

County Chapter Bylaws Completed

By Kelly Monge, County Chapter Committee Chair

The SEIU Local 221 Executive Board has accepted the County Chapter bylaws and has given the County Chapter provisional status. So, what does this mean for county employees? The County Chapter now has the ability to put into place officers and a governing council that will assist with managing all the activities directly related to the county membership of Local 221. First on the list will be presenting the newly written bylaws to the county membership for ratification. After the bylaws are ratified, county employees will be asked to elect officers to lead the governing body of the chapter.

Becoming more organized will be the objective of the new County Chapter. With organization will come strength and unity which will be needed to face the challenging task of negotiating a new contract with the county. The county employee members make up approximately 80% of the entire membership of Local 221. The other chapters within the local make up the other 20%. Our brothers and sisters within these other chapters are currently facing difficult times at the negotiating table, and organization and strength are proving to be an important part of the negotiating process.

In a recent address to county employees, CAO Walt Ekard painted a very bleak picture for the outlook in the next few years and mentioned the role collective bargaining will play for us. We have all lost something. If we are not united, then we are at the mercy of the economy and the Board of Supervisors. It is not about the past, it is not about the future, it's about right now. Change is about right now and it will demand the efforts of all to communicate the needs and value of all county employees.



The County Chapter Committee: (Back row, left to right) Bill James, Roberta Grant, Kelly Monge, Mary Avatsu. (Front row, left to right) Tracey Carter, Karen Gaddes, Sharon O'Brien, Renee Keester-Wellman.

County Chapter Committee to Search for Leaders

The County Chapter Committee has moved on to the next step in putting together the new County Chapter. The Committee is in search of leaders to take on the task of organizing the various Bargaining Units through out the county. The new bylaws call for equal representation for all Bargaining Units, so a representative willing to dig in and organize their group is needed for each of the different areas of concern. If you are interested in taking on a leadership position on this level, please contact your Worksite Organizer.

Hour of Power: A New Approach to County Membership Involvement



As we move forward into this uncharted territory of developing and organizing over 10,000 employees, it will take the efforts of us all to bring strength to the newly formed County Chapter and cause county managers to pause when they implement a policy or cut a program. The "Hour of Power" is how the County Chapter hopes to empower employees. The County Chapter is asking every county employee to give one hour of their time to help with the organizing efforts. There is a lot of work to be done, more than can be accomplished by just a few. You have no idea how important you are and how important you will become as we move closer to negotiating the new contract. If you are reading this, YOU are who we need to get involved!