



Courier

A Publication of the AFGE National Council of Field Labor Locals

NCFL Agenda

The agenda of the National Council of Field Labor Locals parallels that of a progressive Secretary of Labor.

The near-term agenda of the NCFL is to continue as a productive stakeholder in the DOL on behalf of our membership. We believe that we can add value to the output of the DOL and value to the jobs our members perform by blending the objectives of the Department with the objectives of our members. The DOL's employees will take ownership in the Department's mission as long as they are convinced that their work is respected. In that regard, the NCFL maintains four fundamental goals, which remain essentially unchanged since our founding in 1962.

- ✓ Improve wages, hours and working conditions of NCFL personnel.
- ✓ Expand upward mobility and training opportunities.
- ✓ Reduce and remove impediments to accomplishing the mission of workers we represent.
- ✓ Provide clear and uncluttered channels of communication between NCFL field personnel and DOL management.

A Brief Overview of the NCFL



Delegates to the 2008 Leadership Conference on the steps of the Rayburn Building.

The National Council of Field Labor Locals has worked to develop relationships with Secretaries Wirtz, Schultz, Hodgson, Brennan, Dunlop, Usery, Marshall, Donovan, Brock, McLaughlin, Dole, Martin, Reich, Herman and Chao as well as with agency assistant secretaries, program managers and other key management staff. Our principal focus has been the constructive day to day administration of the labor relations program at the Department. Additional areas have been found to extend this mutual cooperation without compromising the NCFL's commitment to the protection of its members.

Historically, we have forged cooperative and progressive relationships within the DOL with the negotiated Master Agreement. We have helped DOL achieve its goals with enthusiastic support of rank and file workers participating in quality improvement and partnership initiatives. Through the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service the parties have employed interest-based bargaining techniques—so called “win-win” bargaining. More recently collective bargaining reverted to the traditional, adversarial approach.



Vice President Al Gore presents council leaders with the Eagle Award denoting excellence in partnership.

The Organizational Structure of the NCFLL

AFL-CIO

AFGE

NCFLL

DOL Secretary



Executive Council
 President
 Executive Vice President
 Treasurer
 Recording Secretary
 7 at-large Vice Presidents

**DOL National
 Agencies & Programs**

20 Constituent Locals

644—648—898—948—1160—1748—2089—2139—2336—2391—2461
 2502—2513—2519—2598—3181—3316—3384—3416—3431

Regional & District DOL Offices

NCFLL Shop Stewards

The Council

The NCFLL is a nation-wide body comprised of twenty one locals chartered under the American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO). This council is the “exclusive representative” with bargaining authority for all DOL employees of our bargaining unit located in over 400 duty stations throughout the United States outside of Washington, DC. AFGE Local 12 represents headquarters employees and bargains a separate contract.

Direction of the NCFLL is in the hands of an eleven-person Executive Committee, made up of the four “general officers” – the president, executive vice president, treasurer and recording secretary; and seven at-large vice presidents. The constituent locals in convention elect these national officers to four year terms.

The members of the NCFLL Executive Committee establish union policy, respond to proposed changes

in conditions of employment, determine the issues to be bargained or moved forward to arbitration and conduct training for stewards of the constituent locals. The executive committee meets with national office management on a regular basis to discuss matters of mutual concern and performs the myriad of functions necessary for a successful and forward looking union.

The NCFLL communicates with employees in the duty stations across the

country through its extensive system of regional representatives, local officers and stewards. The union maintains a website (www.ncfl.org) to keep members informed and also retains an extensive listing of employee home email addresses for dissemination of more timely notices and employee feedback. The union publishes a quarterly newsletter, “The Courier” for distribution to employees, retirees, AFL-CIO and AFGE affiliates, as well as to members of Congress.



The Annual Leadership Conference was held in cooperation with the Harvard Trade Union Program at Harvard University in 2000.

The Locals

Much of the day-to-day work of the union is accomplished by local officers and stewards at the regional and shop levels, who provide direct representational assistance to bargaining unit employees and meet with local management to resolve issues where they occur. Union officers and their designees meet periodically with the regional administrators of field agencies to exchange information and negotiate proposed changes in regional or area working conditions.

At one point, there were nearly fifty chartered locals within the NCFLL. A policy of mergers among smaller locals and changes in the DOL structure brought the total number of locals down to twenty, while increasing the number of union members to over 50% of those represented. All of the current twenty locals were chartered between 1939 and 1966.

With the accretion of the Mine Safety and Health Administration into the Department of Labor from the Interior Department in 1978, a council of about 15 locals of mine inspectors was brought into the preexisting council of Labor Department locals and covered by the National Agreement.

RIGHT: NCFLL Local 648 participates in Chicago's annual Labor Day Parade.

Below: NCFLL President Ron Yarman with Former AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland.



The Membership

Over half of the employees in the bargaining unit have chosen to become dues paying members of our NCFLL locals, compared with a government-wide participation rate of about 30%. Among the twenty one NCFLL locals, membership runs from 40% to 80%. There is a tendency for a higher degree of union participation in the enforcement agencies of OSHA, MSHA and the Wage & Hour Division.

Officers of the council and the locals come from every DOL agency and occupation. All internal union business is done on a volunteer basis. Members and officers give their own time after hours, on annual leave and on weekends to attend meetings and conventions, for lobbying, and for audits, record keeping, elections, newsletter and the host of other activities necessary to maintain an

organization of national scope. In addition, all of our members are in the AFL-CIO and many of our activists serve as officers in the State Federations and Central Labor Councils in their communities.

The Federal Labor Relations Statute (5 USC 7101 – 7135) specifically requires federal unions to represent non-members equally with dues paying members. Thus, there is little immediate incentive for belonging to the union other than an individual employee's recognition of the value of collective bargaining and skilled representation, their sense of community responsibility, and for certain economic benefits such as Union Privilege programs that are available to members only.

All offices with a supervisor are entitled to a union steward whose job it is to represent the NCFLL in their offices. There are over 400 stewards in offices throughout the country.



NCFLL Executive Vice President Jim Weyrauch, the longest serving member of the union's Executive Committee.

History of the National Agreement



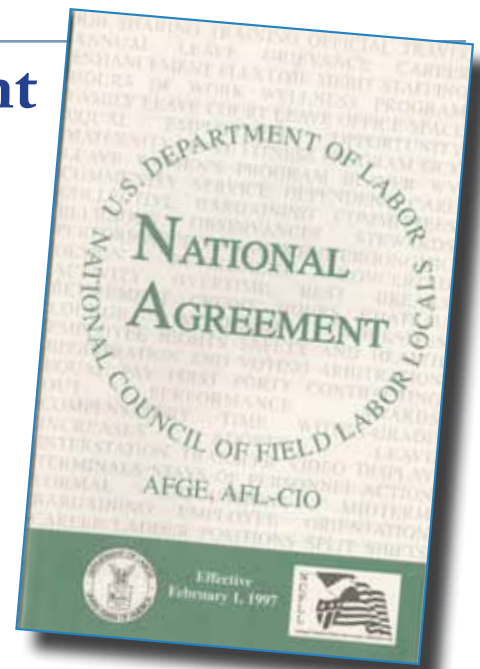
2002 Collective Bargaining Agreement signing NCFLC Executive Board with DOL Secretary Elaine Chao.

On August 18, 1932, a number of Federal employees in Washington, DC received a charter from the American Federation of Labor. The charter created the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE). This new union was charged with improving the working conditions of employees within Federal agencies. From 1940 to 1966, several locals representing Department of Labor (DOL) employees received their charters from AFGE.

Agencies were not required to meet and discuss working conditions with AFGE until President John F. Kennedy signed Executive Order 10988 on January 13, 1962. This Executive Order mandated Federal agency heads to collectively bargain working conditions with the unions representing their employees. The locals representing field (outside the Washington, DC metropolitan area) DOL employees began negotiating with the regional agency heads. President Richard Nixon strengthened the Executive Order in 1971. These rights were codified and expanded in 1978 with the passage of the Civil Service Reform Act (including the Federal Sector Labor Management Relations Statute). Agencies enforcing and administering the Act include the Federal Labor Relations Authority (the equivalent of the National Labor Relations Board for Federal-sector employees), the Office of Personnel Management, Office of Special Counsel, and Merit Systems Protection Board.

The field locals decided in 1964 that they could more effectively negotiate with the entire Department of Labor as a bargaining council within AFGE. They petitioned AFGE for a charter and received it, naming the National Council of Field Labor Lodges (now known as the National Council of Field Labor Locals, or NCFLC) as the exclusive bargaining agent for the field DOL employees. The employees voted at a rate of over 90% to approve the NCFLC as their representative. Secretary of Labor Willard Wirtz officially recognized the NCFLC on November 5, 1965 via a letter to NCFLC President Harry Weisbrod. On August 30, 1966, Secretary Wirtz and President Weisbrod and their bargaining teams signed the first DOL/NCFLC Collective Bargaining

RIGHT: Past President Jesse Rios and Former Secretary of Labor William Brock.
Below: 1997 Contract Negotiations—first agreement with partnership provisions.



Agreement. The parties negotiated other contracts in 1968, 1974, 1978, 1991, 1997, 2002, and 2006 as well as hundreds of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).

The current Agreement was signed by DOL Secretary Elaine Chao and went into effect October 1, 2006 for a five year term ending September 30, 2011.





OPM Director Janice Lachance, Jesse Rios, then AFGE National President Bobby Harnage, and Michelle Sturdivant with Senator Paul Sarbanes and former Labor Secretary Alexis Herman, dedicated a bust in memory of the late John Sturdivant at the Department of Labor.



Members at a stewards training session in Columbus, OH.



RIGHT: Former VP Frank Dancy and Retired Treasurer Ken Maglicic joined AFGE members in DC in the fight for an increased Transit Subsidy.



Ohio Governor Ted Strickland with President Ron Yarman.



LEFT: Former AFGE President Bobby Harnage



RIGHT: Local 2513 shop stewards training conference.



MSHA union leaders John Alvis, Ron Yarman, Hugh Smith and Ruth Mullins at an AFGE convention.



NCFLL Executive Council and Labor Secretary Alexis Herman at a signing ceremony for the 1997 contract.

NCFLL Courier

The National Council of Field Labor Locals is the union representing U.S. Department of Labor employees located throughout the United States.

Our members enforce the laws of OSHA, MSHA, Wage & Hour, the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, the Employee Benefits Security Administration (ERISA) and the Veterans Employment and Training Services. We are the economists of BLS, the manpower development specialists of ETA and Job Corps and the claims examiners of OWCP. We are the Women's Bureau, the Solicitor's office, Office of Public Affairs, and Apprenticeship Training specialists. Together—where America works, we're working for you!

This newsletter has been prepared and paid for by the Union and is not a publication of the U.S. Department of Labor—and we are proud of it!

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The Late John Sturdivant, who served as AFGE's national president for nine years, during a visit to an NCFLL conference. At left, current NCFLL President Ron Yarman who succeeded Jesse Rios (right) in 2001.



Former vice president Nancy Wylie leads the discussion in preparation for the 1991 contract negotiations.



Vice President Denny DeMay and former Chicago local president Jayne Thompson-Meier at an AFGE convention.



Council members with Ohio Governor Ted Strickland.

Role of the NCFLL Accomplishing the Mission of the Department

The National Council of Field Labor Locals is the exclusive representative of more than 7000 DOL employees stationed in the regions where most of the enforcement, investigation, job training, research and data collection work of the Department is carried out. The missions of the agencies are exceedingly labor intensive and the work requires high levels of technical competence and professionalism. Department employees are intelligent, well-educated and deeply dedicated to the welfare of America's workers.

The successful accomplishment of agency goals depends heavily on the self-motivation of these employees. This high degree of initiative that we have managed to maintain in the DOL is grounded in the employees' professional pride and confidence that comes from having their concerns effectively represented by the NCFLL. It is buttressed by the sense the employees have that a measure of fairness and equity exists in their workplaces because the NCFLL and DOL have worked in a cooperative manner. The NCFLL enjoys broad levels of trust and rapport among frontline employees and managers.

The Employees represented by the NCFLL are the single most valuable resource available to Department leadership for accomplishing its goals.

Ultimately, the Secretary must rely upon the dedicated personnel of the Department to execute the policies and programs of DOL. The current conventional wisdom in

organizational development, management science and industrial relations asserts that the human factor is the single most consequential component of any enterprise. DOL Secretaries have been preaching this obvious truth since the Department was established. With the transition to a new Secretary, we can transfer that assertion into a new reality to the benefit of all American workers.

The NCFLL can assist the Secretary in implementing policies as partners involved in a win-win relationship. Our experience has taught us that it is more desirable to pursue mutual interests through partnership than to wage bitter confrontation trying to block policies with which we disagree.

Much of the institutional memory of internal Departmental affairs regarding underfunded programs, thwarted initiatives, personnel matters and working conditions resides with the NCFLL.

One of the quirks of the past twenty years in the Department of Labor is that the leadership of the NCFLL has provided an essential department-wide continuity while the leadership at the Secretary and Assistant Secretary level has turned over with each new administration. Meanwhile, the normal flux of promotions, reassignments, retirements and the like has kept middle management in a constant state of transition.

Union institutional stability has afforded a broader view of the changing structure and mission of the DOL over time. The NCFLL leadership has become, partially by default – but most often by their own efforts, the most knowledgeable, sensitized members of the DOL leadership team. In addition, an untold number of our officers and stewards have moved into management ranks.

Other than the Secretary's Office, the NCFLL is the only organization with concerns that are Department-wide with a view of the DOL as a single coherent institution.

The NCFLL's representational activities provide the union with more Department-wide vision while the majority of managers and supervisors hold to more parochial views focused on the concerns of their specific agencies and careers. Other than sections of OASAM and the Secretary's office, the NCFLL leadership is the only group with an inherent motivation to embrace the concerns of the entire Department.

NCFLL officials participate in Labor-Management Relations meetings on the national level and in the regions. Agendas include the broad range of issues encompassing every agency which further sensitizes NCFLL officials to Department-wide concerns.



MSHA Kentucky local officials join with management to dedicate a new office following years of union advocacy for healthier workspace for Pikeville.



Council officers sworn in.

The Future—Our Vision

The National Council of Field Labor Locals is committed to the success of the U.S. Department of Labor's mission to foster and promote the well-being of America's workers. The union recognizes that our members are the fundamental means for successfully providing effective and ever improving service to America's working people. Our vision is for the Department to treat its own workers with dignity and to provide leadership by the force of our example as the model employer in the United States.

The union seeks to improve conditions in our workplace and to enhance the harmony between our family and working lives. We ask for trust and mutual respect at every worksite and support a simple and just means for resolving workplace disputes. Central to these goals is a productive and progressive labor relations program that provides an effective mechanism for our employees to articulate concerns through their union. On a larger scale our members remain active in their communities and

many hold positions in the State Federations and Central Labor Councils of the AFL-CIO.

The union aspires to the public's confidence in government generally and the Labor Department in particular. We believe that there is no more important mission in government than to protect the employment rights and the safety of

America's workforce. We reject the paralysis of recent years and are prepared to lead once more. Lastly, we promise to maintain a quality workplace and to create an atmosphere where the workers of DOL are treated fairly, respect one another and work together to fulfill the promise and accomplish the mission of the U.S. Department of Labor.



AFGE President John Gage flanked by Paul Tracy (left) and Marty Scanlon (right) both from Local 948.