

A Delegate's Guide to Convention

The UE Convention is the highest decision making body of the Union. Rank-and-file delegates elected by their locals and regional councils meet to determine the policies and direction of the union and elect the union's three general officers.

IT'S YOUR CONVENTION!

Delegates are encouraged to discuss resolutions and constitutional amendments, to speak their minds on the issues facing the union. It's their right, and their duty, as the representatives of their co-workers back home.

Most UE convention delegates find the convention a richly rewarding experience. They have the opportunity to learn from convention discussion and speakers as well as from informal discussion with other delegates.

The convention is an opportunity for delegates to gain new resources, perspectives, ideas, and information to take back to their places of employment and local unions.

The convention is an important event in the life of a democratic rank-and file union.

WHAT HAPPENS AT CONVENTION?

Resolutions that have been submitted by locals and regional councils are discussed and voted on by the delegates. If adopted, they become UE policy.

Constitutional amendments are discussed and voted on by the delegates; if approved they go to the locals for ratification.

The General Secretary-Treasurer presents a **financial report** of the national union.

Delegates **elect** officers and set the salaries of the officers and staff.

What are the Convention Committees?

Rules and Order Committee recommends the rules required for the convention to ensure the fullest participation by the delegates.

Credentials Committee ensures that each local is properly represented and affirms that each delegate's credential is in order.

Publicity and Education Committee discusses the resolutions submitted to the convention that deal with publicity and education and presents a program to the convention for discussion and action by the delegates.

Constitution Committee reviews and makes recommendations on proposed amendments to the Union's constitution before they come to the convention floor. All constitutional amendments adopted by the convention are returned to the locals for ratification.

Resolution Committee reviews policy resolutions. Following thorough discussion, the committee makes recommendations on the resolutions to the convention. Resolutions are debated on the convention floor before action is taken on them.

Policy Action Committee recommends a plan of action for the union on several key resolutions.

Organizing Committee reviews the organizational work of the union during the preceding convention period and makes recommendations for the coming work.

2021 Convention Workshops

Morning Workshops (1-1/2 hours)

Building Power through Organizing

Facilitated by Tristan Bock-Hughes and Mark Meinster (UE International Representative)

Develop your skills as an organizer to build power in your own local, or in new organizing campaigns. This workshop will cover workplace mapping, one-on-one organizing conversations, and making assessments, the key skills union leaders need to engage members in fighting the boss.

Them & Us Unionism

Facilitated by Terry Davis and Jennifer Sherer

How does UE help workers win despite the challenges of our economy? Based on our booklet of the same title, this workshop digs into the fundamental principles that guide our organization, and prepares members to put these ideas into practice. First-time convention delegates are especially encouraged to register for this workshop.

Climate Action: Creating 21st Century Jobs and Justice

Facilitated by Amos Levy

From California wildfires and job loss in Erie, PA, to arctic blasts in Texas and deaths from heat stroke in North Carolina, many of our locals and communities are already being impacted by changes in our climate. This workshop will explore how getting involved to address our climate crisis directly can lead to more equitable and resilient workplaces, better jobs, and a more just society.

Solidarity for Racial Justice: Bystander Intervention Training

Facilitated by Dominic Harris and Kari Thompson (UE Education Director)

It's not always easy to know what to do when someone does or says something racist. As UE continues to unite all workers regardless of race, this workshop will build member confidence to stop harassment when it occurs, at work, within the union, or in your community.

2021 Convention Workshops (Con't.)

Afternoon Workshops (1 hour)

A Powerful Pricetag: Understanding Health Care Costs

Facilitated by John Thompson (UE International Representative)

Do you have a clear sense of how much you and your family are really paying for your health care? This workshop will help members use UE's Health Costs Worksheet to see the real cost of their health care. Members will learn how to use the worksheet with their coworkers to prepare for bargaining over health insurance or to talk about the need for Medicare for All.

Keeping the Members Informed

Facilitated by Jonathan Kissam (UE Communications Director)

Keeping the members fully informed of what's going on in their workplace and their union is essential to developing and maintaining a strong UE local. This workshop will review a variety of communications tools, including printed newsletters, websites, email and text messages, for communicating directly with members. It will also discuss the benefits (and potential pitfalls) of social media.

Building Power with State and Local Political Action

Facilitated by Jennifer Sherer

The victories we win at the bargaining table can be either taken away or reinforced by the action or inaction of our government. This workshop will explore what working people can expect from federal and state legislation in the coming year, and how members can push politicians to respond to the needs of the people.

Mobilizing Members to Win Grievances

Facilitated by Tristan Bock-Hughes and Terry Davis

While it's important to follow timelines and have facts straight, the best way to win a grievance is to put pressure on the boss through an involved membership. This advanced steward workshop will discuss which grievances are the best for engaging members, and how to use escalating tactics to compel management to meet the union's demands.

Speakers



ED GAINEY

State Representative Ed Gainey grew up in East Liberty and saw firsthand the economic hardships many families face in Pittsburgh. Raised by a single mother, he counted on the support of his extended family and community to build a pathway to high school and college. Inspired to do the same for others, he discovered in college that an effective government can be a powerful tool to fight injustice and uplift communities. As a State Representative in Harrisburg he's been on the front line fighting for working families. He won the Democratic Party nomination for Mayor of Pittsburgh in May of 2021, with the general election scheduled for November. He has committed that as mayor he will work every day to make Pittsburgh a city where all can belong and contribute. He is married and has three children, the Gainey's live in the Lincoln-Lemington neighborhood of Pittsburgh.



ERIN JONES

Pastor Erin Jones serves the Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community, which was planted in 2004 and has always been located in the South Side of Pittsburgh. It is connected to both the Presbyterian Church USA and the United Methodist Church. The Hot Metal Bridge Faith Community believes they are an imperfect people coming together to find ways to reflect God's perfect love to the world around us, and that Jesus' greatest command was to love God and love others. The Community relies on the Holy Spirit to guide, lead, and encourage them in this work of love. Pastor Erin is a California native who through the work of the Holy Spirit, and love of her husband who works at Robert Morris University, found herself in Pittsburgh. She is a Lutheran pastor, and sometimes has a Minnesota accent, especially when she's excited about things.



AL HART

Al Hart is the retired managing editor of the UE NEWS, a position he held from 2006 until his retirement in 2017. He first joined UE in October 1973 when he started working at the Erie GE plant, and for 13 years he served Local 506 in positions including shop steward, executive board member, and managing editor of Local 506's monthly UNION NEWS. He joined the UE field staff in the 1980s, working on organizing campaigns in numerous places and servicing UE locals in Connecticut, Ohio and Indiana.



JERRY DIAS

As National President of Unifor, Jerry Dias is at the forefront of the fight for workers' rights, equality and social justice. As the largest private sector union in Canada, Unifor represents more than 315,000 workers in every major sector of the Canadian economy. Elected the first National President of Unifor in August 2013 at the union's founding convention, Jerry was re-elected to his post in 2016 and 2019. An effective negotiator, Jerry has taken on corporate giants to secure good jobs for members and create the economic basis for increased living standards for working people. He assumed an active role in the renegotiation of NAFTA as a consultant to the Canadian government and negotiating team where he consistently pushed to raise labor standards domestically and internationally, maintain Canadian sovereignty and protect key domestic industries. Jerry has helped Unifor lead successful fights in recent years to force the Big Three Detroit auto companies to reinvest in manufacturing in Canada. During COVID-19, he led the campaign for stronger wage subsidies for unemployed workers, increased regulation and improved staffing and working conditions in long-term care facilities, and higher pay for essential frontline workers in health care and retail. A committed trade unionist, Jerry has been vocal on emerging labor issues including precarious work, youth unemployment and underemployment, growing income inequality and lack of work-life balance while strongly advocating for LGBTQ rights, gender equality and the elimination of violence against women. Under his leadership, Unifor's groundbreaking Woman's Advocate Program has expanded into more than 350 workplaces. The union launched its Racial Advocate Program in 2020. Jerry's mission is to strive to create progressive change for a better future.



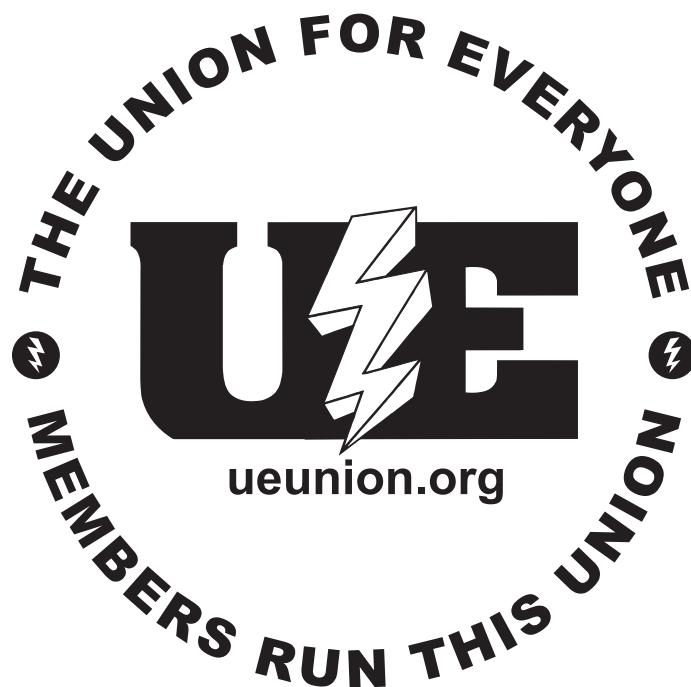
SARA NELSON

Sara Nelson has served as the International President of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO since 2014, representing 50,000 of aviation's first responders at 17 airlines. She has been a union flight attendant since 1996 when she started flying at United Airlines. Sara designed the successful payroll support program that was a historic Worker's First relief program that kept aviation workers connected to their paychecks, healthcare, and other benefits for 16 months during the COVID pandemic, while banning stock buybacks and dividends across the industry and capping executive compensation for 2 years after the relief period ends. Sara believes labor should set the agenda every time. The New York Times called her "America's most powerful flight attendant" for her role in helping to end the 35-day Government Shutdown, InStyle Magazine placed her on their Top 50 Badass Women list, and Fast Company put her on the cover of their Summer 2021 magazine with the headline, "Workers Strike Back." Sara often says corporations have money and control but workers have power, and the labor movement is for all working people. She encourages women everywhere to join unions and run unions. She believes flight attendants can play a pivotal role in building worker power with more public contact than almost any other job and connectivity around the world.



JESUS GARCIA

U.S. Representative Jesús "Chuy" García proudly represents the Fourth Congressional District of Illinois. Throughout his career, Congressman García has been a progressive voice, both as an organizer and as a legislator, fighting to improve the lives of his working-class neighbors, many of whom are immigrants like him. He is a coalition builder committed to expanding access to quality education, affordable housing, and economic opportunity. He currently serves as a member of the influential Financial Services Committee, Natural Resources Committee, and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. He is a member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC), and Congressional Labor Caucus, among others. He is also the founder of the Future of Transportation Caucus. Congressman García was born in Los Pinos, a small village in the Mexican state of Durango. He came to the United States with his family in 1965 with permanent resident status, to join his father who worked in the fields during the bracero program and later in a cold storage plant in Chicago. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's in urban planning from the University of Illinois-Chicago. During college he began organizing for worker rights and non-discriminatory public services. He was elected Alderman in Chicago in 1986, giving Mayor Harold Washington his first working majority in City Council. He also served as an Illinois State Senator, Cook County Commissioner, and as the founding executive director of Enlace, the main community organization in Chicago's largest working-class Latino neighborhood, Little Village. Throughout this time, he has provided concrete support to many union strikes, contract fights and organizing drives, especially those of UE. Congressman García and his wife Evelyn live in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood. They have three adult children and six grandchildren.





DR. LINDA MURRAY

Dr. Murray has spent her career serving the medically underserved. She has worked in a variety of settings including practicing Occupational Medicine at a Workers Clinic in Canada, Residency Director for Occupational Medicine at Meharry Medical College, and Bureau Chief for the Chicago Department of Health under Mayor Harold Washington. Dr. Murray worked as Medical Director of the federally funded health center, Winfield Moody, serving Cabrini Green Public Housing Project in Chicago. Dr. Murray has been an active member of a wide range of local and national medical and occupational safety and health organizations. In 1997 Dr. Murray returned to the Cook County Health System where she served as Chief Medical Officer -Primary Care for twenty-three primary care and community health centers and as an attending physician in the Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Cook County Hospital. Dr. Murray has worked in leadership roles in many public health organizations including as President of the American Public Health Association. Although now retired from her positions in medical institutions and from seeing patients, she continues to serve on the boards of several public health and health equity advocacy organizations. She remains passionate about increasing the number of Black and Latinx health professionals. Dr. Murray is devoting the rest of her career to being an enthusiastic full time trouble maker. She has been a voice for social justice and health as a basic human right for over fifty years.



CHRIS TOWNSEND

Chris Townsend is the Director of New Organizing for the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), the largest bus and rail transit union in North America. He was born in Pennsylvania, and after high school he joined a successful ATU organizing drive in 1979 and went on to become an Executive Board member of his local union in Florida. He joined UE in 1988, starting as a national union Field Organizer and then International Representative. He went on to become the longest serving Political Action Director and UE Washington Representative in UE history. For 21 years he was responsible for UE's political education and mobilization efforts, as well as participating in several of the union's national contract negotiations with various employers, including GE. As the Washington Representative he was privileged to have been able to work closely with Bernie Sanders, a task made easier owing to the fact that for several years UE was the only national union to embrace him and his straightforward pro-union message. Chris retired from UE in 2013, and returned to ATU in order to help establish new departments for field mobilization, new organizing, and collective bargaining at their International office in Washington, DC. Townsend ceaselessly promotes the need for more and aggressive new member organizing and expanded mobilization of union members as one of the primary solutions to the dire situation facing working people today. He takes to heart the counsel drummed into him by the UE old timers and labor radicals who trained him, namely that a union leader must aspire to be the "The Jack of all trades and the master of several." Chris is a ceaseless proponent of labor history reading and study for union members, likely holding the individual sales record for copies of Labor's Untold Story. He lives in Alexandria, Virginia with his wife of 38 years, Nancy McFadden.

Workshop Facilitators

Tristan Bock-Hughes

Tristan is a staff organizer for Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee (EWOC), a national collective of volunteer workplace organizers founded in response to COVID by UE and the Democratic Socialists of America. Before working with EWOC, he worked and volunteered on labor, electoral, and issue-based community efforts to take power from the bosses and win working class demands

Terry Davis

Terry was a Field Organizer then an International Representative for UE until her retirement. Prior to that, she was a rank & file worker organizing in a shop which joined UE. Since COVID began, she has been volunteering with EWOC, organizing essential workers remotely.

Dominic Antonio Harris

Dominic is UE Local 150's Charlotte Chapter president, Local 150 Financial officer, and a UE Eastern Region trustee. He has been a Crew Chief at Charlotte Water for 7 years.

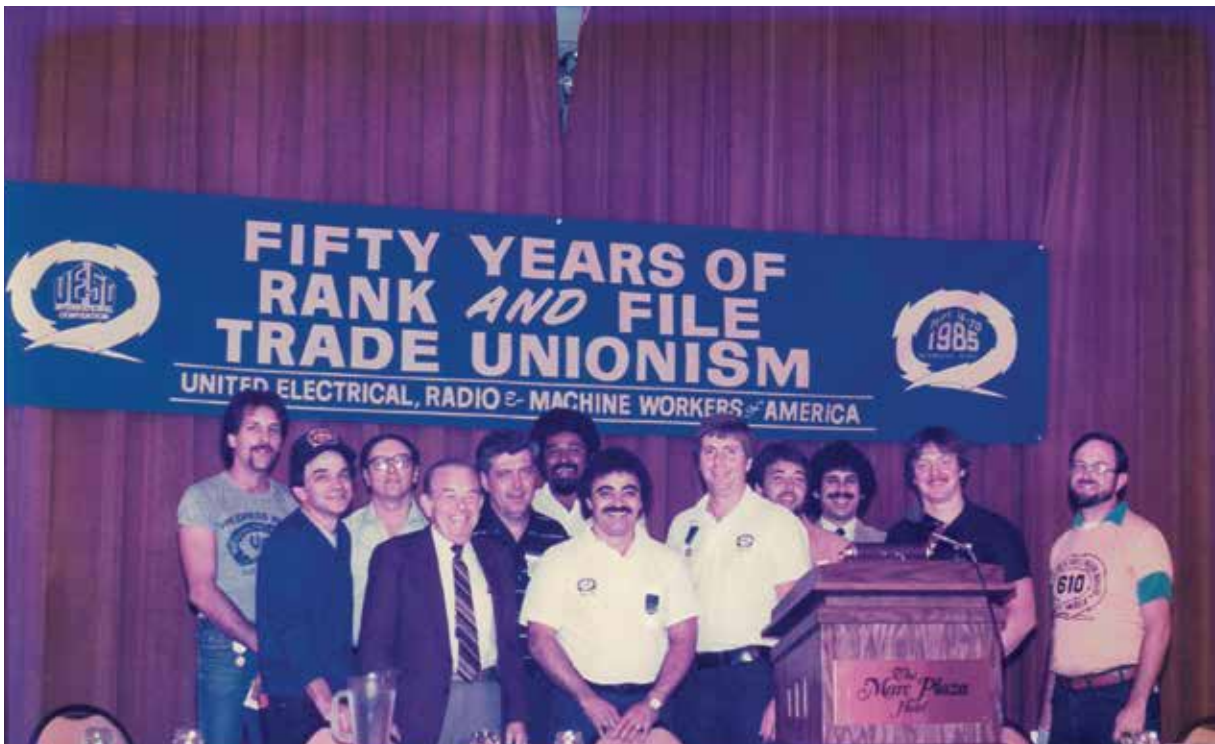
Amos Levy

Amos is an educator and audio engineer, who uses arts education for youth development, community building, and collective action problem solving. He is Music Technology Coordinator at the YMCA Lighthouse program, Co-Director of the Tuff Sound Apprenticeship Program, and Co-Founder of Green New Games--a nonprofit that develops tabletop role playing games to teach youth skills to win climate justice.

Jennifer Sherer

Jennifer Sherer is senior state policy coordinator for the Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN) Worker Power Project at Economic Policy Institute (www.epi.org). Her work focuses on expanding the ability of working people to achieve racial, gender, and economic justice through organizing, collective bargaining, and public policies that promote worker voice. She previously served as director of the University of Iowa Labor Center and first became active in the labor movement over 20 years ago as a local union officer in UE 896-COGS and project staff organizer for UE.

Good Luck Gene!



Gene Elk, third from the right

UE Director of Organization Gene Elk will be retiring at the end of his current term, on October 31. Elk first joined the UE staff in November of 1977, and served the union as a Field Organizer, International Representative, and Secretary of the GE Conference Board before his election as Director of Organization in 2015.

In 1981, Elk was assigned to assist the 3700 members of UE Local 610 as they struck Wabco (now Wabtec), in the first major strike against concessions in an era when most large industrial unions were accepting them. The strike, which lasted for six months, was ultimately successful.

In the late 80s, Elk began working in the UE national office on new efforts to organize General Electric Workers, which brought several GE service shops into the union. In the 1990s, he helped coordinate UE's growing work in the public sector, and in 2011 he became Secretary of UE's GE Conference Board. He was elected Director of Organization in 2015.

In his four decades on UE staff, he was guided by a solid understanding of the role of staff in a rank-and-file union. He both preached and practiced the importance of empowering members to run their own union.

Happy Retirement!

International Program



CSN

The Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux, CSN, was founded in 1921. One of CSN's major strengths lies in the autonomy of all its affiliated unions representing more than 300,000 members in Quebec, Canada. The CSN has worked for many years to develop international solidarity. The CSN today fights for social, cultural, economic and environmental policies that enrich the fabric of society and that benefit the entire population. It takes a lead role on many issues, whether it concerns the right to unionize and negotiate freely, or women's equality in the workforce, pay equity in the private sector or an end to all discrimination. The CSN is a democratic, independent and progressive organization.



FAT

The Frente Autentico del Trabajo, translated to the Authentic Labor Front, is a national organization of workers of the countryside and city, plural, democratic, and militant. In the five decades since our founding, thousands of men and women have organized in the FAT and have tenaciously fought the authoritarian regime that oppresses us and sinks into misery and violence. We are a democratic organization where members are the leaders, where worker assemblies decide our direction, and we support everyone in the fight to give life to one of the most militant, democratic solidarity organizations in Mexico. With the effort of each and every one of the members in struggle, we remain faithful to our principles, trying to build a new society, freer and fairer from everyday practice, to achieve our ultimate goal: that the working class controls our own destiny.



FIOM-CGIL

The Federation of Metallurgical Employees Workers, FIOM, is the union of workers employed in the metallurgical industry. FIOM is a member of the Italian General Confederation of Labor, CGIL, which has 5.5 million members and is Italy's largest labor confederation. FIOM is the oldest Italian industrial union. FIOM has over 340,000 members, including GE workers.

International Program (Cont.)



Unifor

Unifor is Canada's largest private sector union, with more than 315,000 members across the country, working in every major sector of the Canadian economy. Unifor brings a modern approach to unionism: adopting new tools, involving and engaging our members, and always looking for new ways to develop the role and approach of our union to meet the demands of the 21st century. Unifor was officially formed on August 31, 2013, in Toronto, Ontario. It marked the coming together of the Canadian Auto Workers Union (CAW) and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP).



Zenroren

Zenroren, National Confederation of Trade Unions, is a trade union center in Japan representing 1 million workers. Zenroren consists of 19 industrial federations and 47 prefectural federations out of 47 prefectures in Japan. We inherited Japanese militant union movement history, and formed ourselves in November 1989. Our principles are independent from the capital and political party, and to pursue united action based on common demands.

