costs, new technologies are reshaping work and learning, and divisions are deepening across our country.



You are a vital part of this work. When members like you are involved, we build the power to achieve together what no one can accomplish alone.

Thank you for being part of your union—the AFT.

–Randi Weingarten, AFT president

Why join a union?

For: A living wage. Job security. Paid leave. High-quality, affordable healthcare. Safe working conditions. The training and supplies to do your job well. Fair treatment and respect. The power to work toward better lives for our students, our communities and ourselves.

Belonging to the AFT—the union that represents workers like us—can change everything

In our union, we all have a voice in the workplace and a place at the table. Together with our union siblings backing us up, we can negotiate living wages, decent benefits and paid leave. We demand policies that support safe and healthy schools and reasonable workloads for everyone.

We are fighting for:

- A living wage, plus career ladders that provide professional growth and wage increases.
- Protections from unpredictable and dangerous worksite incidents—because work shouldn't hurt.
- Funding to address staff shortages that shortchange students.
- Meal subsidies for kids whose only meals may come from school, plus wraparound services for our students.
- Tools and training to create a workplace where we can do our best for our students, our communities and ourselves.

Our union makes a difference every day!

In Massachusetts, support staff members in Lawrence now earn a living wage and no longer have to work two or three jobs to make ends meet.

In New York City, thanks to a change in state law that their union fought for, PSRP members of the United Federation of Teachers will now automatically become members of the Teachers' Retirement System and can look forward after retirement to a monthly pension check for the rest of their lives—plus, for most retirees, medical, dental and vision benefits for their families.

Members in Syracuse, N.Y., negotiated an innovative professional development and mentoring program that reduced staff turnover and created a pathway for paraprofessionals to become certified teachers at no cost.



New York State United Teachers helped pass the statewide Workplace Violence Prevention Act requiring schools to develop and implement programs to prevent and minimize workplace violence.



In Jefferson Parish, La., we gained computer training for PSRPs, increased pay for paraprofessionals who substitute, and district-paid representatives for classified staff in human resources hearings and resolving school-level problems.

In California, we helped raise the minimum wage in the San Diego Community College District and its four colleges to $30.58 an hour for permanent employees and $22.31 per hour for short-term, temporary employees.

In Oregon, we passed groundbreaking legislation giving classified school employees unemployment benefits, protection from unfair discipline or termination, better training for staff working with students with special needs, more job security for bus drivers and a statewide annual Classified School Employees Week.

We're growing!



More and more school staff across the country have organized with the AFT over the last few years: 16 new school and college support staff units in Illinois; hundreds of new members in West Hartford and new job classifications in Norwalk, Conn.; and 400 Michigan State University Extension employees and more than 1,800 student services and instructional services staff at all three campuses of the University of Michigan.

The AFT is a grassroots union led by members

In AFT local unions, we negotiate our own contracts and vote for leaders from our ranks. Our union may seek assistance and support from the national AFT's legal, strategic and organizing experts, but it's those of us right here who determine our priorities. When we're organizing a union, some managers claim that the AFT is an outsider, a "third party," but it's not true. All AFT members are empowered to:

- Have a voice—be leaders and elect our leaders.
- Improve our worksites—serve on committees and help negotiate contracts for things like better wages and working conditions.
- Be part of the solution—participate in labor-management problem-solving.

We have what you need

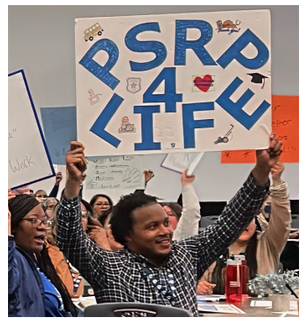
The AFT's 1.8 million members include 370,000 who are paraprofessionals and school-related personnel—what we call PSRPs. Together, the AFT's paraprofessionals, food service workers, custodians, office staff, bus drivers, secretaries and other school staff have real power and voice at the district, state and even national levels.

Our union—from the local to the national—is here to help us win everything from a living wage to relevant professional development intended for school support staff. We have expertise in a range of topics, including:

- Managing student behavior.
- Creating a strong classroom team.
- Dealing with difficult conversations and conflict.
- Fostering social and emotional learning.
- Minimizing stress in the workplace.
- Maintaining safety in the workplace.
- Communicating with families, co-workers and students.

The tax relief working families need

From groceries to gas to rent to healthcare, people are being squeezed in so many different directions today. That's why the AFT is backing the Working Americans' Tax Cut Act. This bill will put real money back into the pockets of working families, resulting in thousands of dollars more in take-home pay for working families each year. And with the rising prices of groceries, gas, rent, healthcare and everything else, it's never been more necessary! For more, go to **www.aftvotes.org/TaxCutAct**.









Working for a PSRP Bill of Rights in every state

PSRPs deserve:

- Living wages
- Safe working conditions
- Affordable healthcare
- Appropriate training and supplies
- Job security
- Paid leave (FMLA, sick and snow leave, etc.)

To make those goals a reality, AFT delegates unanimously passed a PSRP Bill of Rights resolution at the AFT's 2024 convention. Now our union is redoubling our efforts to elect politicians who will pass bills reflecting these principles at the state and national levels. The resolution also commits the AFT to assist state and local union affiliates as they negotiate collective bargaining agreements, develop school board policies and lobby for state and federal laws ensuring school and college support staff secure these rights and benefits.

Advocating for healthy school meals for all kids

One in five kids in the United States experiences hunger regularly. Children can't learn on an empty stomach. Offering school breakfast and lunch to all students at no charge helps ensure that all children have the nutrition they need to grow and thrive. Eight states currently do this. Our union is working with the Food Research & Action Center and a coalition of national anti-hunger, education, health and child advocacy organizations to robust anti-hunger programs for kids and families, including healthy school meals for all.

