

2025/2026

Annual Report

THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this report, we are waiting for the governor to sign our new contract into law after it was passed by the state house and senate. This wait has been a long one. Particularly for the members of our bargaining team and UCPEA office staff. Together, they met more than 60 times over almost two years in caucus or with management to complete this task.

On behalf of the 2,000 of us covered by this new agreement, I offer our sincere thanks.

Now, this does not mean that we are done and that UCPEA is on vacation for the next four years. There are committees being established right now to work on the implementation of new language covering the use of sick bank time as well as to explore moving from salary bands for our compensation to a step system similar to ones used by other statewide bargaining units.

In addition to being a cheerleader of our bargaining team and other committees, I have been our representative to other committees and organizations. I've met with the UConn Labor Coalition and UCPEA Executive Board on a weekly basis and monthly with the AFT Connecticut Legislative and Political Action Committee, the AFT Connecticut Public Employees committee, and the AFT Connecticut Executive Committee. Our interactions with other local and state unions and participation on these committees helps to ensure that the needs of our members are well-represented.

Like many of our members, I waited anxiously to see the release of the Segal report. The administration should view these results as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve our University. I look forward to working with them on the implementations in a manner that is mutually beneficial.

I am truly pleased by the hard work of our UCPEA colleagues over the last year and am thankful that you stand with me as a member.



Peter Morenus
President
UCPEA, AFT Local 3695



UCPEA President Peter Morenus speaks with Lt. Gov. Susan Bysiewicz at the Boom Box Parade in Willimantic on July 4, 2025.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Current Leadership

Peter Morenus, President
Lisa Pane, First Vice President
Jen Morenus, VP for Professional Issues
Amber LaFontaine, VP for Political Affairs
Yesenia Darling, VP for Communications
Nick Boston, VP for Member Services
Nishelli Ahmed, VP for Social Justice
David Paquette, Treasurer
Jordan McMillan, Secretary
Eileen McHugh, Chief Union Steward

OFFICE STAFF

Elizabeth Sullivan, Executive Director
Lindsay Jenkelunas, Senior Field Representative
Margaret Malley, Administrative Coordinator



AREA STEWARDS

Area 1
Tina Burnham
Mary Malley
Mary Margaret Smith

Area 2
Alexander McCollam
Emily Petry

Area 4
Katherine D'Antonio
Frank Lagana

Area 5
Matthew Marshall
Amy McKeon

Area 6
Megan Marie Clark
Rob Morrell
Mitch Saba

Area 7
Shana Bartlett
Kate Finegan
Kimberly Wilk

Area 8
Beth Barbeau
Nick Boston
Harrison Goodale

Area 9
Amber LaFontaine
Jamie Moran

Area 10
Ramesh KC
Daniel Lis
Laura Mlyniec

Area 11
Nishelli Ahmed
Renee Gill
Torona Smith

Area 12
Dwayne Cunningham
Shawn Lappen
Stephanie Marks
Eileen McHugh

Area 13
Heather Breitholz
Valerie (Val) Jenkelunas
Kelsey Keefe
Susan Rosman

Area 16
Michael Pennington

Area 17
Nicole Burns
Jason McMullan
Jennifer (Jen) Morenus
Kelsey O'Neil

Area 18
Craig Burdick

Area 20
Tingting Cunningham

Area 20
Justin Rogowski
Julian Torres

Area 21
Dan Covino
Wiley Dawson
Ramon Espinoza

Area 22
Michelle MarcAurele
Kimberly Meanix Miller

Area 23
Genoveva Arce

Area 26
Chelsea Cannon
Lavonne Womack

Area 27
Denise Whitford

Area 28
Joshua Beres
Samantha Kushel
Jennifer (JP) Lappen

Area 29
Jordan McMillan

Area 30
Jose Aponte
Corey Blatchford
Hunter Tashea

Area 33
Jenna Gibilisco
Taj Julien
Katie King
Susie Scarbeck

Area 36
Timothy Sheffield
Matthew Sroka

Area 37
Steph Kexel

Area 38
Guadalupe Arroyo
Victoria Novak

Area 39
Christianne Smith

Area 41
Dan Stolzenberg

OFFICERS' REPORT

VICE PRESIDENT

After elections for the executive board finished in 2025 we learned that the contract negotiation process that started in 2024 would continue to the end 2025. The legislature had decided to not pass contracts during the 2025 session and our work was to continue into the fall. Starting from the middle wasn't hard, as the team I joined was well versed and ready to negotiate one of the most beneficial contracts we've witnessed.

The team stuck to their principles. Fairness and expansion of benefits were the themes. We extended who could apply for the Sick Bank, we added language to increase leave for civic obligations, expanded holiday time, and strengthened recall rights. We worked with our UConn Union Coalition on parking equality and found language that everyone was able to leverage.

Contract negotiations require patience and grounded actions. This contract process reestablished a healthy labor/management relationship. While either sides' first attempt at language might not be successful, repeated attempts were accepted and a true dialog started. Even if this was an unusually long process, it was never an emotional burden to come to the table.

Committees

- Contract Action Team (CAT) - Offered coffee and donuts at Student Union tables and at regionals to talk negotiations with members. We rallied at the Capitol, sent surveys to members, collected member biographies and photos for a "Who is UCPEA" to demonstrate all the kinds of work members do. They engaged members on issues of equity, fairness, and career progression.
- Hardship Fund - Effective fiscal year 2027, we simplified the award to up to \$1000 and eliminating the salary cap. We also collected resources to share with the award letter.
- Sick Bank - We will be implementing the changes in the eligibility for sick bank in fiscal year 2027. Now, anyone on FMLA can apply if they have used all their sick time. It no longer needs to be a "catastrophic and unexpected" event.
- Scholarships - We named the community/trade college/school scholarship the "Roslyn Swift Scholarship" after Ros, who served as the UCPEA administrative staff for decades. We awarded all three scholarships.

Conferences, Rallies, and Meetings Attended

- UCPEA Tour of UConn Botanical Conservatory 7/29/2025
- UCPEA Summer Retreat 7/30/2025
- UCPEA Higher Education Retreat 9/19/2025
- Chris Murphy Federal Higher Education Meeting 9/19/2025
- Executive Board Retreats 11/13/2025
- Avery Point Area Meeting 11/19/2025
- UCPEA Racial Equity Training 12/16/2025
- Contract Rally at Capitol 3/12/2026

VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

The Professional Issues Committee continued to review the applications for the Professional Development Award (PDA) twice monthly, an effort which has been well-received by the members for its consistency and efficiency. The committee has reviewed more than 570 requests to date, with awards totaling \$392,273. The Vice President for Professional Issues has responded to nearly 500 email inquiries, providing timely and individualized guidance to members seeking support. The Vice President attended a number of area meetings and New Employee Orientation (NEO), served on the Contract Action Team (CAT) during the contract negotiation, and urged an increase to the PDA pool. With the valuable data gathered by the committee and unrelenting advocacy by the VP, the PDA pool was increased by \$50,000.

Grounded in a holistic approach to professional growth, the committee recognizes that supporting staff development means addressing a wide range of interests and needs. With that in mind, the committee hosted well-attended events and workshops throughout the year:

- In collaboration with the Membership Services Committee, **More Work, More Pay**, a workshop on reclassification, career progression, temporary salary increase, and comp time on November 12, 2025.
- **AI Working Group** hosted a panel discussion on AI in the workplace on February 4, 2026.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS

As the Vice President for Political Affairs, I was actively involved with the AFT Connecticut Legislative and Political Action Committee (LPAC). As a member of the AFT-LPAC, I participated in endorsement interviews of most of the candidates for 2025 municipal elected offices and voted in favor of endorsement of candidates that reflected our collective values. Of the 148 endorsed candidates, 89% won their elections. Of the candidates that were current or former union members, 84% won. And of the 32 AFT-CT member candidates endorsed, 81% won their elections. It was an eye-opening experience to be part of these interviews and it really highlighted how influential local politics are to our everyday lives as individuals but also collectively.

I also re-formed the Committee for Political Education and have held monthly meetings since August 2025. As a committee, we've helped organize events such as the Community & Labor: Collective Action in CT's Quiet Corner – an event that brought together UConn union organizers and local progressive activists. COPE is working to bring back events for members around political education and engaging with your legislators.

In addition, as Vice President for Political Affairs, I've been representing UCPEA as one of the liaisons to Connecticut for All – a statewide coalition of labor, community, and faith organizations who stand united to eliminate systemic inequalities and rebuild a better Connecticut, for all of us!

I've been able to attend the Capitol on several occasions to represent UCPEA in times where leaders from higher education have been needed. I'm looking forward to the year to come!

VICE PRESIDENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS

In 2025, Yesenia Darling, VP for Communications, made consistent communication to membership a goal.

In 2024, she built a communications platform that exponentially increased conversations and updates to membership. In 2025, it increased further from there, nearly doubling interactions across the Union. The VP for Communications moved The Union Wire into a more accessible, fully digital format, delivered weekly instead of its pre-2024 monthly paced PDF format. With more news at members' fingertips, the Union Wire became a reliable source for important updates, union news, and stories that reflect the voices of our membership.

The Communications Committee created numerous important materials within the fiscal year. This includes development of three publications: The New Membership Orientation Packet written by Nick Boston, VP of Membership Services, designed by Communications, with edits by the UCPEA executive board and staff. The UCPEA Book, led by Nick Boston and Amber LaFontaine. Finally, the UCPEA Annual Report for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026.

Other notable projects by the VP for Communications and the Communications Committee include the Solidarity Postcard Campaign, and Flyers for all your favorite events throughout the year such as the Winter Celebration, Union Unwind, and UCPEA Pride and Juneteenth.

Throughout, cross-committee collaboration continues to be a priority. The VP of Communications creates materials as needed across all departments; For example, Yesenia Darling has participated in the Contract Action Team, developing materials, templates, and communications. These pieces greatly aided in our success this year with negotiations.

A special thank you goes out to the Communications Committee, a growing team of 10+ hard-working individuals who are responsible for sharing UCPEA news, invites, and updates. Without Grace Bennett, Craig Burdick, Ellen Devlin, Harrison Goodale, Andrew Janavey, Lindsay Jenkelunas, JP Lappen, Margaret Malley, Anna Milot, Leann Sanders, and Sarah Shea, none of this would be possible. It is because of their hard work that we were able to maintain consistent, fast-paced updates.

As we move forward, UCPEA communications will continue to align with the organization's core goals, amplifying the voices of our members by building solidarity through effective communication. Look out for even more ways to connect to members in 2027.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

Membership Services has been busy yet again! Below is a summary of the events hosted in the past year (June 2025 – May 2026):

- June 2025: Pride Celebration with UCPEA Social Justice Committee
- June 2025: Juneteenth Celebration with UCPEA Social Justice Committee
- July 2025: New Member Reception (Storrs)
- July 2025: UCPEA tour of the UConn Botanical Conservatory
- October 2025: Fall Fest
- October 2025: New Member Reception (Storrs)
- November 2025: More Work, More Pay workshop with UCPEA Professional Issues Committee
- December 2025: Winter Celebration at all campuses
- December 2025: Holiday postcard writing
- March 2026: SEBAC rally and bus charter
- April 2026: Kick off UCPEA virtual book club & Blue Mile Walking Club
- May 2026: Union Unwind

Once more, Nick Boston, Vice President for Membership Services, would like to express deep gratitude for the hard work and dedication of the members of the Membership Services Committee (MSC): Beth Barbeau, Mary Boston, Amanda Cannada, Ellen Devlin, Cindy Doherty, Harrison Goodale, Taj Julien, Amber LaFontaine, Frank Lagana, Yaoguang Li, Judy Lopez, Steph Lumbra, Mary Malley, Victoria Novak, Emily Petry, Alenies Rodriguez, Isamar Rodriguez, Karen Schofield, Christianne Smith, Quoron Walker, and Taiyler Watson. The success of UCPEA's events is a direct result of the committee's commitment, inspiration, and strong work ethic, and none of the amazing progress could have been made without them. Thank you to every member of the committee!

Membership Services has continued to collaborate with the UCPEA office team and other UCPEA committees to effectively collect and distribute information from and to our members. One way this manifested this year was in the creation of UCPEA's first edition of a "Meet the Membership" book – a project spearheaded by Nick and the VP for Political Affairs, Amber LaFontaine. This book aims to introduce UCPEA members to each other, public figures, legislators, friends, family, and anyone else who might be interested in the impact that UCPEA members make every day. It is our goal to share all the incredible work done by our members and also to highlight members to each other and get to know a little more about our community at UConn.

In the spirit of recognition, MSC worked to establish an UCPEA Recognition Awards process and timeline in addition to creating two new annual awards: the Advocacy Award and the Campus Connection Award. 2026 will be the first year these new awards will be distributed to members to recognize their excellent commitment and contributions toward their fellow UCPEA members.

Nick continues to serve as an active Area 8 Steward, member of the Hiring Practices Committee, Childcare Reimbursement Committee, Contract Action Team, Committee on Political Education, and has occasionally popped into several other committee meetings as needed all in addition to attending as many contract negotiation sessions as possible as an observer. And last, but certainly not least: new UCPEA merch coming soon... 😊

VICE PRESIDENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the Social Justice Committee (SJC) focused on building a proactive infrastructure centered on immigration advocacy, inclusive community celebrations, and organizational accessibility. A primary pillar of this work involved the development of the "Worker and Family Immigration Protections" proposal, submitting and advocating for the Sanctuary Union resolution for full union vote, practical "Know Your Rights" training in December, and the establishment of a Signal group for communications around ICE in our communities. The committee also advocated for the removal of ICE recruitment postings and connected with CT Freedom to Learn Coalition to ensure a safer environment for all students and staff at UConn and the state of CT.

Beyond advocacy, the SJC prioritized visibility and joy through major events such as the Pride and Juneteenth celebrations, which featured local diverse talent and vendors. The committee fostered labor solidarity by participating in International Labor Day actions and planning to engage in various Pride events throughout CT. Internally, the group launched educational initiatives like the weekly Spanish Learning Lunch and the distribution of safety whistles. By also forming a dedicated Accessibility Team, the committee ensured that equity and inclusion remained at the heart of the union's structural identity.

TREASURER

The financial position of our organization remains strong. The FY26 Budget was projected to have a slight deficit of \$20,182.56. We have found ourselves in a positive financial position, and are projected to have another significant surplus, estimated at approximately \$150,000. The largest explanation for this unanticipated surplus is we have two vacancies for two positions in the office. As mentioned in the prior reports, we budget for contractually obligated expenses for our office staff, but the funds are not always used. Our membership numbers currently remain strong with membership near 1,880 people. Our current reserves are sufficient to meet at least 12 months of expenses.

The Finance Committee has met six times since September 2025. The committee worked on the FY27 budget, voted on recommendations to the Executive Board of over- and non-budgeted items, and discussed various policies regarding investments, processes, and asset management. The committee welcomed new members Danielle Godi, Frank Lagana, Deborah King, and Haili Li Lin. Also continuing to serve are Susan Rosman and MiChelle Pererira-Lopes. I am extremely grateful for the committee's work and dedication to our union.

Our FY25 Audit is still in process in conjunction with our accounting firm Maletta and Associates. Once completed the audit will be posted to the UCPEA website as has been with years past. As we have been without a financial assistant this past fiscal year, I'm expecting the audit to highlight areas of risk and recommended controls and processes to implement. I am looking forward to filling the position and maintaining transparency in our financials.

SECRETARY

I have been proud to serve as UCPEA Secretary this year, and it has been a privilege to work with union leaders from across UCPEA. Collectively we have done incredible collaborative work.

As Secretary, I have maintained the records of Executive Board meetings and contributed to the discussion of issues relevant to our Union. The Secretary also serves as the Union's parliamentarian, which means I make sure we are compliant with our Constitution and Bylaws and our agreed upon rules of order.

This year I have worked closely with our Executive Director, with the input of the rest of the board, to establish written policies and procedures for staff, committees, and elected members. Our key accomplishment was finalizing a staff hiring policy that reflects the Union's values.

As the secretary, I also served on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, where we received two proposed amendments and one proposed resolution (as of writing). These items will be brought before the membership, who has final decision-making power for how we govern our union. Special thanks to our wonderful committee members, Rene Rovozzo, Craig Burdick, Jen Morenus, Matthew Engelhardt, Karen Schofield, and Lyn Alexander. My role would not be possible or functional without the UCPEA staff, Stewards, and Executive Board.

CHIEF UNION STEWARD

Overview

The Chief Union Steward facilitates communication between the Executive Board and the Union Stewards, ensuring that our members receive relevant information and that their concerns are represented to the union. The Key Responsibilities of the Chief Union Steward include attending weekly Executive Board meetings to stay informed and contribute to issue resolution, organizing and leading monthly steward meetings, including preparing agendas, chairing discussions, and summarizing key points for members and supporting stewards in maintaining communication with UCPEA members.

Activities and Initiatives (2025-2026)

- Education: Organized and presented (with others) three Lunchtime Learning Opportunities for new stewards and an all-day steward training.
- Visibility: Sent steward Introduction emails to new members. In collaboration with UCPEA staff, continued to promote Area Meetings and developed a budget for food and drink to encourage attendance, and conducted several midterm elections to fill steward vacancies.

Key Issues for 2025-26

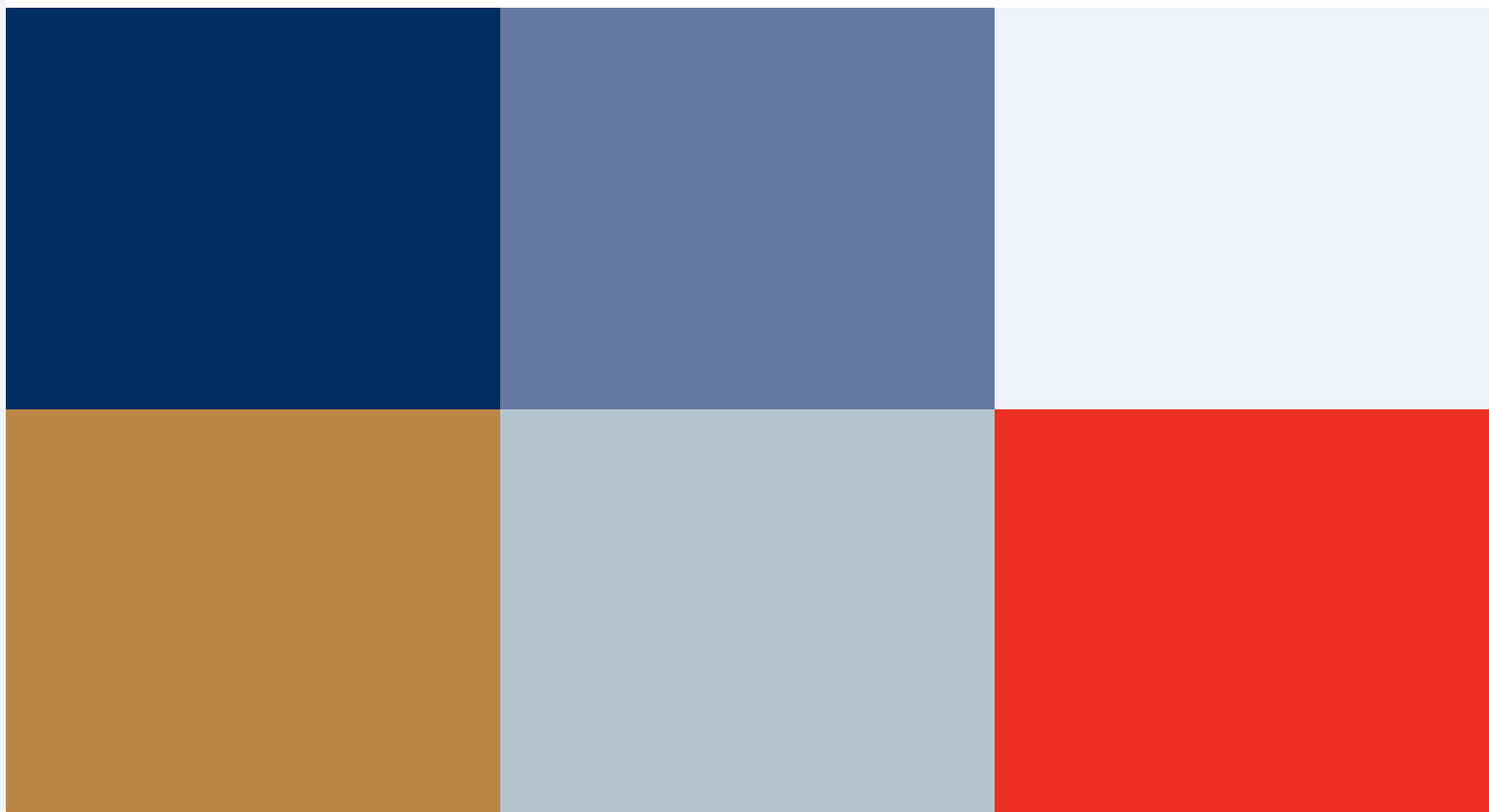
- Contract Negotiations discussions and updates were a major agenda item for our steward monthly meetings this year. Stewards supported the Bargaining and CAT teams with outreach to members regularly.
- Stewards supported their members who were identified to part of the interviews for the Segal Organizational Needs Assessment including attending the listening sessions and taking notes on the process.

CHIEF UNION STEWARD CONTINUED

- Stewards organized the Member Engagement in response to the Executive Board's request to increase the percentage of members. As a first step, stewards familiarized themselves with all members and nonpayers in their area and identified the reasons some individuals are not paying dues. This summer, stewards will have an opportunity for training to help them speak to nonpayers.
- Stewards informed the Executive Board of telecommuting Inequities over the Winter Break.
- Stewards spread the word to UCPEA members who must report to work during a Classes Cancelled event and make sure they are awarded the compensation time to which they are entitled.
- Stewards brought to the Executive Board's attention that many members feel they are suffering through understaffing, i.e., they have too much work and more responsibility than they are being compensated for. The Executive Board will be following up with additional training.

Your Stewards

- Three current and past stewards retired from the University this year. Many thanks to
 - Chris Dahl (Area 6 and 12) on March 1, 2026. Chris was a longtime steward and an advocate for Career Paths/Progressions.
 - Rosemary Marcellino (Area 12) on May 1, 2026. Rosemary, a former Chief Union Steward, was a long-time steward in several areas on campus, most recently Area 12.
 - Rhonda Ward (Area 34) on May 1, 2026. Rhonda was a member of the Social Justice Committee and served on two negotiations teams.
- Thank you to all current and past stewards for your commitment to UCPEA and the university.



UCPEA
Budget - FY27
 July 2026 - June 2027

Income

4000 Dues from Members	\$2,224,238.62
4020 AFT CT Assistance & Grants	\$28,500.00
4040 Misc. Rebates	\$750.00
4650 Unrealized Gain/Loss	\$50,000.00
4655 Investment Fees	-\$15,000.00
Total Income	\$2,288,488.62

Cost of Goods Sold

5000 Affiliates' Dues Share	
5010 AFT	\$459,184.68
5020 AFT CT	\$512,902.32
5030 CT State AFL-CIO	\$24,723.60
5040 SEBAC	\$10,000.00
Total 5000 Affiliates' Dues Share	\$1,006,810.60
Total Cost of Goods Sold	\$1,006,810.60
Gross Profit	\$1,281,678.02

Expenses

5100 Committees Group

5110 COPE (checking)	\$8,000.00
5120 Communications/Public Relations	\$3,000.00
5140 Membership Services	\$25,000.00
5150 Contract Management	\$10,000.00
5150.01 Contract Advocacy	\$4,000.00
5150.2 UConn Labor Coalition Support	\$1,500.00
5150.3 CT For All Membership	\$6,600.00
5151 Membership Materials	\$17,500.00
5160 Professional Issues	\$3,500.00
5180 Union Stewards	\$20,000.00
5190 Social Justice	\$10,000.00
5195 UCPEA Hardship Relief Fund	\$25,000.00
Total 5100 Committees Group	\$134,100.00

5200 Executive Group

5201 Ballot Expense	\$5,000.00
5210 Planning Sessions	\$2,000.00
5220 Membership Meetings	\$1,000.00
5222 State Meetings & Conferences	\$2,000.00
5224 Conferences & Professional Development	\$15,000.00
5240 Goodwill and Welfare	\$1,000.00
5245 Mileage for board	\$2,500.00
5250 Scholarship Fund	\$10,000.00
5270 Annual Recognition Banquet	\$1,000.00
5280 Accounting	\$10,500.00
5290 Treasurer Expense	\$15,000.00
Total 5200 Executive Group	\$65,000.00

5300 Staff Payroll & Support Group

5310 Salaries & Wages	\$533,426.39
5320 Federal & State Payroll Taxes	\$57,076.62
5330 Health Insurance	\$192,000.00
5331 Worker's Comp Ins.	\$1,500.00
5340 401K Retirement Plan	\$38,592.69
5350 Child Care or Elder Care	\$8,000.00
5351 Child Care (EX)	\$2,000.00
5360 Staff Training & Development	\$7,500.00
5361 Professional Development (EX)	\$5,000.00
5370 Mileage for Staff	\$3,500.00
5372 Parking & Hospitality	\$1,500.00
5381 Recruitment Advertising	\$2,000.00
Total 5300 Staff Payroll & Support Group	\$852,095.70

5400 Occupancy Group

5410 Rent	\$68,500.00
5411 Property tax	\$6,000.00
5420 Liability Insurance	\$2,100.00
Total 5400 Occupancy Group	\$76,600.00

5500 Office Operations Group

5510 Supplies for Office	\$2,500.00
5520 Computer Maint & Goods	\$4,000.00
5521 Computer Technical Support	\$7,500.00
5522 Equipment Acquisitions	\$4,500.00
5530 Maintenance - Cleaning	\$4,000.00
5540 IT Software/Licences	\$16,000.00
5550 Postage	\$4,000.00
5560 Copier Lease & Supplies	\$3,200.00
5570 Utilities	\$5,000.00
5572 Telephone	\$3,000.00
5580 Water Cooler	\$475.00
5590 Furniture	\$10,000.00
5595 Office Hospitality	\$500.00
Total 5500 Office Operations Group	\$64,675.00

5600 Reserves From/To

\$89,207.32

Total Expenses

\$1,192,470.70

Net Income

\$0.00