

# PART I: CWA

## 1. Organizational Structure

Convention

Executive Board

Districts

Sectors/Division/Region

Locals

### CONVENTION

The Convention is the highest governing authority of the Union. Approximately 1,300 locally elected delegates and alternates attend the CWA Convention. Once the Convention makes a decision, that decision stands and must be carried out by every single officers and employee of the Union – at both the Local and International levels. Convention action can be changed only by a later Convention or by a referendum of the membership.

#### The Convention has the power to:

- ) Interpret and amend the Constitution;
- ) Establish the policies to be followed by the Union;
- ) Elect the International President, the Secretary-Treasurer, the Vice Presidents, Executive Officer and At-Large Diversity Members;
- ) Act as a final court of review for members who feel they have not been treated fairly at lower levels of the Union;
- ) Establish per capita dues to the International;
- ) Approve or change the budget;
- ) Dispose of any other matters that may come before it.

Delegates to the Convention are elected by local unions with the number of delegates per local determined by membership strength as specified in the CWA Constitution.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board is elected at the Convention every four years and consists of:

- ) President
- ) Secretary-Treasurer
- ) Vice Presidents — Seven District Vice Presidents and Six International Vice Presidents for:
  - Telecommunications and Technologies
  - Public, HealthCare Workers and Education Workers (PHEW)
  - National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET-CWA)
  - The NewsGuild (TNG-CWA)
  - International Union of Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers (IUE-CWA)
  - Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA)
- ) Printing, Publishing and Media Workers Sector (PPMWS) Executive Officer
- ) Four At-Large Diversity Board Members for:
  - Northeast Region
  - Southern Region
  - Western Region
  - Central Region
- ) Director, CWA|SCA CANADA

The Executive Board meets regularly throughout the year. The Executive Board also administers the policies established by the Convention.

The Executive Board has 17 full-time national officers who are responsible for recommending policies and programs to the Convention, based on their day-to-day experience in administrating the affairs of the Union.

## DISTRICTS

CWA is structured into seven geographic Districts. Districts are responsible for carrying out the goals and programs of the Union. Delegates representing the Locals within each District elect a vice president every four years at the Convention. Representatives of Locals within each District must meet at least once each year as required by the CWA constitution.



### CWA Districts

District 1	New York City, NY	District 6	Austin, TX
District 2-13	Philadelphia, PA	District 7	Denver, CO
District 3	Atlanta, GA	District 9	Sacramento, CA
District 4	Cleveland, OH	Canadian Region	Ottawa, ON

## SECTORS/DIVISION/REGION

CWA has seven sectors/division. Five are merger partners (AFA-CWA, IUE-CWA, NABET-CWA, PPMWS, TNG-CWA) that represent and negotiate contracts in their respective industries. The Telecom & Technologies sector bargains national agreements with AT&T Legacy, Lucent, Optical Fiber Solutions, and AVAYA, and coordinates bargaining with Century Link, Windstream, and Frontier. The Public, Healthcare, and Education Sector has ongoing initiatives to promote organizing and bargaining rights for public workers and contributes to national policy issues affecting members.

The Canadian Region is responsible for coordinating matters of common concern and interest with respect to contracts, wages, hours of employment and other working conditions within the units of the CWA | SCA Canadian Region.

### **Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA)**

Established in 1945, the Association of Flight Attendants is the world's largest labor union organized by flight attendants for flight attendants. AFA-CWA represents nearly 50,000 flight attendants at 18 airlines, serving as a voice for flight attendants at their workplace, in the industry, in the media and on Capitol Hill. Through the years, AFA-CWA members have fought for, and won a number of changes in the airline industry that has led to safer airplanes and transformed the flight attendant profession. Flight attendants are trained professionals, First Responders in the air, and responsible for the safety of passengers in the airplane cabin.

- ) AFA-CWA negotiates the best flight attendant contracts in the industry, maintaining and improving wages, benefits and working conditions for flight attendants.
- ) AFA-CWA has strength in numbers and a professional staff to assist flight attendants with workplace, career and interpersonal concerns.
- ) AFA-CWA is a democratic union representing flight attendants at every Mainline, Regional, Low Cost, Niche, and charter carrier. All AFA-CWA officers are flight attendants who solicit member input on policy and financial decisions.
- ) AFA-CWA shares information and strategies, working in solidarity with flight attendant unions around the world through the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF).

## **International Union of Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers (IUE-CWA)**

The International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine, and Furniture Workers' roots reach back to the early 1930's in the radio and electrical manufacturing industries at many of the world's largest companies, including General Electric, Westinghouse, and General Motors. In 1936 these independent unions coalesced to form the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE), the first chartered CIO union. In 1949, as a result of disputes within the CIO, the UE left the CIO and the IUE was born as the union representing those workers who wished to remain in the CIO.

In the 1950's a growing IUE pioneered coordinated bargaining among the 14 unions at GE and Westinghouse, which became a model for the entire labor movement. In 1987, the United Furniture Workers of American merged with the IUE, and in October of 2000, the IUE membership voted to approve the merger with CWA, becoming the Industrial Division of CWA.

IUE-CWA members remain employed in manufacturing, but also now include private and public service-related industries, with over 100,000 active and retired members throughout the United States.

The IUE-CWA Division is known for its progressive history, including leadership in the area of social action. Through the years, IUE has fought on behalf of civil rights and anti-poverty programs, equal employment opportunity, fair housing, education, national health care, pay equity, and trade reform. Currently, the Division is focused on improving union members' job security by bringing both a union-oriented version of high performance, or lean, manufacturing and Energy Treasure Hunts into IUE-CWA worksites. Other priorities include ensuring that a green economy and a U.S. manufacturing renaissance translate into high quality union jobs. The Division is active in the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council and is outspoken in calling for fair trade laws and a fair and equitable U.S. manufacturing policy.

## **National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET-CWA)**

In 1994, NABET merged with CWA. NABET-CWA has 29 chartered Locals with over 10,000 members who are employed in broadcasting, distributing, telecasting, recording, cable, video, sound recording and related industries in North America. Radio announcers, technicians, clerical workers, set designers, directors, video camera operators, videotape editors, and audio visual technicians are among those represented by NABET-CWA.

NABET-CWA negotiates over 100 collective bargaining agreements for its members. Major employers include NBC, ABC and independent companies in the public and private sectors.

Early history of NABET-CWA:

- ) In 1933, some 300 NBC workers formed the Association of Technical Employees (ATE).
- ) In 1934, ATE signed its first contract with NBC. The contract called for a 48-hour work week and a monthly wage scale of \$175.
- ) In 1940, ATE changed its name to the National Association of Broadcast Engineers and Technicians (NABET).
- ) In 1941, NABET negotiated its first eight-hour day contract provision.
- ) In 1943, a Supreme Court decree splits up NBC and creates ABC. NABET adds ABC to its contracts.
- ) In 1951, NABET affiliates with the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).
- ) In 1994, NABET merged with CWA.

## **Printing, Publishing and Media Workers Sector (PPMWS)**

Printers were among the first skilled workers in America to form permanent unions. An organized printers strike occurred in New York as early as 1776. Groups of local printer unions came together in 1852 as the National Typographical Union, changing the name in 1869 to the International Typographical Union (ITU). Columbia Typographical Union #101—now known as CTU #101-12, CWA Local 14200—in Washington, DC was founded in 1815, and maintains the distinction as the oldest continuously operating union in the U.S.

The ITU merged with CWA on January 1, 1987; becoming CWA's Printing, Publishing and Media Workers Sector (PPMWS), combining the strong democratic traditions of both unions to fight together for the rights of workers.

Today, the PPMWS continues to represent employees in the traditional fields of printing and publishing, but our membership has diversified since merging with CWA, and continues to diversify. We carry on the tradition of negotiating some of the best contracts where our members are employed, and the “printing industry” and the PPMWS is no longer just about ink and paper, but includes the digital medium and more.

### **Public, Healthcare and Education Workers - PHEW**

CWA saw its first public worker members in 1965 when 2,300 New York City government workers joined CWA Local 1180. Public worker organizing continued over the next two decades. A major leap in membership occurred in 1980 when 40,000 New Jersey State workers voted for CWA representation.

At CWA’s Special Committee on the Future Convention in 1983, delegates saw the need to establish a separate department for its growing public workers sector and created the CWA Public Workers Department. They voted to elect a Vice President who would oversee the Department and become a CWA Executive Board member.

Since that time, public workers in 25 states along with thousands of health care workers throughout the country have joined CWA. The Public, Healthcare and Education Workers Sector represents over 130,000.

Union attempts to organize public workers began in the 1930’s but it was in 1959 when Wisconsin became the first state to enact legislation giving public workers a legally enforceable right to bargain collectively. During the 1960’s sixteen states enacted bargaining rights legislation. It wasn’t until 1962 that the federal government recognized federal employees’ right to join unions and bargain collectively.

The battle for recognition continues today as only 29 states and the District of Columbia have enacted comprehensive collective bargaining laws for public workers.

CWA represents public, healthcare and education workers across the US, ranging from blue collar workers, and social workers to computer programmers, heavy equipment operators, correction and police officers, finance managers and instructors.

## The NewsGuild (TNG-CWA)

Led by columnist Heywood Broun, The American Newspaper Guild began in 1933. Dissatisfaction with their pay was the main reason that editorial workers, traditionally independent, came together. In 1937 it expanded its membership to include commercial departments.

TNG has been at the forefront of labor law, social justice and worker safety throughout its history. In the 1940's it fought off attacks by publishers who claimed labor law violated their 1st Amendment rights. In the 1960s, the Guild actively pushed employers to end racial and gender discrimination in their hiring and employment practices. In the 1980's the Guild lead the fight to address workplace injuries and repetitive strain injuries caused by the introduction of poorly designed computer equipment.

In the past 20 years language workers, including translators and interpreters have been added to the ranks of Guild members.

At the 2015 TNG Convention, delegates approved changing the union's name to The NewsGuild-CWA, to better reflect the current news industry and diversity of Guild units.

TNG today is primarily a media union whose members are diverse in their occupations, but who share the view that the best working conditions are achieved by people who have a say in their workplace through collective means.

TNG has more than 24,000 members in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

---

## LOCALS

CWA has approximately 900 chartered local unions in the United States and Canada. Members elect local officers and the delegates to the CWA Convention. All chartered locals must represent the workers in their respective jurisdictions and hold meetings at such time, place and frequency as the members may decide by vote. The locals are also responsible for representation and actively implementing all union programs.



---

## 2. Constitution

The CWA Constitution sets forth the rules by which the union conducts its business. Just like the Constitution of the United States, it is a living, changing document. The democratically elected delegates to the CWA convention have the power to change or amend the Constitution. Copies of the Constitution may be downloaded at [www.cwamaterials.org](http://www.cwamaterials.org).

---

## 3. History

The Communications Workers of America (CWA) was founded at meetings in Chicago and New Orleans in 1938. First known as the National Federation of Telephone Workers, convention delegates in 1947 changed the name to the Communications Workers of America. CWA joined the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1949 and has been an affiliate of the AFL-CIO since the two labor organizations merged in 1955.

The late Joseph A. Beirne was the Union's founding president and was succeeded upon his death by Glenn E. Watts who served between 1974 and mid-1985. Morton Bahr became the third president of CWA with his election by acclamation on July 16, 1985 during the Union's 47th annual convention. On August 30, 2005, Larry Cohen was elected president of the CWA and served until 2015. Chris Shelton is the current president, elected during CWA's 75th Convention on June 8, 2015.

On January 1, 1987, the 70,000 member International Typographical Union, America's oldest chartered labor union, affiliated with CWA to become the union's Printing, Publishing and Media Workers Sector.

In 1994 the National Association of Broadcasting, Engineers and Technicians brought 9,000 workers to CWA.

In 1997, The NewsGuild (formerly The Newspaper Guild), representing 40,000 workers merged with CWA.

The year 2000 brought 110,000 new members with the merger of the International Union of Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers.

In 2004, the American Flight Attendant merger brought 45,000 members into CWA.

---

## 4. Duties of International Officers and Staff

---

### PRESIDENT

The International President is the principal officer of CWA and the official spokesperson for the Union. The President has full responsibility for administering and implementing the policies of the union as determined by the Convention – CWA’s highest decision-making body -- and for guiding and building the union. Between Executive Board meetings and Conventions, the President is charged with ensuring that the directives and goals of the union are carried out.

The President presides over the Convention and meetings of the Executive Board of the Union. All officers report to the President. The President is also the Constitutional Chair of all the Bargaining Councils and is the final authority for setting strike action. The President is elected by the delegates to the convention every four years.

The President works to build and strengthen alliances with allies in the U.S. and around the world to support collective bargaining and workers' rights.

The President and the Secretary-Treasurer make up CWA’s Executive Committee.

---

### SECRETARY-TREASURER

This officer has the job of receiving, identifying, distributing and keeping a day-to-day record of the dues income of the Union. The Secretary-Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the membership database and preparing financial statements. The Secretary-Treasurer is elected by the delegates to the convention every four years.

---

### DISTRICT VICE PRESIDENTS

CWA is divided into seven geographic Districts. Each District has a Vice President who is responsible for supervising all policies and programs of the Union within a District. The Vice Presidents work under the direction of the President and they in turn supervise CWA Representatives and other Staff assigned to their Districts. The Vice Presidents are elected by delegates from the locals in their District every four years at the convention.

---

## INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENTS

The Vice Presidents on the Executive Board are elected by convention delegates from locals with members in their sectors/division every four years at the convention. TNG-CWA and AFA-CWA are elected at their own conventions.

---

## PPMWS EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The PPMWS Executive Officer on the Executive Board is elected by convention delegates from locals with members in his/her sector every four years at the convention.

---

## THE DIRECTOR, CWA|SCA CANADA

The Director of CWA|SCA Canada is responsible for coordinating matters of common concern and interest with respect to contracts, wages, hours of employment and other working conditions within the units of the CWA-SCA Canadian Region.

---

## AT-LARGE DIVERSITY BOARD MEMBERS

The At-Large Diversity Members on the Executive Board are elected by convention delegates from locals with members in their regions every four years at the convention.

---

## NON-ELECTED FULL-TIME STAFF

CWA non-elected full-time Staff are employed by the Executive Board. Full-time Staff employees work out of CWA Headquarters/District/Sector offices under the supervision of officers and vice presidents. Most field Staff are assigned to locals and are responsible for assisting locals in meeting all the goals of the Union. Staff at Headquarters support department functions. Organizers direct and support organizing campaigns throughout the Union.

---

## 5. Headquarters Departments

---

### COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications Department handles CWA's internal, traditional and online communications programs, including the weekly e-newsletter, CWA News and other publications, social media, media outreach and video. Connect with CWA at [www.cwa-union.org](http://www.cwa-union.org), on Facebook at CWAUnion, on twitter @CWAUnion and on youtube at CWAUnion.

---

### COMPLIANCE

This office endeavors to assist any Local which may have specific needs in the area of compliance with any Federal, State or CWA Constitutional requirements. Handles all charter jurisdiction changes, Local officer information, Labor Bond coverage and claims, dues certification, and updating of the UOPM.

---

### EDUCATION

This department produces materials and programs that inform members about key issues affecting our union and prepares members for mobilization actions to improve our strength at the bargaining table, in the workplace and in the community. The department develops training for stewards, local officers, union activists, and CWA staff in the fundamentals of union representation, leadership development, contract enforcement and movement building.

---

### FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP

The Finance and Membership Department handles the day-to-day financial work of the union. The Department works diligently to ensure that membership records are maintained accurately and that dues reports and checks are worked in a timely and efficient manner. In addition, the accounts payable section processes and pays the bills for headquarters and district expenses. The accounts receivable section processes the income received from dues and other sources. The accounting department generates budget reports and quarterly financial reports for the union.

---

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The Human Resources Department handles all benefits programs and processes the payroll for all employees in headquarters and in the district offices. This office also handles benefits for all retired employees of the international union.

---

## HUMAN RIGHTS

CWA accepts its responsibility to represent all members, regardless of gender, color, disability, sexual orientation, creed or nationality. CWA consistently challenges discriminatory practices and fosters enlightened attitudes throughout our union and society. This office coordinates the National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity, the National Women's Committee and works with the AFL-CIO constituency groups and other coalitions and community organizations. This office coordinates the National Committee on Civil Rights and Equity, the National Women's Committee, works with the AFL-CIO constituency groups and coordinates CWA Activism on key human rights issues.

---

## LEGAL

CWA is represented by a General Counsel and by various in-house and retained counsel across the country in all legal matters, including litigation, NLRB, other administrative agency proceedings and arbitration cases. CWA attorneys also handle and provide advice relating to internal governance issues, complaints and appeals and other matters governed by the CWA Constitution. CWA's Legal Department provides opinions and guidance on a wide range of matters relating to organizing, mobilization, corporate campaigns, bargaining obligations, legislative and regulatory initiatives and enforcement, benefit and personnel matters and on contractual interpretations and representation disputes.

---

## LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL

Coordinates CWA's Political Action Fund and LPAT program (Legislative-Political Action Teams). Works with District/Sector Legislative-Political Coordinators to increase CWA's grassroots political legislative action efforts and member support of Local, State and Federal candidates. CWA has one of the most active grassroots lobbying and political programs in the country and is working to build up our independent political power for workers in the US.

---

## OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

The department works towards the identification and elimination of member occupational safety and health hazards through the development of education and training materials, conducting workplace safety and health education and training, providing technical assistance, and conducting research specific to member occupational safety and health hazards.

---

## ORGANIZING

Works with the districts/sectors and locals in expanding external organizing opportunities. Provides resource support and direct assistance to locals in organizing campaigns. CWA has one of the most active organizing programs in the labor movement.

---

## RESEARCH

CWA's research and technical staff provide support for CWA bargaining, organizing, and public policy work. The Research Department develops strategic and financial analyses of companies and sectors where CWA members are employed. Department members provide research and technical support for corporate campaigns and other initiatives.

---

## WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

The Women's Activities office works with other women's organizations to advance the state of women workers. The office assists in the planning of CWA's women's conference and workshops.

---

## 6. CWA on the Web

---

### CWA-UNION.ORG

CWA's main website at [cwa-union.org](http://cwa-union.org) is updated daily with the latest news and information from around the union.

The "For Locals" section of the website contains links to this manual, and the CWA Constitution, Convention Proceedings and Biennial Reports, forms, and other materials that can assist you with local administrative duties.

---

### CONNECT WITH CWA

CWA provides just about every form of media possible for members, leaders, and coalition partners to stay current with the latest news and information. Please post on your local website and disseminate through your established mobilization channels.

CWA e-Newsletter (weekly) - Published every Thursday, the CWA e-newsletter highlights the latest information important to CWA members and activists. Visit [www.cwa-union.org/news](http://www.cwa-union.org/news) to subscribe. All activists and stewards should be subscribed.

CWA Materials [CWAMATERIALS.ORG](http://CWAMATERIALS.ORG) is CWA's source for ordering education, organizing, training, and political action materials. Many of the materials can be downloaded at no cost. Orders may only be placed by locals or district/national offices. [www.cwamaterials.org](http://www.cwamaterials.org)

CWA News (quarterly) - CWA publishes a news magazine four times a year that is mailed directly to CWA members' homes. The magazine is issue-based, covering important concerns of CWA members and retirees. Please encourage your members to update their mailing address to ensure timely and accurate delivery of the CWA News. Use CWA news stories at union meetings.

Speed Matters/Telecom Industry Updates (weekly)- Provides critical information on telecommunications. Sign up for weekly Telecom industry updates at [www.speedmatters.org](http://www.speedmatters.org).

CWA Mobile News and Movement Building App - When news breaks, you want to know about it and know what's coming next. The CWA Union Movement Builder brings the latest news, events, photos, Tweets, information and opportunities for action from the Communications Workers of America right to your iPhone or Android. Download the app and create your profile at <http://www.cwa-union.org/app-info>.

CWA Rapid Response Text List: Sign up to get rapid response text messages by texting CWAAction to 69866.

**Facebook**    [www.facebook.com/CWAUnion](http://www.facebook.com/CWAUnion)  
**Twitter**     [twitter.com/cwaunion](http://twitter.com/cwaunion)  
**Flickr**       [www.flickr.com/photos/cwaunion](http://www.flickr.com/photos/cwaunion)  
**YouTube**    [www.youtube.com/user/CWAUnion](http://www.youtube.com/user/CWAUnion)  
**Google+**     [plus.google.com/+cwaunion/posts](http://plus.google.com/+cwaunion/posts)

---

## ONLINE TOOLS FOR YOUR LOCAL

CWA provides free tools to locals to help you send bulk e-mail, create online advocacy and event RSVP pages and host your local website.

For more information about these tools and to request access visit [cwa-union.org/localtools](http://cwa-union.org/localtools)